



To promote the economic, social and environmental viability of Northern California by enhancing and preserving the water rights, supplies and water quality of our members.

January 16, 2013

Mr. Mark Cowin, Director
Department of Water Resources
901 P Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan Funding Request from Proposition 204, Sacramento Valley Water Management Funding

Dear Mr. Cowin:

This is a request for \$1,061,000 from Proposition 204, The Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act of 1996, which provided \$25 million for the "Sacramento Valley Water Management and Habitat Protection Measures." The Act continuously appropriated funding "for programs or projects in the Sacramento Valley to assist in the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Bay-Delta...."

The Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and the Feather River Regional Water Management Plan (FRRWMP) will assist in the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Bay-Delta by better defining certain opportunities and constraints associated with protecting beneficial uses of groundwater and producing additional groundwater supply during dry and critical water years, thereby "decreasing reliance on surface water supplies and increasing water supply for Bay-Delta estuary needs."

This updated project description and funding amount replaces the previously approved project "Sacramento Valley Groundwater Monitoring and Modeling/Assessment and Data Gap Evaluation" that DWR approved for \$2,100,000 in funding in 2009. In the three and a half years since the funding was originally approved, the passage of SB X7 6 and other factors have led to increased groundwater monitoring and reporting. Rather than duplicating these efforts, we have altered the project description to address additional priorities in the Sacramento Valley.

The activities to be performed for the two projects in the updated project description include:

- The Northern California Water Association (NCWA), working with a consultant, will prepare a groundwater quality assessment report in support of efforts to evaluate the sources of salt and nitrate loads and the potential long-term effects of those loads on

surface and groundwater resources throughout the Sacramento Valley. The estimated cost for this work is approximately \$525,000.

- NCWA, working with a consultant, will develop an Agricultural Water Management Plan (AWMP) for the irrigation water suppliers along the Feather River. This regional AWMP will include an inventory of surface water and groundwater supplies and uses and, through water balance analyses, will characterize the interaction between irrigated lands, managed wetlands and underlying groundwater systems. The estimated cost for this work is approximately \$536,000.

Summary descriptions of the scope of work are attached.

Thank you for your attention to these important projects. According to the current funding agreements, these funds will need to be expended by June 30, 2014. As such, we would appreciate you expediting this request. If you have any questions, please call me at (916) 442-8333.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd N. Manley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd N. Manley
Director of Government Relations

Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan

I. Project Description

The Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report and the other is the Feather River Regional Water Management Plan (FRRWMP) will assist in the implementation of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Bay-Delta by better defining certain opportunities and constraints associated with protecting beneficial uses of groundwater and producing additional groundwater supply during dry and critical water years, thereby “decreasing reliance on surface water supplies and increasing water supply for Bay-Delta estuary needs.”

The two proposed initiatives are described in the following sections.

II. Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report, Communications and Outreach

The Northern California Water Association (NCWA), working with a consultant, will prepare a groundwater quality assessment report in support of efforts to evaluate the sources of salt and nitrate loads and the potential long-term effects of those loads on surface and groundwater resources throughout the Sacramento Valley. This information is essential to understanding sustainable management of Sacramento Valley surface water and groundwater supplies, including conjunctive management of reservoirs and aquifers for regional and statewide water supply reliability and Bay-Delta estuary needs, as well as establishing a foundation for monitoring and protecting water quality in the Sacramento Valley and the Bay-Delta.

Essential to informing this effort in the Sacramento Valley is a groundwater quality assessment report that will likely be the foundation for future monitoring and management programs in the Sacramento Valley.

This work will also include a communications and outreach component to assist in the dissemination of information generated by the report, as well as other groundwater and water management efforts in the Sacramento Valley.

Specific Tasks

1. Groundwater Quality Assessment Report – The three main objectives of the assessment are to identify where known groundwater quality impacts exist for which irrigated agricultural operations are a potential contributor or where conditions make groundwater more vulnerable to impacts from irrigated agricultural activities, produce a prioritization of high vulnerability areas based on those impacts, and evaluate the merit and feasibility of incorporating existing groundwater data collection efforts and their corresponding monitoring well systems to achieve the objectives of other programs and support groundwater monitoring requirements.

2. Communications and Outreach – NCWA will also develop a communications and outreach program to improve the dissemination of information developed by the activities included in the grant, as well as a more complete update on the state of groundwater management in the Sacramento Valley.

III. Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan

The Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan (FRRWMP) is the second initiative to be funded through the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Monitoring and Modeling/Assessment and Data Gap Evaluation project. NCWA, working with a consultant, will develop an Agricultural Water Management Plan (AWMP) for the irrigation water suppliers along the Feather River. The entities participating in the AWMP will include those receiving water from the Thermalito Afterbay – Western Canal Water District, Richvale Irrigation District, Biggs-West Gridley Water District, Butte Water District and Sutter Extension Water District, as well as additional water suppliers diverting water from the lower Feather River. This regional AWMP will include an inventory of surface water and groundwater supplies and uses and, through water balance analyses, will characterize the interaction between irrigated lands, managed wetlands and underlying groundwater systems. It will also include analysis of opportunities to enhance regional water management and monitoring among the water suppliers.

Specific Tasks

1. Compile Data and Design Water Balances – Collect and compile historical information and design a regional water balance and individual water balances for the entities participating in the regional AWMP.

2. Develop and Document Supplier and Regional Water Balances – Compile and analyze data to prepare historical water balances for the participating suppliers and the region to serve as a basis for assessing water management practices and identifying opportunities for improvement.

3. Develop Regional Targeted Benefits (TBs) and Quantifiable Objectives (QOs) – In consultation with regional water managers, establish regional TBs and QOs with the purpose of establishing common and comprehensive water management goals for the entities participating in the regional AWMP.

4. Prepare Water Supplier Descriptions (by Supplier) – Develop descriptions of the individual water suppliers according to DWR’s Guidelines for Preparing Agricultural Water Management Plans.

5. Assess and Screen Efficient Water Management Practices (by supplier) – Evaluate the 14 conditional efficient water management practices cited in the water code for each individual supplier participating in the regional AWMP to identify those EWMPs already being implemented and those that are not being implemented but are technically feasible.

- 6. Prepare Water Measurement and Volumetric Billing Plans (by qualifying or interested supplier)** – Developing the measurement and billing program for the water suppliers participating in the AWMP to assist their efforts to comply with state requirements.
- 7. Conduct Benefit-Cost Analyses for Selected Efficient Water Management Practices (by supplier)** – Develop benefit-cost analyses for selected EWMPs for the purpose of determining which EWMPs should be implemented by the individual water suppliers.
- 8. Prepare Draft and Final Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan** – Developing the final Agricultural Water Management Plan for the purpose of facilitating regional water management and complying with state requirements.

IV. Project Funding

It is estimated that the cost to implement the proposed initiatives is \$1,061,000. Of this total cost, approximately \$525,000 will be used for the Sacramento Valley Groundwater Quality Assessment Report, Communications and Outreach and \$536,000 for the development of the Feather River Regional Agricultural Water Management Plan.