



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** October 25, 2011

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Planning Division, Community Development Department

**SUBJECT:** Participation In UCSB/UCSD Application For Federal Sea Grant Funding

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council approve an in-kind staff time contribution, not to exceed \$25,000, for City participation as a community partner in a UCSB/UCSD application for a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sea Grant to research the vulnerability and adaptation of Santa Barbara coastal ecosystems to climate change effects.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The natural coastal environment is a fundamental part of Santa Barbara's resources, beauty, character, and economy. Climate change has the potential to substantially affect coastal resources such as beaches, wetlands, riparian areas, creeks, and kelp forests.

An assessment of local resource vulnerability to changing climate is the first necessary step toward identifying resource management actions. Without this type of local scientific research, staff would have to look to more general statewide studies to extrapolate information that is helpful to our City plans and resource management programs.

In November 2011, researchers at the UC Santa Barbara Marine Sciences Institute and the UC San Diego Scripps Institute of Oceanography intend to submit a joint application for funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Sea Grant program for a research study of Santa Barbara coastal ecosystems. The Sea Grant funding awards are distributed in January 2012 and the two-year study will occur from February 2012 to January 2014.

Ecologist Dr. Daniel Reed (head of the Long-Term Ecological Research Program at the UCSB Marine Sciences Institute, which focuses on the Santa Barbara Channel and coastal watersheds) and eminent climatologist Dr. Daniel R. Cayan (of the UC San Diego Scripps Institute CNAP RISA program - California and Nevada Applications Program for Regional Integrated Science and Assessment) will lead the research team.

The study will identify foreseeable effects of local climate change, assess the vulnerability of Santa Barbara coastal ecosystems to climate changes, and provide recommendations for managing and adapting to changes.

The UCSB research team has requested City participation in the study as a community partner. City departments with coastal knowledge and responsibilities, along with departments that could benefit from the results, will participate in the study. This is inclusive to Community Development (lead), Waterfront, Parks & Recreation, Airport, and Public Works.

The City staff role would involve: (1) attendance at a meeting with researchers to discuss study parameters and assumptions, identify study information that would be most useful to the City, and provide input data to researchers, (2) staff internal peer review of the draft study report; and (3) discerning report recommendations for potential incorporation into City resource management programs and plans. The report recommendations are not binding on the City.

#### **BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

UCSB and UCSD are applying for \$100,000 in funding for the study's researchers. The Sea Grant program stipulates a 50% local match (\$50,000 including in-kind contributions), which is proposed to be split between UCSB and the City (\$25,000 each).

The City will provide an in-kind contribution, up to \$25,000, of staff time as its local match contribution. Staff time is estimated at a total of 200 hours, which will be spread out among four or five City departments over two calendar years (2012 & 2013). Each participating department will contribute an average of 40 hours over the course of the two-year study. There will be no additional expenditures requested from the General Fund.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:**

Staff expects the proposed Sea Grant study of coastal ecosystems to benefit the environmental sustainability of City operations and the larger community by providing research specific to local climate change, resource vulnerability and adaptation measures that would directly assist planning for resource protection.

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**SUBMITTED BY:** Paul Casey, Assistant City Administrator/ Community Development Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office