THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Action

- **Board of Directors**
  One Water and Stewardship Committee

1/14/2025 Board Meeting

7-3

Subject

Authorize: (1) renewal of the Municipal Water Quality Investigations Agreement between the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Contractors and participating urban State Water Project Contractors; and (2) renewal of the Municipal Water Quality Investigations Program Specific Project Agreement between the State Water Contractors and participating urban State Water Project Contractors; the General Manager has determined that the proposed actions are exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

This letter seeks Board authorization to enter into two agreements to continue Metropolitan's funding and participation in the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Municipal Water Quality Investigations (MWQI) Program. The multicomponent MWQI Program carries out the vital tasks of sampling, monitoring, and protecting the water quality of the State Water Project (SWP). Water quality data provided by this program assists SWP Contractors in water management and operational decisions related to treatment processes and supports scientific studies. Metropolitan's share of the annual MWQI Program cost remains at a level not to exceed $2.1 million per year.

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

Staff Recommendation: Option #1

Option #1

Authorize:

a. Renewal of the Municipal Water Quality Investigations Agreement between the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Contractors, and participating urban State Water Project Contractors.
b. Renewal of the Municipal Water Quality Investigations Program Specific Project Agreement between the State Water Contractors and participating urban State Water Project Contractors.

Fiscal Impact: Total costs of up to $2.1 million annually in budgeted funds for the next three years. This includes $1.6 million annually in budgeted funds paid in the SWP statement of charges for work performed under the MWQI Agreement, and $0.5 million annually in budgeted funds paid in Metropolitan's annual payments to the State Water Contractors for work performed under the MWQI Specific Project Agreement.
Business Analysis: The SWP water quality data collected, and the research and analyses produced by the MWQI Program are available to monitor and protect the source quality of SWP water supplies, to inform water supply planning, scheduling, and delivery decisions, and to assist with the development of treatment strategies and compliance with drinking water regulations. The maximum annual MWQI charge plus the MWQI Specific Project Committee charge for all participating SWP Contractors will not exceed $3.1 million for any calendar year. The maximum budget of $3.1 million annually is the same budget amount in the three prior MWQI Agreements covering the years 2017-2019, 2020-2022, and 2023-2025. Through careful management of expenditures and implementing workflow improvements, the MWQI Program can complete

the work at the same $3.1 million cost in the 2026-2028 agreement. Metropolitan's share of the $3.1 million maximum annual total program cost is $2.1 million per year.

Option #2

Do not authorize the General Manager to execute the Municipal Water Quality Investigations agreements.
Fiscal Impact: Potential additional costs to carry out water quality data collection, analysis and related services using alternative personnel or vendors instead of continuing to rely on DWR with its central location, trained staff and expertise to provide these services. If Metropolitan does not participate, other contractors who pay MWQI costs through their annual Statement of Charges may drop out, leaving remaining contractors funding these water quality monitoring and analysis activities with a higher bill.
Business Analysis: DWR staff is in the area, has exclusive access to DWR facilities, and can efficiently collect the data and perform the work. If DWR is not carrying out the MWQI Program, the SWP water quality data collected, and the research and analyses currently produced may be significantly scaled back or eliminated. Water managers, planning staff, and operations and treatment plant managers would have significantly less SWP water quality information available to carry out water supply planning, scheduling, and water treatment efforts. If Metropolitan and other remaining urban contractors were to carry out this work, the costs to remotely administer, deploy staff, and analyze water quality samples and data would likely be higher.

Alternatives Considered

Staff evaluated alternatives to continued participation in the MWQI Program. If Metropolitan opted to discontinue its participation in the MWQI Program, most of the activities currently carried out by the MWQI Program would likely be either scaled back considerably or eliminated completely. Because MWQI Program costs are allocated to participants based on their SWP Contract Table A amounts and Metropolitan has a large Table A, Metropolitan currently pays approximately 2/3 of all MWQI Program costs. If Metropolitan discontinued its participation in the MWQI Program, other SWP Contractors who currently participate in the program may drop out, leaving any remaining contractors with a higher bill. The remaining SWP Contractors would probably opt for a scaled down MWQI Program or implement an alternative water quality monitoring program tailored to their specific needs.

If Metropolitan dropped out of the MWQI Program, three possible alternatives are: (1) use alternative personnel or vendor to carry out the same water quality data collection, analysis and related services currently provided by the program; (2) seek to obtain and piggyback on whatever SWP water quality data is collected by remaining SWP Contractors in a scaled back or alternative water quality monitoring program; or (3) forgo altogether the water quality data, analysis and research provided by the MWQI Program. Because DWR has experienced staff in the area with access to DWR facilities and can efficiently collect the data and perform the work, and the MWQI Program is well managed with costs carefully controlled with no increases over the current 12-year period, staff recommends continued participation in the MWQI Program.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

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

Funding authorization for that portion of the MWQI Program expenses billed under the MWQI Program Specific Project Agreement is done through an annual Board Letter authorizing payments for Metropolitan's participation in the State Water Contractors.

Summary of Outreach Completed

Participating contractors who fund the MWQI Program hold bimonthly meetings of the Real-Time Data and Forecasting Committee to discuss ongoing operations of the program and to monitor expenses. An annual MWQI Program Workplan is developed each year, which includes all water quality sampling and monitoring activities to be carried out, as well as any special studies or projects to be undertaken in the current year. In addition, contractors participating in the MWQI Specific Project Agreement meet regularly to discuss ongoing projects and special studies, and to review and approve all consultant contracts, budgets and expenses.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action to renew agreements is exempt from CEQA because they would fund 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

In 1990, DWR initiated the MWQI Program to provide water quality data for the SWP to support management decisions and alternatives for meeting existing and proposed state and federal drinking water quality standards. The program's initial focus was to conduct source water quality monitoring and compile a comprehensive database of Delta drinking water quality, and conduct scientific studies on key aspects of Delta water quality. Since then, the MWQI Program has evolved and expanded to carry out the following functions:

- Collect and analyze discrete water quality samples ("grab samples") at 14 locations in the Delta and the SWP.
- Operate five real-time water quality monitoring stations located in the Delta and the SWP.
- Conduct weekly modeling simulations to produce 21-day forecasts of water quality in the Delta and within the SWP conveyance and delivery system.
- Conduct research, analysis, and investigations of SWP water quality and related issues.
- Maintain a water quality database and program website.
- Disseminate water quality information and updates to SWP Contractors, water agencies, regulators, and other interested parties.

Project Milestone

Recent accomplishments of the MWQI Program include publication of the 2021 SWP Watershed Sanitary Survey Update in June 2022, issuance of the Simplified Approach for Estimating Delta Salinity Constituent Concentrations, continued development of a SWP Turn-In Data Management System, and continued operation of the real-time water quality monitoring system. Compliance with the State of California Division of Drinking Water Surface Water Treatment Rule requires conducting and updating a watershed sanitary survey every five years. The 2021 SWP Watershed Sanitary Survey Update is an evaluation of observed and emerging water quality conditions throughout the entire SWP system through 2020.

The Simplified Approach for Estimating Delta Salinity Constituent Concentrations is an updated and greatly improved method for estimating the concentrations of bromide, chloride, sulfate, alkalinity, sodium, calcium, magnesium and potassium at key locations throughout the Delta given a known or measured concentration of salinity as expressed in units of either electrical conductivity or total dissolved solids.

The SWP Turn-In Data Management System is a database that provides for the input, storage and retrieval of water quality data for groundwater pump-ins into the SWP conveyance system.

MWQI Program Structure and Financing

Sixteen urban SWP Contractors participate in the MWQI Agreement. The MWQI Agreement provides for funding and payment of MWQI Program costs, which consists of salaries and overhead for DWR staff employed by the MWQI Program, operating expenses, and equipment required to carry out the program. The SWP contractor's annual Statement of Charges includes all MWQI Program costs. Each participating contractor's share of the total MWQI Program costs is based on that contractor's annual Table A amount of project water as shown in their SWP contract in proportion to the total Table A for all participating contractors.

The MWQI Specific Project Agreement funds specialized costs including a consultant to the MWQI Program, scientific studies and consultants, technical support for data acquisition and processing, maintenance of the MWQI Program website and water quality database, and expedited procurement of urgently needed equipment, parts, or services. Fifteen urban SWP Contractors participate in and fund the MWQI Specific Project Agreement, and these participating contractors, along with the State Water Contractors Inc., are the signatories to the MWQI Specific Project Agreement. Under this agreement, work is funded by payments made to the State Water Contractors Inc. Each participating contractor's share of the total MWQI Specific Project Agreement costs is based on that contractor's annual Table A amount of project water in proportion to the total Table A for all participating contractors.

The term of both agreements is three years. The maximum total annual cost of the MWQI Program is $3.1 million, and Metropolitan's share is up to $2.1 million per year. This represents no change from the prior three years. The bulk of MWQI Program costs are for DWR staff carrying out the core functions of the program. The remainder of the program costs is the MWQI Program Specific Project Agreement Charge, of which Metropolitan's maximum annual share is $476,000. However, in recent years, Metropolitan's MWQI Specific Project Agreement Charge has been $260,000 annually, and it is expected to remain at that level in the near future. Actual total expenses of the MWQI Program for all participating contractors in calendar year 2023 was $1.7 million.

The proportionate share of the cost for each contractor, which is based on municipal and industrial Table A amounts, is shown in **Attachment 1**.

Staff recommends entering into the proposed agreements to provide valuable water quality sampling, monitoring, water quality forecasting, data dissemination, and scientific studies involving SWP water quality.

12/26/2024

Brandon J. Goshi *Date*
Interim Manager,
Water Resource Management

12/30/2024

Deven N. Upadhyay *Date*
Interim General Manager

Attachment 1 – Charge Allocation Factors

Ref# wrm12702422

Statement of Charges Allocation Factors
Table 1

	M&I Table A	Proportionate Share
Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District Zone 7	80,619	0.02841469
Alameda County Water District	42,000	0.01480317
Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency	144,844	0.05105120
Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	95,200	0.03355385
Santa Barbara County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	45,486	0.01603183
Crestline-Lake Arrowhead Water Agency	5,800	0.00204425
Kern County Water Agency	79,000	0.02784406
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California	1,911,500	0.67372049
Mojave Water Agency	89,800	0.03165059
Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	29,025	0.01023005
Palmdale Water District	21,300	0.00750732
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District	102,600	0.03616203
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	17,300	0.00609750
San Luis Obispo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	25,000	0.00881141
Santa Clara Valley Water District	100,000	0.03524564
Solano County Water Agency	47,756	0.01683191
TOTAL	**2,837,230**	**1.00000000**

MWQI Specific Project Committee Charge Factors
Table 2

	M&I Table A	Proportionate Share
Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District Zone 7	80,619	0.02866729
Alameda County Water District	42,000	0.01493477
Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency	144,844	0.05150503
Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency	95,200	0.03385214
Santa Barbara County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	45,486	0.01617435
Crestline-Lake Arrowhead Water Agency	5,800	0.00206242
Kern County Water Agency	79,000	0.02809159
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California	1,911,500	0.67970970
Mojave Water Agency	89,800	0.03193195
Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District	29,025	0.01032099
Palmdale Water District	21,300	0.00757406
San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District	102,600	0.03648350
San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	17,300	0.00615170
Santa Clara Valley Water District	100,000	0.03555897
Solano County Water Agency	47,756	0.01698154
TOTAL	**2,812,230**	**1.00000000**