



## **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 (CASG), to extend the term by one year to expire on April 30, 2027 and refine the scope of work of the Social Scientist Extension Specialist. Additional time is needed to fill this position after Dr. Jessica Rudnick's departure from CASG. This amendment also updates the scope of work based on the Council's current social science needs related to effects of climate change and equity.

### Requested Action

Council staff requests that the Council approve Resolution 2024-04 granting authority to the Executive Officer to amend existing contract #19124 with UCSD, California Sea Grant, refine the scope of work, and extend the term one year to expire April 30, 2027.

### 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](#) (available here: <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/pdf/isb/products/2017-05-18-isb-delta-as-a-place.pdf>), 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 recognized the value of incorporating social science into Delta water management and policy. Council staff has expertise in the biophysical sciences, but focusing on

the Delta's biophysical components alone is insufficient to understand and manage such a system. As such, the Council has entered into an agreement with CASG for the specialized services of a Social Scientist Extension Specialist.

The key objectives of the Social Scientist Extension Specialist position are to assist with research and outreach on the human dimensions of Delta water and environmental management and policy. The goals of the Social Scientist Extension Specialist are to build social science capacity, advise Council staff on social science initiatives, and conduct social science research pertaining to water issues in the Delta. The first Social Scientist Extension Specialist, Dr. Jessica Rudnick, moved on to another position, and additional time on the contract is needed to accommodate the CASG hiring process.

### Social Scientist Extension Specialist: Contributions to Date

Since this agreement has been implemented, the position has made significant contributions to the Council's work 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** (available here: <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/bay-delta-social-science-community-of-practice>);
- facilitating **training** in social science methods for Council staff;
- contributing to **Delta as an Evolving 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 paper, and mentoring;
- serving as technical lead for the agriculture portion of **Delta Adapts**, doing extensive outreach with agriculture stakeholders and landowners; and
- for the **2024 State of Bay-Delta Science**, serving on the editorial board and as a contributing author on the governance chapter.

## Purpose of Contract Amendment

This amendment would extend the term of the agreement by one year to expire on April 30, 2027 and provide refinements to the scope of work of the Social Scientist Extension Specialist by re-prioritizing potential research topics to include research that:

- improves understanding of environmental justice issues related to the management and distribution of Delta water exports;
- promotes an understanding of how Tribes see the Delta and the Delta's importance to them; and
- fills gaps in the knowledge of the effectiveness of adaptation approaches identified in Delta Adapts as related to the human dimensions of the Delta; and
- continues to assist in building upon the 2023 Delta Residents' Survey Findings in the distribution of results and assists with the scoping of future surveys.

These changes to the contract would clarify the project focus for the Social Scientist Extension Specialist while building upon already ongoing activities, focusing on conducting original research, and supporting the Council's work as it relates to social science.

## Fiscal Information

NA

## List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Resolution 2024-04

## Contact

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