



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 5/10/2022

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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:** Brad Sherwood 707-547-1927  
**Vote Requirement:** 4/5th  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Sub seasonal to Seasonal Precipitation Forecasting Outreach

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Adopt a Resolution authorizing Sonoma County Water Agency's (Sonoma Water) General Manager to execute an agreement with California Department of Water Resources, in a form approved by County Counsel, to provide outreach and facilitation services in support of California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) pilot project for improving sub seasonal and seasonal precipitation forecasting. Under the agreement, Sonoma Water will receive reimbursement up to \$200,000 from DWR through June 30, 2024.
- B) Authorize Sonoma Water's General Manager to amend the agreement to extend the term, make modifications to the scope of work, accept additional funds, or terminate the agreement with approval of County Counsel.
- C) Adopt a Resolution authorizing adjustments to the Board Adopted Budget for FY 2021/2022 for the Sonoma Water General Fund in the amount of \$200,000. (4/5th Vote Required)

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) will support California Department of Water Resources (DWR) efforts to initiate a western region pilot project to improve sub seasonal to seasonal (S2S) precipitation forecasting, as called for in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) 2020 report to Congress. This support will include outreach and coalition building with local water agencies to ensure that their water management needs are incorporated into the research to be carried out by NOAA. Improving S2S precipitation forecasting is one DWR's highest priority needs for better state drought response.

**Discussion:**

**HISTORY OF ITEM/BACKGROUND**

The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (Weather Act) was signed into law in April 2017, with goals to improve NOAA's weather research through investments in observational, computing, and modeling capabilities, to support improvement in weather forecasting and prediction of high-impact weather events and expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data. The Weather Act bolsters NOAA's commitment to advancing weather research and reinvigorating the weather portfolio. In January 2019, NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) program (Public Law 109-430) included reauthorization of the Weather Act.

Of particular interest to DWR is NOAA's work under Title 2 of the Weather Act: Sub seasonal and Seasonal Forecasting Innovation, as identified in NOAA's 2020 Report to Congress on the topic.

Improving S2S precipitation forecasting is one DWR's highest priority needs for better state drought response. At the direction of DWR, Sonoma Water will support efforts to initiate the western pilot project for improving S2S precipitation forecasting called for in NOAA's 2020 report to Congress pursuant to the Weather Act. The pilot project is a multi-year effort to improve weather and climate models to be able to provide more skillful precipitation forecasts at longer lead times, to support applications such as drought preparedness and response, water allocation planning, and expansion of forecast-informed reservoir operations.

DWR is working through the Western States Water Council (WSWC) to engage state water agencies in pilot project planning and implementation. Sonoma Water's work will be closely coordinated with DWR's efforts to bring local water agencies into pilot project development.

#### SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

Under the proposed agreement, Sonoma Water will conduct outreach and provide communication to organizations and agencies regarding the proposed research pilot project, solicit participation, and coordinate focused meetings on specific research needs.

Sonoma Water's scope of work under this agreement includes building a coalition of local water agencies who are supportive of science research to improve S2S precipitation forecasting, facilitating meetings and engagement of local water agencies with NOAA leadership, and informing federal science leadership on local water management applications for improved S2S forecasting. Sonoma Water will support DWR in the following areas:

1. Conduct outreach to organizations such as the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, Association of California Water Agencies, and National Association of Counties, and to members of organizations such as the Water Utility Climate Alliance, to inform them of the proposed research pilot project, solicit their participation in project formulation, and engage them in meetings with federal science leadership on specific research needs. Based on this outreach, develop, and maintain a coalition of interested local agencies that can coordinate with DWR's activities with WSWC.
2. Organize and facilitate meetings of local water agency representatives with NOAA and other federal science leadership on the pilot project based in Washington, D.C., in coordination with meetings organized by DWR via WSWC.
3. Foster local water agency participation in S2S workshops organized by DWR/WSWC and communicate progress on the pilot project including preparing outreach materials such as newsletter articles for local water agency associations.

DWR will fund Sonoma Water's work through an Intergovernmental Agreement between the two agencies. Sonoma Water will invoice DWR for work performed and costs incurred (for travel, materials, and supplies) on a quarterly basis.

The reimbursement for Sonoma Water's services will not exceed \$200,000; the term end date is June 30, 2024.

Request For Sonoma Water General Manager Amendment And Termination Authority

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Staff recommend that the Board authorize Sonoma Water's General Manager to amend or terminate the agreement with approval of County Counsel.

**County Strategic Plan:** N/A

**Sonoma Water Strategic Plan:**

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

This project supports Strategy 1, Invest in Climate Science and Technology, by working with NOAA and DWR to develop climate models for floods and drought. Improving S2S precipitation forecasting is one DWR's highest priority needs for better state drought response.

**Prior Board Actions:**

None

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

| <b>Expenditures</b>                | <b>FY 21-22<br/>Adopted</b> | <b>FY22-23<br/>Projected</b> | <b>FY 23-24<br/>Projected</b> |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Budgeted Expenses                  |                             |                              |                               |
| Additional Appropriation Requested | \$200,000                   |                              |                               |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>          | <b>\$200,000</b>            |                              |                               |
| <b>Funding Sources</b>             |                             |                              |                               |
| General Fund/WA GF                 |                             |                              |                               |
| State/Federal                      | \$200,000                   |                              |                               |
| Fees/Other                         |                             |                              |                               |
| Use of Fund Balance                |                             |                              |                               |
| Contingencies                      |                             |                              |                               |
| <b>Total Sources</b>               | <b>\$200,000</b>            |                              |                               |

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Additional appropriation of \$200,000 is required for FY2021/2022 and will be appropriated from the Sonoma Water General Fund. A budgetary resolution has been submitted with this item.

Offsetting revenue in the amount of \$200,000 will come from the Department of Water Resources.

| <b>Staffing Impacts:</b>                       |  |                               |                               |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b> | <b>Monthly Salary Range<br/>(A-I Step)</b> | <b>Additions<br/>(Number)</b> | <b>Deletions<br/>(Number)</b> |
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**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

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N/A

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Resolution R-1. Authorizing Resolution

Attachment 2: Resolution R-2. Budget Resolution

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

None