



Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee

Item #13-3-8 Information

March 4, 2013

Consultant Selection for Natural Resources and Regulations Assistance

Issue: SACOG staff is seeking consultant assistance on natural resources and regulations work. A consultant selection process is underway. At the March Board meeting, staff will ask for approval of a recommended consultant and authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate and sign a contract.

Recommendation: None, this item is for information only; however, staff is seeking input from the Committee on issues that may need to be noted in the staff report to the SACOG Board.

Discussion: In the past, SACOG has hired consultants to execute a range of natural resources work for which the agency does not have in-house staff expertise. That work has included assisting with federal permitting for flood control projects in Yolo County, securing federal approvals for transportation projects in Placer County, helping settle land development CEQA lawsuits in Placer County, assisting with Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) throughout the region, overseeing the Six-County Aquatic Resources Inventory, representing SACOG interests at federal agencies related to water resources management, providing background and strategies to improve forest management, and preparing the Environmental Impact Report for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. As SACOG's role in HCP, water resources, and flood issues continues to evolve, staff envisions a need for consultant help with these efforts. In addition, SACOG's commitment—including in the MTP/SCS—to develop a regional open space plan will require assistance from an expert that has extensive knowledge of natural resource issues in the region, and the experience and ability to convene key stakeholders to craft a plan. Addressing environmental regulations and land conservation impediments affecting agriculture is also an important area where consultant help will be needed.

The SACOG Board approved the release of a Request for Qualifications for a natural resource consultant at its January meeting. Due to the timing of the review process, the Board also allowed staff to bring a recommendation directly to the Board for approval of the selected consultant and authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate a contract. Ten Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) were received and a panel of local partners was assembled to review the SOQs and interview candidates. The panel will complete SOQ reviews on March 1 and conduct interviews of the top candidates on March 12. The consultant work is included in the Overall Work Program and will not exceed \$200,000.

Staff is seeking input from the Committee on any issues that may need to be noted in the staff report to the SACOG Board. Staff will notify the Committee Chair and Vice-Chairs once a consultant selection has been made and seek any further advice on issues to include in the staff report to the SACOG Board.

Approved by:

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Chief Executive Officer

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