

BOARD MEETING DATE: January 7, 2022

AGENDA NO. 3

PROPOSAL: Execute Contracts for Legislative Representation in Washington, D.C.

SYNOPSIS: In September 2021, the Board approved the release of an RFP to solicit proposals for legislative representation in Washington, D.C. The Administrative Committee interviewed firms and made recommendations to the Board regarding a contract(s) for the agency's legislative representation. This action is to authorize the Chairman to execute contracts with Carmen Group for \$222,090; Cassidy & Associates for \$216,000; and Kadesh & Associates for \$226,392 for legislative consulting services in Washington, D.C. for one year beginning on January 15, 2022, with an option for up to two one-year renewals, upon satisfactory performance, at the Board's discretion.

COMMITTEE: Administrative, November 12 and December 10, 2021;
Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorize the Chairman to execute contracts with Carmen Group for \$222,090; Cassidy & Associates for \$216,000; and Kadesh & Associates for \$226,392 for legislative consulting services in Washington, D.C. for one year beginning on January 15, 2022, with an option for up to two one-year renewals, upon satisfactory performance, at the Board's discretion.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

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Background

The current contracts for legislative representation in Washington, D.C. expire on January 15, 2022. Following Board approval on September 3, 2021, staff released RFP

#P2022-01 to solicit proposals for legislative representation in Washington, D.C.

As one of the largest air quality regulatory agencies in the United States and a leader in air quality innovations, South Coast AQMD is an important contributor to national policymaking discussions relevant to air quality related issues. Representation in Washington, D.C. ensures that the agency's input and policy priorities are conveyed in a timely and effective manner during the federal legislative and policy-setting process.

It is critical that South Coast AQMD be involved in policy development relating to federal air quality legislation, federal Clean Air Act implementation, subvention funding, special grants, and that all these issues and any other related matters are closely monitored. Therefore, staff recommends continued direct representation and advocacy of South Coast AQMD's policy positions on environmental issues in Washington, D.C.

Outreach

In accordance with South Coast AQMD's Procurement Policy and Procedure, a public notice advertising the RFP and inviting bids was published in the Los Angeles Times, the Orange County Register, the San Bernardino Sun, the Riverside County Press Enterprise, and The Hill newspapers to leverage the most cost-effective method of outreach to qualified firms providing federal legislative representation services.

Additionally, to notify as many potential bidders as possible, approximately 20 RFP notification letters were emailed to lobbying and public affairs firms in the Washington, D.C. area. Notice of the RFP was also emailed to 13 state and federal legislative caucuses and diverse chambers of commerce and business associations and placed on South Coast AQMD's website (<http://www.aqmd.gov>) where it can be viewed by making the selection "Grants & Bids."

Bid Evaluation

Five proposals were received in response to the RFP. The proposals were evaluated and scored by a three-member evaluation panel (see Panel Composition section). All five proposals were considered technically qualified and forwarded to the Administrative Committee for consideration. The attached matrix presents the scores and total proposal costs for the firms interviewed by the Administrative Committee.

On November 12, 2021, the Administrative Committee made a decision to not interview Duncan, Weinberg, Genzer & Pembroke (DWGP) as the cost was twice as much as any of the other proposals. DWGP filed a bid protest on November 18, 2021. On December 3, 2021, DWGP provided comment to the Board which led to a decision to interview DWGP at the next Administrative Committee. DWGP has since withdrawn its bid protest.

Panel Composition

The evaluation panel consisted of one South Coast AQMD Assistant Deputy Executive Officer, one South Coast AQMD Public Affairs Manager, and the Director of Legislative and Public Affairs from San Bernardino County Transportation Authority. Of the three panelists, one is Asian American, one is Hispanic, and one is African American; one is female and two are male.

Committee Recommendations

After interviewing the five firms, and reviewing written materials submitted as part of the proposals, the Administrative Committee recommends to the Board the selection of the following firms: Carmen Group for \$222,090; Cassidy & Associates for \$216,000; and Kadesh & Associates for \$226,392.

Resource Impacts

The funding for the first year is available in the Legislative & Public Affairs FY 2021-22 Budget. Funding for the two optional one-year extensions is contingent upon Board approval for the respective fiscal years.