



- **Board of Directors**
Engineering, Operations, and Technology Committee

3/12/2024 Board Meeting

7-6

Subject

Authorize an increase of \$1.3 million to an existing agreement with Helix Environmental Planning Inc. for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$4.1 million to support the Pure Water Southern California Program environmental planning; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

In October 2021, Metropolitan's Board authorized a professional service agreement with Helix Environmental Planning Inc. (Helix) to prepare environmental documentation for the Pure Water Southern California Program (Program) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Helix requires additional work scope to address modifications to the Program beyond that which had been originally identified. In mid-2023, significant additional environmental impact analyses were required to assess the impacts of upsizing approximately 14 miles of the conveyance backbone pipeline to accommodate potential future flows from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Operation NEXT Program. Finally, staff anticipates that additional work by Helix will be required to support the potential preparation of supplemental CEQA or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for the Program. Collectively, these additions to Helix's original scope of work require an amendment to their existing agreement.

Staff recommends this action to authorize an amendment to the existing professional service agreement with Helix so that ongoing environmental planning work on the Program can be completed while taking into account the scope changes described above. See **Attachment 1** for the Listing of Subconsultants and **Attachment 2** for the preliminary configuration of the Pure Water Southern California Program.

Proposed Action(s)/Recommendation(s) and Options

Staff Recommendation: Option #1

Option #1

Authorize an increase of \$1.3 million to an existing agreement with Helix Environmental Planning Inc. for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$4.1 million to continue preparing environmental documentation for the Pure Water Southern California Program.

Fiscal Impact: None; the environmental documentation is still planned to be completed within the original \$30 million Operations and Maintenance (O&M) budget.

Business Analysis: This option would allow for the completion of environmental documentation required for the Pure Water Southern California Program to address the upsized conveyance backbone pipeline and other modifications to the Program, as well as the potential preparation of supplemental CEQA or NEPA documentation. This effort will advance the development of a significant new local water supply for Southern California to address supply uncertainties associated with droughts, climate change, seismic risks, and other emergencies.

Option #2

Do not proceed with the additional environmental planning activities and agreement amendment.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: This option would risk the completion of the current CEQA documentation and delay the development of recycled water resources to meet the region's water supply needs.

Alternatives Considered

Staff considered not incorporating the upsized conveyance backbone pipeline at this time and potentially addressing this change later through supplemental environmental documentation. Staff also considered not amending the existing agreement with Helix to continue environmental planning activities, which could jeopardize the completion of environmental documentation. However, both alternatives would significantly delay Program implementation and the development of a new water supply for the region. To reduce the overall impact on the Program schedule, staff recommends incorporating the upsized conveyance backbone pipeline and amending the existing agreement with Helix to complete the environmental documentation currently being prepared for the Program.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 5108: Appropriations

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8121: General Authority of the General Manager to Enter Contracts

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

Related Board Action(s)/Future Action(s)

By Minute Item 51962, dated April 14, 2020, the Board appropriated a total of \$2,810.9 million for miscellaneous Metropolitan O&M costs, including costs associated with supply programs, for Fiscal Years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

By Minute Item 52174, dated November 10, 2020, the Board authorized preparation of environmental documentation and technical studies, and public outreach activities for the Regional Recycled Water Program.

By Minute Item 52543, dated October 12, 2021, the Board authorized an agreement with Helix Environmental Planning Inc., for preparation of environmental documentation for the Regional Recycled Water Program; and authorized an agreement with Stantec Consulting Services Inc., for engineering and technical studies to support environmental planning phase activities of the Regional Recycled Water Program.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is exempt from CEQA because it involves only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the Board has not approved, adopted, or funded. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15262.) Additionally, the proposed action is exempt from CEQA because it consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information-gathering purposes or as part of a study leading to an action that a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15306.)

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Details and Background

Background

The Pure Water Southern California Program would reuse treated wastewater currently being discharged to the Pacific Ocean from the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' A. K. Warren Water Resource Facility (Warren Facility) in the city of Carson. The treated wastewater would be further purified at a new advanced water purification facility (AWPF) at the Warren Facility to produce approximately 150 million gallons per day (mgd) of purified water at full build-out. Purified water could recharge regional groundwater basins through spreading facilities and injection wells, satisfy non-potable demands currently relying on imported water, and augment existing water supplies at two of Metropolitan's existing water treatment plants. In addition to the treatment facilities, a new backbone conveyance system would extend from the city of Carson as far north as the city of Azusa and east to the city of La Verne to connect with Metropolitan's existing water treatment and distribution facilities.

In November 2020, Metropolitan's Board authorized the initiation of the environmental planning phase of the Program and an amendment to the existing agreement with the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts to support further development and evaluation of the Program. Agreements were authorized in June 2021 and August 2021 for engineering and technical services related to the Program's backbone conveyance system and the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center (Napolitano Innovation Center, formerly known as Advanced Water Purification Center), respectively. In October 2021, agreements were authorized for engineering and technical services related to the AWPF and preparation of environmental documentation in accordance with CEQA.

In accordance with the April 2020 action on the biennial budget for fiscal years 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the November 2020 action to initiate the environmental planning phase of the Program, the General Manager authorized staff to proceed with planning phase activities for the Program using budgeted O&M funds for this purpose. The agreement amendment that is the subject of this action will be utilized to complete the Program's technical studies and environmental planning efforts. The estimated cost to complete the required environmental phase activities, including this agreement amendment, is \$30 million. Funds for these planning activities for the Program that are the subject of this action are included in the O&M budget for fiscal years 2023/24, 2024/25, and 2025/26.

Pure Water Southern California – Environmental Planning Agreement Amendment (Helix Environmental Planning Inc.)

In October 2021, Metropolitan's Board authorized an agreement with Helix for a not-to-exceed amount of \$2.8 million to prepare environmental documentation for the Program. Helix was selected through a competitive process via Request for Proposals No. 1285 based on the firm's specific experience in analyzing and addressing impacts and in preparing environmental documents of similar scope for large-scale and complex projects within California on behalf of public agencies. Helix is currently preparing the CEQA documentation for the Program and is recommended to continue performing extended environmental analysis and document preparation under the amended agreement.

The additional work added to the Helix agreement stems from several changes made to the Program scope since the agreement was initially executed. In July 2023, staff was directed to incorporate upsizing a portion of the Program's backbone conveyance system into the Program's environmental planning effort to allow for the potential interconnection of large-scale regional water reuse programs. The proposed plan involves increasing approximately 14 miles of pipeline diameter from 84 inches to as much as 108 inches from the Whittier Narrows area to the San Gabriel Canyon Spreading Grounds. Other Program modifications include: (1) conveyance alignment refinements to address comments received from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and various cities along the alignment; (2) AWPF modifications to accommodate updated treatment and operational requirements; (3) incorporation of direct potable reuse through raw water augmentation in Phase 1 of the Program; (4) power infrastructure needs; (5) new workforce training center in the city of Carson; (6) revisions to the construction and operation schedules; and (7) additional biological studies requested by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Collectively, these additional

evaluations require environmental impact analysis similar to other completed Program components. This additional work necessitates an amendment to Helix's existing agreement.

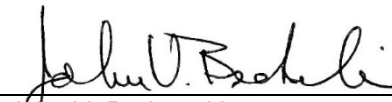
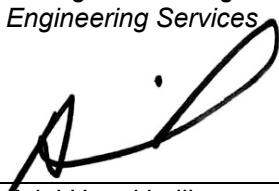
Metropolitan is pursuing potential United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) funding opportunities for the construction of large water recycling projects. This will require Metropolitan to perform additional environmental planning studies for the preparation of environmental documentation in compliance with USBR's NEPA requirements. The recommended agreement amendment includes sufficient funding capacity to allow Helix to conduct the NEPA environmental assessments if required to participate in the federal funding opportunities.

Overall, the extended environmental planning services include: (1) additional technical studies and analyses for the upsized portion of the backbone conveyance system, including a review of construction methodologies, excavation totals, and checking for utility interferences; (2) additional technical studies for various modifications to the Program components identified above; and (3) preparation of supplemental CEQA documentation or environmental documentation in compliance with NEPA requirements.

This action authorizes an increase of \$1.3 million to the existing agreement with Helix Environmental Planning Inc. for a new not-to-exceed amount of \$4.1 million for additional environmental analysis and work to complete the preparation of environmental documentation for the Program. This additional cost has been included under the biennial budget for fiscal years 2024/25 and 2025/26 using Metropolitan's O&M funds. For this agreement, Metropolitan has established a Small Business Enterprise participation level of 25 percent. Helix has agreed to meet this level of participation.

Project Milestone

October 2025 – Board to consider certification of environmental documentation for the Program

 _____ John V. Bednarski Manager/Chief Engineer Engineering Services	2/20/2024 _____ Date
 _____ Adel Hagekhalil General Manager	2/22/2024 _____ Date

Attachment 1 – Listing of Subconsultants

Attachment 2 – Pure Water Southern California Preliminary Configuration

Ref# es12700337

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California**Subconsultants for Agreement with Helix Environmental Planning Inc.**

Subconsultant and Location	Service Category; Specialty
Stantec Consulting Services Inc. Monrovia, CA	Paleontology
Ninyo & Moore San Diego, CA	Hazards/Hazardous Materials
Rick Engineering Company San Diego, CA	Hydrology
Iteris Inc. Los Angeles, CA	Traffic/Transportation

Pure Water Southern California – Preliminary Configuration

