NOFO No. R23AS00109

WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants for FY 2023 and 2024

FOR DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

MAY 23, 2024

WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT

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1.1 Executive Summary

Date: 05/23/2024

Applicant: Water Replenishment District of Southern California

City, County, State: Lakewood, Los Angeles County, California

Task Area/Category: Task C – Drought Contingency Planning Applicant (Develop New Plan)

Project Title: Water Replenishment District of Southern California Drought Contingency Plan

The Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) was formed in 1959 to manage groundwater replenishment and groundwater quality activities for four million people within its service area in Southern Los Angeles County. WRD is advancing development of a Drought Contingency Plan (DCP or Project) that will meet the requirements of the United States Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR or Reclamation) Drought Response Framework and promote regional drought resiliency for WRD and the many stakeholders within its service area. Drought threatens the quantity and quality of groundwater supplies in the area which causes increased stress to imported water supplies and WRD's ongoing efforts to prevent seawater intrusion. The DCP will be developed collaboratively with a diverse group of stakeholders including West Basin Municipal Water District, the cities of Long Beach and Torrance, and local Non-Governmental Organizations. The planning process will further define the drought monitoring process and allow WRD to perform vulnerability and climate change assessments, identifying risks and evaluating potential impacts. Mitigation and response actions will be identified and an Operational and Administrative Framework developed. A DCP will help WRD and stakeholders identify the next drought in the early stages and react accordingly in a coordinated way to minimize impacts to the region. WRD is respectfully requesting $173,645 from Reclamation to leverage WRD funds and support development of the DCP. The DCP will leverage current WRD groundwater basin management efforts and will advance local, regional, and statewide priorities identified in WRD's WIN4All Strategic Plan, the Los Angeles County Water Plan, and the California Water Plan Update 2023.

Project Timeline: The proposed planning efforts are anticipated to last a total of 24 months to complete Phase 1 (formation of a Drought Planning Task Force and development of a detailed Work Plan) and Phase 2 (development of the DCP).

Federal Facility: The proposed planning efforts are not for a project on a Federal facility and will not involve Federal land, but will provide an indirect benefit to Federal water supplies through a reduced regional reliance on imported water, relieving pressure on Colorado River and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta) water sources.

1.2 Project Location

The Project will directly benefit WRD's service area which covers a 420-square-mile region of southern Los Angeles County, California, the most populated county in the United States. WRD manages the groundwater replenishment and groundwater quality activities for the adjudicated Central Basin and West Coast Basin. Four million people reside in the 43 cities that

overlie the groundwater basins. **Figure 1** shows WRD's service area (the Project location).

Figure 1. Project Location

1.3 Technical Project Description

WRD is the largest groundwater agency by population in the state of California, managing local groundwater resources for four million residents to provide, protect, and preserve safe and sustainable groundwater. The 43 cities in the service area, including a portion of the city of Los Angeles, and other unincorporated parts of Los Angeles County use about 220,000 acre-feet (72 billion gallons) of groundwater annually. WRD is not a retailer but manages groundwater which accounts for approximately half of the region's water supply. Imported water and recycled water are the other sources of water supply for the region.

For over 50 years, local agencies, including WRD, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, West Basin Municipal Water District, and numerous other agencies and cities have been collaborating and implementing critical measures, such as water reclamation and reuse, water conservation, improved maintenance of supply and delivery infrastructure, the capture and use of stormwater, and multiple salinity management projects to prevent overdraft, replenish the Central Basin and West Coast Basin aquifer system, and protect groundwater quality.

The Central Basin and West Coast Basin are two of the most heavily utilized groundwater basins in Southern California. Severe groundwater overdraft occurred in the early half of the 20th century, causing groundwater elevations to be depressed by over 100 feet below sea level, resulting in an estimated 600,000 acre-feet (AF) of seawater intrusion and contamination of the aquifer system by the late 1950s.[1] In response, the basins were adjudicated to limit pumping and associated groundwater overdraft, managed aquifer recharge facilities were constructed to halt seawater intrusion and replenish the basins, and WRD was formed by a vote of the people for the purpose of protecting Central Basin and West Coast Basin groundwater resources.

Los Angeles County Flood Control District constructed and currently operates three seawater intrusion barriers: the West Coast Basin Barrier Project, the Dominguez Gap Barrier Project, and the Alamitos Gap Barrier Project. WRD purchases over 90% of the water injected into the barriers which consists of a blend of treated imported water and an increasing portion of advanced treated recycled water. Historical seawater intrusion is most significant in the West Coast Basin where a large seawater-impacted plume is stranded inland of the West Coast Basin Barrier. One desalter facility is currently operating to remediate this saline plume.

WRD's groundwater management activities also entail active replenishment operations, including managed aquifer recharge in the Montebello Forebay where spreading grounds are used to recharge stormwater, untreated imported water, and tertiary-treated recycled water. The Albert Robles Center for Water Recycling and Environmental Learning (an Advanced Water Treatment Facility funded in part by Reclamation's WaterSMART Water Recycling and Desalination grant program) was constructed to achieve independence from imported water for WRD's groundwater replenishment operations, a goal that was achieved in 2019. As shown in **Figure 1** on page 4, the Albert Robles Center for Water Recycling and Environmental Learning is located in Pico Rivera, adjacent to the San Gabriel River, within the Montebello Forebay.

Drought is a regional occurrence, and water supply availability in WRD's service area is a function of available water from groundwater managed by WRD, as well as that from regional imported water suppliers who distribute water purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Currently, municipal water users in the WRD service area are reliant on imported surface water supplies for approximately 50% of their water demand (totaling ~250,000 acre-feet per year). Imported surface water supplies are rapidly affected by, and vulnerable to, drought conditions. Groundwater supplies managed, protected, and augmented by WRD through recycled water, desalination, and stormwater capture are more resilient to variable natural precipitation during droughts but are by no means immune. Many municipalities and other users rely heavily on groundwater for water supply, particularly during drought periods when local surface and imported water supplies are more significantly impacted. This increased demand coupled with reductions in groundwater recharge through natural mechanisms (mostly underflow from adjacent basins) can serve to reduce groundwater storage and strain groundwater supplies. The impacts of drought can be seen in changes to storage in the Central Basin and West Coast Basin, as shown in **Figure 2** on page 6**.**

[1] California Department of Water Resources, Bulletin No. 104, 1962.

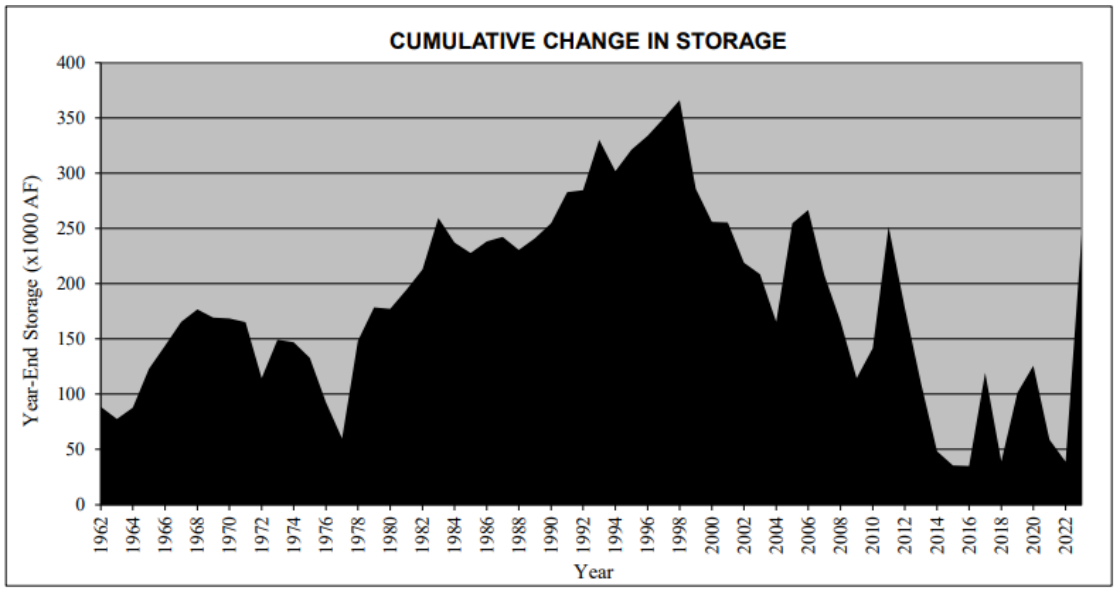

Figure 2. Cumulative Change in Storage in Central Basin and West Coast Basin, 1962-2023

WRD is working to build on its legacy of effective groundwater management by developing additional drought management infrastructure, storage resources, and mitigation strategies to offset drought related hazards. Drought planning is a proactive effort to prepare for future droughts, reducing the impacts they cause and conflicts they create.

1.4 Evaluation Criteria

1.4.1 Evaluation Criterion A – Project Benefits

Identify the threats to water supply, water quality, and river-based ecosystem or watershed health within the geographic area of the planning or design project.

There are multiple threats to WRD and to regional water supply reliability stemming from vulnerabilities within the Project area, all of which are exacerbated by climate change and prolonged drought conditions. Major threats include groundwater overdraft, sea water intrusion, groundwater contamination, and affordability.

Groundwater Overdraft

From 1900 through the 1950s, over-pumping of the basins caused declines in groundwater levels, seawater intrusion, and other groundwater management problems related to supply reliability and quality. To remedy these problems, the courts adjudicated the two basins in the early 1960s and set a limit on allowable groundwater production. The adjudicated pumping amounts are greater than the natural replenishment of the groundwater aquifers under natural conditions, creating an annual deficit or annual overdraft. Accordingly, WRD was established in 1959 to provide the needed supplemental replenishment water to restore basin sustainability and is the groundwater management agency responsible for maintaining the quality and quantity of groundwater in the region.

Recurring drought can exacerbate overdraft due to a reduction in natural recharge, increased pumping, and impacts to artificial recharge from existing WRD basin management measures.

During drought periods, water users in WRD's service area rely more heavily on groundwater than during normal and wet years. Los Angeles County was in some stage of drought for seven consecutive years from January 2012 to January 2019.[2] Droughts statewide and in the greater Colorado River Basin also threaten additional overdraft due to reductions in imported water supplies upon which many purveyors rely. State-wide drought and anticipated effects of climate change in the State Water Project (SWP) source area in the Bay-Delta impact the availability and reliability of SWP deliveries. Final allocations of SWP supply in 2022 and 2023 were five percent of water agencies contracted amounts, and the Department of Water Resources anticipates that by 2050, the Sierra snowpack will be reduced from its historical average by 25–40 percent. In Southern California, warming and population growth are projected to increase water demand, reliance on imported water and the use of groundwater.[3] Local climate change impacts are expected to increase the annual variability in precipitation and increase annual average maximum temperatures.[4] All these factors can lead to groundwater overdraft, especially during times of extended drought.

Major efforts are underway regionally to reduce reliance on imported water. WRD has reduced imported water reliance through the development of recycled water projects and is committed to continue increasing the use of sustainable groundwater supplies and decreasing reliance on imported water. However, even recycled water is not immune to the effects of drought as increased conservation reduces influent to wastewater treatment plants, subsequently reducing the production of recycled water available for recharge.

Sea Water Intrusion

Due to the proximity of the ocean in southwest Los Angeles County, the groundwater aquifers WRD manages are at risk of seawater intrusion. To mitigate the impacts of historical seawater intrusion and prevent further seawater intrusion, WRD has implemented and maintains three seawater barriers. These barriers consist of injection wells positioned like dams between the ocean and the groundwater aquifer. By injecting water along the barrier to maintain a high-water level near the ocean, seawater is prevented from seeping in. WRD collaborates with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) to operate and maintain these barrier projects. The injected water includes a combination of high-quality recycled water and imported water, quantified by project in **Figure 3**. By 2050, sea levels are anticipated to rise by

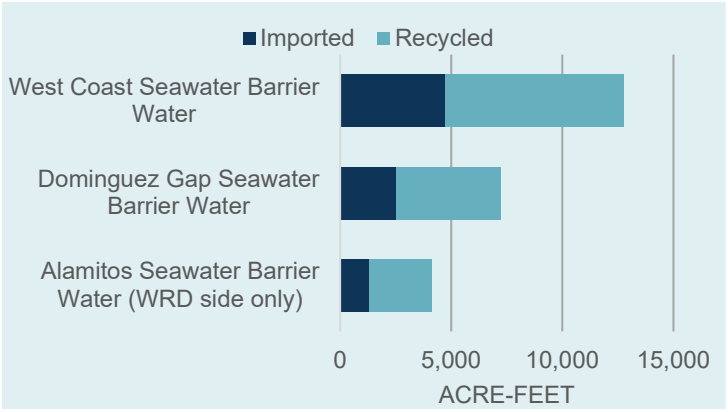

Figure 3: WRD Barrier Injection for Water Year 2022-23

[2] National Drought Monitor, Los Angeles County
[3] USBR's 2016 SECURE Water Act Report
[4] Cal-Adapt's Local Climate Change Snapshot Tool for Paramount, California.

an average of 0.8 feet in intermediate scenarios along the coast of California, increasing the threat of seawater intrusion into coastal groundwater aquifers.[5]

Groundwater Contamination

Many potential groundwater contamination sources exist within WRD's service area due to a large and diverse industrial and commercial presence. One such group of contaminants are per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which have affected groundwater sources. PFAS are bioaccumulatory, meaning they can build up in the human body and environment. In 2021, the California State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water announced the response level (RL) for two of the most commonly used PFAS: 10 parts per trillion for PFOA and 40 parts per trillion for PFOS based on a running four-quarter average. There are over 34 wells with PFAS levels above the RL in WRD's service area (mapped in **Figure 4**), and there are 13 different water purveyors that operate these PFAS-affected wells.[6] On April 10, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency announced the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) limits for five of the most commonly used PFAS and these limits are more stringent than the RL. Other groundwater quality threats in WRD's service area include elevated perchlorate and elevated chloride.

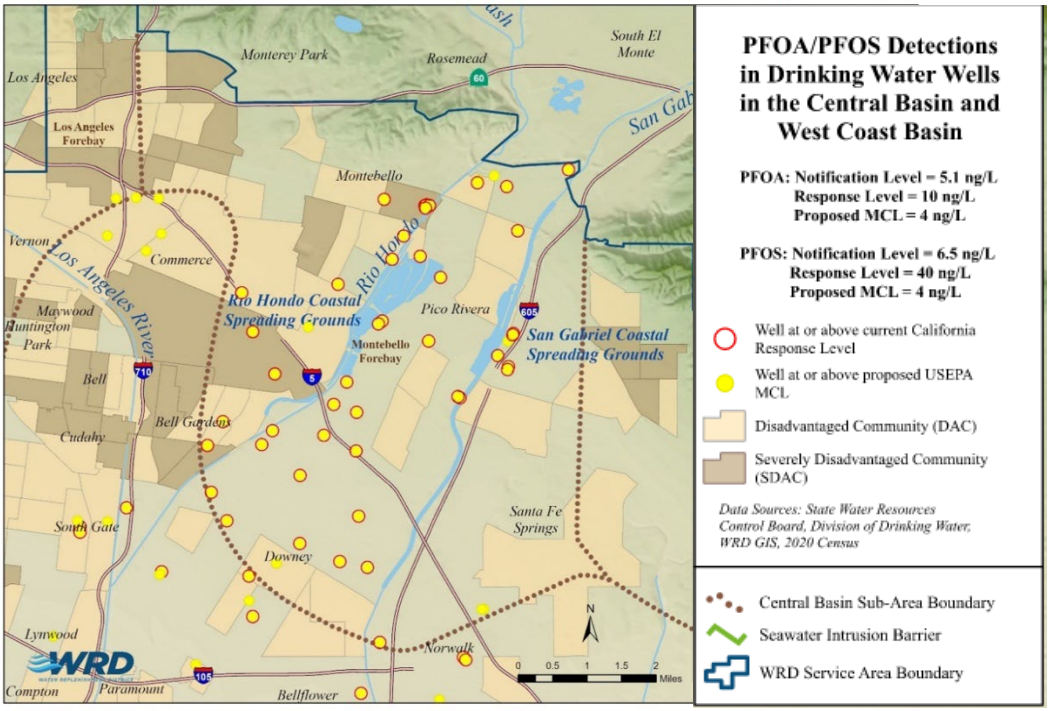

Figure 4: PFAS Concentration above RL and USEPA MCL in WRD Service Area

Affordability

All of the aforementioned threats compound to threaten affordability. One of the greatest risks to affordability is imported water which is multiple times more expensive than pumped groundwater. Groundwater provided by WRD, including

[5] California Sea Level Rise Guidance: 2024 Science and Policy Update
[6] WRD's 2022 2 Year Strategic Plan

during drought periods, is available for under $450 per AF. In contrast, typical rates for imported water are $1,200+ per AF, a figure that is likely to increase during drought periods. Rising costs will impact millions of local residents, particularly customers of 21 Disadvantaged Community water agencies. Approximately 2 million people (about half of the population of WRD's service area) live in disadvantaged census tracts as identified using the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. Decreased future availability (a 10% reduction in total water supplies statewide is anticipated by 2040[7]) and corresponding competition for imported water supplies is likely to increase the cost of imported water even more and result in greater financial challenges for communities already impacted by economic poverty and environmental burdens.

How do the threats identified in your response to the preceding bullet impact specific water uses or sectors in the geographic area of the planning or design project?

Drought-related threats affect the entirety of WRD's diverse service area which includes 4 million people, 43 cities, and 80 active groundwater pumpers, and a major portion of the commercial, industrial, and tourism activity of one of the world's largest economies.

Local Purveyors and Water Managers

Drought related hazards typically develop slowly over time. These hazards can be difficult to avoid, manage, or mitigate because the ability to do so often depends on the availability of sufficient water storage and management infrastructure, and on water managers' ability to effectively plan for and implement water conservation measures. Water conservation implementation includes two key elements: effective demand management and the availability or ability to deploy drought-resilient infrastructure. Reduced availability of water supplies, whether resulting from groundwater overdraft, seawater intrusion, quality concerns, or reduced availability of imported water has implications both for WRD and all water purveyors within the service area. Within WRD's service area, 64 purveyors are permitted to provide public water service to help meet the water demands for domestic, irrigation, and recreational uses of their customers.[8] These purveyors, which are owners or lessors of adjudicated groundwater rights under the respective Basin judgments, range in type and size, such as smaller special districts, irrigation districts, mutual water companies, and larger private and public water agencies (e.g., Bellflower Home Gardens Water Company, which has 342 connections and serves a population of about 1,130 people; and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which has about 680,000 connections and serves a population of over 4 million across its entire service area).

Normal operations can often be sustained through minor to moderate levels of drought with little disruption to normal activities. However, once a drought crosses a certain threshold of severity, managers' ability to effectively continue to provide a near-normal level of service can deteriorate rapidly. To the extent that WRD can increase the reliability of and local reliance on groundwater, WRD's service area will become substantially more resistant to the deleterious effects of drought. In collaboration with the Drought Planning Task Force stakeholders, WRD

[7] California's Water Supply Strategy

[8] Basin Plan for the Coastal Watersheds of Los Angeles and Ventura Counties

intends to identify a series of contamination remediation, storage, and replenishment projects as part of the DCP development that will ultimately reduce the impact of any given drought on the region by increasing groundwater supplies available during a drought.

Multiple risks can compound to water purveyors with wells affected by elevated PFAS, as they must notify the public about the well or move the well out of use. This can result in a reliance on expensive imported water. Severe droughts can also result in an increase of other hazard-creating events, such as forest fires and brush fires, even in highly urbanized and developed areas such as south Los Angeles County. Droughts can also reduce water available for recreation, wildlife, and other uses.

Rate Payers & The Public

When purveyors must rely more heavily on imported water, the increased wholesale costs are eventually borne by the rate payer through their water bill. Industrial and commercial users face economic impacts; however, the greatest burden is on residential (single-family and multi-family) users, the largest customer sector served by local water purveyors. Approximately half of the total population in WRD's service area – about 2 million people – live in a Disadvantaged Community or Severely Disadvantaged Community, defined as census tracts with a median household income less than 80% and 60% of the statewide average, respectively.[9] Even moderate increases in monthly water bills can add burden to already strained household expenditures.

Some pumpers do not have access to imported water and rely solely on groundwater production. The threat of well closure due to contamination or the need to physically lower wells due to declining groundwater levels is especially critical in low-income communities, where lost production can significantly increase the cost of tap water. As droughts increase in severity, increasingly stringent conservation measures are required.

Local Businesses, Tourism, and Industry

During extended droughts, the resulting impacts on communities in WRD's service area can be long lasting—and potentially longer lasting than the drought itself. For example, in areas affected by severe or prolonged droughts, water-intensive industries may need to shift to alternative operations or locations. As previously noted, industrial and commercial water users are among the customer types that are served water by the 64 public water systems in WRD's service area. On the other hand, some entities have their own groundwater wells and produce their own water resources as owners or lessors of adjudicated groundwater rights under the respective Basin judgments. Examples of such groundwater users/pumpers, include food product manufacturing companies, chemical manufacturing/processing businesses, metals manufacturing, environmental remediation parties, dairies, and cemetery districts.[10] The result can be notable changes in the underlying economy, which can cause longer term effects on the availability of jobs and standards of living.

Water is critical to the Los Angeles County economy. With an annual gross domestic product of

[9] Based on 2020 Census Data

[10] https://www.wrd.org/administrative-body

over $900 billion, if Los Angeles County were a country, it would be the world's 19th largest economy.[11] The County's population of nearly 10 million would make it the 9th largest state in the U.S. WRD has nearly 4 million residents in its service area. Los Angeles County could suffer devastating impacts on its economy and quality of life if a major disruption to the region's imported and local water supplies were to occur, making resiliency key to a stable future.

State Water Systems

Effectively managing drought at a local level is critical to all water purveyors and water users in California. To the extent that WRD can increase the reliability of and local reliance on groundwater, less pressure is exerted on state systems during the times when the supply they provide is needed most.

How will the planning or design project help address the threats to water supplies and water uses identified in your response to the preceding bullets?

The benefits of the development of a Drought Contingency Plan will include the following:

Promote Sustainable Management of Groundwater Resources

The comprehensive evaluation of water supply vulnerabilities completed as part of the plan development will inform strategies that will protect groundwater supply and quality. Around 80 pumpers rely on groundwater managed by WRD, all with different circumstances, considerations, and needs. The collaborative nature of the planning effort and a regional approach to drought preparedness is anticipated to create a shared understanding of mitigation actions and buy-in when response measures must be implemented.

Reduce Reliance on Imported Water for Purveyors

The DCP will identify actions and projects that will help improve the availability and reliability of local groundwater supplies, offsetting the demand for drought-sensitive and unsustainable imported surface water. A comprehensive, regional response plan will help optimize local water supply and help to build a more drought resilient future.

Promote Regional Collaboration

Developing the DCP will include the identification of actions and projects that will benefit multiple agencies. Planning and preparation with stakeholders prior to the next drought is critical and will result in better preparation, clear actions, and consistent messaging with the public.

Minimize Affordability Risk & Promote Economic Vitality

Los Angeles County could suffer devastating impacts to its economy and quality of life if a major disruption to the region's water supplies were to occur. By bolstering local water supplies and maximizing groundwater reliability, the Project will help protect the economic vitality of the region. Drought resiliency helps safeguard affordability for communities. Increased sustainability of groundwater pumping also helps improve groundwater quality through WRD's management activities. For example, WRD's PFAS Remediation Program is a regional water treatment program that offers financial and technical

[11] U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, GDP: All Industries in Los Angeles County, CA; World Bank Group.

support to water purveyors seeking to treat PFAS-affected wells. By assisting purveyors to bring contaminated wells back online through the remediation of affected wells, public exposure to PFAS is reduced, spreading of the contaminants throughout the service area is prevented, and an uninterrupted supply of high-quality groundwater is available at affordable rates. Even with treatment costs included, groundwater from WRD is more affordable than imported water. Continued sustainable groundwater supply during future droughts is essential for communities and local economies to flourish.

Is the planning or design effort for the purpose of providing domestic water supplies to a Tribe, insular area, or disadvantaged communities that do not have reliable access to water supplies?

WRD replenishes and protects the groundwater supply of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin of southern Los Angeles County. These groundwater basins are two of the most heavily utilized in California, providing approximately half of the total water demand for the region. WRD serves approximately 4 million people (10 percent of the State's population) residing in 43 cities. Forty-nine percent of the population in WRD's service area is considered disadvantaged per the State's criteria-household income less than 80% of statewide median (Median Household Income of $47,493) with additional breakdown as follows:

- 12% is less than 50% of Median Household Income (MHI)
- 29% is between 50% and 70% of MHI
- 10% is between 70% and 80% of MHI

Over 2 million people (about half of the population of WRD's service area) live in disadvantaged census tracts as identified using the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (mapped in **Figure 6** on page 19). Disadvantaged census tracts are located within the cities of: Bell, Bell Gardens, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Hawthorne, Huntington Park, Inglewood, Los Angeles, Lynnwood, Maywood, Montebello, Paramount, Vernon, and others.

A more reliable local groundwater supply reduces reliance on expensive imported water, helping to ensure reliable and affordable access to water in these DACs. Some pumpers do not have the infrastructure to access imported water, making the reliability of groundwater even more critical.

Does the planning or design effort involve the improvement of nature-based features?

This planning effort does not involve the improvement of nature-based features.

Is the project for the purpose of meeting existing environmental mitigation or compliance obligations under Federal or State law?

The Project would not directly be for the purpose of meeting existing environmental mitigation or compliance obligations. However, as mentioned previously in this section, preparation for future droughts and the ability to reduce the necessity of purchasing expensive imported water will indirectly help WRD continue to implement and expand groundwater contamination remediation programs like the PFAS Remediation Program.

1.4.2 Evaluation Criterion B – Inclusion of Stakeholders, Stakeholder Support, and Previous Planning Efforts

Subcriterion B1: Task C Drought Contingency Planning: *Will the project help meet the water supply needs of a large geographic area, region, or watershed?*

WRD is the largest groundwater agency by population in California and the development of a DCP will benefit a 420-square-mile area in southern Los Angeles County, California which includes four million people in 43 cities. As described in Evaluation Criterion A, the needs of the area are diverse, and development of a DCP will improve WRD's ability to respond effectively to drought conditions which is critical for the future well-being of the region.

If the project is supported by an existing water planning effort, please describe that effort.

WRD's preparation of a DCP has not been identified in an existing plan, but the project shares a nexus with multiple regional plans including:

Los Angeles County Water Plan 2023 Edition: More than 200 agencies are responsible for water management in Los Angeles County. The first edition of this plan was approved by the County Board of Supervisors in December 2023 and provides a roadmap for improving water resilience in the region and achieving 80 percent local water supplies by 2045. Many stakeholders including water professionals, tribes, community leaders, and other stakeholders collaborated on the development of the plan. The plan identified strategies for a resilient water future, many of which align with WRD's management activities. The Project will directly help implement Strategy 2: *Collaborating on Consistent Drought Preparedness and Response Messaging*. The plan is scheduled for adoption by WRD's board in May 2024.

California Water Plan Update 2023: This plan outlines a comprehensive strategy for enhancing the state's water systems' sustainability and resilience. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration across diverse Californian communities and recognizes the state's varied economy, ecosystems, and cultures as strengths in addressing water management challenges. The plan is structured around seven key objectives, with a focus on supporting watershed resilience planning and implementation, improving the resiliency of built water infrastructure, and advancing equitable outcomes in water management. The Project will directly help implement Objective 1: *Support Watershed Resilience Planning and Implementation*. Overall, the plan charts a roadmap to resilience, aiming to adapt to climate change, create economic opportunities, and improve public and environmental health and safety.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California 2020 Integrated Water Resources Plan Regional Needs Assessment: This needs assessment evaluated Southern California's water supply challenges, highlighting uncertainties due to climate change, variable weather, and stressed ecosystems. Scenario planning was performed where Metropolitan Water District collaborated with member agencies to analyze four potential futures, considering factors like weather patterns, demographic changes, and regulatory impacts. Findings identified the criticality of maintaining existing and developing new local supplies (such as groundwater) to achieve regional water supply reliability.

Identify stakeholders in the planning area who have committed to be involved in the planning process.

WRD has reached out to various stakeholders with mutual concerns of drought impacts and the

need for a DCP. The stakeholders represent the local community, specifically entities that pump groundwater and provide water to residents and businesses within WRD's service area. With 43 cities, four million people, and approximately 80 active pumpers within WRD's service area, there will be a diverse set of opinions and impacts to consider. WRD's approach to navigating this challenge is to rely on various types of active groundwater pumpers; specifically, pumpers that are considered small (less than 5,000 acre-feet of groundwater rights, medium (between 5,000 and 10,000 acre-feet of groundwater rights) and large (more than 10,000 acre-feet of groundwater rights), pumpers that provide water within the Central Basin and West Coast Basin, regional water providers and stakeholders, and advocacy groups.

The following stakeholders have provided letters of support for the DCP:

- City of Long Beach: water purveyor with water rights in both basins; considered a large pumper in the Central Basin and small pumper in the West Coast Basin.
- West Basin Municipal Water District: District stakeholder and water district providing imported and recycled water in the West Coast Basin.
- City of Torrance: water purveyor with water rights in the West Basin, considered medium-sized pumper.
- Friends of the Los Angeles (LA) River: The Los Angeles River flows through the Central Basin, the organization supports vulnerable communities with climate adaptation.
- South East Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative: Network of organizations working together to strengthen the capacity of the nonprofit sector and increase civic engagement in Southeast Los Angeles, which is within the Central Basin.

WRD has built a reputation of being a reliable and innovative public agency and has been able to build support for large-scale projects through its stakeholder and community engagement. In Phase 1 of the DCP, WRD will actively work to identify stakeholders to include in the planning process. Robust participation by a wide variety of stakeholders from various sectors will make the mitigation actions identification process more inclusive and holistic and will help create buy-in, broadening support for the future implementation of identified actions. Stakeholders who do not want an active role in the development of the DCP can still provide input through the review and feedback of materials developed by the Drought Planning Task Force. WRD's award-winning outreach program empowers under-represented communities by involving them in projects from the very beginning. WRD has collaborated with other stakeholders and interested parties on multiple regional initiatives and plans such as a basin Salt and Nutrient Management Plan, the Greater Los Angeles County Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, and the Los Angeles County Water Plan.

Describe stakeholders in the planning area who have expressed their support for the planning process, whether or not they have committed to participate.

WRD has invited all stakeholders who have provided a letter of support to be part of the planning process. WRD has received a commitment from the cities of Long Beach and Torrance and is waiting to hear back from the others. In addition, WRD plans to reach out to other pumpers and stakeholders representing a diverse area within the Basin. Stakeholders and roles will be finalized during Phase 1 of the DCP.

For tribal strategies or plans that will be developed collaboratively with multiple tribal interests, but do not include collaboration with external entities, please provide explanation as to why collaboration with entities external to the Tribe will not occur in the development of the strategy or plan.

The plan is not intended to directly serve tribal interests, but local tribal contacts will be invited to be part of the planning process if desired, including Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino/Tongva Nation of the Greater Los Angeles Basin, Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, and the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council.

Describe what efforts the applicant will undertake to ensure participation by a diverse array of stakeholders in the development of a plan (or plan update).

At the onset of the planning effort, the Task Force will develop a Communication and Outreach Plan to define the most effective methods for gathering input and garnering consensus from the public and Outreach group. The Communication and Outreach Plan may include a combination of stakeholder group workshops, written communications, interactive social media, and if needed, one-on-one meetings between Task Force members and the broad group of stakeholders. When a draft version of the DCP is available, the draft will be made available on WRD's website and emailed to stakeholders to gather feedback that can be incorporated into the final DCP. WRD will work to identify stakeholders to include in the planning process.

Is there opposition to the proposed planning effort?

WRD is not aware of any opposition to the creation of a DCP. To the contrary, as water retailers, WRD's customers understand the value of planning for drought and are supportive of WRD's planned efforts, as evidenced by the letters of support attached to this application.

1.4.3 Evaluation Criterion C – Ability to Meet Program Requirements

Describe how the project will address the program specific requirements described in the appropriate program-specific appendix.

Phase 1 of the Project will include the establishment of a Drought Planning Task Force that will include a diverse group of interested stakeholders within WRD's service area. A Detailed Work Plan and a Communication and Outreach Plan will be developed with the input of the Drought Planning Task Force and Reclamation.

Phase 2 of the Project will include the development of the Drought Contingency Plan which will involve:

- development of processes to monitor near and long-term water availability and quantify drought risks and conditions,
- a vulnerability assessment evaluating drought risks and impacts based on a range of future conditions, including uncertainties related to changing hydrologic conditions,
- the identification, evaluation, and prioritization of mitigation actions that will build long-term resiliency,
- the identification, evaluation, and prioritization of response actions and activities that can be implemented during a drought to mitigate the impacts,

- development of an operational and administrative framework, identifying responsibilities to implement and communicate each element of the plan,
- and a report describing the plan development process and the processes for monitoring, evaluation, and future plan updates.

WRD has support from its Board of Directors to prepare and implement a DCP and is ready to proceed upon entering into a financial assistance agreement with Reclamation.

Describe the approach that will be undertaken to meet the applicable program components and requirements.

A preliminary Project schedule is shown in **Figure 5**. A detailed schedule including responsibilities for tasks and milestones will be developed soon after the start of the Project and once a qualified and experienced drought contingency planning consultant has been procured. A preliminary Project budget and narrative is provided in **Section 2** of this application. The estimated preliminary budget for the entire Project is $347,291.

	Year 1												Year 2											
Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Phase I																								
Task 1: Consultant Procurement	■	■	■																					
Task 2: Establish Drought Planning Task Force			■	■	■	■																		
Task 3: Develop Detailed Work Plan			■	■	■	■	■																	
Phase II																								
Task 1 : Drought Monitoring							■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■										
Task 2: Vulnerability Assessment									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Task 3: Mitigation Actions									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Task 4: Response Actions									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■					
Task 5: Operational and Administrative Framework																			■	■	■			
Task 6: DCP Development and Update Process																■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Task 7: Project Management and Evaluation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Figure 5: Proposed Project Schedule Overview

WRD's service area includes many urban water supplies who are required by California state law to adopt and submit an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP).[12] California state law also requires every urban water supplier to prepare and adopt a Water Shortage Contingency Plan as part of its UWMP.[13] These plans identify shortage response actions for the agencies which may serve to inform the identification of potential mitigation and response actions during the development of the DCP.

Describe the availability and quality of existing data and models applicable to the plan.

WRD performs extensive collection, analysis, and reporting of groundwater data to ensure proper resource management of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin. Accurate data tracking, forecasting, and modeling systems are needed to ensure water quality and quantity

[12] Urban Water Management Planning Act of 1983 (California Water Code Section 10610-10656 and 10608)
[13] California Water Code Section 10632

for the drought resiliency of WRD's service area. Key data collection and monitoring systems implemented by WRD that are applicable to the DCP include:

- Regional Groundwater Monitoring Program - currently consists of a network of 354 monitoring wells at 63 locations throughout the service area. WRD staff engage in year-round activities to monitor groundwater conditions and publish a Regional Groundwater Monitoring Report on an annual basis summarizing groundwater levels and quality over the past Water Year (October 1 through September 30).
- Groundwater Basin Update – WRD staff produce a monthly groundwater basin update report that is presented to a committee of WRD's Board. The report includes critical resource planning information, such as precipitation trends, surface water storage reservoir statuses, groundwater recharge levels, types of water sources used for replenishment (local, recycled, imported), and groundwater pumping trends.
- The USGS has developed a model of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin which uses the USGS MODFLOW program based on hydrologic data and basin operations in a cooperative effort with WRD. This enables WRD to simulate water levels and storage in the basins and consider hydrologic variations over a long-term period.[14]
- Aquifer systems were defined by geophysical logs, lithology, geochemistry, and vertical water level differences within the USGS MODFLOW model to support WRD's understanding of the movement and quality of groundwater, particularly in terms of salt and nutrients in the basins.[15]
- As the Watermaster Administrative Body for the two adjudicated basins, WRD oversees the reporting of all groundwater extractions by parties to the West Coast Basin Amended Judgement and Central Basin Third Amended Judgement. Groundwater extraction volumes are self-reported by pumpers and are subject to water meter reading tests to ensure accuracy within a reasonable range per the judgments. WRD staff analyze extraction, storage, and other water rights transactions throughout the year and produce internal trend reports for WRD management on a quarterly basis.

Identify staff with appropriate technical expertise and describe their qualifications.

WRD plans to procure a consultant with experience in the development of Drought Contingency Plans to assist in the planning efforts. WRD Project leadership are anticipated to include:

Asha Kreiling (Water Resources Analyst/Project Manager): Asha has a Masters in Public Administration with an emphasis on Environmental Science and Policy and a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Systems Policy; and has more than eight years' experience in water, science, analysis, and policy. She provides planning, policy analysis, and advocacy of various water initiatives and grant opportunities for WRD and its stakeholders.

Esther Rojas (Manager of Water Resources/Project Director): Esther has a Masters in City & Regional Planning and Bachelor of Arts in Economics; and has more than 15 years' experience in water resources policy, planning, outreach, advocacy, and funding programs. She acts as the Watermaster for the Central Basin and West Coast Basin, which are two of the most utilized

[14] WRD Technical Bulletin, Volume 6

[15] Salt and Nutrient Management Plan - Central Basin and West Coast Basin

urban groundwater basins in the nation and is responsible for overseeing the Water Resources department and all outside funding.

Jenn Swart (Sr. Public Affairs Representative/Outreach & Communications): Jenn has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Geography and has been in a Public Affairs role for more than ten years. She provides outreach and communication to various types of stakeholders in watershed health, groundwater, recycled water, and water conservation. She manages WRD's community education programs and facilitates stakeholder engagement.

Angie Mancillas (Manager of External Affairs/Outreach & Communications Oversight): Angie has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science; and has more than 15 years of experience in community and stakeholder outreach and communications. She has served on the Board of Directors for the California Groundwater Coalition and various regional chambers of commerce. Angie is responsible for overseeing the WRD's External Affairs department, community outreach, and lobbying activities.

Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the plan or project being designed.

No new policies or administrative actions would be required to implement the plan. Any projects resulting from the plan will be approved through WRD's typical administrative and procurement process. Contracts or other documents involving expenditures by WRD must be authorized by WRD's Board of Directors through a Board meeting consistent with WRD's Administrative Code and applicable laws (e.g., the Ralph M. Brown Act).

1.4.4 Evaluation Criterion D – Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities

Climate Change: *Please provide specific details and examples on how the project will address the impacts of climate change and help combat the climate crisis.*

The Project will increase water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change by reducing reliance on imported water and augmenting local water supply resiliency. As described in Section 1.4.1, climate change impacts in Southern California are expected to increase the annual variability in precipitation and increase annual average maximum temperatures, making droughts more frequent and more severe. Recent droughts have highlighted the vulnerability of imported water supplies and multiple regional planning efforts have resolved to improve regional resiliency. Development of a DCP will help further efforts to monitor drought in the region, define vulnerabilities to drought and prioritize mitigation and response actions to minimize impacts due to climate change in the region.

Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities: *Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community?*

Approximately 2 million people (about half of the population of WRD's service area) live in disadvantaged census tracts as identified by the White House Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool. As shown in **Figure 6**, disadvantaged census tracts are located within the cities of: Bell, Bell Gardens, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Hawthorne, Huntington Park, Inglewood, Los Angeles, Lynnwood, Maywood, Montebello, Paramount, Vernon, and others. The DCP will benefit disadvantaged communities by improving

the reliability and availability of groundwater supplies which cost substantially less than imported water. Resilience and improved ability to manage water resources during drought will be particularly beneficial for water systems that partially or completely serve disadvantaged communities and are less likely to have the capacity to implement proactive drought resilience measures. There are over 30 public water systems that serve disadvantaged census tracts within WRD's service area, and the DCP will promote coordination to mitigate existing drought impacts and prepare for future needs.

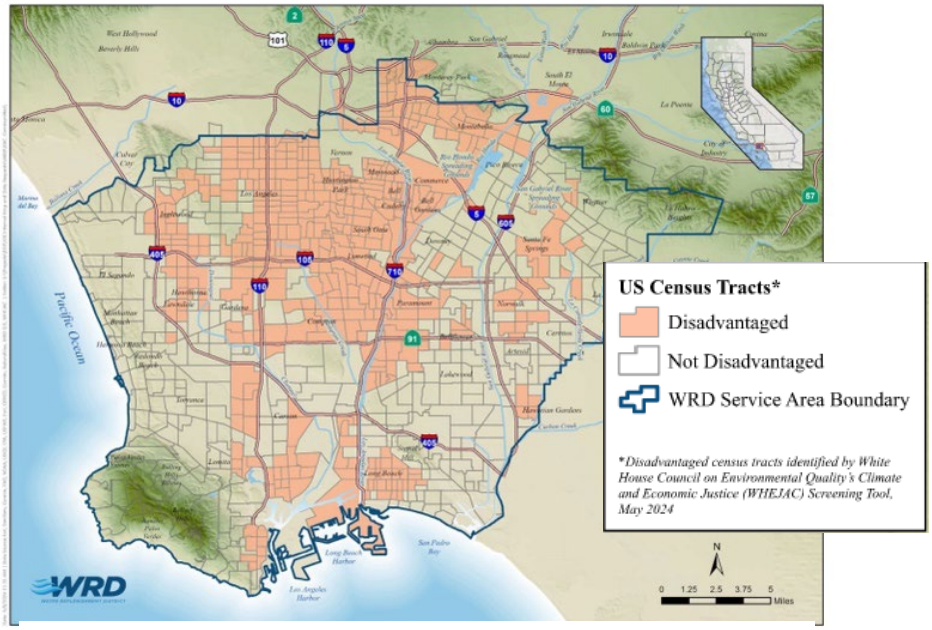

Figure 6: WRD Service Area Disadvantaged Census Tracts

Tribal Benefits: *Does the proposed project directly serve and/or benefit a Tribe?*

The Project will not directly serve or benefit a Tribe, but by providing additional drought resilient supplies as banked groundwater within its service area, the Project will allow overlying communities to substantially reduce their demand for imported water during periods of drought. Reductions in imported water demand will, in turn, alleviate strain on California's water transmission infrastructure and upstream sources. The Project will leave additional water in California's system to support junior appropriators and other water right holders across the state. As a result— particularly during dry and critical water periods—the Project will free up much-needed water supplies to other users, including Tribal and rural appropriators and other water users. The Project will support drought resiliency and improved water management directly within WRD's service area, but also across the state to other users including those served by the State Water Project, the Colorado River, and potentially the Central Valley Project.

The plan is not intended to directly serve tribal interests, but local tribal contacts will be invited to be part of the planning process if desired, including Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino/Tongva Nation of the Greater Los Angeles Basin, Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, and the Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council.

1.4.5 Evaluation Criterion E – Nexus to Reclamation

Is there a Reclamation project, facility, or activity within the planning area? Is the planning area in the same basin as a Reclamation project, facility, or activity?

There is not a Reclamation project, facility, or activity within the planning area or basin. However, WRD imports water from Metropolitan Water District and its member agencies, West Basin Municipal Water District, & the City of Long Beach which in turn import water from the Colorado River and the State Water Project (SWP). Reduced reliance on imported water during a drought will relieve pressure on the Colorado River and water sourced from the Bay-Delta. This will in turn positively affect federal water projects such as the Central Valley Project (CVP). Overseen by USBR, the CVP has long-term agreements to supply water to more than 250 contractors in 29 California counties. CVP deliveries provide an average of 5 million AF of water for farms, 600,000 AF of water for municipal and industrial uses, and water for wildlife refuges and maintaining water quality in the Bay-Delta.[16] Offsetting the use of SWP water would have a direct benefit to the Bay-Delta system and CVP water that would benefit the San Joaquin River and Sacramento River watersheds. Reductions in surface water use would help to improve in-stream flows and enhance habitat locally, in the Bay-Delta ecosystems, and the Central Valley Basin for non-listed as well as federally endangered and protected species.

Several WRD facilities and projects were funded in part by Reclamation grant funding, including the Robert W Goldsworthy Desalter (now called the Torrance Groundwater Desalter Expansion Project), Leo J Vander Lans Advanced Water Treatment Facility, and the Groundwater Reliability Improvement Program Recycled Water Project (now called the Albert Robles Center for Water Recycling and Environmental Learning).

In what way will the proposed project benefit a basin where a Reclamation project, facility, or activity is located?

Projects or actions identified in WRD's DCP development process would benefit Reclamation activities by increasing local, sustainable, drought-resilient water supplies. Projects to reduce southern Los Angeles County's reliance on imported water from the Colorado River and Central Valley Project, for example, would:

- promote Reclamation's mission to address water management issues in the Colorado River Basin
- support the Reclamation's "Lower Colorado River Operations Program" agreement and drought contingency plans for the Upper and Lower Colorado River Basins
- allow for more storage capacity in the Upper Basin, as mandated in Reclamation's Demand Management Storage Agreement.
- address findings of Reclamation's 2016 Sacramento and San Joaquin Basins Study by developing a local, drought-proof, reliable recycled water source for groundwater replenishment. In doing this, DCP projects will make it easier for Reclamation to meet other contractual arrangements and continue comprehensive efforts to achieve reliable water supply for California and a healthy Delta ecosystem.

Does the applicant have a water service, repayment, or O&M contract with Reclamation? Does the applicant receive Reclamation water through a Reclamation contractor or by any other contractual means?

No.

[16] USBR's Central Valley Project Description

2.0 Project Budget

2.1 Funding Plan and Letters of Funding Commitment

The estimated cost for the DCP is $347,291. WRD commits to providing up to $173,645 or 50% of the total in non-federal match funds in support of the activities identified in this application. It is expected that this amount will be satisfied by WRD's operating budget funded through the replenishment assessment, which is WRD's main revenue source. No third-party contributions are included in the cost-share amount. All match funds needed for the DCP will be made available as soon as the grant is awarded.

Budget Proposal

Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources (Phase I and II)

Funding Sources	Amount
Non- Federal Entities	
Water Replenishment District of Southern California	$173,645
Non- Federal Subtotal	**$173,645**
REQUESTED Reclamation Funding	**$173,645**

Table 2. Budget Proposal (Phase I and Phase II)

Budget Item Description	$/Unit	Quantity	Quantity Type	Total Cost
Personnel				
Project Manager	$51/hour	520	Hours	**$ 26,754**
Project Director	$93/hour	150	Hours	**$ 13,955**
Communications & Outreach	$62/hour	80	Hours	**$ 4,962**
Communications & Outreach Oversight	$95/hour	40	Hours	**$ 3,796**
Fringe Benefits				
Project Manager	$16.75/hour	540	Hours	**$ 9,045**
Project Director	$25.90/hour	200	Hours	**$ 5,180**
Communications & Outreach	$17.52/hour	80	Hours	**$ 1,402**
Communications & Outreach Oversight	$15.62/hour	40	Hours	**$625**

Budget Item Description	$/Unit	Quantity	Quantity Type	Total Cost
Personnel and Fringe Subtotal				**$65,721**
Budget Item Description	**$/Unit**	**Quantity**	**Quantity Type**	Total Cost
Contractual				
Consultant (TBD)			Lump sum	**$ 275,000**
Indirect				
De minimis	10%		Lump sum	**$ 6,572**
Total Estimated Project Costs				**$ 347,291**

Note: See Budget Narrative for details regarding assumptions for anticipated efforts by Phase and estimated costs provided in Table 2.

Table 3. Total Project Cost Table

Source	Amount
Cost to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	**$ 173,645**
Cost to be paid by the applicant	**$ 173,645**
Value of third-party contributions	**N/A**
TOTAL project cost	**$ 347,291**

2.2 Budget Narrative

Personnel

1- Water Resources Analyst/Project Manager: It is estimated that the Project Manager Asha Kreiling will spend approximately 120 hours for Phase 1 and 400 hours for Phase 2 of this project. She will be responsible for procurement and oversight of the qualified expert consultant, oversee the development of the Detailed Work Plan, act as the liaison with staff and the selected consultant, oversee compliance and reporting requirements for financial and performance reporting, and serve as the main contact for the DCP.

- Hourly Rate: the hourly rate for Phase I and Phase II reflects a 5% increase, which includes an average merit and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase. The hourly rate is based on the actual current labor rate of the identified personnel and is consistently applied to Federal and non-federal activities:

  -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 1: 120 hrs X ($49.00 + $2.45) = $6,174

  -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 2: 400 hrs X ($49.00 + $2.45) = $20,580

2- Manager of Water Resources/Project Director- It is estimated that the Project Director Esther Rojas will spend approximately 50 hours for Phase 1 and 100 hours for Phase 2 of this project. She will provide executive-level oversight of the project and assist with procurement activities, development of the work plan, provide quality control and assist with stakeholder outreach.
    - Hourly Rate: the hourly rate for Phase I and Phase II reflects a 5% increase, which includes an average merit and COLA increase. The hourly rate is based on the actual current labor rate of the identified personnel and is consistently applied to Federal and non-federal activities.
        -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 1: 50 hrs X ($88.60 + $4.43) = $4,652
        -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 2: 100 hrs X ($88.60 + $4.43) = $9,303
3- Sr. Public Affairs Representative/Outreach & Communication: It is estimated that this position will spend approximately 45 hours for Phase 1 and 35 hours for Phase 2. They will be responsible for coordinating activities with stakeholders and public engagement. Specifically, assisting with meeting logistics, and coordinating and implementing public outreach for the project.
    - Hourly Rate: the hourly rate for Phase I and Phase II reflects a 5% increase, which includes an average merit and COLA increase. The hourly rate is based on the actual current labor rate of the identified position and is consistently applied to Federal and non-federal activities.
        -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 1: 45 hrs X ($59.08+ $2.95) = $2,790
        -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 2: 35 hrs X ($59.08+ $2.95) = $2,170
4- Manager of External Affairs/Outreach & Communication Oversight- It is estimated that this position will spend approximately 25 hours for Phase 1 and 15 hours for Phase 2. They will provide oversight of stakeholder and public engagement, and the implementation of public outreach for the project.
    - Hourly Rate: the hourly rate for Phase I and Phase II reflects a 5% increase, which includes an average merit and COLA increase. The hourly rate is based on the actual current labor rate of the identified position and is consistently applied to Federal and non-federal activities.
        -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 1: 25 hrs X ($90.39 + $4.52) = $2,375
        -(Y1 & Y2)-Phase 2: 15 hrs X ($90.39 + $4.52) = $1,425

Fringe Benefits

Hourly amount (less than 35% of compensation for all positions): Fringe benefits are based on hours for each staff member and include benefits and required taxes paid for each position. Fringe rates have been computed at $16.75 for the Project Manager and $25.90 for the Project Director and are applied to the 540 and 200 hour estimates for each position. In addition, the fringe rates have been computed at $17.52 for the Outreach & Communication Staff and $15.62 for the Outreach & Communications Oversight Staff and are applied to the 80 and 40 hour estimates for each position.

Travel

No travel costs are anticipated for preparing the DCP.

Equipment

No equipment costs are anticipated for preparing the DCP.

Supplies

No supply costs are anticipated for preparing the DCP.

Contractual

WRD will conduct a competitive procurement process to retain a qualified technical drought consultant for Phase 1 & Phase 2 of the DCP as part of Phase 1-Task 1. Based on the average cost of local provider services, it is anticipated that the total cost of the contract is approximately $275,000. The scope of the contract and refined cost will be included in the detailed work plan (Phase 1- Task 3).

Construction

No construction costs are required for preparing the DCP.

Other

Other expenses associated with the DCP include the following assumed reporting requirements for the grant which are accounted for in personnel and contract costs:

- Semiannual Financial Reports
- Annual Performance Reports
- Final Performance Report

Indirect Costs

A 10% de minimis rate was applied to the modified direct cost to account for indirect costs associated with clerical, administrative and other costs accounted for in the WRD's accounting system.

Total Costs

The total eligible cost of the DCP under this NOFO is $347,291. Of this, WRD is committed to a cost share of $173,645 (50% of the total eligible project costs). Expenses will be covered directly by WRD and/or from other non-federal funding sources secured for the project.

We respectfully request $173,645 from USBR under this NOFO. This represents 50% of the total eligible cost share. Please see **Table 1** for the Proportion of Non-Federal Funding.

3.0 Environmental & Cultural Resources Compliance

Environmental and cultural resources compliance is not required for the planning activities proposed for the grant. The Project will not complete National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) or California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or CEQA-Plus environmental documentation as part of the grant funded work.

4.0 Required Permits or Approvals

No permits or approvals are required for the planning activities proposed for the grant.

5.0 Statements

5.1 Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

The proposal submitted for consideration under this program does not in any way duplicate any proposal or project that has been submitted for funding consideration to any other potential funding source—whether it be Federal or non-Federal.

In May 2024, WRD submitted a USBR Title XVI Feasibility Study on PFAS treatment projects on behalf of seven water systems impacted by PFAS contamination in their water supply within the Central Basin. The Feasibility Study intends to allow those water systems to apply directly for Title XVI construction funding for their respective projects after approval of the Feasibility Study by the USBR.

WRD is in the process of submitting implementation grant applications for the Torrance Groundwater Desalter Expansion Project at the state and federal levels (e.g. California DWSRF, Federal WIFIA).

These efforts are not duplicative of efforts associated with this Drought Contingency Plan efforts; they are related and complementary.

5.2 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

In accordance with 2 CFR §1402.112, WRD is providing a statement that no actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of this application submission.

5.3 Uniform Audit Reporting Statement

WRD was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. The Employer Identification Number (EIN) associated with that report is 95-6006456 and it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

Official Resolution

Due to the timing of the Board meetings, the executed Official Resolution authorizing the General Manager, or Designee, as the authorized representative to prepare, review, approve and file an application and execute agreement(s) for the U.S Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART: Planning and Project Design Grants for FY23 and 24 Funding Opportunity will be provided if selected for an award. Resolution No. 24-1225 was recommended on May 16, 2024 by the WRD's Water Resources Committee and adopted by the Board of Directors on May 21, 2024. A copy of a Resolution No. 24-1225 is attached (pending signatures). A copy of the signed resolution will be submitted once signatures are obtained.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-1225

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR AND EXECUTION OF A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES BUREAU OF RECLAMATION FOR FEDERAL FUNDING UNDER THE WATERSMART DROUGHT RESPONSE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (District) is a special district created under the laws of the State of California charged with replenishing the Central Groundwater Basin and the West Coast Groundwater Basin and maintaining the groundwater quality in said basins; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the Water Replenishment District of Southern California ("the Board") continues to pursue projects through its Water Independence Now 4 All ("WIN4ALL") program to further increase the region's use of local, sustainable groundwater supplies to reduce reliance on imported water; and

WHEREAS, these efforts by the Board have become increasingly important in the face of California's historic drought conditions and restrictions on imported water to Southern California; and

WHEREAS, the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has released a funding opportunity under the WaterSMART Drought Response Program for Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 to make planning and project design funding available to qualifying applicants;

WHEREAS, the Board desires to submit a funding application to develop a Drought Contingency Plan consistent with Reclamation's Drought Response Program Framework; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Water Replenishment District of Southern California, as follows:

1. Approves the filing of an application for the Bureau of Reclamation's Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 WaterSMART Drought Response Program for the development of a Drought Contingency Plan.

2. If selected for the WaterSMART grant, staff will work with Reclamation to prepare the necessary materials needed to enter into a cooperative agreement and to meet the established deadlines for entering into a cooperative agreement.

3. The Water Replenishment District of Southern California will fund at least 50 percent of the project costs.

4. Appoints the General Manager, or his designee, as legal agent to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, payment requests and so on, for the United States Bureau of Reclamation's Fiscal Year 2023 and 2024 WaterSMART Drought Response Program grant.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the Water Replenishment District of Southern California this 16th day of May 2024 by the following vote:

Ayes_____
Noes_____
Absent_____

WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

_____
Joy Langford
President, Board of Directors

ATTEST:

_____
Vera Robles DeWitt
Secretary, Board of Directors

_____
DATE

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____
Leal Trejo APC
Attorneys for the Water Replenishment
District of Southern California

Letters of Support

No.	Letters of Support
1	West Basin Municipal Water District
2	City of Long Beach
3	City of Torrance
4	Friends of the Los Angeles (LA) River
5	Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) Collaborative

17140 S. Avalon Blvd.
Carson, CA 90746

310-217-2411
www.westbasin.org

May 6, 2024

Ms. Sheri Looper
Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Support for Water Replenishment District's Bureau of Reclamation Drought Contingency Planning Grant Application

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Dear Ms. Looper,

West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin) is pleased to support the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) in its grant application for federal funding to develop a Drought Contingency Plan in response to Funding Opportunity Announcement R23AS00109 WaterSMART Planning and Project Design for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and FY 2024.

West Basin is a regional water wholesaler that serves high-quality drinking water to nearly one million residents in Los Angeles County. We are also one of California's largest producers of recycled water, delivering up to 40 million gallons per day of drought-proof supplies to the region, while preventing the same volume of treated sewage from being discharged into the ocean.

WRD, whom we have a long-time partnership, is the largest groundwater agency by population in the state of California, managing and protecting local groundwater resources for four million residents. WRD's service area covers a 420-square-mile region of southern Los Angeles County and includes 43 cities.

A cooperative agreement with Reclamation to develop a comprehensive Drought Contingency Plan will include the formation of a Drought Planning Task Force and development of a Detailed Work Plan, followed by the development of the Plan. The development of the Plan through an open and inclusive planning effort will help WRD proactively plan for and respond to drought.

17140 S. Avalon Blvd.
Carson, CA 90746

310-217-2411
www.westbasin.org

The Plan will address monitoring and early recognition of drought, vulnerability to drought, risks and impacts to critical resources, and development of strategies and actions that can be implemented when faced with drought conditions. This effort will support regional collaboration and is essential for the sustainability and long-term resiliency of local communities.

West Basin attests to the value this effort will bring to WRD's customers and the region as a whole, resulting in better water resources management and preparation for times of drought. We support this effort and look forward to collaborating with WRD, as needed, in the development of the plan.

Sincerely,

E.J. Caldwell
General Manager
West Basin Municipal Water District

LONG BEACH Utilities
Water · Gas · Sewer

CHRISTOPHER J. GARNER, General Manager

1800 E. Wardlow Road, Long Beach, CA 90807
562.570.2300 | LBUtilities.org

April 23, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Support for Water Replenishment District's Bureau of Reclamation Drought Contingency Planning Grant Application

Dear Ms. Looper,

The Long Beach Utilities Department is pleased to support the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) in its grant application for federal funding to develop a Drought Contingency Plan in response to Funding Opportunity Announcement R23AS00109 WaterSMART Planning and Project Design for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and FY 2024.

WRD is the largest groundwater agency by population in the state of California, managing and protecting local groundwater resources for four million residents. WRD's service area covers a 420-square-mile region of southern Los Angeles County and includes 43 cities. The development of the Plan through an open and inclusive planning effort will help WRD proactively plan for and respond to drought. The Plan will address monitoring and early recognition of drought, vulnerability to drought, risks and impacts to critical resources, and development of strategies and actions that can be implemented when faced with drought conditions. This effort will support regional collaboration and is essential for the sustainability and long-term resiliency of local communities.

As the largest water rights holder in the Central Basin, the Long Beach Utilities Department can attest to the value this effort will bring to the City of Long Beach and the region as a whole. We support this effort and look forward to collaborating with WRD in the development of the plan.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Garner
General Manager

CITY OF
TORRANCE
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

SEE WHAT TORRANCE IS DOING

Craig Bilezerian
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

May 2, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Support for Water Replenishment District's Bureau of Reclamation Drought Contingency Planning Grant Application

Dear Ms. Looper,

Torrance Municipal Water (TMW), the municipal water utility for the City of Torrance, is pleased to support the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) in its grant application for federal funding to develop a Drought Contingency Plan in response to Funding Opportunity Announcement R23AS00109 WaterSMART Planning and Project Design for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and FY 2024.

WRD is the largest groundwater agency by population in the state of California, managing and protecting local groundwater resources for four million residents. WRD's service area covers a 420-square-mile region of southern Los Angeles County and includes 43 cities.

A cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to develop a comprehensive Drought Contingency Plan will include the formation of a Drought Planning Task Force and development of a Detailed Work Plan, followed by the development of the Plan. The development of the Plan through an open and inclusive planning effort will help WRD proactively plan for and respond to drought. The Plan will address monitoring and early recognition of drought, vulnerability to drought, risks and impacts to critical resources, and development of strategies and actions that can be implemented when faced with drought conditions. This effort will support regional collaboration and is essential for the sustainability and long-term resiliency of local communities.

As a municipal retail water agency in the South Bay region of Los Angeles County, TMW can attest to the value this effort will bring to WRD's customers and the region, resulting in better water resources management and preparation for times of drought. We fully support this effort and look forward to collaborating with WRD, as needed, in the development of the plan.

Sincerely,

Andrew Darlak,
Water Operations Manager
City of Torrance

FRIENDS OF THE LA RIVER

570 W. AVE 26 #250
LOS ANGELES
CA 90065
323.223.0585
CONTACT@FOLAR.ORG

May 8, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Support for Water Replenishment District's Bureau of Reclamation Drought Contingency Planning Grant Application

Dear Ms. Looper,

Friends of the Los Angeles is pleased to support the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) in its grant application for federal funding to develop a Drought Contingency Plan in response to Funding Opportunity Announcement R23AS00109 WaterSMART Planning and Project Design for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and FY 2024.

WRD is the largest groundwater agency by population in the state of California, managing and protecting local groundwater resources for four million residents. WRD's service area covers a 420-square-mile region of southern Los Angeles County and includes 43 cities.

A cooperative agreement with Reclamation to develop a comprehensive Drought Contingency Plan will include the formation of a Drought Planning Task Force and development of a Detailed Work Plan, followed by the development of the Plan. The development of the Plan through an open and inclusive planning effort will help WRD proactively plan for and respond to drought. The Plan will address monitoring and early recognition of drought, vulnerability to drought, risks and impacts to critical resources, and development of strategies and actions that can be implemented when faced with drought conditions. This effort will support regional collaboration and is essential for the sustainability and long-term resiliency of local communities.

As a CEO of FoLAR I can attest to the value this effort will bring to WRD's customers and the region as a whole, resulting in better water resources management and preparation for times of drought. I / we support this effort and look forward to collaborating with WRD, as needed, in the development of the plan.

Sincerely,

Candice Dickens-Russell
President & CEO

May 10th, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Sheri Looper
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Support for Water Replenishment District's Bureau of Reclamation Drought Contingency Planning Grant Application

Dear Ms. Looper,

The SELA Collaborative is pleased to support the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) in its grant application for federal funding to develop a Drought Contingency Plan in response to Funding Opportunity Announcement R23AS00109 WaterSMART Planning and Project Design for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and FY 2024.

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As a nonprofit organization representing a network of organizations in the Southeast region, we attest to the value this effort will bring to WRD's customers and the region, resulting in better water resources management and preparation for times of drought. We support this effort and look forward to collaborating with WRD, as needed, in the development of the plan.

Sincerely,

Dr. Wilma Franco

Executive Director