

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 4, 2026

AGENDA NO. 13

PROPOSAL: Execute Contracts for Legislative Representation in Sacramento, California

SYNOPSIS: At the May 1, 2026 meeting, the Board approved release of an RFP to solicit proposals for legislative representation in Sacramento, California. Three separate proposals were received from Buckley Government Affairs, LLC, Catalyst, LLC and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son. On August 14, 2026, the Legislative Committee recommended approval of the execution of contracts with Buckley Government Affairs, LLC for \$144,500, Catalyst, LLC for \$180,000, and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son for \$168,000 for legislative representation in Sacramento.

COMMITTEE: Legislative, August 14, 2026, Recommended for Approval.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

1. Authorize the Chair to execute contracts with Buckley Government Affairs, LLC for \$144,500, Catalyst, LLC for \$180,000, and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son for \$168,000 in an amount not to exceed \$492,500 per year for legislative representation in Sacramento, California for a two-year period, beginning on January 1, 2027. The contracts include an option for one two-year renewal, contingent on satisfactory performance and approval of subsequent budgets, upon approval of the Governing Board.

Wayne Natri  
Executive Officer

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**Background**

The current contracts for legislative representation in Sacramento, California expire on December 31, 2026. Legislative representation for South Coast AQMD in Sacramento is critical to advancing the Board's policies and priorities through direct engagement with the Legislature, Governor's Office, agencies, and other stakeholders. South Coast AQMD's legislative representatives engage in ongoing

communication with Capitol offices to build and maintain relationships and effectively represent the agency's interests. Core activities include, but are not limited to:

- Acting as a liaison with Capitol offices on Board policy and funding priorities;
- Protecting the agency's regulatory authority to adopt and implement rules, regulations and policies that are needed to achieve state and federal air quality standards;
- Monitoring, analyzing, and recommending positions on bills, and representing the agency through testimony and negotiations on legislative and budget matters;
- Advocating for South Coast AQMD's sponsor and position bills to achieve Board priorities;
- Providing technical expertise and serving as a resource on air quality issues to build relationships on behalf of the agency; and
- Securing funding and support for technology advancement, emission reduction projects, and incentive programs.

These efforts also include fostering state support for South Coast AQMD's federal initiatives.

A challenging political and economic environment is expected to continue to affect legislative, funding, and policy issues. South Coast AQMD is expected to continue to navigate issues framed by affordability concerns, a tight state budget, high fuel and energy costs, increased scrutiny of zero-emission mandates, efforts to prescribe or repeal local rules and regulations, ongoing issues on energization, deployment of infrastructure and clean technologies, data centers, and other issues. These challenges will be compounded by continued turnover in the Legislature, requiring renewed outreach and education to newly elected members and staff who may be less familiar with South Coast AQMD's mission, authority, and regional air quality needs. As a result, maintaining a strong, consistent, and strategic presence in Sacramento will be critical to advancing South Coast AQMD's policy and funding priorities. Legislative representation for South Coast AQMD in 2027 may include advancing the following policy and funding priorities:

- Protect and expand funding by maintaining existing resources, such as the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, and identifying new, sustainable revenue streams to support programs that achieve state and federal air quality standards, implement the Community Air Protection Program (AB 617), and reduce toxic air contaminants to protect public health.
- Preserve South Coast AQMD authority to raise revenue and impose fees as needed and to implement the Board's clean air policies and programs, including those required by state and federal Clean Air Acts, to support Air Quality Management Plans, State Implementation Plans and Letters of

Commitment with U.S. EPA and CARB. Additionally, oppose unfunded state mandates.

- Advance clean transportation and goods movement policies by supporting funding and programs that accelerate deployment of the cleanest technologies available with a priority on zero-emission where commercially viable for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, locomotives, oceangoing vessels, aircraft, and off-road equipment.
- Advocate for policies and funding to address energization challenges such as interconnection, grid capacity, infrastructure upgrades, permitting hurdles, and reliability.

Additional issues of potential interest include data centers, CEQA reform, and other issues.

The development of South Coast AQMD's 2027 legislative guiding principles and policy priorities will depend largely on the outcome of the 2026 legislative session. However, many of 2026's program elements and policy priorities are expected to continue, and it is anticipated that there will be a need to build upon them in the coming 2027 legislative year in Sacramento. South Coast AQMD's legislative priorities for 2027 will be presented to the Legislative Committee for review and approval, and then will move to the Board for final approval.

At the May 1, 2026 meeting, the Board approved release of an RFP to solicit proposals for legislative representation in Sacramento, California. Three separate proposals were received from Buckley Government Affairs, LLC, Catalyst, LLC, and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son. On August 14, 2026, the Legislative Committee recommended approval of the execution of contracts with Buckley Government Affairs, LLC for \$144,500, Catalyst, LLC for \$180,000, and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son for \$168,000, for a total amount not to exceed \$492,500 for legislative representation in Sacramento.

### **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, Riverside County's Press Enterprise, and the Sacramento Bee newspapers, to leverage the most cost-effective method of outreach to the entire South Coast Basin and beyond.

Additionally, RFP notices were emailed to lobbying and public affairs firms in California. Notice of the RFP was e-mailed to legislative caucuses and various minority chambers of commerce and business associations and placed on South Coast AQMD's website (<http://www.aqmd.gov>).

**Bid Evaluation**

Three proposals were received in response to the RFP. The proposals were evaluated by a three-member panel, including one South Coast AQMD executive, who was male and Latino; one South Coast AQMD manager, who was male and Latino; and one outside state official, who was female and Latina. All proposals were deemed technically qualified, and all proponents were interviewed by the South Coast AQMD Legislative Committee. Attachment A provides the final scores for the three firms.

**Proposal**

Staff proposes to execute contracts with Buckley Government Affairs, LLC for \$144,500, Catalyst, LLC for \$180,000, and Joe A. Gonsalves & Son for \$168,000 in an amount not to exceed \$492,500 per year for legislative representation in Sacramento, California, for a two-year period, beginning on January 1, 2027. The contracts include an option for one two-year renewal, contingent on satisfactory performance and approval of subsequent budgets, upon approval of the Governing Board.

**Resource Impacts**

Funding for these contracts is available in the Legislative, Public Affairs & Media FY 2026-27 Budget. Funding for the optional two-year extension in all 3 contracts is contingent upon Governing Board approval of the Budget for the respective fiscal years.

**RFP #P2026-08 SCORES AND COSTS MATRIX  
FOR QUALIFYING FIRMS**

| <b>Firm Name</b>                | <b>Technical Score</b> | <b>Additional Points</b> | <b>Cost Points</b> | <b>Total Points</b> | <b>Total Cost</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Buckley Government Affairs, LLC | 64.0                   | 2.0                      | 30.0               | 96.0                | \$144,500         |
| Catalyst, LLC                   | 66.7                   | 12.0                     | 22.5               | 101.2               | \$180,000         |
| Joe A. Gonsalves & Son          | 66.7                   | 0                        | 25.2               | 91.9                | \$168,000         |