

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

TO: BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
FROM: CLAIRE NORDLIE, SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR
WATER DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT WITH GOLD RIDGE RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR EXPANSION OF EXISTING
RAINWATER HARVESTING REBATE PROGRAM

AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Water Department that the Board of Public Utilities, by motion, approve the agreement for Rainwater Catchment Rebate Program Support between Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District and the City of Santa Rosa.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (Gold Ridge RCD) has received grant funds to supplement existing rainwater capture rebate programs throughout Sonoma County. This agreement would provide up to \$20,000 to Santa Rosa Water to increase the existing rainwater harvesting rebate offered to Santa Rosa Water customers.

BACKGROUND

Gold Ridge RCD has received grant funding through the Department of Water Resources' Proposition 1, North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Program, and the County of Sonoma's Climate Resiliency program to offer rainwater capture rebates to both water utility customers and rural landowners that reside within Gold Ridge RCD's service area. Gold Ridge RCD will increase Santa Rosa Water's existing rainwater harvesting rebate program by \$0.25 per gallon of stored rainwater for a total rebate to customers of \$0.50 per gallon of rainwater storage. This increased rebate will be available for customers who have participated in Santa Rosa Water's rebate starting May 5, 2022 to September 30, 2024, or until the maximum available funding of \$20,000 is expended.

This program seeks to promote water conservation, provide alternatives to potable water, enhance streamflow and foster water use awareness. In addition to the increased rebate funding, Gold Ridge RCD has partnered with Daily Acts, a local environmental

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non-profit organization, to offer workshops and hands-on rainwater harvesting installation projects to educate Sonoma County residents about how to install rainwater harvesting projects in their own homes. This technical assistance to customers is crucial to increasing the uptake of rainwater harvesting in our community, as a lack of knowledge is an often-cited barrier to participation in this program.

PRIOR BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES REVIEW

None.

ANALYSIS

Since 2009, Santa Rosa Water has offered a rainwater harvesting rebate of \$0.25 per gallon stored. This has resulted in the approval of 118 systems for rebates totaling approximately 176,000 gallons of rainwater storage. This increased rebate will further incentivize customers to pursue the financial investment of installing a rainwater harvesting system, presumably stimulating more program participation and resultant water savings.

Should the Board of Public Utilities approve of this agreement, Santa Rosa Water's existing rainwater harvesting program would not change except for the increased per gallon rebate. Other stipulations of receiving this funding include Santa Rosa Water's responsibility for quarterly reporting requirements to Gold Ridge RCD. These reports will include the property address or APN, rebate amount issued, gallons of water stored for all installed systems and the date of rebate post-inspection. In addition to quarterly reporting, Santa Rosa Water is also committing to market the rainwater harvesting rebate program with the appropriate acknowledgment of the funding provided by the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program as required by the grant, provide regular communication as needed on budget expenditures to Gold Ridge RCD, monitor the rebate program for compliance with the North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program agreement, and maintain membership in the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership. These program requirements are not expected to be overly burdensome, and many are in place already.

FISCAL IMPACT

This funding agreement allows Santa Rosa Water to receive up to \$20,000 of pass-through grant funding from Gold Ridge RCD for the purpose of increasing the existing rainwater harvesting program rebate to \$0.50 per gallon of rainwater storage. The funding would be made available to Santa Rosa Water until the total funding is expended, or September 30, 2024, whichever is sooner. The grant funding available via the proposed agreement will allow Santa Rosa Water to reduce overall costs to ratepayers and encourage customer water use efficiency.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Agreement – Rainwater Catchment Rebate Program Support

CONTACT

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