



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 3/3/2026

To: Boards of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, South Park County Sanitation District

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, South Park County Sanitation District

Staff Name and Phone Number: Grant Davis 707-547-1911, Brad Sherwood 707-547-1927

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

2026-2027 State and Federal Legislative Affairs

Recommended Action:

State Advocacy

- A) Approve Sonoma County Water Agency's 2026-2027 State Legislative Platform.
- B) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager acting on behalf of Sonoma County Water Agency, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, and South Park County Sanitation District to execute an agreement with Pacific Policy Group, LLC, in substantially the form presented to this Board, for state legislative affairs outreach through December 31, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$274,000.

Federal Advocacy

- C) Approve Sonoma County Water Agency's 2026-2027 Federal Legislative Platform.
- D) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager acting on behalf of Sonoma County Water Agency, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, and South Park County Sanitation District to execute an agreement with Thorn Run Partners, LLC, in substantially the form presented to this Board, for federal legislative affairs outreach through December 31, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$298,000.
- E) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager acting on behalf of Sonoma County Water Agency, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, and South Park County Sanitation District to execute an agreement with Natural Resource Results, LLC, in substantially the form presented to this Board, for federal legislative affairs outreach through December 31, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$298,000.
- F) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager acting on behalf of Sonoma County Water Agency, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, and South Park County Sanitation District to execute an agreement with Van Ness Feldman, LLP, in substantially the form presented to this Board, for federal legislative affairs outreach through December 31, 2027, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$298,000.

Travel Authorization

- G) Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager, Grant Davis, and Assistant General Manager, Brad Sherwood, to travel out of state as appropriate to support the implementation of the

Sonoma County Water Agency legislative platforms. In accordance with the Sonoma County travel policy, the Board must authorize travel for staff who attend out-of-state meetings more than twice in the fiscal year. This item authorizes the General Manager and Assistant General Manager to travel out of state as appropriate without further separate Board authorization if the trips support the implementation of the Sonoma County Water Agency legislative platforms.

Executive Summary:

This item requests adoption of the state and federal legislative platforms, which reflect Sonoma County Water Agency's (Sonoma Water) legislative priorities. In addition, this item requests authorization to execute agreements with state and federal affairs advocates to implement legislative priorities included in the state and federal legislative platforms and leverage funding opportunities for Sonoma Water's projects, research, development, and implementation of a coalition to support statewide funding resources for Sonoma Water's service area and the North Coast, and outreach services in Sonoma Water's areas of interest. Legislative services are also provided to county sanitation districts to support funding needs for necessary maintenance, repairs, and other needs.

This item also requests travel authorization for Sonoma Water's General Manager and Assistant General Manager to travel out of state as appropriate to support the implementation of Sonoma Water's legislative platforms.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Sonoma Water operates and manages Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, and South Park County Sanitation District (Districts) under contract with Districts. Sonoma Water also operates a hydroelectric plant and allows recreational use over some of its properties.

Sonoma Water is actively implementing efforts to protect, restore, and monitor endangered or threatened steelhead and salmon species in the Russian River watershed as indicated by the Russian River Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Additionally, a significant effort is underway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate, and bolster aging infrastructure. Sonoma Water is implementing Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) at Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino for atmospheric river research for drought preparedness and water supply management purposes.

Since 1999, Sonoma Water's Board of Directors has provided direction regarding future state and federal funding authorizations, funding requests, and legislative and regulatory issues of importance to Sonoma Water -either through inclusion in the County of Sonoma's overall legislative platform, or as separately adopted Sonoma Water platforms. For 2026-2027, Sonoma Water's State (Attachment 1) and Federal (Attachment 3) Legislative Platforms are included with this item for your Board's consideration and approval. These new platforms continue to outline issues most relevant and critical to helping Sonoma Water and Districts meet its strategic plan, goals, and mission. The platforms cover a range of issues from climate resiliency to wastewater treatment and funding opportunities. As such, the platforms provide the flexibility needed for staff to promptly address legislative issues as funding opportunities or legislation become available.

The current list of state and federal advocacy priorities for Sonoma Water and Districts, and the history of state and federal advocacy are provided in Attachment 7 - List of State and Federal Advocacy Priorities and History.

SELECTION PROCESS

Thorn Run Partners, LLC, Natural Resource Results, LLC, Pacific Policy Group, LLC, and Van Ness Feldman LLP (Advocacy Consultants) were selected from a list of qualified consultants developed from a competitive selection process. Attached is a memo that explains the competitive selection process (see Attachment 8 - Competitive Selection Process Memo).

Advocacy Consultants were selected for the subject work because of their expertise, Congressional and Administrative contacts, and past success in obtaining passage of funding legislation.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

State Level Agreement:

Under the proposed agreement with Pacific Policy Group, LLC (PPG), PPG will provide representation of Sonoma Water’s and Districts’ interests described above and further outlined in Attachment 7. The cost of services will not exceed \$274,000. This agreement covers services rendered from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2027.

Federal Level Agreements:

Under each of the proposed agreements with Thorn Run Partners, LLC, Natural Resource Results, LLC, and Van Ness Feldman, LLP (Consultants), Consultants will provide representation of Sonoma Water’s and Districts’ interests described above and further outlined in Attachment 7. The cost of services for each agreement will not exceed \$298,000. Each agreement covers services rendered from January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2027.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:

N/A

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment

Goal: Climate Change

Strategy: Develop and implement practices to understand and minimize vulnerability to climate change impacts.

Action: Continue legislation support and policy development at national, state, regional, and local levels.

Work performed under the agreements will enable Sonoma Water to continue developing and supporting funding mechanisms in alignment with Sonoma Water’s climate change and resilience objectives and goals.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

See Attachment 9 - Prior Board Actions

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$322,000	\$564,000	\$282,000
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$	\$	\$
Total Expenditures	\$322,000	\$564,000	\$282,000
Funding Sources	\$	\$	\$
General Fund/WA GF	\$	\$	\$
State/Federal	\$	\$	\$
Fees/Other	\$322,000	\$564,000	\$282,000
Use of Fund Balance	\$	\$	\$
General Fund Contingencies	\$	\$	\$
Total Sources	\$322,000	\$564,000	\$282,000

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Budgeted amount of \$322,000 is available from FY 2025/2026 appropriations for the Water Transmission (\$74,820), Warm Springs Dam (\$171,540), and Recycled Water Funds (\$75,640). FY 2026/2027 and FY 2027/2028 appropriations will be budgeted in those fiscal years.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: 2026-2027 State Legislative Platform
- Attachment 2: Agreement with Pacific Policy Group, LLC
- Attachment 3: 2026-2027 Federal Legislative Platform
- Attachment 4: Agreement with Thorn Run Partners, LLC
- Attachment 5: Agreement with Natural Resource Results, LLC
- Attachment 6: Agreement with Van Ness Feldman, LLP
- Attachment 7: List of State and Federal Advocacy Priorities and History
- Attachment 8: Competitive Selection Process Memo
- Attachment 9: Prior Board Actions

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None.