Funding Opportunity No. R24AS00059
WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects
For Fiscal Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025

Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Water Resources and Planning Office

Submitted by:
San Benito County Water District
30 Mansfield Road
Hollister, CA 95023
(Category A – Applicant)

Turf Removal Program

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Category A – Irrigation / Water District

Executive Summary

The San Benito County Water District (SBCWD) is a federal contractor with the Bureau of Reclamation in the Central Coast region of California. The SBCWD receives Central Valley Project Water (CVP). The surface water is pumped through an enclosed, pressurized pipe from San Luis Reservoir through the Pacheco Pass via the San Felipe Project. The SBCWD receives agricultural and Municipal and Industrial (M&I) water from the CVP. The M&I water is used at the two surface water treatment plants in the county to improve drinking water quality for the urban residents of northern San Benito County. Growers have access to agricultural water through the many turnouts along the pipe system.

Drought and environmental concerns in California have hampered surface water deliveries from the Central Valley Project for over a decade. When allocations of surface water are diminished or non-existent, residents and water providers turn to groundwater in the North San Benito Groundwater Basin. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has listed the local groundwater basin as a "medium priority" basin, experiencing moderate risk of negative impacts due to potential overdraft. Reducing water demand by removing existing lawns through a Turf Removal Program would put less stress on the imported surface water allocations and less stress on the local groundwater basin.

Landscape irrigation is the largest portion of residential water use, especially in hotter inland areas and cities with larger lots such as San Benito County. While lawns have value for recreation and aesthetics, replacing existing turf lawns with well-designed, low water landscapes that incorporate native and climate-appropriate shrubs, grasses, and trees, along with mulch varieties that replenish soil and retain water, can have many benefits.

SBCWD will leverage funding to increase existing water use efficiency programs offered to commercial, institutional, and residential water users. The Water Resources Association San Benito County (WRASBC), a fiduciary subsidiary of SBCWD, will operate the program. The WRASBC Committee is comprised of representatives from the City of Hollister, City of San Juan Bautista, Sunnyslope County Water District, and the San Benito County Water District. WRASBC will offer $2.00 per square foot of lawn removed. Full implementation of the program will result in the remove of 100,000 square feet of turf resulting in annual water savings of 3,700,000 gallons.

Length of time and Estimated Completion Date

We are requesting funding for a turf removal program to begin October 2024 (anticipated funding date) and estimate it will take approximately one year to allocate the funds. End date is anticipated to be October 2025.

Whether or Not the Project is Located on a Federal Facility:

The Turf Removal Program is not located on a Federal Facility

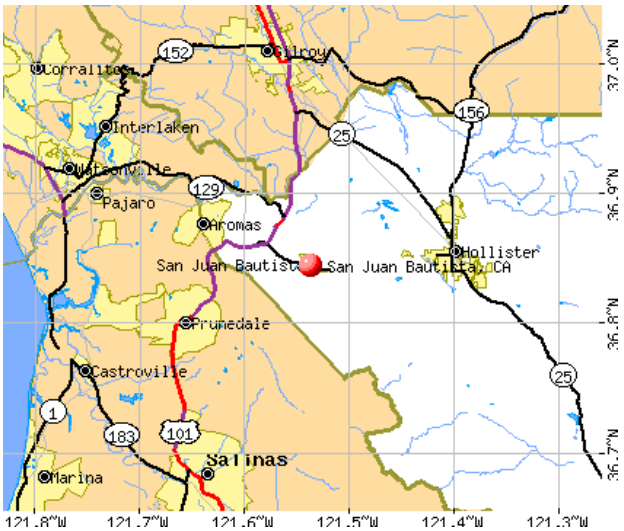
Project Location

San Benito County is located in Central California, approximately 40 miles east of Monterey and approximately 50 miles south of downtown San Jose. The Turf Removal Program would be for the water

customers in the north San Benito urban area. This is the major urban and population center for San Benito County. The two major cities in the county are Hollister and San Juan Bautista.

Figure 1: San Benito County's location

Figure 2: Hollister- San Juan Bautista (North San Benito County Urban Area)



D.2.2.2 Technical Project Description

Water intense turf grasses are the historical foundation of California landscaping with over half of urban water deliveries consumed by landscape irrigation. Climate driven drought conditions, among other catalysts, are encouraging SBCWD customers to seek alternatives to traditional turf grass landscapes. In response, SBCWD is seeking funding to enhance the district's existing water efficiency program to deliver additional incentives for water conservation through landscape and irrigation conversions to commercial, institutional, and residential customers. The Turf Removal Program is a water conservation program designed to transform irrigation intensive turf grass. Turf will be removed and replaced with water-efficient landscaping, drought tolerant plants, California native plants, mulch, and permeable hardscaping. This new landscape will require less than half the water needed by traditional lawns. Irrigation systems within the converted area must be upgraded to a low-flow system or be disconnected to employ hand watering. The required application of mulch saves water by reducing evaporative losses, cooling soil, and controlling weeds and encourages infiltration, preventing storm water runoff and erosion, and provides a barrier to some diseases that stress plants and increase water requirements.

<u>Program Specifics</u>

The Turf Removal Program was initially implemented as an emergency drought response in the early 2010s. This phase continues the program efforts which will allow commercial, institutional, and residential landscapes to be eligible for $2.00 per square foot of converted landscape, resulting in 50,000 square feet of commercial/institutional turf and 50,000 square feet of residential landscapes removed. The water savings for this turf removed is estimated at 3.7 million gallons per year. Program history indicates that landscape improvements have a minimum life of approximately 15 years, resulting in 55.5 million gallons (170 acre-feet) savings over the lifespan of these installations. This water saving has the potential

to increase over time as the new water efficient landscapes become established and irrigation requirements are reduced.

Participation in the program begins with a site visit and meeting the property owner, property manager, or authorized contact and discuss program requirements. A water conservation specialist will then take pictures and measure the area of turf being removed. The participant will be required to include the following information on their application to the program: lists of permeable materials to be used, lists of low water use plants that will be used, and irrigation information. Once the application is received and deemed complete, a pre-approval letter will be sent to the participant. The participant has 120 days from the date on the letter to complete their project. Once notified of project completion, SBCWD staff will perform an onsite validation during a post inspection. Upon a successful installation, a rebate will be issued to the applicant based upon actual square footage of removed turf.

Program performance will be based on an evaluation of water use before and after the landscape improvements at implementation sites.

Evaluation Criteria

E.1.1. Evaluation Criterion A. Project Benefits (35 points)

Up to **35 points** may be awarded based upon evaluation of the benefits that are expected to result from implementing the proposed project. This criterion considers a variety of project benefits, including the significance of the anticipated water management benefits and the public benefits of the project. This criterion prioritizes projects that modernize existing infrastructure to address water reliability concerns, including making water available for multiple beneficial uses and resolving water related conflict in the region.

Benefits to the Category "A" Applicant's Water Delivery System:

Describe the expected benefits to the Category "A" applicant's water delivery system.

Address the following:

Clearly explain the anticipated water management benefits to the Category "A" applicant's water supply delivery system and water customers. Consider:

- *Will the project result in more efficient management of the water supply?*

In the North San Benito Basin, most of the daily residential water consumption is applied to lawns and landscaping with about 30% of applied water lost due to overwatering runoff, and evaporation. The SBCWD needs to implement the program to increase water supply reliability in its service area by reducing such irrigation demands on potable water supplies. The projected benefits of implementing the program include 55.5 million gallons of water conserved over the 15-year life of the program improvements. This will reduce the SBCWD's demands on water supplies (both groundwater and CVP water). The program will provide financial incentives to customers by offering rebates to participants who convert high water use turf to water efficient landscapes. Additionally, customers will benefit from lower

water bills due to reduced water consumption. Furthermore, customers who otherwise may not be able to afford landscape conversions can leverage funding offered through the program to conserve water.

The implementation of the program will thereby result in greater efficiencies for the management of the SBCWD water supply.

- *Where any conserved water as a result of the project will go and how it will be used?*

The conserved water will assist in the overall health and sustainability of the North San Benito Groundwater Basin. Presently, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has listed this groundwater basin as a "medium priority" basin, experiencing moderate risk of negative impacts due to potential overdraft. Reducing water demand by removing existing lawns through a Turf Removal Program would put less stress on the imported surface water allocations and less stress on the local groundwater basin.

This groundwater is a critical water supply during the extreme droughts that California has and will experience due to Climate Change. The conserved water will provide increased reliability for local groundwater supply in times of drought.

Explain the significance of the anticipated water management benefits for the Category "A" applicant's water delivery system and customers.

Consider:

- *Are customers not currently getting their full water right at certain times of year?*

Over the past decade, climate change driven drought conditions and administrative droughts have severely affected SBCWD's surface water supplies through the Central Valley Project. The California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) curtailment orders in 2014/2015 and most recently in 2021 severely affected water supplies state-wide. In addition, the USBR supply of CVP surface water was limited to Public Health and Safety allocation during the Water Year 2022.

The combined drought conditions resulted in a mandatory reduction of water used for all urban customers of 25% compared to pre-drought usage.

Does this project have the potential to prevent lawsuits or water calls?

Due to the scope of the Turf Removal Program, SBCWD does not anticipate any impacts associated with lawsuits or water calls.

- *What are the consequences of not making the improvement?*

Water conservation has long been a critical component of SBCWD's water supply portfolio. In absence of evolving and additional water conservation programs offered to customers, the participation levels would decrease thus resulting in an increased use in this vital supply.

Continued water use on non-functional turf landscapes will strain SBCWD's retail partners production capacity especially during peak demand, as this is typically the time customers are irrigating their landscapes which negatively impacts groundwater supplies.

- *Are customer water restrictions currently required?*

Due to the extreme atmospheric river systems that hit California in the winter of 2023, previous drought restrictions have been removed. However, due to Climate Change and the uncertainty of California precipitation patterns, drought conditions are certain to reoccur.

Recent legislation in California declared water conservation as a way of life. This program supports the California Department of Finance's 2022/2023 FY Budget Change Proposal (BCP) which specifically calls for funding to support turf removal. Within the proposal it is stated "Many water suppliers across California encourage and support turf replacement as an effective action to make water conservation a way of life. The current drought (2019-2022) gives the State, local agencies, and the public an opportunity to eliminate ornamental turf grass, a glaring example of inefficient water use."

- *Other significant concerns that support a need for this project.*

The program provides benefits to disadvantaged communities through improved water quality, and water supply reliability. The turf removal will reduce the amounts of pesticides used, therefore reducing the effects of stormwater pollution. Additionally, the reduced dependence on water for turf irrigation will contribute to SBCWD's overall water supply reliability. The Program has the potential to provide positive monetary benefits to low income and minority populations by incentivizing water conservation program implementation, which, after installation, will potentially decrease the costs to that population. Furthermore, school and park participation and the resultant water cost savings will allow the schools and parks to invest additional funds into serving disadvantaged and historically underserved members of our community.

Broader Benefits: *Describe the broader benefits that are expected to occur as a result of the project. Consider:*

- *Will the project improve broader water supply benefits at sub-basin or basin scale?*

Groundwater management is critical to the North San Benito Basin for water reliability. Forward thinking management strategies have advanced strategies where imported CVP water is used when available to allow for additional groundwater recharge. This conjunctive use combined with robust water conservation programs have stabilized groundwater levels. The program supports groundwater management strategies and helps address sub-basin drought conditions.

- *Will the proposed project increase collaboration and information sharing among water managers? Please explain.*

This is a collaborative effort that benefits four partner water agencies in the WRASBC and the customers they serve. By lessening the water demand of landscapes, more surface water can be conserved and used to improve drinking water, which will assist local agencies in meeting their wastewater discharge requirements, support in protecting the local groundwater basin, and help in producing a high-quality recycled water. These actions benefit all four agencies. Information will be shared with the City of Hollister City Council. City of San Juan Bautista City Council, the San Benito County Board of Supervisors, the Board of Directors at the Sunnyslope County Water District, and the Board of Directors at the San Benito County Water District.

- *Is the project in an area that is experiencing, or recently experienced drought or water scarcity? Will the project help address drought conditions at the sub-basin or basin scale? Please explain.*

Over the past decade, climate change driven drought conditions and administrative droughts have severely affected SBCWD's surface water supplies through the Central Valley Project. The California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) curtailment orders in 2014/2015 and most recently in 2021 severely affected water supplies state-wide. In addition, the USBR supply of CVP surface water was limited to Public Health and Safety allocation during the Water Year 2022.

At a basin-wide scale, the benefits are incremental due to the size of the groundwater basin. However, the program will promote public awareness to stimulate continued water conservation.

- *Will the project benefit species (e.g., federally threatened or endangered, a federally recognized candidate species, a state listed species, or a species of particular recreational, or economic importance)? Please explain.*

The project will indirectly benefit threatened or endangered species by reducing groundwater use locally. Animals that depend on groundwater include fish and other aquatic organisms that rely on groundwater-supported stream flow and amphibious or terrestrial animals that lay their eggs in water. The biological resources element of the 2010 San Benito County General Plan identifies three listed species that require aquatic habitat: California red-legged frog, California tiger salamander, and steelhead trout.

- *Will the proposed project positively impacts/benefit various sectors and economies within the applicable geographic area (e.g., impacts agriculture, environment, recreation, and tourism)? Please explain.*

San Benito County has been experiencing an expanding population in recent years. Water managers have noted that water demand has remained approximately the same even though the local population has increased by approximately 10,000 residents. This is due to existing WRASBC water conservation programs, infrastructure upgrades, and the state of California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO), which limits the amount of turf installed in new and refurbished landscapes (over 5,000 square feet). New homes have a beneficial economic impact on the cities and county by promoting new businesses, increasing the tax base, and improving infrastructure.

- *Will the project complement work being done in coordination with NRCS in the area (e.g., the area with direct connection to the districts water supply)? Please explain.*

Although this program has no direct link with NRCS in the area, the proposed program does incentivize water conservation and contributes to drought resiliency, both of which are part of NRCS's WaterSMART Initiative.

E.1.2. Evaluation Criterion B—Planning Efforts Supporting the Project (25 points)

Up to 25 points may be awarded based on the extent to which the proposed on-the-ground project is supported by an applicant's existing water management plan, water conservation plan, System Optimization Review, or identified as part of another planning effort led by the Category A applicant. This criterion prioritizes projects that are identified through local planning efforts and meet local needs. Note: Project specific planning and design for the project or other phases of the project are considered in Criteria C – Implementation.

Plan Description and Objectives: *Is your project supported by a specific planning document or effort? If so, describe the existing plan. When was the plan developed? What is the purpose and objective of the plan?*

The Turf Removal Program was identified to greatly reduce water use in the Hollister Urban Area Water Management Plan 2020 (HUAWMP). This is a multi-agency planning document used by local water agencies that addresses long-term resource planning and water supply sustainability. The Plan is updated every five years.

Plan Development: *Who developed the planning effort? What is the geographic scope of the plan? If the planning effort was not developed by the Category A applicant, describe the Category A applicant's involvement in developing the planning effort.*

The HUAWMP is a collaborative effort with City of Hollister, Sunnyslope County Water District, and the SBCWD. The geographic scope of the plan focuses on urban area surrounding Hollister. The plan is updated every five years.

Support for the Project: *Describe to what extend the proposed project is supported by the identified plan. Consider:*

- *Is the project identified specifically by name and location in the planning effort?*

  Yes, the project is specifically addressed by name in the HUAWMP. This phase is a continuation of a previously successful program which was limited due to lack of funding. However significant demand persists for an expanded program.

- *Is this type of project identified in the planning effort?*

  Yes, the project is specifically addressed by name in the HUAWMP.

- *Explain whether the proposed project implement a goal, objective, or address a need or problem identified in the existing planning effort?*

Water conservation is encouraged throughout San Benito County. A variety of programs are discussed in detail in Section 9 of the HUAWMP. The Turf Removal Program is specifically mentioned to meet the

future water use per capita demand targets. "These specific Demand Management Measures (DMM) represent opportunities for maximum water savings, based on local experience during the recent drought".

- *Explain how the proposed project has been determined as a priority in the existing planning effort as opposed to other potential projects/measures.*

In the HUAWMP, on Page ES-4 it states: To meet the future water use per capita demand targets, the combined agencies plan to focus their efforts on several demand management measures (DMMs) including public outreach, rebates, and turf removal programs. These specific DMMs are targeted as opportunities for maximum water savings. During public comment period of the development of the HUAWMP, many residents expressed desire for the continuation of this specific program.

E.1.3. Evaluation Criterion C. Implementation and Results (20 points)

Up to 20 points may be awarded based upon the extent to which the applicant is capable of proceeding with the proposed project upon entering into a financial assistance agreement. Applicants that describe a detailed plan (e.g., estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates) will receive the most points under this criterion.

- *Describe Implementation Plan for the proposed project. Please include an estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates.*

The San Benito County Water District currently manages a successful Turf Removal Program that was implemented due to drought emergencies. This grant would augment the existing program and provide additional incentives to commercial and residential properties. And thus, the project implementation could commence immediately upon award of funding.

See estimated Project Schedule below:

Table 1: Turf Removal Program Project Schedule

Task/Milestone	Start Date	End Date
Task 1 -Program Administration	March 2024	October 2025
Execute and manage the cooperative agreement with Reclamation **Already completed:** Board/agency approval Program Forms and Marketing Materials (includes dedicated webpage): https://www.wrasbc.org/turf-removal-program/ Spanish translation Dedicated group of partners within the community (Integrated Waste, Chamber of Commerce, Landscape Contractors, Service Organizations) Facebook page, print ads in two area newspapers, and an online news website Coordination with Financial Services, process rebates		

Task 2 -Outreach and Promotion	March 2024	October 2025
Task 3 – Site Inspections	March 2024	October 2025
Task 4—Grant Management and Reporting	October 2024	October 2025
• Prepare Program Performance Reports and Reimbursement Requests • Close program and prepare Final Report		

Budget Narrative

The total expenditures for the Turf Removal Program are estimated to be $225,000.

$100,000 would be the funding amount requested through the WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects (R24AS00059). The San Benito County Water District (Category A applicant) would incur $125,000.

Most costs would be expended in the fall, spring and summer 2025 since many landscape activities cease in the winter. The program would still be marketed in the wintertime, but it is expected most customers would be actively working on their landscapes in the other seasons.

Two personnel would be required to operate the program. Duties to operate the program would fall under the regular activities of the WRASBC staff.

No travel or special equipment is required for this program. The only materials and supplies would be for advertising and marketing the program. The total costs for these efforts are estimated to be $25,000 over the grant period.

The rebate amounts would be $2.00 per square foot of turf removed. This would allow for up to 100,000 square feet of turf to be removed at the costs of $200,000. Total program administrative costs are anticipated to be $25,000. Thus, the total project budget will be $225,000.

Other elements such as contractual, Third-Party In-Kind Contributions, Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs, Indirect Costs or other expenses would not be applicable to the proposed program.

Project Budget

Table 2.- Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
1. San Benito County Water District	$125,000
Non-Federal Subtotal	$125,000
REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING	$100,000

Table 3. – Total Project Cost Table

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with requested Federal funding	$100,000
Costs to be paid by applicant	$125,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST	$225000

Table 4. – Sample Budget Proposal Format

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	$/Unit	Quantity		
Salaries and Wages				
Salaries and wages will not be part of the costs share with the Bureau				
Fringe Benefits				
Fringe benefits will not be part of the costs share with the Bureau				
Equipment				
N/A				
Supplies and Materials				
Rebates (50% Grant / 50% non-Federal Cost Share)	$2.00	100,000	Square foot	$200,000
Print Advertisements (non-Federal Cost Share)	$550	20	Monthly	$11,000
Web ads (non-Federal Cost Share)	$400	20	Monthly	$8,000
Bill inserts & flyers (non-Federal Cost Share)	$0.20	25,000	Fall/Spring	$5,000
Spanish translation services (non-Federal Cost Share)	$250	4	Per item	$1,000

- *Describe any permits and agency approvals that will be required along with process and timeframe for obtaining such permits and approvals*

No permits are required for the program. Turf removal rebate application and program compliance will be administered by the WRASBC and SBCWD staff.

- *Describe any policies and administrative action required to implement the project.*

The program is a continuation/expansion of the existing Turf Removal Program. It has already been approved and supported by all the WRASBC partner agencies.

- *Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of this project. What level of engineering design is the project currently? If additional design is required, describe the planned process and timeline for completing the design.*

There is no engineering or design work required for this program.

- *Does the applicant have access to the land or water source where the project is located? Has the applicant obtained any easements that are required for the project? If the applicant does not yet have permission to access the project location, describe the process and timeframe for obtaining such permission.*

To participate in the program, customers will have to allow staff onsite to measure turf areas and take photos. No easements are required.

- *Identify whether the applicant has contacted the local Reclamation office to discuss the potential environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements for the project and the associated costs. Has a line item been included in the budget for costs associated with compliance? If a contractor will need to complete some of the compliance activities, separate line items should be included in the budget for Reclamation's costs and the contractor's costs.*

The program is for developed land in Hollister urban area. Therefore, cultural resources have been previously mitigated through development processes.

E.1.4 Evaluation Criterion D. Nexus to Reclamation (5 points)

Up to **5 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the proposal demonstrates a nexus between the proposed project and a Reclamation project or activity.

- *Describe the nexus between the proposed project and a Reclamation project or activity, including: Is the proposed project connected to a Reclamation project or activity? If so, how? Please consider the following*:

The main connection between the project and Reclamation is the reduction of water use in the applicant's service area. Using less water locally will put less stress on the imported surface water from the Central Valley Project.

CVP water originates in dams and reservoirs in the northern California mountains and then travels through the San Francisco Bay Delta. The Delta Region, comprising the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta, has been described as California's "water faucet." Drinking water for 22 million people and irrigation water for 4 million acres of the world's most productive farmland passes through the Delta. The Delta covers 730,000 acres of land interlaced with hundreds of miles of waterway, and it is home to 750 species of plants and animals. It is also the location of one of the nation's most productive salmon fisheries as well as a critical part of the Pacific Flyway used by millions of migrating birds each year.

Reclamation is a principal partner in working to develop a long-term comprehensive plan to restore the ecological health and improve the water management of the Bay-Delta system. The approaches include long-term levee protection, water quality, ecosystem restoration, and water use efficiency programs.

- *Does the applicant have a water service, repayment, or operations and maintenance(O&M) contract with Reclamation?*

Yes, specifics are contained within the "Water Infrastructure for the Nation Act Contract No. 8-07-20-W0130A-P between the United States and the San Benito County Water District Providing for Project Water Service – Central Valley Project, California."

- *If the applicant is not a Reclamation contractor, does the applicant receive Reclamation water through a Reclamation contractor or by any other contractual means?*

The SBCWD is a Reclamation contractor.

- *Will the proposed work benefit a Reclamation Project area or activity?*

Yes, by reducing potable water demands within the urban area, the community will require less water. During periods of CVP Public Health and Safety reductions due to extreme drought or reduced allocation cycles, the local agencies can better rely upon groundwater sources to meet the lower customer demand.

E.1.5 Evaluation Criterion E- Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (15 points)

Up to **15 points** may be awarded based on the extent that the project demonstrates support for the Biden-Harris Administration's priorities, including E.O. 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad* and E.O. 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,* and the President's memorandum, *Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to Nation Relationships.* Points will be allocated based on the degree to which the project supports the priorities listed, and whether the connection to the priority(ies) is well supported in the application. Only address the sub-criterion that are relevant to your project.

E.1.51. Sub-criterion No. E1. Climate Change

Combating the Climate Crisis: E.O. 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, focuses on increasing resilience to climate change and supporting climate- resilient development. For additional information on the impacts of climate change throughout the western United States, see: www.usbr.gov/climate/ secure/docs/2021secure/2021SECUREReport.pdf. Please describe how the project will address climate change, including the following:

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

In 2006, the California Legislature passed the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 [Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32)], which created a comprehensive, multi-year program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California. AB 32 required the California Air Resources Board to develop a Scoping Plan that describes the approach California will take to reduce GHGs to achieve the goal of reducing emissions. The 2017 Scoping Plan states "since the greatest energy consumption related to water is from delivery to end uses, the potential for energy savings also resides with water end users, where water conservation and efficiency play an important role". The Turf Removal Program directly addresses this through the reduction of 3.7 million gallons of water treated, pumped, delivered and consumed for turf irrigation per year.

- *Does this proposed project strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change? Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?*

Full implementation of the project will result in annual decrease of 3.7 million gallons of potable water. As this project reduces water demand, it effectively reduces all components of providing potable water to the Hollister urban area.

Components include:

- Energy related to pumping of groundwater and/or transporting untreated water to the Hollister urban area
- Energy related to the treatment of water to potable standards

- Chemical usage
- Equipment maintenance
- Etc.

Effectively, water conservation results in energy conservation that alleviates greenhouse gases which contribute to the acceleration and magnitude of impacts of climate change.

E.1.5.2. Sub-criterion No. E2. Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities

E.O. 14008 and E.O. 13985 affirm the advancement of environmental justice and equity for all through the development and funding of programs to invest in disadvantaged or underserved communities. For the purpose of this criterion, Tribes and insular areas (Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Virgin Islands) are considered disadvantaged.

- *Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community? Benefits can include, but are not limited to, public health and safety by addressing water quality, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities.*

The program provides benefits to disadvantaged communities through improved water quality, and water supply reliability. The turf removal will reduce the amounts of pesticides used, therefore reducing the effects of stormwater pollution. Additionally, the reduced dependence on water for turf irrigation will contribute to SBCWD's overall water supply reliability. The Program has the potential to provide positive monetary benefits to low income and minority populations by incentivizing water conservation program implementation, which, after installation, will potentially decrease the costs to that population.

If applicable, describe how the project benefits those disadvantaged or underserved communities identified using the tool. For example, does the project increase reliability of water supplies, improve water quality, provide economic growth opportunities, improve, or expand public access to natural areas or recreation, or provide other benefits in a disadvantaged or underserved community?

Yes, the Turf Removal Program will provide water supply benefits to communities identified as disadvantaged by the CEJST. **Figure 3** shows that a significant portion of the City of Hollister has been designated disadvantaged by the CEJST. These areas were identified as disadvantaged because of their linguistic isolation, low median income, limited high school education, high unemployment, and projected exposure to wildfire risk through climate change. The designated areas will be served by the program, being completely within the San Benito Urban Area and its associated water supply service areas.

Water supply is delivered to the entire San Benito Urban Area through the Sunnyslope, Hollister, and San Juan Bautista intertied distribution systems, which serve the CEJST disadvantaged areas.
The increased water supply reliability that the Turf Removal Program brings is important to the economic development of this disadvantaged area. Increased water availability will also provide additional resources to fight wildfire and address other impacts from climate change. SBCWD, Hollister, Sunnyslope, and San Juan Bautista are also committed to education and economic development. Through the Water Resources Association (WRA) of San Benito County, these agencies provide education and access to employment opportunities throughout San Benito County, with a particular focus on schools and underrepresented communities.

The Turf Removal Program will also provide these benefits to additional parts of the San Benito Urban Area defined as URCs, DACs, and SDACs by the State of California, as shown in **Figure 4**. As noted above, the Turf Removal Program will increase the amount of reliable water supply during drought and improve overall delivered water quality (and wastewater quality as well). The benefits to San Juan Bautista is significant, as reliance on poor-quality groundwater will shift to use of a higher quality CVP-groundwater blend from the West Hills Surface Water Treatment Plant. Benefits to Hollister are system wide and will provide DACs and SDACs in the service area with more reliable supply and improved water quality.

Figure 3. California-Defined Underrepresented Communities in the San Benito Urban Area

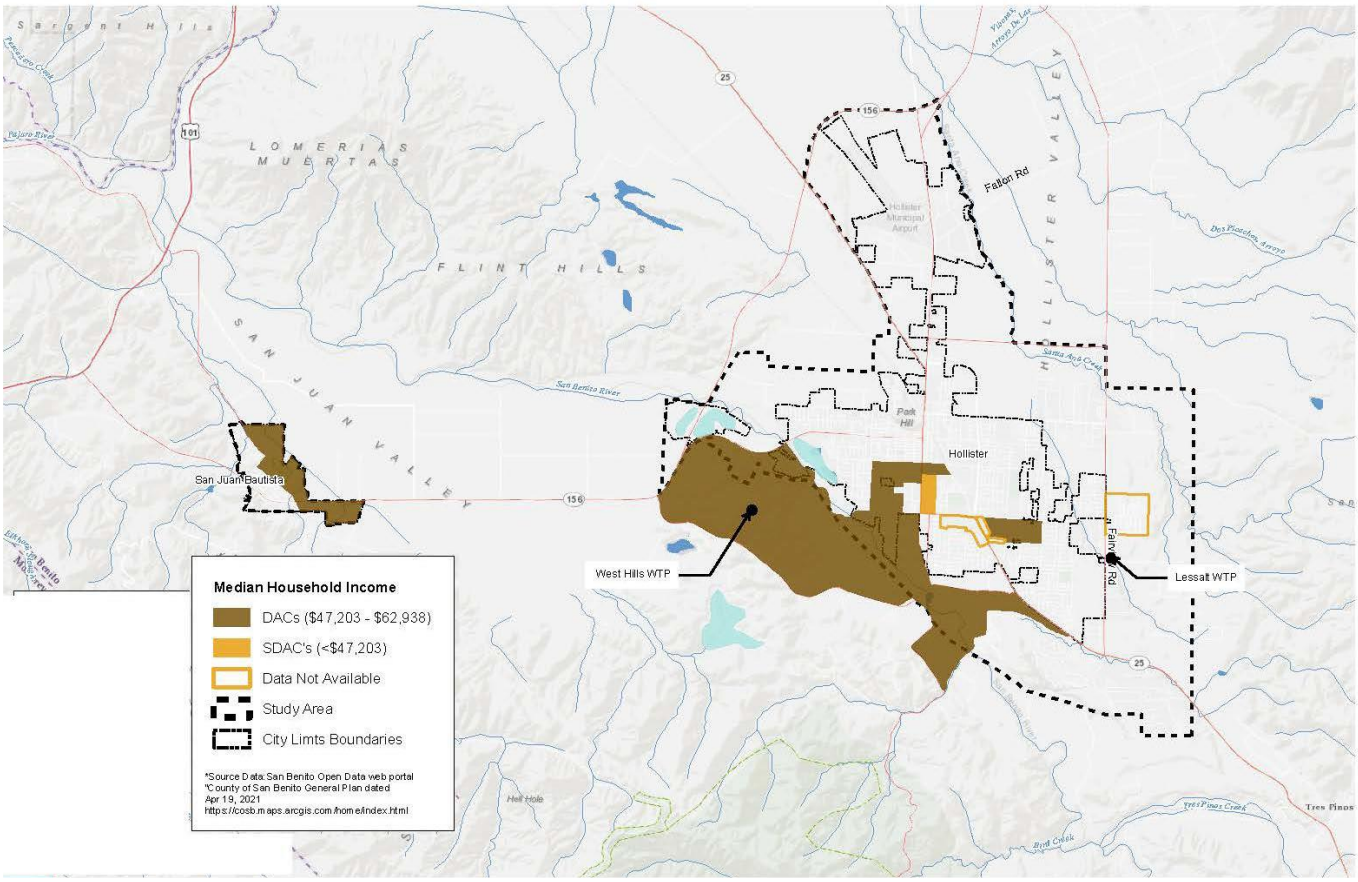
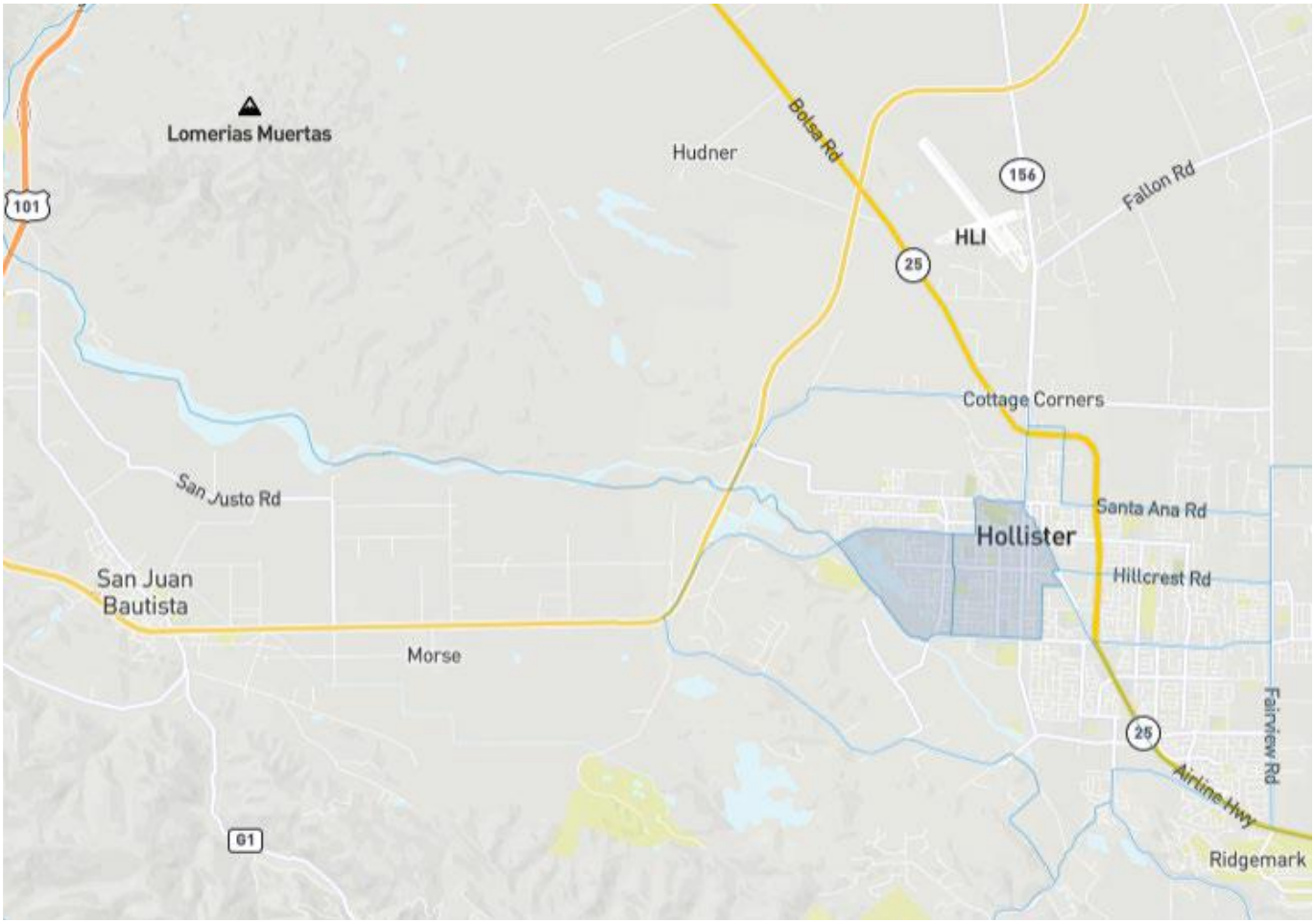


Figure 4. Federally Defined Disadvantaged Communities from Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)



E.1.5.3. Sub-criterion No. E.3. Tribal Benefits

Points will be awarded based on the extent to which the Project will honor the Federal government's commitments to Tribal Nations.

- *Does the proposed project directly serve and/or benefit a Tribe? Will the project improve water management for a Tribe?*

The program does not directly serve a Tribe.

- *Does the proposed project support Tribal resilience to climate change and drought impacts or provide other Tribal benefits such as improved public health and safety by addressing water quality, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities?*

The program is not directly linked to any climate change or drought related Tribal benefits.

Figure 1: San Benito County's location

Figure 2: North San Benito Basin