



ACTION ITEM

Consideration and Possible Approval of a Contract Amendment with the Regents of the University of California San Diego, California Sea Grant for the 2020 Class of Delta Science Fellows and 2020/2021 Classes of State Policy Fellows

Summary: Council staff recommends that the Council approve a contract amendment with the Regents of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), California Sea Grant to re-allocate previously approved funds among fiscal years and add nine months additional time for the 2020 Delta Science Fellows to complete fellowships that experienced delays during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This agreement supports long-standing programs that provide fellowship opportunities for early-career scientists and have a proven track record of nurturing the growth and diversity of the region's scientific community.

REQUESTED ACTION

Council staff requests that the Council approve a re-allocation of approved funds among fiscal years and extend the contract's end date to June 30, 2023.

The Executive Officer has delegated authority up to \$750,000 to enter into contracts and interagency agreements on the Council's behalf. Because this agreement exceeds that amount, this contract requires Council approval.

BACKGROUND

Since 2003, the Delta Science Program has partnered with UCSD/California Sea Grant to fund Delta Science Fellows (graduate students and postdocs conducting research at academic institutions) and State Policy Fellows (recent graduates with advanced degrees who work in the Council's offices in support of the Council's priorities). Since 2003, 107 graduate and post-graduate level researchers have been supported through the Delta Science Fellows program. The partnership expanded in 2013 when the Council became a host agency with the California Sea Grant State Policy Fellowship Program and has since supported 25 scientists to work at the Council during their fellowships.

California Sea Grant sponsors and administers scientific research, fellowships, and panels of scientific advisors that contribute to the growing body of knowledge about coastal and marine resources and help solve contemporary marine-related problems. California Sea Grant is the largest of the 34 Sea Grant programs nationwide and draws on the talents of scientists and engineers at public and private universities, as well as other research institutions throughout the state. It is administered by UCSD and is based at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. The California Sea Grant program is funded by the National Sea

Grant College Program, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with matching funds from State and local resources.

As identified in the Delta Reform Act, the mission of the Delta Science Program is “to provide the best possible scientific information for water and environmental decision-making in the Bay-Delta system through funding research, synthesizing and communicating scientific information to policymakers and decision-makers, promoting independent scientific peer review, and coordinating with Delta agencies to promote science-based adaptive management” (Water Code Section 85280(b)(4)). The Delta Science Program does this in part by initiating, evaluating, and funding research to fill critical gaps in our understanding of the current and changing Bay-Delta system.

DELTA SCIENCE FELLOWS PROGRAM

This program pairs the next generation of Delta scientists with academic and community mentors to conduct critical science investigations targeting high-priority Delta issues. Numerous past Delta Science Fellows have continued to work in science (in many cases, the Delta region), building on their work as Fellows to launch full careers centered on developing scientific information for improved management.

Research funded by the Delta Science Fellows program is a critically important way in which we address the priority science actions in the 2017-2021 Science Action Agenda (SAA), a four-year science agenda for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that aims to fill gaps in knowledge, promote collaborative science, and build science infrastructure.

Delta Science Fellows are selected through a competitive solicitation process, with resulting candidate proposals undergoing a rigorous review and selection process administered by California Sea Grant.

In spring 2020, ten Delta Science Fellowships were awarded for research topics that address the actions identified in the 2017-2021 SAA. Recipients include eight University of California (UC) postdoctoral researchers and doctoral graduate students, one California State University (CSU) masters student, and one doctoral student from Stanford University.

STATE POLICY FELLOWS

The State Policy Fellows are recent post-graduates interested in exploring a career path in the public sector at the science-policy interface. State Policy Fellows work with Council staff in the Science and Planning Divisions for 12 months to support the Council’s high-priority tasks. Though not all-inclusive, previous work performed by Policy Fellows includes:

- providing support to the Delta Independent Science Board;
- assisting in Delta Plan amendments and updates;
- assisting the Delta Lead Scientist on the monthly “Lead Scientist Report” to the Council;
- gathering data and presenting the “By the Numbers” report to the Council;
- supporting the Interagency Adaptive Management Integration Team, and;
- participating in the Delta Science Plan and Science Action Agenda Updates.

The current agreement funds eight State Policy Fellows (four per calendar year 2020 and 2021).

FISCAL INFORMATION

The budget information is summarized below.

Budget Category	Original 9/16/19-9/15/22	Amended 9/16/19-6/30/23
Personnel	\$188,902	\$199,867
Science Fellowships	\$904,800	\$1,147,185
State Policy Fellowships	\$399,840	\$445,329
Travel	\$38,100	\$7,534
Indirect Costs	\$472,205	\$230,608
Other Direct Costs (Workshops, Panelists)	\$42,375	\$15,699
Total	\$2,046,222	\$2,046,222

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

None

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