



ACTION ITEM

Consideration and Possible Approval of an Amendment to a Contract with the Regents of the University of California San Diego, California Sea Grant for the Position of Social Scientist Extension Specialist

Summary

Council staff recommends approval of an amendment to an existing contract with the Regents of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), California Sea Grant, to add additional funds and extend the tenure of the Social Scientist Extension Specialist, a joint position between the Council and California Sea Grant. The original contract was for a three-year term of \$430,994. The amendment would extend the contract another three years for an additional \$572,753.36 for a total of \$1,003,747.36. The additional cost covers salary, research funding, and a research assistant.

Requested Action

Council staff requests that the Council approve Resolution 2023-02 granting authority to the Executive Officer to amend existing contract #19124 with UCSD, California Sea Grant, to extend the contract period from three years to six years (ending in 2026) and add additional funds of \$572,753.36 for a contract total of \$1,003,747.36.

The Executive Officer has delegated authority of up to \$750,000. Because the amended contract total exceeds the delegated amount, this amendment requires Council approval.

Background

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) is a complex socio-ecological system. The Delta Independent Science Board (ISB), in their 2017 [Review of Research on the Delta as an Evolving Place](#), called for a more significant role for social science in research in the Delta. The ISB review, in part, led to the creation of the Council's

Social Science Task Force, and one key recommendation from the task force report was to build capacity for social science within the Council. In alignment with these two reports, the Council and California Sea Grant (CASG) recognize the value of incorporating social science into Delta water management and policy. Council staff has expertise in the biophysical sciences, but focusing on Delta's biophysical components alone is insufficient to understand and manage such a system. As such, the CASG created the position of Social Scientist Extension Specialist, a CASG employee the Council hosts. When the position was created in 2020, Dr. Jessica Rudnick was selected as the Council's first Extension Specialist.

The key objectives of the Extension Specialist position are to assist with research and outreach on the human dimensions of Delta water and environmental management and policy. Within the Council, the goals of the Extension Specialist are to build social science capacity and advise Council staff on social science initiatives. Outside the Council, the goals of the Extension Specialist are to conduct social science research on water issues in the Delta and conduct education and/or outreach programs. As the Extension Specialist, Dr. Rudnick is well-poised to continue and build on her work of supporting the Council's efforts to expand its social science activities and connecting the Council, CASG, and the Delta community.

Information about the Topic

In the first two years of her tenure with the Council, Dr. Rudnick has made significant contributions across a broad range of activities within the Council and the wider Delta community, including:

- supporting the Council's internal **Social Science Integration Team** and the [Bay-Delta Social Science Community of Practice](#);
- facilitating **training** in social science methods for Council staff;
- contributing to **Delta as Place** efforts through regular community engagement, interviews, focus groups, and field visits, and establishing the first **Delta Residents' Survey** in collaboration with California State University Sacramento's Institute for Social Research;
- leading research efforts informing the Council's **environmental justice paper**, advising staff on the development and drafting of the policy paper,

and mentoring a UC Davis student intern who planned community workshops;

- serving as technical lead for the agriculture portion of **Delta Adapts**, doing extensive outreach with agriculture stakeholders and landowners;
- for the **2024 State of Bay-Delta Science**, serving on the editorial board and as a contributing author on the governance chapter; and
- **mentoring** students and CASG fellows working on social science and interdisciplinary projects.

Through this amendment to extend the Extension Specialist position for three years, Dr. Rudnick will build upon these activities, focusing on conducting original research and supporting Council social science activities. The amendment includes three additional years of salary for the Extension Specialist position and adds research funding (\$50k) and a student research assistant.

Fiscal Information

Additional \$572,753.36 over three years (2024-2026). The original contract was for \$430,994 over three years (2020-2023); the amended contract total would be \$1,003,747.36 over six years (2020-2026).

List of Attachments

No attachments.

Contact

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