



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0842, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Water Agency
Staff Name and Phone Number: Jessica Martini-Lamb 547-1903 / Susanne Oliver 524-1155
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma Water Allocation Change Request

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Resolution effective September 14, 2021 to:

- A) Add one (1) full-time equivalent Water Agency Environmental Specialist II and delete one (1) full-time equivalent Water Agency Resource Programs Technician II in the Sonoma Water Environmental Resources Division to relieve workload and create greater capacity for senior staff to focus on complex work through the delegation of journey level work.

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) requests additional journey-level staff in the Environmental Resources Division to manage general environmental compliance and resource analysis. Currently, senior staff are assigned less technically complex projects with little ability to delegate work. This add/delete request would allow journey-level staff to work on the less complex, routine projects, including reporting and tracking, while providing senior staff more time for complex environmental compliance work, permitting, data analyses, preparation of annual reports, and database management. Adding capacity at the Water Agency (WA) Environmental Specialist II level will create capacity at the senior level allowing managers to delegate appropriate project management, environmental compliance, and reporting workload.

The Sonoma County Human Resources Department has reviewed this request and concurs with the recommendation.

Discussion:

Environmental Resources Division staff accomplish work on a number of programs and projects including: environmental regulatory compliance and permitting for Sonoma Water capital, operations, maintenance, sustainability, and resource planning projects; compliance with and monitoring of the Russian River Biological Opinion; wildlife, fisheries, and water quality monitoring programs in the watershed; support of regional partnerships; and long-term resource management planning. Currently WA Senior Environmental Specialist staff are preparing environmental compliance documents and data analyses for less complex projects with little ability to delegate this work to journey-level staff. This further impacts the manager workload as the WA Senior Environmental Specialists have limited capacity to take on additional complex project work. The addition of an WA Environmental Specialist II will allow senior-level staff to delegate routine environmental compliance, monitoring, and data analysis projects, as well as reporting and tracking, to journey-level staff,

freeing time for senior staff to focus on complex projects and data analyses, preparation of annual reports, and database management. Additionally, adding a WA Environmental Specialist II position will allow for a better transfer of institutional knowledge which supports Sonoma Water's succession planning efforts.

Alternatives considered include use of extra help, cross-training, and use of consultants. The Environmental Resources Division currently uses extra-help technician-level staff for seasonal field studies and monitoring activities; however, the need for staff at the WA Environmental Specialist II level is year-round and requires staff to become familiar with the organization's multiple business functions. The Environmental Resources Division currently cross-trains staff, and most WA Environmental Specialists work on both field activities and data analyses and environmental compliance tasks. Some staff currently assist other Sonoma Water Divisions by supporting their field activities and with geomorphology/modeling. The Environmental Resources Division uses consultants for projects that require specialized expertise not available within the organization, however contracting out less complex environmental projects and data analyses to consultants would require additional time commitment from WA Principal and Senior Environmental Specialists to prepare and manage these contracts. This would not provide desired efficiencies in staff resources or speed of service, nor would it address succession planning within the Division.

The primary responsibilities of the new WA Environmental Specialist II will be as follows:

1. Conducting analyses of the potential for projects to impact the environment, developing mitigation measures, and preparing written summaries of analysis and recommendations for mitigation measures for review by senior staff
2. Under direction of supervisor or senior staff, prepare technical reports and permit applications
3. Conduct surveys for wildlife, fisheries, botanical, wetlands, water quality, geomorphology or other related fields and collection of data
4. Analyze and manage field data (e.g. wildlife and fisheries, habitat, water quality) using a computer, statistical and analytic software
5. Attend meetings with colleagues and representatives from regulatory agencies

Prior Board Actions:

N/A

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$21,211	\$28,847	\$29,424
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$21,211	\$28,847	\$29,424
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$21,211	\$28,847	\$29,424
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			

Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$21,211	\$28,847	\$29,424

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Salary and benefits are budgeted in the General Fund which is funded through property tax revenue and grants. The General Fund is reimbursed by enterprise funds through the overhead rate using project costing. Sonoma Water's cost accounting system allocates labor costs to Sonoma Water projects specific to its enterprise funds.

Adding a 1.0 FTE WA Environmental Specialist II allocation and deleting 1.0 FTE WA Resource Programs Technician II allocation represents a FY 21/22 annual increase in salary and benefits of \$28,281. If filled in October 2021, the FY 21/22 increase in costs would be \$21,211. Assuming a 2% COLA each year, FY 22/23 increase in costs would be \$28,847 and \$29,424 in FY 23/24.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
WA Environmental Specialist II	\$6,563.99 - \$7,978.02	1	0
WA Resource Programs Technician II	\$5,309.98 - \$6,454.42	0	1

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

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

WA Resource Programs Technician allocations will decrease from 4 to 3

WA Environmental Specialist II allocations will increase from 5 to 6

Attachments:

Resolution

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

N/A