

DESERT AND MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: June 11, 2008

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into Chapter 8 Agreements with Los Angeles County to acquire Tax Defaulted parcels between Lancaster and Edwards Air Force Base, lower slopes of the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountains, and near the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into Chapter 8 Agreements with Los Angeles County to acquire Tax Defaulted parcels between Lancaster and Edwards Air Force Base, lower slopes of the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountains, and near the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.

Background: The Desert and Mountain Conservation Authority (DMCA), as a non-profit public agency, has the ability to enter into Chapter 8 Agreements with Los Angeles County to acquire tax defaulted properties.

The County has provided a book of tax defaulted parcels for the 2008C sealed bid auction in August 2008. The DMCA reserves the right to pull parcels off of the auction list prior to the auction. As with any auction, some of the parcels will not be available when the time comes to pay for the Agreement. This is due to the right of the property owner to pay back taxes before the property is sold to a potential buyer.

This particular type of auction is slightly different from the normal auction. This "sealed-bid" auction is a compilation of parcels designated as "...not suitable to build or rehabilitate and sell or rent as low-income housing, as most of these properties are slivers, washes, drainage or landlocked. However, a non-profit organization may request a property on the list if it can clearly demonstrate the public use of the property considering its size, location and other conditions." The prices are not known.

The exact price will be the total of back taxes owed on the property. The DMCA and MRCA must finalize a request list to send to the Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collectors Office by the end of this month. An up-front fee of \$100 per parcel is required to be sent with the request list. The fee for any parcel that is not available will be refunded. This is a serious constraint because the DMCA has virtually no discretionary funding. If there is an appropriate funding source, the attached resolution authorizes the use of those funds for this purpose.

The parcels of interest that have been identified with staff research to date, are within the Precision Impact Range Area (PIRA), and associated Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat Area. There are 51 parcels that fall within these boundaries. A map is attached showing the distribution of these parcels within the focus areas.

Additionally, the DMCA will identify more parcels within the acquisition scope of the DMCA. While the PIRA and Desert Tortoise Critical Habitat Area are identified in this report, areas on the lower slopes of the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona Mountains, and near the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve will also be reserved and placed in Chapter 8 Agreements.