



## COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

### SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 10/7/2025

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**To:** Board of Supervisors; Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Water Agency

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Grant Davis 707-547-1911 Susanne Oliver 707-524-1155

**Vote Requirement:** 4/5th

**Supervisory District(s):** All

**Title:**

Sonoma Water - Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) Position

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Adopt resolution amending the Department Allocation List of Sonoma Water, effective October 7, 2025 ☐
- B) Adopt resolution Authorizing Adjustment to the Board Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 for the Sonoma Water General Fund in the amount of \$85,737 for the Sonoma Water Allocation Change Request. (4/5th Vote Required)

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) staff recommend and County Human Resources staff approved the addition of one position and deletion of one position in the Sonoma Water Environmental Resources Division to support the expanding workload resulting from the development and implementation of the Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA or Authority).

Sonoma Water management had not reached a final recommendation for positions to meet this operational need at the time of fiscal year 2025/2026 budget submission. Adding this allocation represents a total net increase in FY 2025/2026 labor costs of \$85,737. For FY 2026/2027 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$117,745 and \$121,278 for FY 2027/2028 assuming a 3% cost of living allocation (COLA) each year. Salary and benefits are budgeted in Sonoma Water's General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grants.

ERPA will be receiving grant funds from the State and is in the process of establishing a reimbursement policy for its member agencies, including Sonoma Water. Once funding is received by ERPA, it is expected that ERPA will significantly contribute toward this position by reimbursing Sonoma Water for services provided to ERPA.

**Discussion:**

**Addition of 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Water Agency Assistant General Manager and deletion of 1.0 FTE vacant Water Agency Environmental Resources Manager**

Sonoma Water is seeking to better align internal and external functions within the Environmental Resources Division to meet day-to-day operational needs of the division while also supporting the implementation and management of ERPA.

Eel-Russian Project Authority (ERPA) is a joint powers authority formed in December 2023 by Sonoma Water,

the County of Sonoma (County), and the Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission to permit, construct, operate, and maintain the New Eel-Russian Facility. Sonoma Water and the County each have a representative on the Authority's Board of Directors. Pursuant to the joint exercise of powers agreement and Authority Board of Directors action, Sonoma Water is designated as the principal office and serves as the Secretary for the Authority. The joint powers agreement also authorizes the Authority to designate an employee of a member agency to serve as executive director.

Through a forthcoming agreement between Sonoma Water and ERPA, the requested Assistant General Manager in Environmental Resources would serve as an ex-officio executive director of the Eel-Russian Project Authority. The Assistant General Manager will support Sonoma Water's implementation efforts with the ERPA which is focused on developing and managing a complex series of projects that require executive level experience from a manager with extensive experience and knowledge of the Potter Valley Project, Russian River and Eel River stakeholders, environmental compliance and regulatory landscape.

Currently, the Water Agency Division Manager of Environmental Resources provides both staffing support for ERPA while also providing day-to-day operational management of the Environmental Resources Division. In analyzing the expanding ERPA responsibilities, Sonoma Water initially considered whether an Assistant General Manager Time-Limited position could meet these needs. However, due to the permanent and ongoing nature of the joint powers agreement a Time-Limited position would not be optimal. Adding the Assistant General Manager position meets the needs of ERPA by providing an executive level manager to provide direction to the Authority Board of Directors, including support such as community engagement, policy development, regulatory oversight and overall governance management. Additionally, the requested Assistant General Manager will be responsible for strategic oversight of Sonoma Water's environmental stewardship initiatives including compliance with the 2025 Russian River Biological Opinion; serving as principal liaison for environmental affairs with staff and elected officials from Sonoma Water's water contractors; inter-agency coordination for watershed resiliency efforts including Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations and development of a secondary outlet at Lake Sonoma; principal manager for Sonoma Water's collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers including maintenance of partnerships and strategic guidance for the Coyote Valley Dam/Lake Mendocino Feasibility Study; and serving as a principal representative for Sonoma Water's state and federal regulatory and legislative advocacy efforts.

In addition to leading environmental stewardship efforts and guiding Environmental Resources Division operations, the Assistant General Manager will also assist the Water Agency General Manager in managing and directing activities of Sonoma Water. The existing Division Manager position would then be able to fully devote attention to managing and implementing Sonoma Water's environmental resources work, including strategic direction and oversight of the four distinct environmental teams composed of 24 FTE Environmental Specialists and their managers along with the 25-30 seasonal extra help all of whom are required to manage workload, help maintain compliance, and meet organizational objectives.

There are currently 2.0 FTE Water Agency Environmental Resources Manager positions in the Environmental Resources Division, one filled and one vacant. The vacant Water Agency Environmental Resources position, financed by Sonoma Water's General fund, will be deleted. Once the requested position is established, Sonoma Water will open a recruitment to fill the requested position.

**County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:**

N/A

**Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Goal: Strengthen the organization and workforce to perform core functions.

Goal: Protect and sustain our watersheds to maintain water resources, ecosystems, and communities.

**Racial Equity:**

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

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

07-22-2025 Receive update on Potter Valley Project; Approve and authorize the Chair (on behalf of County and Sonoma Water) to execute the Water Diversion Agreement for New Eel-Russian Facility in substantially the form presented and in a form approved by County Counsel; Authorize Sonoma Water's General Manager to enter into agreements with the Eel-Russian Project Authority regarding staffing and technical support and other work in a form approved by County Counsel

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY25-26 Adopted</b>	<b>FY26-27 Projected</b>	<b>FY27-28 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses		\$117,745	\$121,278
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$85,737		
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$85,737</b>	<b>\$117,745</b>	<b>\$121,278</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF		\$117,745	\$121,278
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$85,737		
General Fund Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$85,737</b>	<b>\$117,745</b>	<b>\$121,278</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Salary and benefits are budgeted in the General Fund, which is financed through property tax revenue and grant awards. The General Fund receives reimbursements from Sonoma Water's enterprise funds based on an overhead rate determined by project costing. Sonoma Water's cost accounting system allocates labor costs to specific Sonoma Water projects associated with its enterprise funds.

Funding a position supported by the ERPA will help offset costs associated with adding this new position. ERPA is in the process of establishing a reimbursement policy, and once funding is received by ERPA from the State, it is expected that ERPA will significantly contribute toward this position. Adding 1.0 FTE Water Agency Assistant General Manager allocation will result in a net increase of \$85,737 in labor costs for fiscal year 2025/2026, assuming the new position is filled at the beginning of October. The projected costs for fiscal years 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 anticipate a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) each year.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>
Water Agency Assistant General Manager	\$18,378.83-\$22,340.88	1.0□	0.0□
Water Agency Environmental Resources Manager	\$13,726.29 - \$16,684.79	0.0□	(1.0)

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

If approved, this request will adjust Sonoma Water's allocation tables as follows:

- Addition of 1.0 FTE Water Agency Assistant General Manager will increase allocation from 2.0 to 3.0
- Deletion of 1.0 FTE Water Agency Environmental Resources Manager will decrease allocation from 2.0 to 1.0

**Attachments:**

Resolution 1 Amending the Sonoma County Water Agency Department Allocation List

Resolution 2 Budgetary Adjustment

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

None.