

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 7, 2021

AGENDA NO. 6

PROPOSAL: Execute Contract to Upgrade Real-time Public Alerts of Hydrogen Sulfide Events in the Coachella Valley

SYNOPSIS: In response to odor events related to the Salton Sea, South Coast AQMD began continuous measurements of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) at two Coachella Valley locations in November 2013. In 2017, South Coast AQMD contracted with Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI) to implement an automated real-time email and text alert system to provide H₂S exceedance notifications. To better capture H₂S events, up to three additional H₂S monitors are planned for the region. This action is to execute a contract with STI to perform technical upgrades, integrate data from additional monitors, and maintain a real-time alert system for H₂S in the Coachella Valley at a cost not to exceed \$77,300 from the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35).

COMMITTEE: Administrative, April 9, 2021; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the Executive Officer to execute a sole-source contract with Sonoma Technology, Inc. at an initial cost not to exceed \$24,500 with an option to renew the annual operation support at an annual cost not to exceed \$16,000 in each of the next three years and an option to integrate data from up to three additional stations at a cost of \$1,600 per station for a total of \$77,300 over four years from the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35). The contractor will perform technical upgrades, integrate data from additional monitors and maintain a public alert system to provide automated alerts for H₂S.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

Background

Following a widespread hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) odor event in 2012, South Coast AQMD started continuous H₂S measurements at two locations in the Eastern Coachella Valley in 2013 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 and smells like rotten eggs. This process 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 communities in the Eastern Coachella Valley. 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 (2018 – 2020), there were between 22 and 50 days where the H₂S levels at one or more stations in the Coachella Valley exceeded the 30 parts-per-billion California State H₂S standard.

Under a contract executed in 2017, Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI) implemented a real-time H₂S alert system that uses data from two H₂S monitors maintained by South Coast AQMD. These monitors are located in Mecca and at a site along the northern shore of the Salton Sea. The previous contract included implementation of web interfaces for subscribers, as well as the administration of the subscription services and operational support.

Proposal

Staff proposes a sole-source contract with Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI), the contractor responsible for the development of our current real-time H₂S alert system, to continue maintaining the system and implement upgrades to improve reliability and uptime. The automated alerts are available via email with subscriber signups through a web interface. The initial cost for the first year of maintenance and to facilitate the required upgrades will not exceed \$24,500 with an option to renew the annual operational maintenance support at an annual cost not to exceed \$16,000 in each of the next three years and an option to add up to three new monitoring stations at a cost of \$1,600 per station. The total cost over four years is \$77,300 if the annual operational maintenance support contract is renewed each year and data from three additional monitoring stations is integrated into the web interface.

The AES Settlement Project Funds (35) recommended for funding this effort are not restricted by applicable statutes or the settlement agreement and; this fund was used for the initial contract with STI in 2017, with a total amount of \$78,000 over four years. Prior to the STI contract, the Board had used this fund for fleet rules, but the funds can be directed to other projects, with Board approval.

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 upgrade 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 upgrading and maintaining the H2S alert system due to their experience developing and operating the system in this location for the past four years.

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.