

# GRASS REMOVAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

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**WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale  
Water Efficiency Projects for Fiscal  
Year 2024 and Fiscal Year 2025**  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Funding Opportunity No. R22AS00195

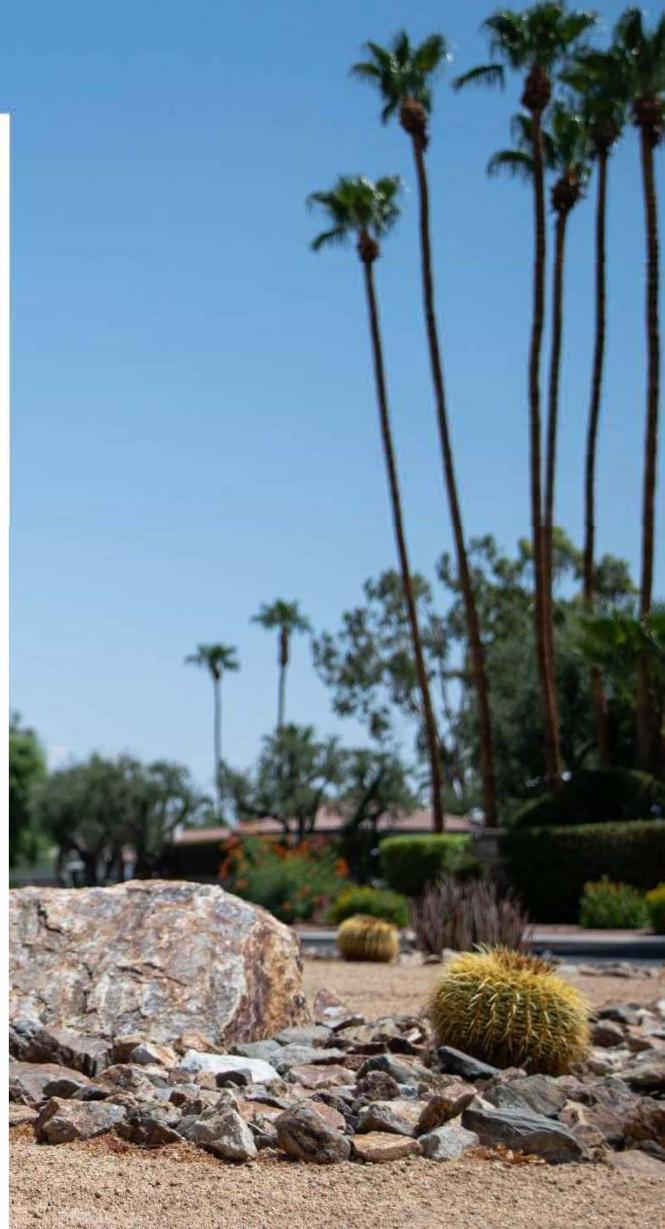
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***Applicant:***

Desert Water Agency  
1200 Gene Autry Trail South  
Palm Springs, CA 92264

***Project Manager:***

Ernye Valenciano, Conservation Specialist II  
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# Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria

## Executive Summary

Date: June 25, 2024

Applicant Name: Desert Water Agency

City: Palm Springs

County: Riverside

State: CA

Project Manager:

Ernye Valenciano

Conservation Specialist II

[Evalenciano@dwa.org](mailto:Evalenciano@dwa.org)

760-323-4971 x 280

Grant Funding Request: \$100,000

Non-Federal Matching Funds: \$100,000

Total Project Cost: \$200,000

Estimated Construction Start Date:

March 31, 2025

Estimated Project Completion Date:

March 31, 2027

Estimated Project Duration: 24 months

Located on Federal Facility: Not applicable

Applicant Type: Category A

### Project Summary

Desert Water Agency (DWA), located in California's Coachella Valley, is requesting funding to expand its existing Grass Removal Rebate Program for one year in order to reduce outdoor residential water demand and improve water supply resilience. This funding will provide rebate incentives for customers to replace approximately 100,000 square feet of turf with low water use landscaping, resulting in approximately 17.25 acre-feet (AF) of annual water savings based on a study from SNWA. Based on a draft study specific to the Coachella Valley, this savings may be up to 21.30 acre-feet of annual water savings in DWA's service area. The request for this funding is in response to CA AB-1572 legislation and its ban on irrigating non-functional turf by way of potable water, "Making Conservation a California Way of Life" and its goal to reduce outdoor water use, the 2022 Indio Subbasin Water Management Plan Update - Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Alternative Plan, DWA's 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan and 2018 Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan which prioritize water conservation. The Grass Removal Rebate Program has been extremely popular among DWA customers. Funding for this program (see Technical Project Description, pg. 2) will allow DWA to reduce water demand in its service area in order to address aquifer overdraft, increase the resilience of water supplies, and reduce future variability in the local Coachella Valley groundwater basins.

## Project Location

The grass removal sites would be located throughout DWA's district boundary (see DWA Boundary Map below). Desert Water Agency serves water in Riverside County, California. The approximate project latitude is {33°48'23.4"N} and longitude is {116°29'25.5"W}. Because the grant is for an incentive program, we do not know yet what locations will take advantage of the program to remove their grass. DWA would provide a map with all project locations along with the final grant completion report.

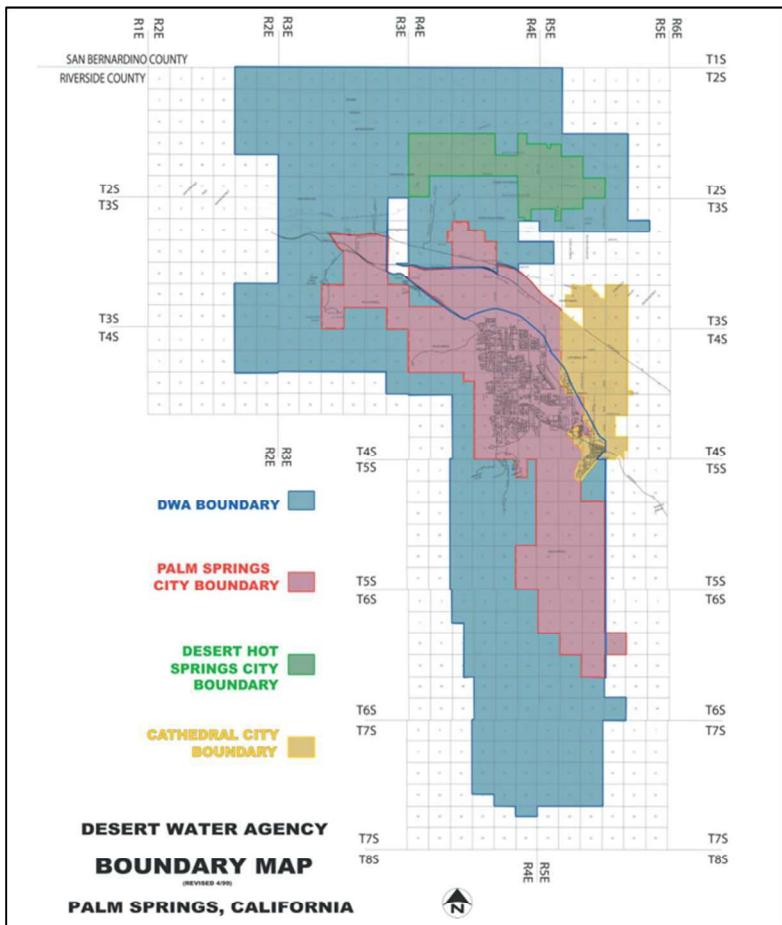


Figure 1. Desert Water Agency Boundary Map

## Technical Project Description

### Grass Removal Incentive Program

The Grass Removal Incentive program started in 2014 for residential, multi-family, and commercial sites as an effective strategy to reduce water demand. The Grass Removal Incentive

Program encourages customers to replace existing grass with low or no-water use landscapes. The program reimburses successful applicants at a rate of \$2 per square foot of grass replaced. The average turf replacement area for residential properties is approximately 1,500 square feet. Below are some terms and conditions of the program:

- Participants apply directly through the DWA website.
- Eligible participants include residential, commercial or HOA customers.
- Applicant must be an authorized owner/manager/landscaper for a property within DWA's service area.
- Grass must be in place and the property reviewed by DWA prior to removal (cannot be bare dirt).
- Desert Water Agency performs remote and field measurements to verify square footage.
- Applications are awarded on a first-come first-served basis, until funding is exhausted.
- Residential conversions must be completed within 90 days; other conversions must be completed within 180 days.
- All irrigation in the rebate area must be low flow (.33 gpm or less). No adjustable bubblers.
- Artificial turf or trees/plants are required unless project area is less than 4 feet wide.
- DWA does not guarantee rebates until applicants complete pre-approved projects per program requirements. Customers must notify DWA when their replacement projects are completed.
- Reimbursement is issued via check, and is mailed to the participant about 45 days from the date the project is approved.

#### Program Implementation

This is an existing DWA program seeking grant funding to supplement the cost of expanding the Grass Removal Incentive Program for the project period. DWA staff implements all aspects of the program.

Managing this program will also include measuring and reporting program progress to implement the water-efficient landscape upgrades. DWA expects incentive checks being issued from August 2025 through July 2026.

## Evaluation Criteria

### E.1.1 Evaluation Criterion A—Project Benefits (35 Points)

**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.

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

Yes. Through this grant, between 17.25 AF to 21.30 AF, or approximately 56.2 to 69.4 gallons per square foot, is estimated to be made available each year to offset additional water demand (the 17.25 AF estimate is based on EPA WaterSense’s Landscape Water Requirement Equation and the 21.30 AF from the draft regional conservation study specific to DWA’s service area.).

Since DWA launched its grass removal incentive program in 2014, customers see an average outdoor water savings of about 47% after participating in the grass removal program.

As such, DWA has concluded the grass removal program will have a long-term water conservation benefit, resulting in between 258.7 to 319.5 AF of water savings over the first 15 years of the project.

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

The water conserved would help reduce outdoor water-use as required by AB 1668 & SB 606 (Making Conservation a California Way of Life) and allow more imported water to sustainably recharge the Indio Subbasin. With grant funds from Reclamation, DWA will be able to encourage more conversions than what is currently budgeted.

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?

Desert Water Agency currently has no local water rights under curtailment. However, Desert Water Agency currently has a reduced allocation of 40% from the State Water Project in California. Consistently low allocations from the State at current agency-wide consumption levels put the local aquifer at risk of long-term overdraft.

Neither the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, nor any of its subbasins have been adjudicated; therefore, groundwater production is not currently legally limited. However, DWA and the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) continuously work to manage the groundwater basin through individual and joint programs and plans. Since 1962, DWA has secured rights to 55,750 AFY of Table A, highest priority State Water Project water to artificially recharge the groundwater basin. DWA and CVWD entered into water exchange contracts with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) in 1967.

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



This project will not directly prevent lawsuits or water calls.

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

In the absence of this project Desert Water Agency would have to pursue other, potentially more expensive options, to decrease water demand or increase water supply. Desert Water Agency would miss the opportunity to capitalize on community buy-in for long-term water conservation. Progress towards “Making Conservation a California Way of Life” and CA AB 1572 objectives would continue to be a challenge.

- **Are customer water restrictions currently required?**

Currently Stage 1 of Desert Water Agency’s Water Shortage Contingency Plan is activated. This includes customer water restrictions such as prohibiting runoff, restricting water feature use, prohibiting water use for washing hard surfaces, requiring automatic shutoff nozzles for hoses, requiring customers to fix any leaks they are notified of in a timely manner, requiring hotels to provide opt out linen service, discouraging draining and filling of swimming pools, and discouraging overseeding of grass.

- **Other significant concerns that support the need for the project.**

The challenges that DWA faces are long-term in nature. While there is sufficient groundwater to weather short-term droughts, it will not sustain the current population indefinitely due to the limited quantities of natural recharge. Continued water conservation is necessary to meet current and future water demands.

**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 reliability at sub-basin or basin scale?**

Given DWA’s shared use of the Whitewater River and Mission Creek Subbasins of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin, reductions in DWA’s groundwater withdrawals related to water conservation can improve water quality and reduce the risk of overdraft and subsidence throughout the subbasins. As both a State Water Contractor and Groundwater Sustainability Agency, this grant funding would directly help DWA secure a more sustainable water supply for the future.

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

DWA actively collaborates on water resources management projects and shares information with the other water managers in the region including the City of Coachella, Coachella Valley Water District, Indio Water Authority, Myoma Dunes Water Company, Mission Springs Water District, and Valley Sanitary District. Each of these agencies has an interest in solving the problem of high water-use and urban runoff caused by excessive landscape irrigation. DWA will



share data from this project with other water managers throughout the region to inform their landscape efficiency rebate programs.

- 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.

Yes, Desert Water Agency is in an area that has experienced severe drought conditions repeatedly over the past years. The most recent being 2020 – 2022. Our grass removal incentive program will continue to drastically reduce the amount of water demand for inefficient landscapes. Increased water supply reliability will help address drought conditions within the Whitewater River and Mission Creek Sub-basins of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin. Reducing water demand as a way of ensuring long term supply helps Desert Water Agency to better respond to short-term drought conditions. This strategy also helps ensure better response to long-term drought conditions by allowing Desert Water Agency to use more water supply to recharge the groundwater basin.

- 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.

Although this project does not have targeted benefits for specific endangered species, it will complement the local ecology by returning landscaped areas to a more native habitat.

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

Water supply reliability will help keep the tourism industry in the Palm Springs area sustainable. Tourism is a major industry in the DWA service area with the City of Palm Springs having about 48,375 residents and millions of visitors a year.

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

The project complements the NRCS Landscape Conservation Incentive on agricultural properties by offering similar landscape incentives on residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional properties. There is no direct coordination between these projects, however.

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

**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 Indio Subbasin Ground Water Sustainability Agencies (GSA) collaboratively prepared the *2022 Indio Subbasin Water Management Plan Update – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Alternative Plan*, which DWA was party to and lists water conservation as a project and

management action for groundwater sustainability. Desert Water Agency's grass removal program is specifically mentioned in 11.3.1.1 PMA 1: Urban Water Conservation. The *2018 Coachella Valley Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) and Stormwater Resource (SWR) Plan* explains that "water is a limited resource and that water conservation and use efficiency should be actively pursued". The project contributes to IRWM Plan objectives in the following ways:

*Objective A: Provide reliable water supply.* This project is reducing water demands by removing grass, which is a high-water use plant. Removing grass and converting to desert landscaping, or artificial turf, will reduce pumping for irrigation and therefore protect existing groundwater supplies.

*Objective B: Manage groundwater levels to reduce overdraft.* By reducing overall water use, the project will decrease the pumping of groundwater which will reduce the risk of overdraft.

*Objective D: Maximize local supply opportunities including water conservation.* This project prioritizes water conservation efforts as a source of local supply to reduce overall water use.

*Objective F: Preserve and improve surface water quality.* Grass removal results in less pesticide and fertilizer application and less dry weather urban runoff.

DWA is a partner regionally with other agencies in completing the IRWM/SWR plan.

DWA's *2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan* reiterates this water conservation ethos by stating, "water conservation is one of several high-priority policies actively implemented within DWA, and programs such as water audits for large-volume water users, residential water audits, landscape water audits, and water-efficient landscape gardens are encouraged and well received". The UWMP also states that most water use within DWA's service area (up to 80 percent) is used outdoors. DWA has objectives that focus on conservation efforts and developing outdoor water conservation measures.

**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.

Desert Water Agency collaborated with local agencies to prepare the *2022 Indio Subbasin Water Management Plan Update – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Alternative Plan, 2018 Coachella Valley IRWM/SWR Plan and DWA's 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan*. The geographic scope of these plans is the Coachella Valley and underlying basins, but these also contain information specific to DWA's service area. Desert Water Agency was directly involved with the development and planning efforts for the above mentioned plans.

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

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

Turf replacement programs are specifically referenced in the IRWM Plan in "Region Description and Resource Management Strategies".

The turf replacement program is also specifically mentioned in Section 6.9.2.4 of the *2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan*.

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

Yes, turf replacement is mentioned as a project in both IRWM Plan, the 2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan and the 2022 SGMA Alternative Plan Update for the Indio Subbasin.

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

The grass removal project would address the need to conserve water in an effort to provide more sustainable recharge for Coachella Valley groundwater basins.

From Section 11.3 of the *2022 Indio Subbasin Water Management Plan Update – Sustainable Groundwater Management Act Alternative Plan*, "Water conservation is a major component of overall water management in the Indio Subbasin."

In section 6.7.2 of the *2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan* it is stated that "water importation, water recycling, water conservation, and long-range planning are necessary to meet current and future water demands without depleting the groundwater in storage." This project supports long term water conservation.

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

From Section 6.3.4 of the *2020 Coachella Valley Regional Urban Water Management Plan* the turf management program is prioritized because, "most water use within DWA's service area is

used outdoors, DWA has focused conservation efforts on developing outdoor water conservation measures.”

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

##### *Implementation Plan*

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

Desert Water Agency already has an established grass removal incentive program that has successfully helped its customers convert grass areas into drought friendly landscapes since 2014. The funds awarded from this grant would require minimal effort to integrate and would seamlessly contribute to the existing grass removal budget. DWA expects this project to span 18 months, from March 2025 through August 2026. Pre-installation is expected to occur during an 8-month window. Post-installation is a 12-month window that is partly concurrent with pre-installation. The project will culminate with a one-month monitoring and reporting period.

*Table 1. Implementation Plan*

Project Stage	Duration	Milestones	Start Date	Completion Date
Funding Award	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive award letter</li> <li>• Respond to request for information</li> <li>• Final signatures</li> </ul>	March 2025	August 2025
Phase 1: Pre-Installation	8 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application Review &amp; Approval</li> <li>• Pre- installation site visits</li> </ul>	August 2025	March 2026
Phase 2: Post-Installation	12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-installation site visits</li> <li>• Verification of successful project completion</li> <li>• Rebate check processing</li> </ul>	August 2025	July 2026
Phase 3: Monitor & Report	1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit progress &amp; final report</li> <li>• Monitor water savings</li> </ul>	July 2026	August 2026

- Proposal with a budget and budget narrative that provide a reasonable explanation of project costs will be prioritized under this criterion. Please refer to the budget narrative section for further details. Total project cost will be \$200,000, Desert Water Agency will be using \$100,000 of its own funding and supplementing the grass removal incentive program with \$100,000 of federal funding.
- Describe any permits and agency approvals that will be required along with the process and timeframe for obtaining such permits or approvals.

No permits will be required for the implementation of this project.

- Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed 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.

No engineering or design work will be performed specifically in support of this project.

- Does the applicant have access to the land or water source where the project is located? Has the applicant obtained any easement 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.

No easements are required for the project. Projects that apply for grass removal are on Desert Water Agency customer owned properties.

- 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 environmental BOR-Yuma Area Office (YAO) has indicated that, this being an additional phase of our grass removal incentive program and previous SWEP Agreement R23AP00284, the level of compliance would remain the same:

Per BOR-YAO representative “*NEPA - No further NEPA documentation is required for this action. Proposed action is covered under 46.210 Listing of Departmental categorical exclusions. The following actions are categorically excluded under paragraph 46.205(b), unless any of the extraordinary circumstances in section 46.215 apply:*

- *(c) Routine financial transactions including such things as salaries and expenses, procurement contracts (e.g., in accordance with applicable procedures and Executive Orders for sustainable or green procurement), guarantees, financial assistance, income transfers, audits, fees, bonds, and royalties..*

*Cultural - Nothing additional required, No SHPO consultation required. No potential to cause effects to historic properties (No specific NoPe for this). ESA - No impacts to endangered species*

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

*Is the proposed project connected to a Reclamation project or activity? If so, how?*

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

No.

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

DWA has water rights to 55,750 AFY of State Water Project water, with actual delivery impacted by weather-related and structural factors. However, there is no pipeline or aqueduct from the SWP proximal to DWA. Therefore, DWA has an agreement in place to exchange their SWP water with the Metropolitan Water District for Colorado River water, which comes through the Coachella Valley in an aqueduct. Metropolitan Water District is a holder of a Water Delivery Contract with Reclamation. (Section 5 contractor with the Bureau of Reclamation for the Colorado River).

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

Yes, there are currently Reclamation projects in the local Coachella Valley groundwater basins, including other WaterSMART projects. DWA's grass removal incentive program will reduce demand for water, thereby reducing groundwater pumping in the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin and leaving more water in this aquifer. The proposed project will save between 258.7 to 319.5 AFY of water from being pumped in the first 15 years of the program.

#### E.1.5. Evaluation Criteria E—Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (15 points)

##### E.1.5.1. Sub-criterion No. E1. 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.

By conserving between 258.7 to 319.5 AF of water throughout the life span of the project, we can avoid between 77.6 to 95.8 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e in GHGs from purchase and recharge of Colorado River water. This assumes that the energy requirements associated with delivering Colorado River water (including Canal water) are 2.3 megawatt hours per acre foot (MWh/AF) and 600 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>e/AF (WaterReuse Association, 2011).



- 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?

This project does strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change. There is an estimate of water made available of between 17.25 AF to 21.30 AF, or approximately 56.2 to 69.4 gallons per square foot, each year to offset additional water demand (this estimate is based on EPA WaterSense's Landscape Water Requirement Equation and the draft regional conservation study specific to DWA's service area).

#### *E.1.5.2. Sub-criterion No. E2. Disadvantaged or Undeserved Communities*

- Please use the White House Council on Environmental Quality's interactive Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, available online at Explore the map – Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (<https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov>) to identify any disadvantaged communities that will benefit from your project.

Desert Water Agency serves disadvantaged communities and many fixed-income seniors who may benefit from this grant. Using the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool identification system, the following Riverside County tract numbers will have properties that are fully or partially disadvantaged and may benefit from this grant: 06065045000, 06065941000, 06065941100, 06065044805, 06065044701, 06065044702, 06065941200, 06065940700, 06065940800, 06065044804, 06065044805, 06065044806, 06065044807, 06065941400, 06065044701, 06065941300, 06065940500, 06065044602, 06065044604, 06065044605, 06065044606, 06065044807, 06065941100.

- 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?

Access to these grant funds by disadvantaged communities (DAC) will help absorb much of the financial investment required to convert to water efficient landscapes. Furthermore, helping disadvantaged communities realize these projects will save them money on their water bill. This continued reduction in outdoor water use will favor a more reliable water supply in the future. There are disadvantaged communities and many fixed-income seniors throughout the Desert Water Agency service area. These communities will have the same or greater access to grant funding as all other Desert Water Agency customers.

#### *E.1.5.3. Sub-criterion No. E3 Tribal Benefits*

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

DWA is a service provider for a large swath of the checkerboard Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indian (a federally recognized tribe) reservation. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians provide a letter of support and the grass removal incentive will be open to all DWA customers, benefitting the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians tribe, allottees and lessees.

- 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 project will assist in supporting Tribal resilience to drought impacts by reducing water demand in the region. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians will also share in the regional benefits laid out in the other Evaluation Criteria.

- Does the proposed project support Reclamation's Tribal trust responsibilities or a Reclamation activity with a Tribe?

In accordance with the Department of Interior's Indian Trust Responsibilities (Chapter 2 Part 303: 2.7. A, Trust Principles), this project would be protecting and preserving Indian trust assets from loss, damage, unlawful alienation, waste and depletion by maximizing tribal resilience to drought impacts.

## Budget Narrative

### Budget Proposal

*Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources*

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
<b>1. Desert Water Agency</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
Non-Federal Subtotal	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

*Table 2. Total Project Cost*

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$100,000
Costs to be paid by the applicant	\$100,000
Value of third-party contributions	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$ 200,000.00</b>

# Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

- *Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? Please briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. Please also explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts.* This project will only remove existing grass located on previously disturbed land and should not negatively affect soil, air, water or habitat. The project requires ground cover to be installed, so dust will not be an issue. The project will reduce the water demands of the project sites.
- *Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?* There are no known habitats of threatened or endangered species within the project area.
- *Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States?” If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.* No.
- *When was the water delivery system constructed?* Various dates starting in the 1920s.
- *Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.* No.
- *Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? A cultural resources specialist at your local Reclamation office or the State Historic Preservation Office can assist in answering this question.* No.
- *Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?* No.
- *Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations?* No.

- *Will the proposed project limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands?* No. Grass removal projects may occur on previously disturbed Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians tribal lands.
- *Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?* No.

## Required Permits or Approvals

No permits are expected to be required for this project. The only approval required will be a Desert Water Agency Board of Directors approval of the grant agreement between the Agency and Reclamation.

## Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

There is no overlap between the proposed project and any other active or anticipated proposals or projects in terms of activities, costs, or commitment of key personnel.

## Conflict of Interest Disclosure

There are no known conflicts of interest. If any conflicts of interest are identified Desert Water Agency will disclose them to USBR and work to resolve them.

## Uniform Audit Reporting Statement

Desert Water Agency was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year.

## Certification Regarding Lobbying

Desert Water Agency is not requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding.

## SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Desert Water Agency is submitting a fully completed and signed SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.



**RAUL RUIZ, M.D.**  
Member of Congress  
25th District of California

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**Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3605**

June 12, 2024

Honorable Camille Touton  
Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Commissioner Touton:

I write in support of Desert Water Agency (DWA) and their application for the WaterSMART Grant: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects program. If awarded, this funding would empower residents in my district and neighboring areas to significantly reduce their water consumption.

DWA's Grass Removal Incentives for Water Conservation project will conserve water and enhance the community's aesthetic and environmental quality. DWA has been a steadfast advocate for water conservation, and this project represents another significant step in our collective efforts to responsibly manage the region's water resources. Water conservation is critical in our region, where approximately 80% of water use occurs outdoors.

As the Representative of California's 25th Congressional District, I understand the impact that this project would have on the lives of the individuals I serve and represent. The Coachella Valley experiences extremely high temperatures and minimal precipitation, making water conservation essential for the long-term sustainability of our region. Implementing this project encourages residents to replace grass with drought-tolerant landscaping, which will enhance the environmental quality of our community.

I believe Desert Water Agency has the capacity to successfully carry out this project, and I urge full and fair consideration, consistent with all relevant program rules and regulations. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact my office at (760) 424-8888.

Sincerely,

Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress

July 01, 2024

The Honorable Camille Touton  
Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

**RE: Desert Water Agency's Grass Removal Incentives for Water Conservation Project**

Dear Commissioner Touton,

I am writing this letter in support for Desert Water Agency's Grass Removal Incentives for Water Conservation project.

As you may know, the Coachella Valley experiences high temperatures and minimal precipitation, making water conservation essential for the long-term sustainability of our community. Desert Water Agency has been a steadfast advocate for water conservation, and this project represents another significant step in our collective efforts to responsibly manage our region's water resources. The proposed Grass Removal Incentive Program encourages residents, and neighboring areas to significantly reduce their water consumption.

Water conservation is critical in this region, where approximately 80% of water use occurs outdoors. Turf removal presents a substantial opportunity for achieving significant water savings. By encouraging residents to replace grass with drought-tolerant landscaping, this program will conserve water, and improve the environmental quality of the community.

I urge your full and fair consideration of Desert Water Agency's application consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Please keep my office informed of the status of this application, and if I can be of further assistance, please contact Angel Marquez, at (619) 239-3886. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



ALEX PADILLA  
United States Senator



# City of Palm Springs

## Office of Sustainability

3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way • Palm Springs, California 92262  
Tel: (760) 323-8214 • Fax: (760) 322-8360 • Web: [www.palmspringsca.gov](http://www.palmspringsca.gov)

27 June 2024

The Honorable Camille Touton, Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

**RE: Letter of Support for WaterSMART Grant: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects FY 2025, NOFO # R24AS00059**

**Dear Commissioner Touton:**

As Director of the Office of Sustainability for the City of Palm Springs, I am writing to express my strong support for Desert Water Agency's Grass Removal Incentives for Water Conservation project. Palm Springs is home to approximately 43,800 residents, all of whom are directly impacted by our region's water management strategies.

The Coachella Valley experiences high temperatures and minimal precipitation, making water conservation essential for the long-term sustainability of our community. Desert Water Agency (DWA) has been a steadfast advocate for water conservation, and this project represents another significant step in our collective efforts to responsibly manage our region's water resources. The proposed Grass Removal Incentive Program will empower more residents of Palm Springs and neighboring areas to significantly reduce their water consumption.

Water conservation is critical in our region, where approximately 80% of water use occurs outdoors. Turf removal presents a substantial opportunity for achieving significant water savings. By encouraging residents to replace grass with drought-tolerant landscaping, this program will not only conserve water but also enhance the aesthetic and environmental quality of our community. We have partnered with DWA in the past to provide matching funding for enhanced rebates which have yielded reductions of over 500,000 square feet of turf.

On behalf of the City of Palm Springs, I wholeheartedly support DWA's Grass Removal Incentive for Water Conservation Project. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of DWA's proposal and the substantial regional benefits it promises.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal or my endorsement, please do not hesitate to contact me at 760-323-8214 or via email at [lindsey-paige.mccloy@palmspringsca.gov](mailto:lindsey-paige.mccloy@palmspringsca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lindsey-Paige".

Lindsey-Paige  
Director,  
City of Palm Springs

Office

of

McCloy  
Sustainability



Cathedral City

The Honorable Camille Touton, Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

June 13, 2024

**RE: Letter of Support for WaterSMART Grant: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects FY 2025,  
NOFO # R24AS00059**

Dear Commissioner Touton:

As City Manager of the City of Cathedral City, I am writing to express my strong support for Desert Water Agency's Grass Removal Incentives for Water Conservation project. Cathedral City is home to approximately 50,000 residents, all of whom are directly impacted by our region's water management strategies.

The Coachella Valley experiences high temperatures and minimal precipitation, making water conservation essential for the long-term sustainability of our community. Desert Water Agency (DWA) has been a steadfast advocate for water conservation, and this project represents another significant step in our collective efforts to responsibly manage our region's water resources. The proposed Grass Removal Incentive Program will empower more residents of Cathedral City and neighboring areas to significantly reduce their water consumption.

Water conservation is critical in our region, where approximately 80% of water use occurs outdoors. Turf removal presents a substantial opportunity for achieving significant water savings. By encouraging residents to replace grass with drought-tolerant landscaping, this program will not only conserve water but also enhance the aesthetic and environmental quality of our community.

On behalf of Cathedral City, I wholeheartedly support DWA's Grass Removal Incentive for Water Conservation Project. We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of DWA's proposal and the substantial regional benefits it promises.

If you have any questions regarding this proposal or my endorsement, please do not hesitate to contact me at 760-770-0387 or via email at [cmclendon@cathedralcity.gov](mailto:cmclendon@cathedralcity.gov).

Sincerely,

Charles P. McClendon, City Manager

City of Cathedral City



# COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

*Established in 1918 as a public agency*

GENERAL MANAGER  
Jim Barrett

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Robert Cheng

CLERK OF THE BOARD  
Sylvia Bermudez

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Dan Charlton

June 17, 2024

***VIA EMAIL***

The Honorable Camille Calimlim Touton  
Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

RE: Letter of Support for WaterSMART Grant  
Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects, Fiscal Year 2025, NOFO# R24AS00059

Dear Commissioner Touton:

As General Manager of Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), I am writing to express my strong support for Desert Water Agency's Grass Removal Incentive Program for Water Conservation project. CVWD is home to approximately 270,000 residents, all of whom are directly impacted by our region's water management strategies.

The Coachella Valley experiences high temperatures and minimal precipitation, making water conservation essential for the long-term sustainability of our community. Desert Water Agency (DWA) has been a steadfast advocate for water conservation, and this project represents another significant step in our collective efforts to responsibly manage our region's water resources. The proposed Grass Removal Incentive Program for Water Conservation will empower more residents of CVWD, and neighboring areas to significantly reduce their water consumption.

Water conservation is critical in our region, where approximately 80% of water use occurs outdoors. Turf removal presents a substantial opportunity for achieving significant water savings. By encouraging residents to replace grass with drought-tolerant landscaping, this program will not only conserve water but also enhance the aesthetic and environmental quality of our community.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1337**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
DESERT WATER AGENCY AUTHORIZING AND  
APPROVING SUBMISSION FOR A U.S. BUREAU OF  
RECLAMATION SMALL-SCALE WATER EFFICIENCY  
PROJECTS GRANT**

**WHEREAS**, the Desert Water Agency was established by an Act of the California Legislature in 1961 as a public water management agency; and

**WHEREAS**, the Agency views water conservation investments as a critical strategy to meet future water needs; and

**WHEREAS**, working with members of our own community to achieve local water conservation gains is an ideal approach; and

**WHEREAS**, about eighty percent of water is used outdoors, making grass removal an effective tool; and

**WHEREAS**, Desert Water Agency intends to submit an application for one hundred thousand dollars in financial assistance from the United States Bureau of Reclamation through its small-scale water efficiency project grant in fiscal year 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, the funding requested is for the Desert Water Agency Grass Removal Incentive Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Policy and Administration requires Governing Body approval for submission of an application; and

**WHEREAS**, if successful, the Agency will use California Department of Water Resources grant funding or the Agency's own budgeted funds for the matching funds in the funding plan submitted with the application;

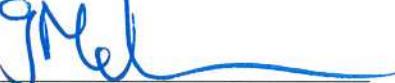
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of Desert Water Agency hereby authorizes staff to apply for grant funding through the United States Bureau of Reclamation's Small-scale Water Efficiency Projects.

**ADOPTED** this 2nd day of July, 2024.



Paul Ortega, President

**ATTEST:**



Gerald McKenna, Secretary-Treasurer



**ART BUNCE**  
Chair

**DANIEL G. SHILLITO**  
Vice-Chair

**RUSS MARTIN**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**THOMAS J. DAVIS**  
Member

**HEATHER WHITEMAN RUNS HIM**  
Member

**REID D. MILANOVICH**  
Ex-Officio Member

July 1, 2024

The Honorable Camille Touton, Commissioner  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

**RE: Letter of Support for WaterSMART Grant: Small-Scale  
Water Efficiency Projects FY 2025, NOFO # R24AS00059**

Dear Ms. Touton:

As the Chief Planning Officer for the Agua Caliente Water Authority, I am writing in strong support of **Desert Water Agency Grass Removal Incentives for Water Conservation Project**. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians has 500 tribal members on 31,500 acres. Agua Caliente has long been a good steward of water resources and a proponent for sustainable groundwater management in the Coachella Valley.

Coachella Valley experiences high temperatures and minimal precipitation, so water conservation is essential to the long-term future of the valley. The proposed Grass Removal Incentive Program will allow more residents on the Reservation and those in neighboring areas to reduce their water footprint.

Water conservation is critical, and in our area, about 75% of water use is outdoors. Grass removal is a great place to achieve high savings.

On behalf of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, please accept this letter of support for DWA's Grass Removal Incentive for Water Conservation Project. We appreciate your thoughtful review of DWA's proposal and the regional benefits it offers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Park".

Margaret E. Park, AICP  
Chief Planning Officer  
**AGUA CALIENTE WATER AUTHORITY**

5401 Dinah Shore Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92264

760.699.6800  
acwaterauthority.org

- 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 project will assist in supporting Tribal resilience to drought impacts by reducing water demand in the region. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians will also share in the regional benefits laid out in the other Evaluation Criteria.

- Does the proposed project support Reclamation's Tribal trust responsibilities or a Reclamation activity with a Tribe?

In accordance with the Department of Interior's Indian Trust Responsibilities (Chapter 2 Part 303: 2.7. A, Trust Principles), this project would be protecting and preserving Indian trust assets from loss, damage, unlawful alienation, waste and depletion by maximizing tribal resilience to drought impacts.

## Budget Narrative

### Budget Proposal

*Table 1. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources*

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
<b>1. Desert Water Agency</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
Non-Federal Subtotal	\$100,000
<b>REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

*Table 2. Total Project Cost*

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$100,000
Costs to be paid by the applicant	\$100,000
Value of third-party contributions	
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$ 200,000.00</b>

*Table 3. Budget Proposal*

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	\$/UNIT	Quantity		



<b>Personnel</b>				
Employee 1	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>				
Full-Time Employees	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
Part-Time Employees	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>Travel</b>				
Item A	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>Equipment</b>				
Item A	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>Supplies</b>				
Item A	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>Contractual</b>				
Item A	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>Construction</b>				
Grass Removal Incentive	\$2 per FT <sup>2</sup>	100,000	FT <sup>2</sup>	\$ 200,000
<b>Other Direct Costs</b>				
Item A	<i>Not Applicable</i>			\$ 0
<b>TOTAL DIRECT Costs</b>				\$ 200,000
<b>Indirect Costs</b>				
Type of rate	<i>Not applicable</i>			\$ 0.00
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS</b>				\$ 200,000

## Budget Narrative

If awarded, Desert Water Agency will use USBR funds in conjunction with its own budget. The program will be administered entirely at the cost of Desert Water Agency.

a. *Personnel*

Not applicable.

b. *Fringe Benefits*

Not applicable.

c. *Travel*

Not applicable

*d. Equipment*

Not applicable. No new equipment is anticipated to complete this project.

*e. Supplies*

Not applicable. No new materials or supplies are anticipated in order to complete this project.

*f. Contractual*

Not applicable.

*g. Construction*

Each grass removal program applicant is required to complete an application for reimbursement. Applicants are reimbursed based on the square footage of turf replaced with potential federal funds being cost shared with DWA funds to maximize participation, \$2 per square foot.

*h. Other*

CEC: Based on previous correspondence with Reclamation's Yuma Area office, Desert Water Agency expects the cost of obtaining a NEPA Categorical Exemption (CEC) to be approximately \$0.

*i. Total Direct Charges*

A total cost of \$200,000.00 is expected when accounting for both federal and non-federal funds.

*j. Indirect Costs*

Not applicable.

*k. Totals*

A total cost of \$200,000.00 is expected when accounting for both federal and non-federal funds.