PG&E Settlement Fund Request

Program/Project Name: Alert FM System Purchase & Implementation

Program/Project Type (Check all that apply)

☐ County stability ☐ Camp Fire Recovery ☒ Hazard Mitigation

Program/Project Need (Describe the need for the program/project.)

Since the Camp Fire, PG&E has instituted Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) in an effort to mitigate risk of fire during certain weather events. These PSPS events affect the most rural areas of our community the most. Due to their remote locations, many residents do not have landline phone service and typically rely on wireless internet service in their homes for a cell phone connection. When the power is shut off during a PSPS event, residents lose their wireless internet connection and their cell phones no longer work. When cell phone service is lost, residents may be unable to receive emergency alerts through Code Red and Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWs). The purpose of this project is to implement an emergency alert system to work in conjunction with established systems in order to reach residents in the more rural areas of our community regardless of the availability of power or cell phone service.

Program/Project Description

Alert FM provides an alternative method of broadcasting emergency alerts utilizing existing FM radio infrastructure. The system does not require cell phone service, internet connectivity, or an external source of power. During an emergency, an alert can be broadcast through the Alert FM system over FM radio frequencies to receivers in designated areas. The receivers can be programmed to emit an audible hi/lo siren, a flashing light, and a text display message. The ability to provide customized emergency alerts utilizing the existing FM radio infrastructure will allow County to reach individuals that may not otherwise be able to receive alerts due to their remote location, loss of power or lack of cell phone service. It is the goal of the Sheriff's Office to provide emergency alerts across multiple platforms in order to reach the highest number of residents possible.

The Board of Supervisors approved $500,000 in PG&E Settlement Funds in 2021 for the Sheriff's Office to contract with Alert FM to install the infrastructure necessary to send messages to individual receivers located within homes, congregate care settings and businesses. All infrastructure is installed and tested.

PG&E donated $100,000 to Butte County to initiate a pilot project to distribute receivers to households with the highest probability of Public Safety Power Shutoffs who also have weak of no telecommunication signal and may lose the ability to receive emergency alerts when power is out. The pilot program is underway and awaiting 1,000 receivers for distribution.

This project is requesting matching funds of $239,282 to provide the required 25% local match for a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) to fund receivers for 3,500 homes and 350 congregate living facilities across the County.

Program/Project Timeline (Describe the timeline including the urgency for the project if applicable)

A Notice of Interest was submitted for FEMA HMGP funding for the project on February 14, 2022. The County has been invited to submit an application for the projects by April 8, 2022. The application submission must include a letter of commitment for matching funds.

Project Timeline

Submit HMGP application	February 2022
Funding announcement	November 2022 (Projected)
Internal project development	November-December 2022
Develop outreach plan	January-February 2023

Implement outreach plan	February 2023-June 2023
Receive orders and coordinate fulfillment with vendor	February 2023-August 2023
Annual maintenance	November 2023, 2024, 2025
Grant close out	November 2025

Program/Project Budget (Include the total cost and all sources and uses including outside funding, projects that leverage outside funds will be prioritized.)

Budget Narrative:

Project costs include 3,500 home receivers ($503,002), 350 commercial receivers for congregating living facilities ($168,543), the annual vendor maintenance fee for the installed infrastructure for three years ($75,000), outreach to the community ($133,757), and staff coordination and project administration totals ($76,824).

Budget Sources and Uses:

Project Costs/Uses	No. Units	Cost Per Unit	Total Cost
In Home Receivers	3,500	$ 144.72	$ 503,002
Commercial Receivers	350	$ 481.55	$ 168,543
Annual Vendor Infrastructure Maintenance	3	$ 25,000	$ 75,000
Outreach	1	$ 133,757	$ 133,757
Project Coordination (~6 months)	1	$ 51,824	$ 51,824
Project Administration	1	$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Total			**$ 957,127**

Funding Sources	Percent	Total
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	75%	$717,845
PG&E Fund (proposed)	25%	$239,282
Total Project Cost	100%	**$957,127**

Long-term Financial Plan (Describe the plan for continuing the program/project if applicable.)

The project does not have ongoing costs for implementation. The ongoing annual maintenance fee of $25,000 for the installed infrastructure will be incorporated into the Sheriff's Office budget.

Camp Fire Tie-back - Optional (Describe the direct impact from the Camp Fire.)

Human resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult times. Similarly, community resilience is absorbing disturbance and still retaining basic function and structure. Both human and community resilience involve strength and a belief that challenges can be overcome. These resiliency skills are directly supported by emergency preparation and provision of relevant and meaningful tools. Providing protective tools, such as emergency alert systems, creates feelings of safety and security, strengthens resiliency skills, and furthers the long-term recovery of County residents.

Department Approval_____ CAO Approval_____