



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/19/2022

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: Brad Sherwood / 707-547-1927

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

State and Federal Affairs Legislative Advocacy

Recommended Action:

State Advocacy

- A) 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 a form approved by County Counsel, for state legislative outreach and representation through December 31, 2023, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$153,000.

Federal Advocacy

- 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 Thorn Run Partners, LLC, in a form approved by County Counsel, for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2023, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$200,778.
- C) 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 a form approved by County Counsel, for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2023, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$193,500.
- 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 Van Ness Feldman, LLP, in a form approved by County Counsel, for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2023, in the not-to-exceed amount of \$188,496.

Executive Summary:

This item requests authorization to enter into agreements with state and federal affairs advocates to implement the Board-approved legislative platform. Legislative advocacy on the federal level leverages

funding opportunities for Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) projects, such as climate resiliency, the Russian River Biological Opinion, reservoir re-operations, and extreme weather forecasting. State-level legislative advocacy leverages funding opportunities to research, develop, and implement a coalition to support statewide funding resources for Sonoma Water's service area and the North Coast, and will provide outreach services for projects, programs, regulations, and legislation in Sonoma Water's areas of interest. State and federal legislative tracking, legislative development, and pursuit of funding to offset costs are essential for success in fulfilling Sonoma Water's responsibilities and strategic plan. Legislative services will be provided to county sanitation districts to support funding needs such as aging infrastructure, recycled water production and distribution, and other needs of the county sanitation districts.

Discussion:

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Sonoma Water-a California special district with responsibility for wholesale water supply, flood protection, wastewater treatment, and recycled water distribution-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. In addition, Sonoma Water is actively involved in efforts to protect and restore endangered or threatened steelhead and salmon species in the Russian River watershed and in implementing a Biological Opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service that requires extensive restoration and biological monitoring. A significant effort is underway to increase renewable power production, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and provide for climate change adaptation.

Sonoma Water is implementing Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations and is actively utilizing and supporting 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. Sonoma Water's state and federal legislative programs have previously been submitted for inclusion in the County of Sonoma's overall legislative program. The current list of state and federal advocacy priorities for Sonoma Water include support and often funding for:

1. Climate resiliency and planning
2. Source water protection and wildfire risk reduction
3. Hazard mitigation programming and funding
4. Weather-related initiatives: Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information system, Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations at Lake Mendocino, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Hydrometeorology Testbed Project Implementation, atmospheric rivers research, flood modeling and drought, and subseasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting
5. The Russian River Biological Opinion
6. The Corps of Engineers' operations and maintenance activities at Warm Springs and Coyote Valley dams and related fish facilities
7. Central Sonoma Watershed Project comprehensive planning and rehabilitation
8. The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund
9. Quagga/zebra mussel prevention

10. San Francisco Bay Restoration
11. Technical collaboration with United States Geological Survey and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
12. Agricultural Water Enhancement program
13. Wastewater treatment and collection funding opportunities
14. Recycled water production and distribution funding opportunities

SELECTION PROCESS

Pacific Policy Group, LLC, Natural Resource Results LLC, Thorn Run Partners, LLC, and Van Ness Feldman, LLP (collectively "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.

Consultants were selected because of the quality of their submittals in the areas of expertise. In addition, these firms have unique knowledge of Sonoma Water's issues and of state and federal legislative concerns.

SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Services to be performed for each agreement are described separately below.

State-Level Agreement:

Pacific Policy Group, LLC: Under the proposed agreement with Pacific Policy Group, LLC (PPG), PPG will provide representation of Sonoma Water's interests in securing state funding and support Sonoma Water and partners that assist Sonoma Water in its water supply, water-use efficiency, water treatment and recycling, water quality protection, watershed restoration, Endangered Species Act compliance, flood control, emergency services, and related efforts.

The cost of services will not exceed \$153,000; the term end date is December 31, 2023.

Federal-Level Agreements:

Thorn Run Partners, LLC: Under the proposed agreement with Thorn Run Partners, LLC (TRP), TRP will provide representation of Sonoma Water's interests in securing federal funding and support for Sonoma Water and partners that assist Sonoma Water in its water supply, water conservation and water-use efficiency, water treatment and recycling, water quality protection, watershed restoration, ESA compliance, flood control, emergency services, and related efforts.

The cost of services will not exceed \$200,778; the term end date is December 31, 2023.

Natural Resource Results LLC: Under the proposed agreement, Natural Resource Results LLC (NRR) will provide representation of Sonoma Water's interests in securing federal funding and support for Sonoma Water and partners that assist Sonoma Water in efforts related to: coordination of subseasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting coalition efforts, policies, and funding requests, consistent with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) 2020 report to Congress pursuant to the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act; increasing political support and federal funding for extreme weather forecasting and monitoring initiatives, atmospheric river and hydrometeorology testbed research programs, and assisting Sonoma Water in maximizing other opportunities for federal support and funding for water supply, flood control, fisheries recovery and restoration and carbon neutral economy efforts.

The cost of services will not exceed \$193,500; the term end date is December 31, 2023.

Van Ness Feldman, LLP: Under the proposed agreement, Van Ness Feldman, LLP (VNF) will provide federal affairs legislative advocacy related to: coordination of subseasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting coalition efforts, policies, and funding requests, consistent with NOAA's 2020 report to Congress pursuant to the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act; and maintaining and increasing, if possible, federal funding for those programs that support atmospheric river research, fisheries recovery, climate change and assessment, water supply and quality, and flood protection programs.

The cost of services will not exceed \$188,496; the term end date is December 31, 2023.

Each agreement above includes two options for Sonoma Water to extend the agreement for a period of one year each by providing written notice to each consultant thirty days in advance of the expiration date of the agreement and of the first extension option.

Prior to executing each agreement above, Sonoma Water will terminate the existing agreements with each consultant with term end dates of December 31, 2022, and the same or similar scopes of work as stated above.

County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:

This item directly support the County's Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

Pillar: Climate Action and Resiliency

Goal: Goal 1: Continue to invest in wildfire preparedness and resiliency strategies

Objective: Objective 1: Align the Board of Supervisor's strategic priorities, policy, and operational goals with funding and resources.

Develop and support funding mechanisms in alignment with County's climate change and resilience objectives and goals.

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:

Climate Change, Goal 1: Continuing improving our ability to respond and adapt to climate change.

Develop and support funding mechanisms in alignment with Sonoma Water's climate change and resilience objectives and goals.

Prior Board Actions:

03/02/2021: Approved Sonoma Water's legislative Platform 2021/2022, and authorized Sonoma Water's General manager to execute the following agreements: Conservation Strategy Group, LLC for state legislative affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2022, for a cost not to exceed \$114,000; Pacific Policy Group, LLC for state legislative affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2022, for a cost not to exceed \$186,000; 9b Group, Inc. for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2022, for a cost not to exceed \$104,000;

Alcalde & Fay for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2022, for a cost not to exceed \$216,800; Natural Resource Results LLC, for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2022, for a cost not to exceed \$210,000; and Van Ness Feldman, LLP, for federal affairs advocacy representation through December 31, 2022, for a cost not to exceed \$203,328.

02/26/2019: Approved agreements between Sonoma Water and Conservation Strategy Group, LLC, and Pacific Policy Group, LLC for state legislative advocacy. Cost \$114,000, and \$186,000 respectively; term ends of December 31, 2020.

02/26/2019: Approved agreements between Sonoma Water and Alcalde & Fay, Natural Resource Results LLC, and Van Ness Feldman, LLP for federal legislative advocacy. Cost \$216,800, \$210,000, and \$203,328 respectively; term ends of December 31, 2020.

12/13/2016: Approved third amended agreement between Sonoma Water and Conservation Strategy Group for state legislative advocacy services. Added \$226,800 and 24 months to term ends

12/13/2016: Approved first amended agreements between Sonoma Water and Alcalde & Fay, Van Ness Feldman, LLP, and Natural Resource Results LLC for legislative and advocacy services. Added \$212,160, \$185,760, and \$201,600 respectively; and added 24 months to term ends.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$490,516	\$245,258	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$490,516	\$245,258	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$490,516	\$245,258	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$490,516	\$245,258	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

PPG Agreement:

Budgeted amount of \$102,000 is available from FY 2022/2023 appropriations for the Water Transmission O&M, Warm Springs Dam, and Recycled Water Funds. FY 2023/2024 appropriations will be budgeted in that fiscal year.

TRP Agreement:

Budgeted amount of \$133,852 is available from FY 2022/2023 appropriations for the Water Transmission O&M, Warm Springs Dam, and Recycled Water Funds. FY 2023/2024 appropriations will be budgeted in that fiscal year.

NRR Agreement:

Budgeted amount \$129,000 is available from FY 2022/2023 appropriations for the Water Transmission O&M, Warm Springs Dam, and Recycled Water Funds. FY 2023/2024 appropriations will be budgeted in that fiscal year.

VNF Agreement:

Budgeted amount of \$125,664 is available from FY 2022/2023 appropriations for the Water Transmission O&M, Warm Springs Dam, and Recycled Water Funds. FY 2023/2024 appropriations will be budgeted in that fiscal year.

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: Competitive Selection Process Memorandum

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

None