

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 5, 2017

AGENDA NO. 3

PROPOSAL: Execute Contract to Provide for Real-time Public Alerts of Hydrogen Sulfide Events

SYNOPSIS: In response to natural odor events related to the Salton Sea, SCAQMD began continuous measurements of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) at two Coachella Valley locations in November 2013. In 2016, there were 55 days when one or more of those stations exceeded the 30 parts-per-billion State 1-hour H₂S standard. While SCAQMD's real-time alerts for other pollutants are issued through the U.S. EPA EnviroFlash alert system, H₂S is not included since there is no federal H₂S standard. Staff proposes to replace the current manual notifications for Coachella Valley H₂S with an automated real-time email and text alert system, by contracting with Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI), in order to develop an equivalent capability for H₂S. This action is to execute a contract with STI to develop and maintain a real-time alert system for H₂S in the Coachella Valley at a cost not to exceed \$78,000 from the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35).

COMMITTEE: Administrative, April 14, 2017; Less than a quorum was present; the Committee Members concurred that this item be approved by the Board.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the Executive Officer to execute a sole-source contract with Sonoma Technology, Inc. at an initial cost not to exceed \$33,000 with an option to renew the annual operation support at an annual cost not to exceed \$15,000 in each of the next three years for a total of \$78,000 over four years from the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35), to implement a public alert system to provide automated alerts for H₂S.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

Background

A significant odor event occurred in September 2012, bringing widespread attention to the issue of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) odors from the Salton Sea. During that event, sulfur or rotten egg odors were experienced throughout the Coachella Valley and across the South Coast Air Basin. In 2013, SCAQMD started continuous H₂S measurements at two locations in the Coachella Valley to improve our understanding of the processes that lead to odors and to better communicate odor events to the public.

H₂S is a product of anaerobic organic decay at the bottom of the shallow Salton Sea that occurs throughout the year, but is especially active in the summer months with the abundant desert sunlight and heat. Shifting winds cause H₂S to be released from the Salton Sea and transported to the Coachella Valley communities. While severe events like that of September 2012 are uncommon, less-extreme releases of H₂S frequently cause odors in areas near the Salton Sea. In each of the last three years, between 27 and 55 days exceeded the 30 parts-per-billion California State H₂S standard was exceeded between 27 and 55 days at one or more stations in the Coachella Valley. SCAQMD staff has been sending manual notifications to Coachella Valley subscribers after these events occur.

For our “Air Alerts” public messaging system, SCAQMD utilizes the U.S. EPA AirNow/EnviroFlash system for automated real-time public alerts via email, text or Twitter, when pollutant levels exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). These alerts can be requested by the subscriber at different threshold levels and by monitoring location. H₂S is not a federal “criteria” pollutant, that is, associated with a NAAQS, thus it is not included in the federal EnviroFlash system. This effort is to develop additional software capabilities for a real-time H₂S alerting system, including operational support and web interfaces for subscribers and administration.

Proposal

Staff proposes a sole-source contract with Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI), the contractor responsible for the development and operation of the U.S. EPA AirNow and EnviroFlash program, for the development, execution and maintenance of a real-time alert system for H₂S. The automated alerts will be available via email, text message, or via Twitter, with subscriber signups through a web interface. This system will be expandable if other stations are added to the SCAQMD’s H₂S monitoring program. The initial cost will not exceed \$33,000 with an option to renew the annual operation support at an annual cost not to exceed \$15,000 in each of the next three years for a total of \$78,000 over four years. The system will also be expandable for other pollutants at an additional cost, for example, for real-time public alerts from community or facility monitoring projects. By working directly with the AirNow/EnviroFlash contractor, portions of the existing system can be leveraged, including the real-time data ingest and processing capability.

AES Settlement Project Funds (35) recommended for funding this effort are not restricted by applicable statutes or the settlement agreement; however, in the past the Board restricted the use of these funds for fleet rules. With Board approval, AES Settlement Project funds can be directed to other projects.

Sole Source Justification

Section VIII, B.2 of the Procurement Policy and Procedure identifies four major provisions under which a sole-source award may be justified for non-federally funded procurement.

The request for a sole-source contract for the development and operational support of a real-time H2S alert system is made under Section VIII, B.2.c.1 of the Procurement Policy and Procedure which states: Except for contracts funded in whole or in part with federal funds, written justification for a sole-source award must be provided documenting that the desired services are available from only the sole-source based upon one or more of the following reasons::(1) The unique experience and capabilities of the proposed contractor or contractor team.

Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI) has unique experience and capabilities for the development and implementation of the H2S alert system, due to their ability to leverage work done for U.S. EPA's AirNow program. This will ensure operational consistency and public transparency between all SCAQMD real-time alerts and the subscriber interfaces. STI's ability to utilize the existing AirNow/EnviroFlash data processing and alerting system components that they have already developed is critical for timely and cost effective implementation of SCAQMD's H2S alert system.

Resource Impacts

Funds for this contract have been identified in the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35). This contract will require staff oversight, but is not expected to have other fiscal impacts.