

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



**FROM:** Supervisor Jim Venable

**SUBMITTAL DATE:** May 10, 2004

**SUBJECT:** Approval of a Project Agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) United States Department of Agriculture.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:** That the Board of Supervisors join with me to approve the attached Project Agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) United States Department of Agriculture.

**BACKGROUND:** On April 13, 2004 this Board adopted a Memorandum of Understanding with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and their Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program for them to assist us with the overwhelming dead and dying tree removal process.

The MOU drafted by NRCS outlined a general plan of work to implement the EWP program. Detailed plans were to be developed with separate "project agreements" for those endeavors that are mutually agreed upon. The most recent change in this process was the decision just a few days ago by Department of Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman who, at the urging of Senator Dianne Feinstein, agreed to waive ALL match requirements by the local governments who are affected by the tree mortality situation. This means that NRCS is absorbing 100% of all costs for their tree removal in our mountain communities, up to a total of \$20,000,000.00. This is an action that we have been actively pursuing for many months; it is deeply appreciated by our office and by all of our affected constituents.

The attached agreement details the initial project and also names a liaison from the County who will be working in partnership with the NRCS on this project. I therefore urge my colleagues on this Board to approve this Project Agreement so that we can move ahead in a cooperative relationship with the NRCS.

  
Jim Venable, Supervisor Third District  
JV:msm