

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 3, 2025

AGENDA NO. 10

PROPOSAL: Amend Contracts for Legislative Representation in Sacramento, California

SYNOPSIS: The current contracts for legislative representation in Sacramento, California with Joe A. Gonsalves & Son and Buckley Government Affairs, LLC expire on December 31, 2025. South Coast AQMD continues to require their legislative lobbying services in Sacramento for Calendar Year 2026. Based on the firms' effective performance during the second year of their current contracts, this action is to approve a second one-year extension of the contracts with these two lobbying firms in the amount of \$143,836 for Joe A. Gonsalves & Son and \$143,836 with Buckley Government Affairs, LLC. Sufficient funding is available in the Legislative, Public Affairs & Media FY 2025-26 Budget.

COMMITTEE: Legislative, September 12, 2025; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Authorize the Chair to execute a second one-year extension of the contract with Joe A. Gonsalves & Son at the current contract amount of \$143,836; and
2. Authorize the Chair to execute a second one-year extension of the contract with Buckley Government Affairs, LLC at the current contract amount of \$143,836.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

Background

The current contracts for legislative representation in Sacramento, California expire on December 31, 2025. As a leading air quality agency and an innovator in developing and implementing emission reduction programs, South Coast AQMD plays a critical role in policy discussions at the State Legislature. It is vital to ensure that South Coast AQMD's input continues to be conveyed in a timely and meaningful manner by engaging in the day-to-day policy discussions in Sacramento to promote cleaner air and protect the agency's authority, both through policy development and securing sufficient funding. A legislative presence in Sacramento is critical to advancing Board policies and priorities.

In 2025, the lobbying firms of Joe A. Gonsalves & Son (Gonsalves) and Buckley Government Affairs, LLC (BGA) represented South Coast AQMD in Sacramento and performed at a high professional level.

Gonsalves is a Sacramento lobbying firm with decades of experience and strong ties to legislators on both sides of the aisle. The firm has relationships with many cities throughout the state, including several within the South Coast region. With over 36 years of experience, the firm's principals are well-respected and knowledgeable on many local and statewide issues. On multiple occasions, Gonsalves has secured access for South Coast AQMD to elected officials and key staff at critical junctures in the legislative process, including the Governor's office, to help achieve positive policy and budgetary outcomes.

Ross Buckley is the principal of BGA and has been a primary representative of South Coast AQMD since 2019 through a previous firm and now through his own company, which he launched in 2025. He has an expansive network, a comprehensive understanding of both politics and policy and an extensive history of successfully representing South Coast AQMD in Sacramento. Mr. Buckley's over 15 years of experience in state government, government affairs, and politics has led to effective solutions for policy priorities and funding issues. Ross also spent six years working in the California State Legislature, including three years as Chief of Staff for an Assemblymember.

Throughout the year, the two firms have coordinated effectively with staff to advance the Board's legislative agenda. Their work has included facilitating meetings with Senators, Assemblymembers, and committee staff, as well as providing testimony in hearings. They have successfully negotiated bill language with legislative offices and committees and, when necessary, acted to hold or stop bills that would have harmed South Coast AQMD's policy and funding priorities. In addition, they ensure that South Coast AQMD remains strategically informed of policy and political considerations related to legislative and budget proposals. Both firms consistently demonstrate creativity in developing solutions to legislative challenges on key policy and funding

issues, helping to support South Coast AQMD's clean air mission.

Although the 2025 legislative session is in progress, Gonsalves and BGA have played a critical role in South Coast AQMD's legislative successes, such as:

- Advocating for FY 2025-26 Community Air Protection (AB 617) program funding, including \$50 million for air district implementation and \$50 million for emission reduction incentive programs, as well as a \$300 million annual appropriation beginning in FY 2026-27 through the Cap-and-Trade reauthorization process along with \$10 million annually for Community Air Grants.

Sponsored Legislation:

- AB 1338 (Solache) – Provides cost reimbursement to air districts for implementing the universal fence-line monitoring requirement on metal shredding facilities under AB 2851 (Bonta, 2024). This 2-year bill will be pursued in 2026, with planned amendments to preserve South Coast AQMD's authority to continue enforcing local metal shredder regulations.

Position bills:

- AB 1305 (Arambula): Would have imposed costly and duplicative permit reporting requirements on air districts. Opposed bill that is now dead.
- SB 318 (Becker): Sought broad regulatory changes that undermined air district authority, created redundant regulations, and imposed financial and administrative burdens on air districts. Opposed bill that is now dead.
- AB 1266 (Solache): Proposed onerous and costly requirements on large air districts' rulemaking. Worked with author and bill is no longer moving forward.
- SB 415 (Reyes) / AB 735 (Carrillo): Collaborated with authors to secure amendments to AB 98 (Carrillo, 2024) that required South Coast AQMD to conduct air monitoring and a study related to warehouses in the Inland Empire. The monitoring and study as originally chaptered into law were not feasible based on science and resources. Worked with author on amendments and funding for efforts was secured in the budget.

Gonsalves and BGA provide efficient and effective state legislative consulting services for South Coast AQMD. Their policy and political insights enhance South Coast AQMD's credibility, strengthen its presence in Sacramento, and advance the Board's

policy and funding priorities.

Proposal

The contracts with the two firms expire on December 31, 2025. 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 authorize the Chair to execute the second one-year contract extension with Gonsalves for \$143,836, and to authorize the Chair to execute the second one-year contract extension with BGA for \$143,836. Utilizing the services of these two firms in Sacramento will help build upon existing legislative efforts and strategic political and stakeholder partnerships created thus far and continue to promote South Coast AQMD's mission and 2026 legislative and funding priorities going forward.

Resource Impacts

The Legislative, Public Affairs & Media Budget for FY 2025-26 contains sufficient funds for this action.