



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA Water Resources Committee Members and Alternates

FROM: Scott Petersen, Water Policy Director

DATE: March 2, 2020

RE: Committee to Consider Recommendation to the Board of Directors to Authorize Execution of Agreement with State Water Contractors and Expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the Technical Budget to Jointly Fund Technical Science Support for CSAMP Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making

BACKGROUND

As previously discussed with the Authority Board, staff is planning to focus on key areas for the 2021 and future Science Program budgets, in order to assist in the development of a more coordinated science strategy between public water agencies and state and federal agencies who fund the scientific enterprise. Specifically, these recommended areas are:

- Technical Support for Authority Engagement in Regulatory Processes
- Steelhead Monitoring and Protection
- Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Scientific Expertise
- Development of Voluntary Agreement Science Plan

Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making Scientific Expertise

Compass Resources has been hired to facilitate a Structured Decision Making Project aimed at building consensus across CSAMP membership on a portfolio of recommended management and science actions to support the recovery of Delta Smelt.

Under the current contract, the deliverables include:

1. Delta Smelt Goal Statement (complete)
2. Objectives, sub-objectives and performance measures (underway)
3. Candidate management actions (underway)
4. Proposed modeling and analysis methods (underway)

These deliverables are intended to set the stage for the next year of rigorous SDM planning facilitated with the Technical Working Group (TWG), CAMT, and the CSAMP Structured Decision Making Steering Committee.

The early efforts of the TWG starting in the fall of 2019 involved documenting first order impact hypothesis statements for each Delta Smelt life stage, and having each TWG member independently judge the severity of each hypothesis. This in-depth exercise raised an interesting range of opinion, and triggered important discussions regarding lines of evidence in support of each impact hypothesis, which in turn is now building agreement on which objectives and management actions to focus on.

As these discussions are ongoing, there is an identified need to comprehensively document the evidence used and the rationale underlying these scoping decisions that the TWG is making. There is now a need for an additional deliverable for this phase of work.

Scope of Work

Compass, through CSAMP, has additional support needs for a biologist in support of developing a fifth deliverable:

5. Identification and exploration of key effect pathways

This documentation will include:

- A description of the process used to identify key impact hypotheses for each life stage.
- Detailed effect pathway diagrams.
- Concise documentation of the primary lines of evidence in support of each effect pathway.
- Listing of key uncertainties.

Depending on the experience of the biologist and the ongoing evolution of the TWG process, it is estimated that the effort required would be up to 0.5 of a full time equivalent position over the period from January to May 2020, or approximately \$50,000 in total.

The State Water Contractors have agreed to jointly fund this expenditure, but have not yet taken Board action.

ISSUE FOR DECISION

Whether to recommend to the Board of Directors approval to authorize execution of an agreement with State Water Contractors and expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the Technical Budget to jointly fund additional technical expertise and support for Compass Resources for the Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Water Resources Committee recommend to the Board to authorize execution of an agreement with the State Water Contractors and expenditure of up to \$25,000 from the Technical Budget to jointly fund additional technical expertise and support for Compass Resources for the Delta Smelt Structured Decision Making.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Board approved \$500,000 in unobligated funding for this year's Technical Budget,.Should the Committee recommend to the Board, and the Board act upon that recommendation, that will obligate \$25,000 of the \$500,000 available for this fiscal year for the Technical Studies/Science Budget, resulting in \$475,000 of unobligated funds in this fiscal year's budget.