



## Legislation Text

**File #:** 2022-1114, **Version:** 1

**To:** Board of Directors, Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Sonoma County Water Agency  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Susanne Oliver 524-1155; Lynne Rosselli 524-3771  
**Vote Requirement:** 4/5th  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Sonoma Water Allocation Change Requests

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Adopt a resolution effective November 8, 2022, to:
- Add one (1) Full-Time Equivalent Water Agency Deputy Chief Engineer (DCE) to the Engineering and Natural Resources Division to provide overall coordination and management to Sonoma Water's water resource planning, groundwater resources, water use efficiency/demand management, energy resources/climate resiliency, and technical writing sections.
  - Add one (1) Full-Time Equivalent Department Program Manager to the Engineering and Natural Resources Division to carry out work associated with the Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project and Climate Adaptation Plan.
  - Add one (1) Full-Time Equivalent Administrative Services Officer I to the Budgets/Accounting/Finance Section of the Administrative Services Division to manage several of Sonoma Water's funds as well as the sanitation rate setting and billing.
  - Add one (1) Time-Limited Water Agency Resource Programs Technician II to the Environmental Resources Division to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Biological Opinion.
- B) Adopt a Resolution Authorizing Adjustment to the Board Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2022/2023 for the Sonoma Water General Fund in the amount of \$542,928 and the Water Security Fund created by the Board during FY2022-23 Budget Hearings in the amount of \$110,645 for the Sonoma Water Allocation Change Requests. (4/5th Vote Required)

(4/5<sup>th</sup> Vote Required)

**Executive Summary:**

Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) staff recommend the addition of four key positions to effectively respond to Sonoma Water's commitments to the community and achieve Sonoma Water's strategic goals.

Changing climate along with the reality of a seismically active region are driving Sonoma Water to critically assess resources and staffing to minimize vulnerabilities to water supply, and sanitation facilities and operations. Three permanent positions are requested in three separate divisions to ensure Sonoma Water is optimally positioned to address these ongoing and increasing threats to its operations. Each of the three permanent positions, as further described in the discussion below, will support this purpose either directly or

indirectly.

Additionally, Sonoma Water requests one time-limited position to perform tasks previously conducted by UC Sea Grant. This body of work is necessary for the Army Corps to comply with the Biological Opinion.

Sonoma County Human Resources has reviewed these requests and is in agreement with the job classifications.

**Discussion:**

Four key positions are requested to effectively respond to Sonoma Water's commitments to the community and to achieve identified strategic goals. Three are permanent positions and are requested to ensure Sonoma Water is optimally positioned to address ongoing and increasing threats to its operations caused by changing climate and seismic vulnerabilities. The fourth is a time limited position that will take over critical work related to the Biological Opinion previously performed by UC Sea Grant.

**PERMANENT ALLOCATIONS**

**Addition of one (1) Water Agency Deputy Chief Engineer**

The agency currently has one DCE responsible for capital project engineering and construction, land surveying, right-of-way and property management, CAD/GIS, operations engineering and permitting, and infrastructure planning. Optimizing the coordinated management of water and energy resources to ensure system reliability and resiliency in the face of climate-enhanced natural hazards and seismic vulnerabilities is an increasingly high priority for Sonoma Water. The proposed Deputy Chief Engineer will provide coordinated management of water and energy resources critical to build resiliency against climate-enhanced natural hazards (fire, flood, drought, etc.) and seismic vulnerabilities for Sonoma Water's facilities and operations. The position, under the direction of the Chief Engineer, will be responsible for the overall coordination and management of the following sections and will directly manage five section heads.

- Water resource planning
- Groundwater resources
- Water use efficiency/ demand management
- Energy resources/climate resiliency
- Technical writing

There is no practical consultant alternative for providing the needed organizational management, and a direct reporting relationship of these five workgroups to the Chief Engineer moreover does not provide the requisite focus and specialized degree of expertise necessary to manage the water and energy resources in Sonoma Water's care.

The existing Deputy Chief Engineer position will continue to focus on other critical areas including capital project engineering and construction, land surveying, right-of-way and property management, CAD/GIS, operations engineering and permitting, and infrastructure planning. Without the addition of the proposed Deputy Chief Engineer, Sonoma Water does not have the management resources or expertise to provide oversight of the water and energy resource workgroups, especially in an environment where the development and implantation of climate adaptation and natural hazard mitigation strategies is critical.

Surface and groundwater resource planning and modeling, associated data collection and analysis, river and reservoir management, water rights administration, related regulatory compliance and stakeholder

coordination, hydrogeology, water use efficiency, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency, development, and power purchase agreements are some of the specialized areas requiring management oversight distinct from other aspects of Sonoma Water's Engineering Division.

Sonoma Water's Resource Planning section is primarily responsible for ensuring compliance with various mandates. The proposed DCE will provide enhanced leadership, oversight, and coordination, supporting Sonoma Water's compliance capabilities in the face of growing resiliency challenges. [Examples of compliance mandates include the following: Urban Water Management Planning Act, State Water Resource Control Board Decision 1610 for river management compliance, California Water Code compliance for water supply and demand analysis, National Marine Fisheries Service biological opinion support, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act compliance+, Water Rights administration, various water supply agreements, energy policy implementation, etc.]

A focus of the County's Recovery and Resiliency Framework is planning and preparedness before a disaster occurs. This request directly supports Strategy Area 1 (Community Preparedness and Infrastructure) and Strategy Area 5 (Natural Resources - Healthy and Well-managed Land and Water). By providing the coordinated management of water and energy resources necessary to build resiliency against climate-enhanced natural hazards (fire, flood, drought, etc.) and seismic vulnerabilities for Sonoma Water's facilities and operations, including critical water supply, wastewater management, and flood protection, the requested Deputy Chief Engineer directly supports the Recovery and Resiliency Framework.

The following summarizes the key programs the proposed position would be responsible for managing.

#### **Water Resource Planning**

- Surface water planning - transmission system and Russian River system
- Interact and negotiate with state and federal regulatory and resource agencies such as the State Water Resources Control Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the National Marine Fisheries Service
- Lead the development of Temporary Urgency Change Petitions to manage Russian River in-stream flows and reservoir storage during periods of water shortages
- Provide leadership for the Lake Mendocino and Sonoma Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations programs
- Provide technical leadership related to drought management
- Support implementation of the Biological Opinion (BO) including performing the technical modeling and analysis for the Fish Flow project and other BO programs
- Lead Sonoma Water's management of its water rights for the Russian River system
- Support the Operations Division regarding management of reservoir releases
- Coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- Modeling/forecasting - including climate futures
- Lead planning and technical studies related to the Potter Valley Project
- Lead the Regional Water Supply Resiliency Project with Sonoma Water's Water contractors and Marin Municipal Water District
- Lead continued research programs regarding Russian River and Riverbank water quality in partnership with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab to ensure pathogen attenuation by naturally occurring alluvial sediments and potential post-fire water quality impacts
- Coordination with numerous academic, state and federal partners
- Conduct flood and drainage review services under contract to several cities in Sonoma County

### **Groundwater Resources**

- Lead the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in Sonoma County
- Develop conjunctive use projects to improve coordinated management of surface water and groundwater such as aquifer storage and recovery, groundwater banking and Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR)
- Lead studies and research related to better understanding surface water and groundwater interactions at Sonoma Water's Russian River diversion facilities
- Leading role in public communication regarding groundwater issues
- Interaction with the Division of Water Rights (DWR) and other regulators regarding depletion of interconnected surface waters
- Coordination with outside state, academic and federal partners

### **Water Use Efficiency and Demand Management**

- Lead the development of the Urban Water Management Plans as required by CA Water Code
- Lead the development and implementation of Sonoma Water's water shortage contingency plan
- Working closely with CA Department of Water Resources to ensure compliance with state regulations regarding water loss, water conservation programs in addition to continuing new laws and regulations
- Lead role in coordinating regional water use efficiency programs through leadership of the Sonoma-Marín Water Saving Partnership
- Lead Sonoma Water's annual drought planning water supply and demand analysis as required by the

#### CA Water Code

- Lead role in water use reductions during droughts including coordination of water allocation model for Sonoma Water's water contractors and other transmission system customers, drought outreach and public communication
- Preparation and administration of water conservation grants
- Management of the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) program

#### **Energy Resources and Climate Resiliency**

- Responsible for leading Sonoma Water's implementation of its comprehensive Climate Adaptation Plan
- Lead the development of the Wildfire Resiliency Decision Support Framework modeling tools
- Manage Sonoma Water's climate resiliency projects for drought, Flood-MAR, and flood risk management
- Lead the implementation and management of Sonoma Water's Carbon Free Water program
- Management of the Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information system programs
- Program management of Sonoma Water's cathodic protection program
- Lead the development of renewable energy projects including solar, hydropower, geothermal, wind power
- Manage energy contracts with the Power and Water Resources Pooling Authority (PWRPA)
- Evaluate energy efficiency of Sonoma Water's infrastructure
- Provide annual calculations of Sonoma Water's greenhouse gas emissions and estimation of emission credits

#### **Technical Writing**

- Provide contract writing services for the entire organization
- Prepare professional services agreements (PSA)
- Prepare technical specifications and bid documents working closely with engineering design and construction management sections
- Work closely with county counsel regarding legal issues associated with the development of PSAs and contract documents
- Monitor new laws and regulations related to contracting that could affect Sonoma Water

**Addition of 1 Department Program Manager**

Sonoma Water requests the addition of 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Department Program Manager in the Engineering and Resource Planning Division to develop its response to current catastrophic drought conditions and state drought response requirements. The proposed position will also help plan for future flood events, develop a more defined flood coordination framework, and provide ongoing support to the Engineering and Resources Planning Division with implementing Sonoma Water's Climate Adaptation Plan approved by our Board.

On July 12, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved the Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project (Project) recommended by the Department of Emergency Management and Sonoma Water to develop capabilities needed to respond to State drought response requirements and plan for future flooding events. The Board approved \$1.13 million over two years (\$565k each year) to support requested staff and operational needs for the Project.

Previously, during the June 17, 2022, Budget Hearings, the Board set aside \$5 million from County discretionary one-time balances to create a Water Security Fund, which is the source approved to finance staff to implement the Project for two-years at \$1,130,000. Here is the excerpt from the July 12, 2022, board item:

Item	Year 1 Costs	Year 2 Costs	Notes
Project Manager(s)	-	-	Existing DEM & SW staff
Program Lead - SW	\$210,000	\$210,000	Program Manager classification
Program Lead - DEM	\$210,000	\$210,000	Program Manager classification
Other Dept. Support	\$75,000	\$75,000	(i.e., County Counsel, PIO, Webmaster)
Operations & Supplies	\$70,000	\$70,000	
<b>Yearly Total</b>	<b>\$565,000</b>	<b>\$565,000</b>	

This Project supports two years of funding for two limited-term positions, one each in DEM and Sonoma Water, and other associated services, supplies, and operational costs. These positions will work under the direction of the DEM Director and Sonoma Water General Manager, collaboratively, to develop capabilities to support current sustained drought operations through 2023. Specifically:

1. Expand and maintain a standing drought task force to comply with SB552 requirements and ensure adequate representation from all sectors within the operational area;
2. Provide staff support to task force working groups to ensure programmatic advancement for drought monitoring, public information and warning, emergency response planning;
3. Provide technical support to community water systems and domestic well owners throughout the operational area in support of SB552 requirements for those entities to develop water shortage contingency plans in coordination with the County;

4. Develop a County Drought Response and Water Shortage Response Plan;
5. Engage and coordinate with adjacent operational areas and regional agencies;
6. Ensure equity considerations into all planning, operations, and communications;
7. Develop a sustainable organizational model and program that will indefinitely serve as the County Drought Task Force and develop a transition plan to ensure existing staff can absorb the maintenance of all drought response and planning activities upon expiration of limited-term positions;
8. Ensure continuity and coordination between the various existing, already funded, drought resiliency projects.

The July 12, 2022 Item identified the need for a Time Limited Department Program Manager. After consideration Sonoma Water is requesting an ongoing position. Once support for the drought and flood response project concludes, the proposed Department Program Manager will work to plan and implement Sonoma Water's Climate Adaptation Plan approved by the Board in October 2021. Ongoing funding for the position will come from the Sonoma Water General Fund.

The proposed Department Program Manager will bring a strong technical understanding of climate science to help lead the program. Many of the actions identified in the climate adaptation plan require collaboration with external entities with a stake in watershed health and resiliency in a climate of increased flooding, intensities in precipitation, seasonal variability of precipitation, extended drought conditions, and increased wildfire risk. Sonoma Water will rely on the Department Program Manager to help implement those aspects of the Climate Adaptation Plan that require collaboration and continued relationship building with other entities involved in the health and resilience of our regional watersheds. The position is critical, as Sonoma Water does not own the watershed, whereas many other entities and jurisdictions have control over the natural and urban lands within the watershed. Therefore, Sonoma Water must continue to develop and sustain relationships with these regional entities in order to join forces on impacts to water quality, water retention, flood resilience, groundwater recharge, and wildfire resilience.

Hiring a consultant is not efficient or cost effective, primarily as the role is both full-time and requires continuity and a high level of engagement. A full-time employee will better develop institutional knowledge, build sustainable and collaborative relations with other Sonoma Water divisions and County of Sonoma Departments, and develop trust and mutual priorities with other regional entities within the watershed.

The Department Manager will be responsible for the following:

- Represent Sonoma Water in internal, local, County, watershed, and regional forums/meetings re: climate adaptation and sustaining watershed health
- Prepare meeting materials for such forums. Conduct or participate in meetings for such forums
- Manage Sonoma Water climate adaptation efforts and contribute to local, regional, or state climate adaptation programs/projects, being able to pivot and act as a vital team member representing Sonoma Water in various forums, events, initiatives, and to assist in implementing various standing plans, projects, and objectives
- Evaluate mutually beneficial reasons to collaborate with external cross-sectoral agencies with interests in natural resources management, watershed health, climate science and adaptation to extreme

weather events (flood, drought, and wildfire) and related impacts

- Develop and manage diverse partnerships and collaborations
- Assist in identifying, pursuing, obtaining grants, following grant-funding guidelines
- Make presentations about Sonoma Water's climate resiliency work to diverse audiences
- Consult with GIS to obtain data sources to plan and implement actions
- Administers outside consultant contracts including writing and issuing request for quotations/request for proposals (RFQ/RFP), interviewing consultants, reviewing and evaluating proposals, and coordinating the preparation of contracts
- Develop and sustain relationships with local, state, and federal agencies, governments, academia, agricultural industry, and community-based organizations that have a role and/or responsibility in flood preparedness and response in the Sonoma Operational Area
- Identify and collaborate with similar climate adaptation response programs and efforts in California and nationally (ex. The Northern California Catastrophic Flood Response Plan) to identify and integrate relevant climate change weather forecasting tools and products into local drought and flood resiliency planning
- Convene subject matter experts to collaborate on assessing existing flood preparedness and response programs, plans, resources, infrastructure and activities in comparison to the hazard of catastrophic flooding in all areas of the County (ex. County Russian River Flood Response Annex)
- Research and present to executives the emerging issues related to catastrophic flood risk, which may include weather trends, climate related risks, infrastructure impacts, and secondary/compounding hazards
- Conduct public outreach including development of materials, holding meetings to garner public input and conduct informational tours
- Coordinate with Sonoma Water's Flood Zone Advisory Committee activities including providing information, education and understanding key flood management issues and priorities
- Convene subject matter experts to collaborate on assessing the need and potential for activating or forming flood control zones in the Sonoma Operational Area and address administrative and fiscal considerations
- Lead development of a strategic plan that addresses the long-term vision, goals and objectives that would address the hazard to the Sonoma Operational Area posed by catastrophic flooding

#### **Addition of 1 Administrative Services Officer I**

Sonoma Water manages a \$222 million budget and more than 60 separate funds including water supply, water transmission, sanitation, flood control, and internal service funds. In addition to drafting budgets, the Sonoma Water Finance Section is responsible for tracking fund balance, cash balance, and reserves; financial analysis



and reporting; long range financial plans for 17 enterprise funds; financial review/approval of agreements and board items; rate setting for 9 water and sanitation enterprise funds; and a Proposition 218 process for 8 sanitation enterprise funds.

Due to the complexity of the funds and competing work demands, the Finance section needs additional resources to support the needs of Sonoma Water. Finance staff has been consistently working more than 50-60 hours per week with no decrease in work anticipated. All budgeting and financial planning and reporting including rate setting for the Water Transmission System and 8 sanitation districts and zones is currently managed by the Division Manager, one ASO II, and one ASO I, all of whom have other duties and responsibilities. Finance workload has gradually increased over the years as Sonoma Water and the Districts it operates (Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District, Occidental County Sanitation District, Russian River County Sanitation District, and South Park County Sanitation District) have grown in both responsibility and sophistication. Significant time critical assignments, i.e. long range financial plans, financial reports, financial analysis, and rate studies, are not receiving adequate attention due to limited resources. The Administrative Services Division Manager (Division Manager) is regularly handling work that is more appropriate for an Administrative Services Officer I or II. Furthermore, at the May 17, 2022 Sewer Rate hearings, the Board identified additional long-term planning for the sanitation districts and zones as an immediate priority. The resources required to address this work will add additional responsibilities to an already unsustainable workload for existing staff. As budgeting and financial planning are instrumental to advancing Sonoma Water's goals, strategies, and objectives, the Finance section requires additional resources to meet demands to support other Sonoma Water divisions in accomplishing their work. Adding an Administrative Services Officer I will provide a higher level of support for the Administrative Services Officer II and Division Manager, including the ability to take direct responsibility for managing several of Sonoma Water's funds as well as the sanitation rate setting and billing. The proposed position will also free up the Administrative Services Officer II and Division Manager to work on higher level priorities.

Generally, responsibility for Sonoma Water's more than 60 funds will be allocated between the existing Administrative Services Officer I and the proposed Administrative Services Officer I. The existing position will retain responsibility for the majority of the non-sanitation funds. The proposed position will assume responsibility for the 15 funds associated with the sanitation districts and the 11 funds associated with the sanitation zones.

Specifically, the proposed Administrative Services Officer I will address the following areas:

- **Budgets:** As projects move from one division to another (e.g., engineering to inspections; O&M to engineering, engineering to O&M), budget accountability may remain with the original project manager even though the project manager may not have control over project decisions that impact the budget. In some cases, who is accountable for the project budget is not clear and responsibilities associated with budget accountability may not be clear. Engineering staff need to track project level budgets but encounter challenges because the budget is broken out by account number, and they don't know how much of the lump sum labor budget is for their project. Current financial reporting tool shortcomings make the project budget tracking process even more challenging. There is not a clear understanding or process for project level budget preparation, budget adjustments, or budget overruns across divisions. Current Finance staff are stretched too thin to actively monitor all the funds under their purview. This position will take over responsibility for a number of funds, assist with

process improvements, and provide staff training.

- Long Range Financial Planning: There are long range financial planning models in place for water transmission, flood control, Warm Springs Dam, and sanitation. The models have some inconsistencies and need review and improvement. The models do not always align with the capital project plan. A number of funds have no long-range financial plan or financial forecast. The proposed position will assist with review and improvement of existing plans for the sanitation districts and zones.
- Sanitation System rates: In the past, Sonoma Water has engaged consultants to prepare sanitary sewer system rate studies for its eight County Sanitation Districts and Zones to evaluate existing customer use categories and definitions and the estimated impact on the rates paid by the customers. Two districts transitioned to volumetric rates, which required designing and establishing reliable and accurate processes and procedures. Getting accurate and timely data has proven difficult as Sonoma Water relies on third party water retailers for the required data and must adhere to strict Prop 218 deadlines. Sonoma Water, in coordination with County Counsel, has identified several areas that need additional work including data collection, analysis, and revisions to rates paid by residential and commercial customers. It is anticipated that this will be a long-term project that will support the Board's stated priority of addressing long-term planning for the sanitation districts and zones.

Sonoma Water anticipates filling the position in November 2022 and that the benefits of the new position will be felt within weeks and will be fully realized within 12 months as training takes place. Sonoma Water will realize cost savings from timely completion of critical assignments, and from the additional oversight of line staff work product reducing errors that currently require additional staff resources to remedy. This position change request is a high priority for Sonoma Water as it will allow proper fiscal management of mandated services while avoiding burnout with existing staff. Funding the position also allocates work to the appropriate staff freeing higher-level staff to address other Sonoma Water and Board priorities.

Alternatives analyzed included maintaining the current organizational structure (no change), hiring lower-level staff, hiring a consultant (and shifting workloads amongst existing staff), and hiring an extra help ASO I. The no change option is not feasible as existing staff is already working beyond capacity. Continuing in this manner will increase the likelihood of costly errors, missed deadlines, burnout, and staff departures. Without additional staff, the finance group will not be able to adequately address the Board's sanitation priorities or take on additional work as it arises.

Sonoma Water conducted an analysis of the duties required by the position and concluded it is not feasible to reallocate the work to lower-level employees. The complexity and number of funds managed by Sonoma Water necessitate an additional Administrative Services Officer I position. This position be responsible for billing and monitoring nearly 20,000 sanitation customers throughout the year while ensuring compliance with complicated regulations.

Hiring a consultant to do this work would not meet Sonoma Water's business needs. The tasks require working extensively within the county financial systems consultants cannot access, i.e. Enterprise Financial System, OnBase, Simpler Systems. The nature of the work is full-time continuous work, not project related or periodic. Additionally, using consultant services would still require a full-time dedicated staff person to support the consultant, so this option does not alleviate the need for an additional staff member.

Adding a permanent Administrative Service Officer I is more appropriate than hiring an additional extra help position. The work is ongoing, not temporary in nature, and requires the incumbent to take lead responsibility

for gaining significant knowledge in the funds with which they work and the sanitation rate setting/billing process. Extra Help is not conducive to attracting and retaining qualified candidates for this position.

The proposed position will manage the following tasks and under the direction of the Administrative Services Officer II:

- Preparation of budgets, long range financial plans, mid-year and third quarter reports, supplementals, quarterly consolidated budget adjustments, budget tracking tools, year-end budget monitoring, budget adjustments, and fund balance tracking for a number of Sonoma Water's more than 60 funds community (General Fund, Spring Lake Park, Sustainability, Waste and Recycled Water Loan Fund, Water Transmission (19), Russian River Projects, Recycled Water, Warm Springs Dam (2), flood control zones (5), four sanitation districts (15), four sanitation zones (11), and Internal Service Funds (3)
- Preparation of sanitation sewer rates, supporting financial data, Proposition 218 notices, and sewer rate board packets
- Review and development of financial data, and fiscal narratives for agreements and agenda items, and preparation of budget resolutions for Board approval
- Preparation of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) spreadsheet and documentation needed for inclusion in county annual CIP
- Development of financial procedures, review and analysis of financial data, and research and resolution of accounting and financial questions and issues
- Design and preparation of monthly and quarterly financial reports for management
- Assisting with budget training for staff including creating training documentation
- Assisting with implementation of budget- and finance-related strategic plan goals
- Assist with Emergency Operation Center Finance section activities during emergencies
- Approval of contract encumbrances and claims
- Participation in interviewing and hiring staff
- May assist in obtaining financing by preparing for the issuance of bonds, obtaining grants and arranging for low interest loans from other sources
- Supervising one or more staff - Admin Aide and potentially an Accounting Technician
- Back up supervision of the accounting group, posting payroll to EFS, and approving all requisitions and vouchers on an as needed basis

#### **TERM LIMITED ALLOCATIONS**

##### **Water Agency Resource Programs Technician II - Time Limited**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), through a direct contract with the Regents of the University of California (Scripps Institution, UC San Diego, California Sea Grant Program), is providing funds to conduct fish monitoring required by the Russian River Biological Opinion. Issued in 2008 for a term of 15 years, the Biological Opinion authorizes Sonoma Water and the Army Corps to conduct water supply and flood control operations in the Russian River watershed without jeopardizing the continued existence of threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead. Compliance with the Biological Opinion is mandatory under federal and state law. For financial and administrative reasons, the UC Sea Grant Program is unable to fulfill the remaining three years of their five-year agreement with the Army Corps. Sonoma Water also conducts fisheries monitoring required by the Biological Opinion and has collaborated with UC Sea Grant and the Army Corps for

more than a decade. Performing monitoring tasks in the Russian River requires trained staff, specialized equipment, stringent regulatory permits to handle endangered species, and permissions to enter more than 1,000 private properties throughout the watershed. Sonoma Water has the permissions and resources to conduct fisheries monitoring in the Russian River, so the Army Corps and UC Sea Grant have requested that Sonoma Water perform tasks (previously conducted by UC Sea Grant) necessary for the Army Corps to comply with the Biological Opinion. Through a subcontract with Sonoma Water, UC Sea Grant will extend Army Corps funds to Sonoma Water to hire extra-help technical staff (Water Agency Resource Program Technician I-EH) and a time-limited (2-year) Water Agency Resource Program Technician II.

Entities engaged in Russian River salmon and steelhead monitoring require unique federal and state regulatory permissions, expertise, equipment, and landowner access. Only Sonoma Water and UC Sea Grant have these capabilities. Private consultants would be unable to accomplish the required monitoring tasks without substantial investments in time and money to acquire the resources needed to accomplish this work. Sonoma Water is the only organization prepared to assume monitoring duties from UC Sea Grant. Failure to transfer this work to Sonoma Water would result in no data collection for the tasks described in the preceding section and a violation the terms of the Biological Opinion. Sonoma Water considered accomplishing the monitoring tasks with only extra-help staff. Sonoma Water extra-help technicians typically work for a period of 9-10 months prior to taking a 3-month service break. The continuous nature of the monitoring tasks in the UC Sea Grant/Sonoma contract demands the experience and dedication of a time-limited Water Agency Resource Program Technician II.

To perform the Army Corps monitoring tasks, Sonoma Water will increase the number of extra-help technicians on staff. Sonoma Water's fisheries monitoring program utilizes both extra-help and permanent technicians. Permanent technicians at the II level possess the experience and skill required to serve as field crew leaders. The complexity and continuous (year-round) nature of fisheries field tasks requires the leadership of permanent or time-limited technician level II staff. The 2-year time-limited, as opposed to permanent, duration of the position will align with the UC Sea Grant/Sonoma Water contracting timeline.

The time-limited Resource Programs Tech II will serve as a field crew leader for the following tasks included in the UC Sea Grant/Sonoma Water contract.

- Daily operation of fish traps in four Russian River tributary streams between March and June each year. Duties include measuring, weighing, and tagging threatened and endangered fish; using field computers; downloading and error checking data.
- Year-round operation of electronic fish tag detection and data logging equipment in four tributary streams. Duties include maintenance of tag antenna arrays, downloading data, and uploading data into a database.
- Conducting juvenile fish counts via snorkel and electrofishing surveys in four tributary streams annually between June and September.
- Conducting adult salmon and steelhead surveys weekly in multiple streams between December and March each year. Duties include identifying species, measuring salmon spawning sites, and collecting mapping data.
- Helping coordinate field data collection activities, assist with error checking of data, and preparation of summary reports.

**County Strategic Plan: N/A**

**Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment: Water Supply and Transmission System, Goal 1: Protect drinking water supply and promote water use efficiency.

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment: Our Organization, Goal 3; Continue to improve emergency preparation and response to natural disasters.

Sonoma Water Strategic Plan Alignment Vehicle Fleet, Goal: Improve safety, reliability and cost efficiency of the vehicle fleet.

Adding the requested allocations will provide Sonoma Water with the appropriate staffing to continue efforts toward achieving these strategic goals.

**Prior Board Actions:**

07-12-2022 Received an update on Water Supply Conditions and continued Local Emergency Proclamation Due to Drought Conditions; Considered funding a Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project and provided direction to staff to implement the project for two-years at \$1,130,000 from the Water Security Fund.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Adopted</b>	<b>FY23-24 Projected</b>	<b>FY 24-25 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses		\$868,113	\$821,426
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$653,573		
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$653,573</b>	<b>\$868,113</b>	<b>\$821,426</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF		\$697,996	\$682,118
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$653,573	\$170,117	\$139,238
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$653,573</b>	<b>\$868,113</b>	<b>\$821,426</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

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

Adding these allocations represents a total increase in FY 2022/2023 labor costs of \$542,928. For FY 2023/2024 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$868,113 and \$821,426 for FY 2024/2025 assuming a 2.5% COLA each year. The budget adjustment for FY 2022/2023 cannot be absorbed with the existing budget so a budgetary resolution has been submitted with this item. Appropriations adjustment is requested

with this item in the amount of \$653,573 to include a transfer of \$110,645 from the Water Security Fund to Sonoma Water in alignment with funding needs described in the July 12, 2022 Board item. FY 2023/2024 and FY 2024/2025 appropriations will be budgeted in these fiscal years. See detail below:

- Adding a 1.0 FTE Water Agency Deputy Chief Engineer represents an increase in labor costs in FY 2022/2023 of \$238,368 (based on an annual cost of \$357,552 prorated 8 months). For FY 2023/2024 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$366,491, and \$375,653 for 2024/2025, assuming a 2.5% COLA each year.
- Adding a 1.0 FTE Department Program Manager represents an increase in labor costs in FY 2022/2023 of \$110,645 (based on an annual cost of \$165,968 prorated 8 months). For FY 2023/2024 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$170,117 and \$174,370 for 2024/2025, assuming a 2.5% COLA each year. Funding for this position is coming from the Water Security Fund for the first two years and from the Sonoma Water General Fund permanently afterwards. A transfer of \$110,645 from the Water Security Fund to the Sonoma Water General Fund is included in the attached Budget Resolution to account for costs in the FY2022-23 fiscal year and the remaining \$309,355 will be budgeted in the subsequent years.
- Adding 1.0 FTE Administrative Services Officer I allocation represents an increase in labor costs in FY 2022/2023 of \$128,821 (based on an annual cost of \$193,232 prorated 8 months). For FY 2023/2024 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$198,063, and \$203,014 for 2024/2025, assuming a 2.5% COLA each year.
- Adding 1.0 Time Limited Water Agency Resource Programs Technician II allocation represents an increase in labor costs in FY 2022/2023 of \$65,094 (based on an annual cost of \$130,187 prorated 6 months). For FY 2023/2024 the net increase for salary and benefits will be \$133,442, and \$68,389 for 2024/2025, assuming a 2.5% 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 Deputy Chief Engineer (1017)	\$14,728 - \$17,902	+1	0
Department Program Manager (3085)	\$7,112 - \$8,644	+1	0
Administrative Services Officer I (0827)	\$7,368 - \$8,955	+1	0
Water Agency Resource Programs Technician II (0914) - Time Limited (2 years)	\$5,456 - \$6,634	+1	0

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

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

WA Deputy Chief Engineer from 1 to 2

Department Program Manager from 0 to 1

Administrative Services Officer I from 3 to 4

WA Resource Programs Technician II from 3 to 4

#### **Attachments:**

(1) Resolution Adding Positions

(2) Resolution Adjusting Budget

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

None.