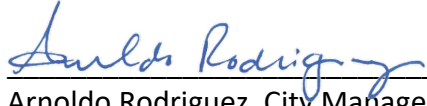


REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

Approved by:


Arnaldo Rodriguez, City Manager

Council Meeting of: April 21, 2021

Agenda Number: B-11

SUBJECT:

Consideration of a Minute Order Acceptance of the submittal of a support letter expressing the Madera City Council's support for AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council approve Minute Order Approving:

1. Submittal of support letter addressed to Assembly member Dr. Joaquin Arambula, expressing the Madera City Council's support for AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board.

SUMMARY:

AB 559, as introduced by Assembly member Dr. Joaquin Arambula, at its core would revise and expand the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) Board from a 15-member board to a 17-member board. Mayor Santos Garcia represents the City on the SJRC Board.

The SJRC was established in 1992 in order to acquire lands from willing sellers between the Friant Dam to State Route 99 along the San Joaquin River. The goal of these acquisitions is to simultaneously conserve valuable riparian habitat and provide the benefits of public greenspace to residents of Madera County, Fresno County, and beyond. The SJRC board is tasked with making decisions on the Conservancy Master Plan, which details how acquired lands will be enhanced and made available for recreation and public use.

Existing law requires that the governing board of the conservancy consist of 15 voting members, as prescribed, including, among others, one resident of Fresno County, and one resident of Madera County appointed by the Governor from a list of candidates provided by the board of supervisors of these counties, respectively. Existing law requires the board of supervisors of these counties to develop their lists from a list submitted by environmental justice organizations and property owners of their counties pursuant to a rotating appointment qualification requirement, as specified.

Existing law subjects the meetings of the governing board of the conservancy to the Ralph M. Brown Act.

DISCUSSION:

As it currently stands, specifics of AB 559 include the following:

1. Increases the SJRC governing board from 15 to 17 voting members, as follows:
 - a. Adds one member of a local tribal organization, as defined, appointed by the Governor from a list submitted by local tribal organizations.
 - b. Adds one public member appointed by the Governor, who is not an elected official, to represent statewide interests.
2. Revises existing qualifications, as follows:
 - a. Replaces the “environmental organization” and “property owner” candidates that rotate between the Counties of Fresno and Madera for consideration by the Governor, to instead include candidates submitted by local nonprofit organizations that support outdoor recreation, conservation, environmental justice, or social justice issues.
 - b. Authorizes each county board of supervisors to establish additional criteria for these appointments.
3. Authorizes the Governor, in the event either of the two county-nominated seats are not filled within one year, to appoint a resident of Fresno or Madera County nominated by local nonprofit organizations that support outdoor recreation, conservation, environmental justice, or social justice issues.
4. Provides that SJRC governing board meetings are subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, which generally applies to state, rather than local, governing bodies.
5. Requires the voting members of the governing board to elect a chair and vice chair to a one-year term, limited to no more than two consecutive terms.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Submittal of the support letter provides no direct financial impact to the City.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE VISION MADERA 2025 PLAN:

The information contained herein is not addressed by the Vision Madera 2025 plan, nor is the information in conflict with the plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

As an alternative, the Council may elect to reject submittal of support letter expressing the Madera City Council’s support for AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Support Letter Addressed to Assembly member Dr. Joaquin Arambula regarding AB 559
San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board

Attachment 1:

Support Letter Addressed to Assembly Member Dr. Joaquin Arambula
regarding AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Assembly District 31
State Capitol, Room 5155
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0031

SUBJECT: Support for AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board

Dear Assembly member Dr. Joaquin Arambula:

On behalf of the Madera City Council, I write in support of AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board.

The City of Madera understands the San Joaquin River Conservancy (SJRC) was established in 1992 in order to acquire lands from willing sellers between the Friant Dam to Highway 99 along the San Joaquin River. The goal of these acquisitions is to simultaneously conserve valuable riparian habitat and provide the benefits of public greenspace to residents of Madera County, Fresno County, and beyond. The City also understands the SJRC board is tasked with making decisions on the Conservancy Master Plan, which details how acquired lands will be enhanced and made available for recreation and public use.

The City of Madera support the proposed revisions and changes of AB 559 San Joaquin River Conservancy: governing board to accomplish the following:

1. Increase the SJRC governing board from fifteen to seventeen voting members, as follows:
 - a. Adding one member of a local tribal organization, as defined, appointed by the Governor from a list submitted by local tribal organizations.
 - b. Adding one public member appointed by the Governor, who is not an elected official, to represent statewide interests.

2. Revise existing qualifications, as follows:
 - a. Replace the “environmental organization” and “property owner” candidates that rotate between the Counties of Fresno and Madera for consideration by the Governor, to instead include candidates submitted by local nonprofit organizations that support outdoor recreation, conservation, environmental justice, or social justice issues.
 - b. Authorize each county board of supervisors to establish additional criteria for these appointments.
3. Authorize the Governor, in the event either of the two county-nominated seats are not filled within one year, to appoint a resident of Fresno or Madera County nominated by local nonprofit organizations that support outdoor recreation, conservation, environmental justice, or social justice issues.
4. Provide that SJRC governing board meetings are subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, which generally applies to state, rather than local, governing bodies.
5. Require the voting members of the governing board to elect a chair and vice chair to a one-year term, limited to no more than two consecutive terms.

Madera City Council believes these changes will serve to create a more inclusive board to better serve the San Joaquin River surrounding areas, being a regional resource.

Sincerely,

Santos Garcia
Mayor
City of Madera