



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: *September 19, 2023*

DATE: September 14, 2023

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Brian Beffort, Sustainability Manager
Office of the County Manager
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THROUGH: Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager
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SUBJECT: Recommendation to accept the Energizing Rural Communities Prize Phase One Partner from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations in the amount of [\$100,000; no County match] retroactive for the period of July 14, 2023 through June 30, 2024; retroactively authorize the County Manager to execute the prize award documents; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments. This award program is meant to incentivize the development of clean energy projects in rural or remote areas of the United States. The prize offers funding to kickstart development of clean energy projects and is intended to incentivize competitors to take the first steps necessary to develop a clean energy project. This project will assess needs, identify and evaluate resources, and put together a conceptual plan for a future renewable-energy system in the Gerlach area that is inspired by the people of Gerlach, informed by world-class energy expertise, and powered by cutting-edge technology. (District 5) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

The Washoe Board of County Commissioners must accept funding awards, and must approve amendments to the adopted fiscal year budget and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments. It is recommended that the Board accept the Energizing Rural Communities Prize Phase One Partner from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations in the amount \$100,000. This prize will assess needs, identify and evaluate resources, and plan for a future renewable-energy system for the community of Gerlach.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Innovative Services

PREVIOUS ACTION

There is no previous action

AGENDA ITEM # _____

BACKGROUND

The Energizing Rural Communities Prize (ERCP) is provided through the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations to incentivize the development of clean energy projects in rural or remote areas of the United States. The prize offers funding to kickstart development of clean energy projects and is intended to incentivize competitors to take the first steps necessary to develop a clean energy project.

Washoe County's approved project focuses attention of clean energy expert stakeholders on the needs of Gerlach to solve the community's energy needs while meeting the County's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050. The project integrates the expertise of a project team that includes the Washoe County Office of the County Manager, Sustainability Manager, UNR's Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, the Nevada Clean Energy Fund, the Gerlach General Improvement District and NV Energy.

This project team will assess needs, identify and evaluate resources, and plan for a future renewable-energy system that is inspired by the people of Gerlach, informed by world-class energy expertise, and powered by cutting-edge technology. The process will culminate in an Implementation Plan that provides a conceptual technical design and finance plan to support the installation of a state-of-the-art, clean-energy electric grid that provides clean, reliable, and affordable energy to help Gerlach remain comfortable and resilient in the face of climate change.

Retroactive approval is requested as the Prize Acceptance Form for the award was due by July 20, 2023.

AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: Climate-Resilient Gerlach

Scope of the Project: The project will convene a team of experts to create an Implementation Plan to provide sustainable, reliable solutions to support the community of Gerlach in the face of climate change.

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: This project is the first step in providing sustainable energy solutions for Gerlach residents to ensure residents remain comfortable and resilient in the face of extreme weather events and climate change.

On-Going Program Support: This is a one-time project that will create an implementation plan to provide solutions for Gerlach's energy needs. No additional funding is necessary for the plan itself. There is an opportunity to apply for additional prize funding at the conclusion of the award period in order to implement the plan.

Award Amount: \$100,000

Funding Period: July 14, 2023 through June 30, 2024

Funding Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations
Administered by the National Renewable Energy
Laboratory

Pass Through Entity: N/A

Assistance Listing #/CFDA: N/A

Award ID Number: N/A

Match Amount and Type: This prize does not require a match

Contracts: Under this prize, Washoe County will contract with the following experts: UNR College of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Nevada Clean Energy Fund, NZero.

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the board accept this prize, the FY24 Sustainability adopted budget will be increased by \$100,000 in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
IO-12256 Energizing Rural Communities Prize	431100-Federal Grants	\$100,000
IO-12256 Energizing Rural Communities Prize	710110-Contracted/Temp Services	\$100,000

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners accept the Energizing Rural Communities Prize Phase One Partner from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations in the amount of [\$100,000; no County match] retroactive for the period of July 14, 2023 through June 30, 2024; retroactively authorize the County Manager to execute the prize award documents; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: *"Move to accept the Energizing Rural Communities Prize Phase One Partner from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations in the amount of [\$100,000; no County match] retroactive for the period of July 14, 2023 through June 30, 2024; retroactively authorize the County Manager to execute the prize award documents; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget amendments.*