



Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

Capturing Stormwater Since 1956

File 180.804

620.10

January 15, 2020

Robert Phipps, Deputy Director
Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Mr. Phipps,

Submittal of White Paper for Fresno COG Consideration

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (District), I am submitting for Fresno Council of Government (COG) review the enclosed White Paper "*Re-Operation of Big Dry Creek Reservoir*". This paper provides an overview of our initiative to seek inclusion of language in the 2020 Water Resources Development Act that would assist us in our efforts to optimize the use of our largest reservoir for regional groundwater recharge.

This submittal was approved by the District Board of Directors on January 8, 2020.

We would appreciate an opportunity to discuss our proposal in more detail with COG leadership, staff, and COG Member Agencies. Our analysis of the potential benefits of the re-operation of Big Dry Creek Reservoir finds that the potential water supply and flood control benefits extend across and outside the cities of Fresno and Clovis, to include the cities of Kerman, Firebaugh, Mendota, and parts of the unincorporated area.

Please feel free to contact me at (559) 456-3292, or by email at alanh@fresnofloodcontrol.org with any questions. My Administrative Analyst, Andrew Remus, is also very familiar with this request and can be contacted in my absence.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Hofmann', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Hofmann
General Manager-Secretary

AH/AR/rl

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Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

2020

One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

RE-OPERATION OF BIG DRY CREEK RESERVOIR

Submitted by:

**Alan Hofmann, General Manager
Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District
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RE-OPERATION OF BIG DRY CREEK RESERVOIR

SHORT INTRODUCTION:

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (District) operates the Redbank-Fancher Creeks Flood Control Project (Project), a series of dams, channels and control structures that serve to intercept, temporarily store and dispose of stormwater originating in the foothill streams between the San Joaquin River and the Kings River. The Project protects the cities of Fresno and Clovis from severe (200 year event), as well as routine flooding.

The Big Dry Creek Dam and Reservoir (Reservoir) is the largest element of the Project. Built in 1948, it was designed to control flows originating from Big Dry Creek and Dog Creek, and to provide up to 11,250 acre-feet of conservation storage. The Project was increased in size in 1993 (storage capacity 30,200 acre-feet) and is governed by a US Army Corps of Engineers' (Corps) Water Control Manual (Manual). A series of determinations by the Corps has prevented the reservoir from being used for conservation storage. Despite Congressional action through the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) that explicitly authorized the entire Redbank-Fancher Creeks Flood Control Project to "maximize benefits to groundwater, including groundwater recharge", pursuant to the Manual, Corps rules require the District to divert all excess flood waters from the Reservoir, as soon after a storm event as possible, preventing the storage of stormwater inside the facility. The District believes that the 1986 WRDA language should be amended to clearly authorize the storage of stormwater runoff, or other waters, in the Big Dry Creek Reservoir and distribution of stored water to downstream recharge facilities. The vehicle for making the above-described amendment is the 2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), currently under development. In March, 2019, the District General Manager, Alan Hofmann, requested, for the third year in a row, that the Corps undertake a 'New Start Feasibility Study' to study how to maximize the reservoir's potential to address the water resource needs of our area. This study will require an appropriation, from Congress to the Corps, to fund a study that reviews improvements to the facility to permanently store water that provides a regional continuing benefit. The study would be funded equally between the Corps and local Fresno County Stream Group under the Corps 333 Rule (3 years, \$3 million, and 3 approval levels). This cooperative effort will explore and define how the operation of Big Dry Creek Dam and Reservoir can be optimized for the greatest public benefit.

SUMMARY REQUEST:

The 1986 Water Resources Development Act authorized the Corps, with the District as a local sponsor, to construct the Project. Included in the Project was the raising of Big Dry Creek Dam to increase its flood control capability (current capacity: 30,200 acre-feet). The language in the Act recognized that the Project, including the Big Dry Creek Reservoir, could serve to support groundwater recharge for the community, but was less than definitive about how storage for recharge was to be included in the Project. The 1986 WRDA language is simply:

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: REDBANK AND FANCHER CREEKS, CALIFORNIA. The project for flood control, Redbank and Fancher Creeks, California; Report of the Chief of Engineers, dated May 7, 1981, at a total cost of \$84,600,000, with an estimated first Federal cost of \$64,900,000 and an estimated first non-Federal cost of \$19,700,000. The project shall include measures determined appropriate by the Secretary to minimize adverse effects on groundwater and to maximize benefits to groundwater, including water recharge.

The District has approached the Corps on numerous occasions over the last three decades, seeking authorization to utilize the 'conservation storage' function of the Reservoir, which is part of the facility's original design. The District has made no headway with these requests; the Corps' perspective is that storage and recharge are not authorized through the 1986 WRDA. The District seeks a clarifying amendment to the 1986 WRDA, as follows:

PROPOSED LANGUAGE: REDBANK AND FANCHER CREEKS, CALIFORNIA. The project for flood control, Redbank and Fancher Creeks, California; Report of the Chief of Engineers, dated May 7, 1981, at a total cost of \$84,600,000, with an estimated first Federal cost of \$64,900,000 and an estimated first non-Federal cost of \$19,700,000. The project shall include measures determined appropriate by the Secretary to minimize adverse effects on groundwater and to maximize benefits to groundwater, including ~~water recharge~~ **the temporary storage of water for recharge and the distribution of such water to downstream water recharge facilities.**

The District believes that the proposed amendment of the original language will provide the Corps with the assurance it needs to consider an update to the operating rules for the Reservoir. Modification of the reservoir operating rules to account for the water storage and recharge functions would yield opportunities for the District to capture, hold and redistribute stormwater to its many downstream recharge facilities, in support of the health and welfare of the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area and its water resource needs.

The vehicle for making the above-described amendment is the 2020 WRDA. Following the normal process for a WRDA, the 2020 WRDA will be drafted separately in the two houses of Congress, then reconciled. The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure has produced the first Senate draft. The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment will likely produce the first House draft early in 2020. **Our congressional delegation on the House side could work to get the proposed amendment of the 1986 WRDA before the appropriate House subcommittee.**

REQUEST BACKGROUND:

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (District) operates the Redbank-Fancher Creeks Flood Control Project (Project), a series of dams, channels and control structures that serve to intercept, temporarily store and dispose of stormwater originating in the foothill streams between the San Joaquin River and the Kings River.

The Big Dry Creek Dam and Reservoir is the largest element of the Project with a capacity of 30,200 acre-feet. Originally built in 1948, it was designed to store 16,250 acre-feet and control flows originating from Big Dry Creek and Dog Creek, and to provide up to 11,250 acre-feet of conservation storage. The Big Dry Creek Dam was increased in size and capacity in 1993. A series of determinations by the Corps, beginning in 1954, have prevented the reservoir from being used for conservation storage. Congressional action through the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) explicitly authorized the entire Redbank-Fancher Creeks Flood Control Project to “maximize benefits to groundwater, including groundwater recharge”. However, the current (1994) Army Corps’ Water Control Manual, that governs operation of the enlarged Big Dry Creek Reservoir, requires that the entire volume of the reservoir be reserved for flood storage. Releases of accumulated stormwater, through the Little Dry Creek Diversion Channel to the San Joaquin River, are mandated as part of the complete draining of the reservoir after runoff-producing storm events.

The District operates an extensive network of over 150 groundwater recharge ponds spread across the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area. These ponds are interconnected with Big Dry Creek below the Reservoir and with the Fresno Irrigation District canal system, presenting numerous opportunities to route stormwater and irrigation water to recharge facilities where it can percolate into the regional groundwater table.

Periodic drought, a declining regional groundwater table, and the expectation that future weather patterns will produce fewer, but higher-yielding precipitation events, all argue for maximizing opportunities to store floodwater for conservation purposes. The California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 places responsibility for reversing regional groundwater overdraft onto local agencies. Helpfully, both State and Federal agencies are revisiting past practices and seeking structural and non-structural ways to conserve water and develop new water supplies. Further, Congress has directed the Corps to explore the possibility of “re-operating” flood control facilities to serve the need for better water storage.

The District believes that there are no insurmountable barriers to operating Big Dry Creek Reservoir in a manner that optimizes its use for water conservation without compromising the Reservoir’s primary role as flood protection for the more than 250,000 persons residing within an inundation zone and the 700,000 persons living in the communities downstream of the facility.

The District believes that the 1986 WRDA language should be amended to clearly authorize the storage of stormwater runoff in the Big Dry Creek Reservoir and the distribution of stored water to downstream recharge facilities. If amended, the District would then begin the process of making application to the Secretary of the Army to study and, prove the dam’s stability and sufficiency to provide such temporary storage. There are several Corps programs that could support such a study. A likely candidate is the “New Start” process that the Corps is promoting as a streamlined approach to permitting and the modification of existing Corps-built locally-managed facilities. The District has identified several pathways through which re-operation of the reservoir could be achieved, and at this juncture the ‘New Start Feasibility Study’ approach appears to be most viable.

Such studies are dependent on the Corps getting the required Congressional budget appropriation and the commitment of local project beneficiaries (e.g. urban and agricultural interests) to contribute to the process. In March, 2019, District General Manager Alan Hofmann, for the third year in a row, requested that the Corps undertake a 'New Start Feasibility Study'. To date, the request has not reached the priority level necessary to garner Corps support or Presidential support for funding.

IF NOT A TRANSPORTATION RELATED REQUEST, ARE THERE ANY TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONNECTIONS?

There are no connections to transportation policy.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

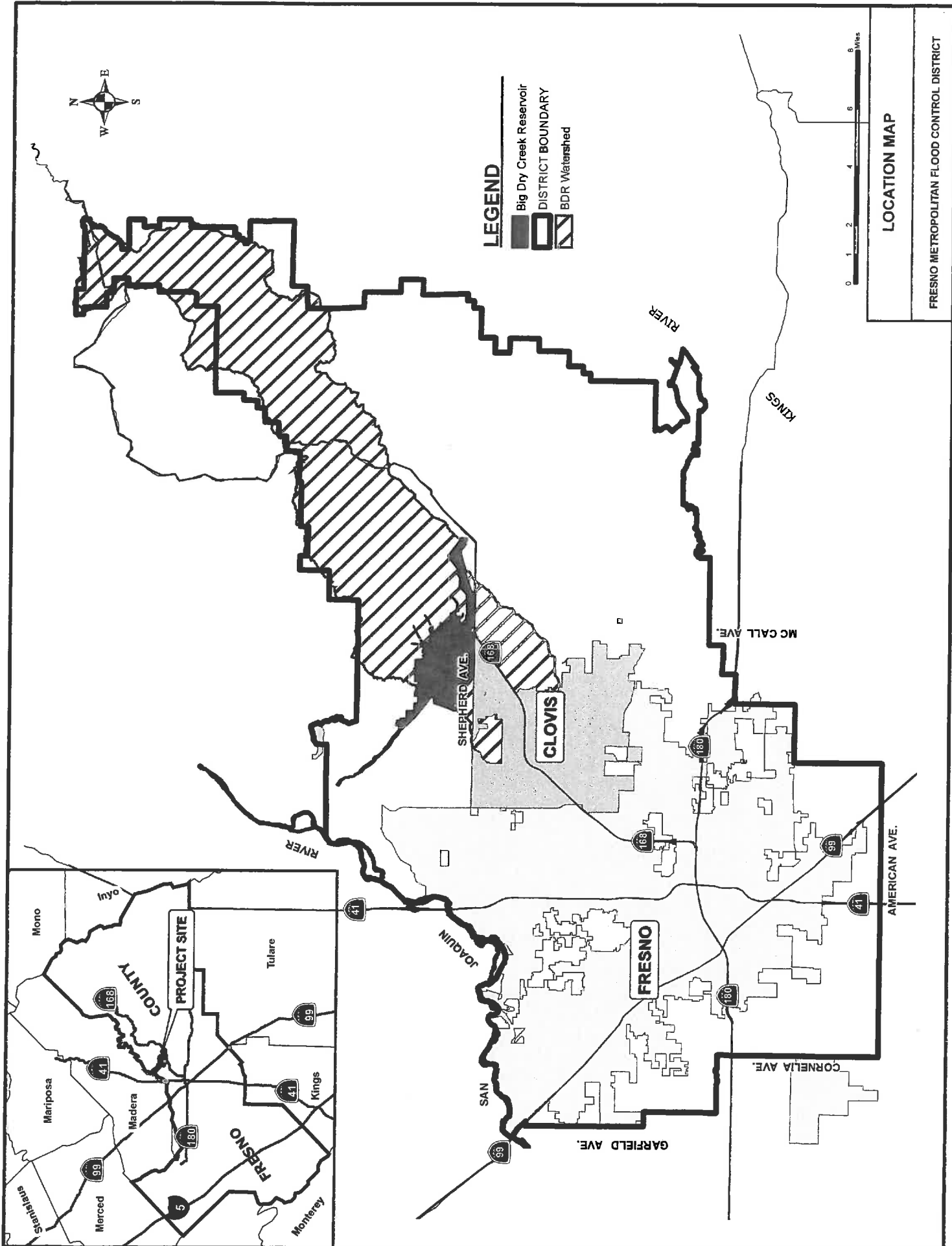
Use of the facility as a dry season regulation reservoir for distribution of water to existing District recharge facilities, Fresno Irrigation District groundwater banking facilities, and to other existing and future regional water conservation facilities, will undoubtedly economically benefit the community by helping to arrest the decline of the regional water table. Agricultural, industrial, commercial and residential land uses within the Fresno-Clovis are all dependent on groundwater.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

Map of the Big Dry Creek Reservoir & Watershed

CONTACT:

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Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
2020

One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

Community Services Block Grant

Submitted by:

Elizabeth Jonasson

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COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

Fresno EOC respectfully asks that the One Voice Delegation promote the continued funding of the Community Services Block Grant program. This is the source for emergency, human service interventions, and economic development Fresno EOC extends to our county's most vulnerable residents.

We also ask that members encourage our local Congressional delegation to support and co-sponsor the reauthorization of the Community Services Block Grant, HR 1695. This would continue to authorize funding for the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). Our federal representatives have consistently recognized the value of CSBG to their constituents and have all supported reauthorization and stable funding for the program. Maintaining federal CSBG funding is the single most important tool our community has to mitigate the impacts of emergencies, such as the opioid epidemic, and to create economic opportunities for our neediest residents. Fresno EOC is the locally designated steward of CSBG funds for Fresno County.

REQUEST SUMMARY

For FY 2020 CSBG was approved at \$740 million, which amounted to only about a \$15 million increase from FY 2019, below the targeted amount that we requested of \$775 million. Unfortunately, the increase fell short of meeting the needs.

- 1. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) FY 2021 funding at 800 million.**
- 2. Reauthorization of CSBG: H.R. 1695: Community Services Block Grant Reauthorization Act of 2019, pending introduction in the Senate**

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

CSBG honors local assessment and design of programs that meet urgent local needs and generate economic opportunities. It correctly requires governance of the CSBG-funded agency by locally appointed and elected leaders, as well as those representing service recipients. CSBG is particularly critical to our county, where one in four live in poverty. It is a responsible, local instrument allowing for local determination and the creation of local solutions to ameliorate the persistent, unabated poverty our region has become all too well known for.

- a. CSBG funding makes it possible for Fresno EOC to deliver services such as food, utility and transportation assistance to thousands of our county residents each year.
- b. CSBG has catalyzed robust economic initiatives such as Access Plus Capital, a Community Development Financial Institution lending to small businesses through which hundreds of jobs have been created.
- c. It was the source through which vital human services such as the Sanctuary Youth Shelter, Central Valley Against Human Trafficking, the Local Conservation Corps, and School of Unlimited Learning (SOUL) charter high school were started.
- d. CSBG has also been leveraged to create social enterprises such as Fresno EOC's growing solar installation business, catering, and commercial recycling efforts all of which employ and train disadvantaged workers and generate discretionary revenue for new local ventures.
- e. CSBG has been utilized to grow new, promising programs like our Valley Apprenticeship Connections which provides construction and maintenance mechanic job training skills and connects them to a good paying job upon completion.

IF NOT A TRANSPORTATION RELATED REQUEST, ARE THERE ANY TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONNECTIONS?

Because of its flexible nature, CSBG funding can be used for any policy matters that improve conditions for our community, including transportation. In addition to having a transit program, transportation is a component in many of our programs.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

Fresno EOC has prioritized economic stimulus and entrepreneurship with its allocation of CSBG funding. We know that it is only through access to opportunity that people can lift themselves out of poverty.

- a. Access Plus Capital has provided \$27.3 million in loans and technical assistance to 771 businesses and

borrowers low-to-moderate income neighborhoods since 2009.

- b. Turn-key commercial recycling operations recovering CRV containers, used oil, tires, and electronic waste.
- c. Commercial food production center producing and delivering more than 7,500 meals per day.
- d. Commercial vehicle fleet detailing.
- e. Nielsen Conference Center.
- f. Solar PV installations.
- g. Taxi scrip services.
- h. Landscaping and grounds maintenance.
- i. Investment in the formation of a thriving credit union in southeast Fresno.
- j. Catering business.
- k. Job training.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

No.

CONTACT:

Name, Title: Elizabeth Jonasson Rosas, Strategy and Communications Officer

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Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
2020

One Voice Regional Priorities Washington, DC

Poverty Guidelines

Submitted by:

Elizabeth Jonasson

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POVERTY GUIDELINES

SHORT INTRODUCTION OF REGIONAL PRIORITY AND ISSUE:

Fresno EOC respectfully asks that the One Voice Delegation approve requesting a reevaluation of the Federal poverty guidelines issued each year by the Department of Health and Human Services to account for changes, including regional differences, since the base calculation in 1963.

The poverty guidelines are based on poverty thresholds first calculated grounded on a “three-times-the-cost-of-the-food-plan”. Poverty guidelines are income levels based on household size and used to determine eligibility for important non-open-ended and open-ended programs such as Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Head Start, Weatherization Assistance, Foster Grandparents, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Job Corps, SNAP, National School Lunch, as well as many others. Many other state and local-driven programs and funders use the guidelines to determine where to invest their time and resources.

Except for Hawaii and Alaska, these guidelines are static across the US and do not account for regional or state-by-state cost of living changes. Federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour, however nearly all states have their own minimum wage laws signifying vast income and cost of living differences across the nation. California’s rising minimum wage, coupled with the relatively high cost of living in the state, is making working people who cannot meet their basic needs ineligible for government services. This means California will continue to lose out on federal resources and people in our community will get less and less of the resources they need to lift themselves out of poverty.

REQUEST SUMMARY

In order to address the changes in family spending since the poverty thresholds were first calculated as well as to address differences in cost of living throughout the United States we ask that:

- 1. Poverty thresholds be recalculated and a new benchmark year be established every 10 years.**
- 2. Poverty guidelines be established on a state-by-state basis.**

REQUEST BACKGROUND AND EXPLAIN THE REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The poverty thresholds were originally developed in 1963 by taking information from the USDA report “Family Food Plans and Food Costs” on the cost of food for a household of 3 or more and multiplying it by three- a number supported by a 1955 Household Food Consumption Survey finding that roughly a third of a household budget was on food. In 1969 the poverty thresholds became the official definition of poverty. The poverty guidelines were then developed for administrative purposes.

The poverty guidelines are issued every year based on the poverty thresholds released by the Census Bureau. The poverty thresholds are adjusted every year based on the previous year’s inflation. The poverty thresholds for a certain year are announced after the year is over, while the Poverty Guidelines are announced at the beginning of the year for that year.

In the late 1960’s, recognizing the higher cost of living in Alaska and Hawaii, compared to the continental United States, these two states have been given higher guideline amounts. Only the poverty guidelines have this distinction, the thresholds do not. Despite vast differences in cost of living that have developed since then, no other states have been given separate guidelines.

The dynamics of household economics have changed since 1963, and it is widely recognized that food budgets no longer represent a third of household expenditures. There have been attempts to update the thresholds: An interagency subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Updating the Poverty Threshold, recommended in 1973 that the threshold be updated every ten years, amongst other things. A couple of years later another interagency collaboration, the Poverty Studies Task Force, produced and delivered to congress The Measure of Poverty report which outlined some of the challenges the poverty measures were facing. In 1981 some tweaks were made, almost 20 years since the thresholds were first calculated, (for example eliminating distinctions between farm and non-farm households, female or male-led households), however they have not been re-benched.

IF NOT A TRANSPORTATION RELATED REQUEST, ARE THERE ANY TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONNECTIONS?

There are multiple links between transportation and poverty. The ability for people to access opportunity is predicated on reliable transportation whereas that cannot be easily had unless one already has certain financial stability. In as much as poverty statistics are used to make transportation investment decisions, the poverty guidelines play a role.

ARE THERE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS?

The poverty guidelines are used directly or indirectly for funding or programmatic decisions nationwide. Because of the millions of dollars tied to the guidelines each year, it is important to the economy of our region that we get the resources we need to help people participate more fully in our economy and lift themselves out of poverty.

ARE THERE ANY ATTACHMENTS?

No.

CONTACT:

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