



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 12/6/2022

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

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

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Susan Haydon / 547-1937 Brad Sherwood / 547-1927

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Federal Advocacy for Small Watershed Program, Conservation, and Watershed Health

**Recommended Action:**

Authorize Sonoma County Water Agency's General Manager to execute the First Amended and Restated Agreement for Federal Advocacy Services Related to Small Watershed Program, Conservation, and Watershed Health with 9b Group, Inc., in a form approved by County Counsel. The amended agreement increases the amount by \$96,000 and extends the agreement term by two years for a new not-to-exceed agreement total of \$200,000 and end date of December 31, 2024. □

**Executive Summary:**

This item requests authorization for Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) to amend an agreement with 9b Group, LLC (Consultant) to continue providing legislative advocacy on the federal level leveraging funding opportunities for Sonoma Water projects (such as Central Sonoma Watershed Project, Alexander Valley watershed planning, and Sonoma County Regional Conservation Partnership Program), as well as assistance on funding strategies and opportunities related to watershed health, climate resiliency, groundwater management, flooding and fire disasters, emergency watershed protection, natural resources management, and conservation activities. 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.

**Discussion:**

HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND

Since 1999, Sonoma Water's Board of Directors has provided direction regarding future federal funding authorizations, funding requests, and legislative and regulatory issues of importance to Sonoma Water. Sonoma Water's federal legislative programs have been submitted for inclusion in the County of Sonoma's overall legislative program. The two-year agreements align with the Congressional calendar year. The current list of 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. Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information System.
5. Weather-related initiatives: Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations at Lake Mendocino, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Hydrometeorology Testbed Project Implementation,

- atmospheric rivers research, flood modeling and drought.
6. The Russian River Biological Opinion.
  7. The Corps of Engineers' operations and maintenance activities at Warm Springs and Coyote Valley dams and related fish facilities.
  8. Central Sonoma Watershed Project comprehensive planning and rehabilitation.
  9. The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund.
  10. Quagga/zebra mussel prevention.
  11. San Francisco Bay Restoration.
  12. Technical collaboration with United States Geological Survey and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
  13. Agricultural Water Enhancement Program.
  14. Wastewater treatment and collection funding opportunities.

Since 2000, Sonoma Water's major legislative accomplishments have included:

1. Russian River Biological Opinion:
  - a. Authorization language in 2014 Water Resources Development Act (2014)
  - b. \$28M in appropriations for Dry Creek restoration (2020)
  - c. U.S. Army Corps ongoing cooperation and collaboration with implementation (ongoing)
2. Invasive Species: \$30M annual federal authorization for Russian River basin in 2020 Water Resources Development Act (2020)
3. Natural Resources Conservation:
  - a. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations funding for Planning of Matanzas Dam Rehabilitation (2019)
  - b. Same funding for Watershed Plan and Environmental Assessment for Central Sonoma Watershed Program (2020)
  - c. USDA NRCS Sonoma County Regional Conservation Partnership Program (2016)

Sonoma Water and Consultant entered into an agreement for federal advocacy for professional services beginning January 1, 2021, in the amount of \$104,000.

#### SELECTION PROCESS

Consultant was selected from a list of qualified consultants developed from competitive selection process. Attached is a memo that explains the competitive selection process.

#### SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the proposed amended agreement, Consultant will focus on funding strategies related to Sonoma Water's role as local sponsor with federal partner United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service, and funding opportunities related to watershed health, flood management, flooding and fire disasters, emergency watershed protection, natural resources and integrated regional water management, and conservation activities.

The additional cost is \$96,000, for a new not-to-exceed agreement total of \$200,000. The new end date is December 31, 2024.

**County of Sonoma Strategic Plan Alignment:**

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

**Pillar:** Resilient Infrastructure

**Goal:** Goal 5: Support, fund, and expand flood protection.

**Objective:** Objective 1: Secure a total of \$60 million in grant funding by 2026 for strategic priorities, including technology tools, climate resiliency, and other capital projects.

Work under this agreement directly aligns with County of Sonoma goals to maintain and upgrade critical flood management infrastructure through the Central Sonoma Watershed Project as well as assists in achieving climate resiliency goals to protect and supply drinking water.

**Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment**

Water Supply and Transmission System, Goal 1: Protect drinking water supply and promote water-use efficiency.

Flood Protection, Goal 1: Provide efficient and effective flood protection programs.

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

The projects supported by legislative advocacy efforts under this agreement directly align with Sonoma Water's goals to maintain and upgrade critical flood management infrastructure through the Central Sonoma Watershed Project, as well as assist in achieving Sonoma Water's climate resiliency goals to protect and supply drinking water.

**Prior Board Actions:**

03/02/2021: Approved agreements between Sonoma Water and 9b Group, Inc. for federal legislative advocacy. Cost \$104,000; term end December 31, 2022.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Adopted</b>	<b>FY23-24 Projected</b>	<b>FY 24-25 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$50,000	\$46,000	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$46,000</b>	
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$50,000	\$46,000	
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$46,000</b>	

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Budgeted amount of \$50,000 is available from FY 2022/2023 appropriations for the Flood Control Zone 1A

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Fund. 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 1: Selection Memo

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

None