May 20, 2014

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, California 94903

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO AUTHORIZE PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE MARIN AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST IN THE AMOUNT OF $500,000 FOR THE ACQUISITION OF AN AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION AGREEMENT ON THE MATTOS RANCH, TOMALES

Dear Board Members,

RECOMMENDATION:
1. Authorize President to execute the agreement
2. Authorize the Board of Supervisors to allocate $500,000 within the Measure A Farmland Preservation Grant Program from Reserve for Acquisition to Pass-through Grantee.

SUMMARY:
This is the second grant request for funds from the Measure A Farmland Preservation Program. The Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) requests a grant of $500,000 to help acquire a perpetual agricultural conservation easement over the 270-acre Mattos Ranch, Assessor’s Parcel 100-050-32. This single parcel in west Marin is approximately 2.5 miles northwest of the town of Tomales, and has been owned by the extended Mattos family since the 1940s. It is used for commercial agricultural purposes, and serves as pasture land for organic dairy cattle. Details of the parcel’s agricultural values are contained in the attachments.

The estimated fair market value of the easement is approximately $1 million. MALT will contribute the remainder of funds necessary to purchase the easement. Income from the sale of this easement would alleviate the family’s need to liquidate some of the equity in its land to generate the funds necessary to diversify and modernize the ranch’s agricultural operations.

When protected, the property will connect a chain of MALT easements stretching from the northwestern-most corner of Marin County to Marshall. The Mattos
Ranch is directly adjacent to the MALT-protected Crayne, Jablons-Hicks, and Parks easements. When protected, the property would join a contiguous block of 20 MALT-protected properties that almost entirely surround the town of Tomales, forming an agricultural greenbelt.

Staff considers grant applications on a first-come first-served basis and evaluates the merits of each proposal based on the project selection guidelines contained in the Marin County Agricultural Land Conservation Program, approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 31, 2012.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Sufficient budget capacity exists in the FY 2013-14 Measure A Farmland Preservation Grant Program budget, Fund 24590, Acquisition Account 900005 for movement to 5410901. After purchase of this and the Thacher Ranch easement, the balance of Measure A Farmland Preservation Grant Program budget will amount to approximately $900,000.

**REVIEWED BY:**

[X] Department of Finance     [  ] N/A
[X] County Counsel            [  ] N/A
[  ] Human Resources          [X] N/A

Open Space Planner Craig Richardson is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald Miska
Deputy Director

RM/CR/kbl

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