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Department of
Agriculture

Forest
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Subject: Consideration to Local Contractors in Evaluations

To: Region 5 Staff Directors and Forest Supervisors

The Forest Service has been given the authority to give consideration to local contractors or cooperators in evaluating offers provided in response to federal projects funded by certain appropriations for defined types of projects. This authority has been granted to the Forest Service through the Consolidated Appropriations Act through fiscal year 2015 at which time the authority may be extended. The language authorizes use of specified evaluation criteria in acquisition instruments to enhance effects on certain rural communities.

The Forest Service may include consideration of local contractors and cooperators who are from, and who provide employment and training for dislocated and displaced workers in economically disadvantaged rural communities including contracts, grants or agreements, for hazardous fuels reduction, watershed or water quality monitoring or restoration, wildlife or fish population monitoring, or habitat restoration or management. This definition includes those historically timber-dependent areas that have been affected by reduced timber harvesting on federal lands and other forest-dependent rural communities isolated from significant alternative employment opportunities. The terms "rural community" and "economically disadvantaged" shall have the same meanings as in Section 2374 of Public Law 101-624.

As with all evaluation criteria, the actual language and relative importance given the criteria is dependent on the circumstances of the work and location of each contract, grant, or cooperative agreement. However, Contract Specialists and Grants and Agreement Specialists should assure that the intent of the statutory authority is reflected in all contracts and agreements for restoration type work.

Additionally, Forest Service Handbook 2409.19, Chapter 60-Stewardship Contracting states that the Contracting Officer shall award all Stewardship Contracts on a best value basis, including consideration of criteria other than cost or price. One of the suggested criteria to use for evaluation in all Stewardship Contracts is the utilization of local workforce (the types of jobs and number of workers to be hired and/or employed from the defined local area in completing required work).

Although this authority can be applied to projects funded through any appropriation provided the specific project meets the defined criteria, this region would like to emphasize the use of this authority specifically for stewardship projects, collaborative forest landscape restoration funded projects, and fire restoration projects, so that we can further align ourselves with the intent of these programs.



For further information on how the Forest Service can utilize this authority, please refer to the following source of information, consideration for local contractors toolbox located at Region 5 AQM webpage:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/workingtogether/contracting>

When using this authority in anticipation of advertising and awarding contracts to other than Small Business, HubZone, 8(a), SDVOSB, and WOSB contractors, please specifically address this in your market research and 1205 Small Business Clearance Request. Also, when using this authority in contracting, please include language in your pre-solicitation, or request for proposal, that indicates use of this authority and includes specific evaluating criteria and responsiveness determinations.



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cc: Theodoris Broussard, Kellie Hamilton, Don Tinsley, Sheila Finney, Edmond Avakem,
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