

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 5, 2021

AGENDA NO. 12

PROPOSAL: Amend Contracts for Legislative Representation in Sacramento, California

SYNOPSIS: The current contracts for legislative representation in Sacramento with Quintana, Watts and Hartmann; California Advisors, LLC, and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son expire on December 31, 2021. Based on the firms' effective performance during the first year of their current contracts, this action is to approve a one-year extension of the contracts with these three lobbying firms in the amount of \$180,000 for Quintana, Watts and Hartman, \$142,080 for California Advisors, LLC, and \$143,000 for Joe A. Gonsalves & Son, for legislative lobbying services in Sacramento for Calendar Year 2022. Sufficient funding is available in the Legislative, Public Affairs & Media FY 2021-22 Budget.

COMMITTEE: Administrative, October 8, 2021; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Authorize the Chairman to execute a one-year extension of the contract with Quintana, Watts and Hartmann at the current contract amount of \$180,000;
2. Authorize the Chairman to execute a one-year extension of the contract with California Advisors, LLC at the current contract amount of \$142,080; and
3. Authorize the Chairman to execute a one-year extension of the contract with Joe A. Gonsalves & Son at the current contract amount of \$143,000.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

DJA:LTO:PFC:RAR

Background

As a leading air quality agency in California and a leader in developing emission reduction programs, it is critical for South Coast AQMD to be an active participant in

policy discussions and activities in Sacramento. Representation in Sacramento ensures that South Coast AQMD input is conveyed in a timely and meaningful manner. It is critical that South Coast AQMD is involved in the day-to-day discussions in support of air quality priorities both through policy and funding to implement the 2016 AQMP, AB 617, administrative and operational issues, and other programs and projects.

In 2021, the lobbying firms of Quintana, Watts and Hartmann, Joe A. Gonsalves & Son, and California Advisors, LLC represented South Coast AQMD in Sacramento and performed at a high professional level.

Quintana, Watts, and Hartmann (Quintana) and the firm's principal, David Quintana, have a professional history which spans over 22 years, with extensive expertise in air quality and a wide range of issue areas. Mr. Quintana served as a Legislative Director in the State Senate and as a Consultant for the Senate Committee on Public Safety. Quintana has special capabilities that help provide access to sometimes difficult to reach legislators and other elected officials that can help resolve policy or political roadblocks during the legislative process. Quintana's experience and strong relationships help enhance the effectiveness of South Coast AQMD efforts to achieve policy and funding goals with respect to the California Legislature, Governor, and others.

Joe A. Gonsalves & Son (Gonsalves) is a Sacramento lobbying firm with decades of experience and strong ties to legislators on both sides of the aisle. The firm also has relationships with many cities throughout the state, including several within the South Coast region. With over 32 years of experience, the firm's principals are well-respected and knowledgeable on many local and statewide issues. On multiple occasions, while representing South Coast AQMD, Gonsalves has secured access for staff and Board Members to elected officials and key staff at critical junctures in the legislative process, including the Governor's office. They consistently demonstrate creativity in providing solutions and alternatives to legislative challenges regarding policy priorities and funding to help facilitate South Coast AQMD's ability to achieve its clean air mission and support the 2016 AQMP.

Will Gonzalez, principal of California Advisors, LLC, (Cal Advisors) has over 19 years of legislative and bipartisan political experience specializing in transportation, environmental and energy issues. Mr. Gonzalez also served as a Legislative Director in the state Legislature working on funding issues relating to compressed natural gas transit buses and innovative air quality programs. Cal Advisors' principals have a comprehensive understanding of both politics and policy and an extensive history of successfully representing South Coast AQMD policy and funding interests in Sacramento with respect to the Legislature, Governor and state agencies.

Throughout the year, the three firms have worked effectively and in coordination with

staff to advance the Board’s legislative agenda by facilitating meetings with legislators and staff and testifying in committees. The three firms work in concert to keep South Coast AQMD apprised of the latest developments in Sacramento. They have successfully negotiated bill language with legislative offices and committee staff and, when necessary, worked to have bills held in committee or otherwise not move forward if they were detrimental to the Board’s policy positions.

The three firms also work closely with staff to ensure that South Coast AQMD is strategically aware of policy and political considerations related to pending legislative and budget proposals. The constant communication among the firms and staff is essential to ensure that messaging is correctly communicated to Legislators and staff, as well as the Governor’s office. Their diligent efforts and ability to gather and communicate key information in a highly time-sensitive atmosphere are critical to supporting South Coast AQMD’s interests.

Cumulatively, during the 2021 state legislative year, the three consultant firms skillfully contributed to legislative efforts that led to South Coast AQMD budgetary and legislative successes, including the following:

- 1) \$50 million in statewide monies from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) for local air districts to fund implementation of community air monitoring and community emission reduction programs mandated by AB 617 (Garcia, 2017), with a significant portion of those funds to be directed to the South Coast region;
- 2) \$260 million in AB 617 incentive funding from the GGRF to be awarded to local air districts statewide to facilitate co-benefit criteria pollutant emission reductions. These funds support implementation of Community Emissions Reduction Plans by funding community priorities such as accelerating the turnover of older, polluting medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to cleaner ones;
- 3) \$45 million in Carl Moyer Program funding for air districts in severe or extreme nonattainment areas for the purchase of non-diesel medium- and heavy-duty vehicles emitting no more than 0.02g/bhp-hr NOx, that replace diesel vehicles;
- 4) The release of \$153 million in statewide Carl Moyer Program funds previously undispersed due to a state budget authority issue and facilitating the increase of CARB’s Budget Act allocation authority level for Carl Moyer Program funding, to disburse these funds to air districts in the future; and
- 5) Reclassification of South Coast AQMD from a “dependent special district” to an “independent special district,” through the State Controller’s Office. This change allows South Coast AQMD to apply for a portion of \$100 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act COVID-19 relief funding distributed by the state.

The three firms worked together to create an efficient and effective consultant team for South Coast AQMD. Their policy and political insights inform South Coast AQMD and strengthen its presence, credibility, and ability to support the Board’s policy priorities

and pursue funding needs in Sacramento. At this critical point in time, it is important that the momentum through political and stakeholder partnerships continue as we work on legislation and funding to achieve South Coast AQMD's mission and policy goals, including implementation of the 2016 AQMP.

Proposal

The contracts with the three firms expire on December 31, 2021. The current contracts have options for two one-year extensions that may be exercised at the Board's discretion, pursuant to the original RFP. This proposal is to approve the first one-year extension for each of the contracts.

Resource Impacts

The Legislative, Public Affairs & Media Budget for FY 2021-22 contains sufficient funds for this action.