

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

Governing Board

January 22, 2025



Consideration to Perform a Fire System Infrastructure Assessment

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Governing Board authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with HDR, Inc. to perform a Fire System Infrastructure Assessment for a not-to-exceed amount of \$73,100, inclusive of an optional task for grant research and submittal assistance, in accordance with its proposal dated January 16, 2025; and approve the transfer of \$73,100 from the FY 2024-25 Budget Capital Contingency Fund to the FY 2024-25 Budget Operating Expense line item Engineering General Consulting.

OVERVIEW

The recent January 2025 fires in Los Angeles County, and issues in that area with water availability for firefighting purposes, have prompted the need for Sweetwater Authority (Authority) to perform a Fire Mitigation Assessment and expand on past assessments performed, to ensure that the Authority maintains a ready state of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, capable of effectively responding to fire emergencies as they arise.

As climate change accelerates the frequency, intensity, and scale of wildfires in California, there is a heightened risk to both water quality and infrastructure. A comprehensive fire system assessment will reveal potential significant risks to the water system from wildfire events. However, by implementing proactive mitigation strategies, and improving resilience in infrastructure, the Authority can better protect its critical resources and continue providing safe, reliable water services in the face of future wildfires.

The assessment will help the Authority identify and prioritize system improvements, if needed, to become more resilient to the wildfire risk. The evaluation will focus on hydraulic modeling under different scenarios in accordance to industry standards and in coordination with pertinent fire departments. In addition, a review and summary of various challenges tied to the following will be performed:

- Direct Fire Damage - Pipes/conveyances, source water, water collection/intake pretreatment, treatment, storage and distribution, electronic, computer, or other automated systems (including security)
- Storage or handling of chemicals
- Power Disruptions - Emergency Power, fuel, treatment and distribution systems
- Access and Response - Brush Clearance and tree trimming
- Wildfire induced water contamination
- Emergency Planning and Response
- Optional Task for Grant research and submittal assistance

Staff reached out to HDR, Inc. to provide a proposal (Attachment 1) for the assessment effort because of its ability to respond quickly to this request as they are very familiar with the Authority's systems. HDR, Inc. performed modeling exercises associated with the current Distribution Master Plan and have extensive experience with fire system infrastructure assessments such as this one.

Staff will pursue any grant opportunities for any potential improvements recommended by HDR. Emergency preparedness is eligible for the hazard mitigation grant administered by FEMA and CalOES.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY 2024-25 Budget allocation for the Capital Contingency Fund currently has a budget and balance of \$140,760. Staff requests that \$73,100 be transferred to the FY 2024-25 Budget Operating Expense line item 10-40-400-5650 – Engineering General Consulting to fund the Fire System Infrastructure Assessment Project.

The proposal from HDR, Inc. dated January 16, 2025, has a base fee of \$60,700 and includes an optional task to perform grant research and submittal assistance, for an additional \$12,400. Staff recommends including the optional task for a total amount not-to-exceed cost of \$73,100.

OPTIONS

1. Authorize the General Manager to execute a contract with HDR, Inc. to perform a Fire System Infrastructure Assessment for a not-to-exceed amount of \$73,100, inclusive of an optional task for grant research and submittal assistance, in accordance with its proposal dated January 16, 2025; and approve the transfer of \$73,100 from the FY 2024-25 Budget Capital Contingency Fund to the FY 2024-25 Budget Operating Expense line time Engineering General Consulting.
2. Other direction as determined by the Governing Board.

Staff Contact:

Carlos Quintero, General Manager

Roberto Yano, Assistant General Manager

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Attachments

1. Proposal from HDR, Inc. dated January 16, 2025
2. Staff Presentation

Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Goal No. 6 – Administrative Effectiveness: Provide efficient and effective administrative systems and procedures in accordance with best management practices.

- AE1: Maintain a ready state of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery, capable of effectively responding to emergencies as they arise.