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MORE AG LAND SET ASIDE FOR CLIMATE BENEFITS

Cap-and-Trade Funded SALC Program Commits Nearly \$34 Million To Preserving Agricultural Land, Minimizing Emissions

SACRAMENTO – An innovative State program has committed nearly \$34 million to fund projects that achieve two important goals: protecting agricultural land from development and reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

The Strategic Growth Council awarded \$33,962,403 on Tuesday to fund 25 agricultural conservation easements and two strategy and outcome grants, impacting organizations in 19 counties. The Council launched the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) in 2014 and works with the Department of Conservation to identify potential projects. In its first two years, the SALC Program distributed \$42 million to land trusts and local governments.

The SALC Program is part of the [California Climate Investments](#) initiative. Through this initiative, State agencies invest cap-and-trade auction proceeds in projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing a variety of additional benefits to California communities.

“Both of the results the SALC Program achieves – limiting development on agricultural property while at the same time reducing our carbon footprint – are valuable in terms of protecting the environment and enhancing the quality of life for Californians,” California Resources Agency Secretary John Laird said.

The \$33.9 million in grant awards approved this year will preserve 46,253 acres of irreplaceable agricultural land and, by limiting development, reduce emissions by eliminating nearly 55 billion potential vehicle miles over a 30-year period. That equates to nearly 22.6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide over the next three decades.

“The SALC program is a crucial investment in California’s future – preserving the vitality of the State’s agricultural lands while also protecting its communities from sprawl development. Each of these innovative

projects advances the Strategic Growth Council’s goal of creating vibrant communities and landscapes across California,” said Randall Winston, Executive Director of the Strategic Growth Council.

The Department of Conservation’s Division of Land Resource Protection reviewed 29 funding proposals before making recommendations to the Strategic Growth Council to fund 27. Both the Ag Land Trust of Monterey County and the Feather River Land Trust submitted four successful projects. The Central Valley Farmland Trust received three grants and the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County two. The largest grant was \$3,450,700 to the Bear Yuba Land Trust, facilitating the second phase in the preservation of a 3,070-acre cattle ranch in the Penn Valley area of Nevada County.

“We’re proud to be part of the SALC Program, and we’re very pleased that the land trusts and local governments that do such important work in their areas of the state brought forth so many worthy projects for consideration,” Department of Conservation Director David Bunn said.

A complete list of grant recipients is available [here](#).

California Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross noted that December 5 is also World Soils Day -- celebrating the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human well-being – and that the Agency just announced its [Healthy Soils Awards](#).

“The SALC Program and our Healthy Soils Program, both supported by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, have several profound impacts: helping to ensure that California remains the nation’s leading agricultural production state, raising awareness of the connection between agriculture and the environment, and fighting climate change,” Secretary Ross said.

SALC Program funding is part of the much larger effort by the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to preserving agricultural land, proceeds from the state’s cap-and-trade auctions help reduce emissions by supporting more compact infill development patterns as well as encouraging active transportation and transit usage. Most of that funding is aimed at benefiting disadvantaged communities.



The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment—particularly in disadvantaged communities. The cap-and-trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investment projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are made in disadvantaged and low-income communities. For more information, visit [California Climate Investments](#).