

Western Regional Water Commission

STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 9, 2020

TO: Chair and Members, Western Regional Water Commission (“WRWC”)

FROM: Jim Smitherman, WRWC Water Resources Program Manager

SUBJECT: Review and possible approval a Second Amendment to the Agreement with Data Instincts to assist and provide guidance in the development of outreach strategies, messages, materials and information dissemination methods related to regional effluent management planning, at no additional cost to extend the term of the Agreement through December 2020; and possible direction to staff.

SUMMARY

In October 2018, the WRWC approved a scope of work, funding in an amount not to exceed \$100,000 from the RWMF, and a First Amendment to the Agreement with Data Instincts for continuation of a project to assist and provide guidance in the development of outreach strategies, messages, materials and information dissemination methods related to regional effluent management planning (the “Project”).

Data Instincts has been performing well relative to the scope of work and direction from staff. Some of the hands-on technical work is being performed by agency staff, which has resulted in the project being under budget to the extent that Data Instinct’s work can continue through 2020 with little or no additional funding.

The Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (“NNWPC”), at its December 4, 2019, meeting, discussed the need for continuing the project, reviewed a proposed rate schedule for 2020 and made a recommendation to the WRWC for approval of a Second Amendment to the Agreement at no additional cost to extend the term through December 2020.

BACKGROUND

In February 2018, the NNWPC approved a recommendation from the Regional Effluent Management Team (the “Team”), funding in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 from the RWMF to retain Data Instincts for the Project, and authorized the NNWPC Water Resources Program Manager to execute an Agreement with Data Instincts to ensure timely Project initiation.

In April 2016, the Team presented a report on the development of a phased feasibility program to demonstrate treatment technologies and evaluate whether advanced treatment of effluent and groundwater replenishment offers long-term regional benefits. Program elements include community outreach, State regulatory framework, treatment technology, pilot testing, hydrologic investigations and field-scale demonstration projects.

Recommendations from the Water Research Foundation’s Independent Advisory Panel, which is advising and assisting the Team and other local agency staff to implement the various phases of the feasibility program, include early implementation of a multi-phase outreach program initially targeting internal agency staff and elected decision-makers, then progressing to customers, interest groups, media, and the general public. This approach has proven effective in similar feasibility studies elsewhere in the United States.

With the implementation of the feasibility program underway, the Team identified consultant assistance concerning communication and outreach as a near-term requirement and priority. The Team determined that Data Instincts was, and is, uniquely qualified because of its extensive experience with similar efforts in California and other states. In addition, the firm’s principal, Mr. Mark Millan, is a member of the Independent Advisory Panel that is providing advice and assistance to the Team and staff, as indicated above.

The Team, consisting of technical staff from the City of Reno, the City of Sparks, Washoe County and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, has been meeting since April 2014 to discuss regional effluent management issues. In 2016, the development and initiation of the feasibility program marked a significant step forward in regional effluent management. Since then, staff and Team members have provided reports from time to time to keep the NNWPC and WRWC apprised of progress, and to request funding for feasibility program activities such as the Data Instincts project.

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

The NNWPC, at its December 4, 2019, meeting, made a recommendation to the WRWC for approval of a Second Amendment to the Agreement with Data Instincts to assist and provide guidance in the development of outreach strategies, messages, materials and information dissemination methods related to regional effluent management planning, at no additional cost to extend the term of the Agreement through December 2020.

POSSIBLE MOTION

“Move to approve the proposed Second Amendment to the Agreement with Data Instincts to continue the Project through December 2020; and authorize the Chairman to execute the Amendment for that purpose.”

JS:jp