

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

Governing Board

June 25, 2025



Consideration to Award a Contract for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Professional Engineering Consulting Services

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Governing Board award a contract to Tetra Tech Inc. of San Diego, CA, in the amount not to exceed \$291,365 for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Professional Engineering Consulting Services in accordance with the scope of work presented, which includes a ten percent contingency fund in the amount of \$26,488 and allocate \$291,365 from the FY 2025-26 PFAS Mitigation Reserve to the FY 2025-26 Expense Budget.

OVERVIEW

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced a new National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in drinking water during April 2024, establishing six Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) which will be enforced beginning in 2029. Although there is currently consideration at the federal level to modify MCLs and extend the compliance deadline, at this time, staff's understanding is that California intends to move forward with the NPDWR as originally written.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals widely used in industrial and consumer products for their water-resistant, heat-resistant and non-stick properties. They are found globally in items like non-stick cookware, waterproof clothing, firefighting foam and food packaging. PFAS are often called "forever chemicals" because they break down very slowly in the environment and can accumulate in water, soil, and living organisms.

As required by the EPA's Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule-5 (UCMR-5), Sweetwater Authority (Authority) began testing for PFAS in the treated water leaving the Perdue Water Treatment Plant in October 2024. UCMR-5 monitoring found levels of two PFAS compounds; Perfluorohexanesulfonic acid (PFHxS) and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) above California Notification Levels (NLs), which required the Authority to provide public notification during December 2024. Additionally, the Authority has detected levels of PFOA and Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) above the federal MCLs that will take effect in 2029.

Although current PFAS detections do not yet require mitigation, staff recommends engaging a professional engineering consultant to assist the Authority in identifying long-term solutions to mitigate for PFAS in advance of the 2029 MCLs becoming enforceable.

The FY 2025-26 Strategic Plan Detailed Work Plan includes a goal to competitively procure a consultant to develop a preliminary design report and a pilot study for the potential installation of a PFAS treatment system at the Perdue Water Treatment Plant.

Request for Qualifications

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Professional Engineering Consulting Services to serve as the Authority's representative was advertised on May 6, 2025 (Attachment 2).

Scope of Work

The RFQ states that the selected consultant (owner's engineer) will be responsible to develop a detailed scope of work – taking into account the key considerations outlined below - and guide the selection of an engineering firm:

- Perform a desktop alternatives analysis for compliance with the EPA's future MCLs and current California NLs and Response Levels (RLs). Including but not limited to: watershed management, source water blending, and treatment technologies.
- Based on best available information, including water quality and operational data, make a recommendation for a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of various treatment technologies for PFAS removal at the Perdue Water Treatment Plant.
- Develop a pilot test protocol, and assist the Authority with the execution and operation of the pilot.
- Prepare a pilot test report, based upon the study results, and make a recommendation for full scale treatment. Estimate capital costs and ongoing operation and maintenance (O&M) costs.
- Prepare a preliminary design report for PFAS treatment removal. Submittals will be at key milestones as proposed by the consultant and agreed upon by the Authority.

Pre-Submission Meeting

A non-mandatory (highly encouraged) pre-submission meeting was held at the Perdue Water Treatment Plant on May 20, 2025; there were 13 individuals in attendance representing 8 consulting firms.

Consulting Firms in Attendance at the Pre-Submission Meeting

- Carollo Engineers
- CDM Smith
- EEC Environmental
- Hazen and Sawyer
- Integrated Sustainability
- NZW Engineering
- Tetra Tech, Inc.
- Trussell

Results

Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) were due on June 6, 2025. One submittal was received in response to the RFQ from Tera Tech, Inc. The consultant selected would not be allowed to participate in the bids for the scope of work developed by the owner’s engineer, many of the interested firms decided to wait for the next phases in this process.

Consultant Selection Process Summary (As Stated in the RFQ)

The RFQ stated that the Authority will evaluate proposals based on the evaluation criteria presented in Table 1 below, as well as background information and references.

Table 1

Category	Maximum Points
Completeness of proposal in addressing requested information	20
Qualifications and experience of the Consultant’s personnel assigned	25
Firm’s experience relevant to the type of project being considered, including past performance on Authority projects	30
Approach to complete tasks identified in the Scope of Services Section	25
Total	100

Staff’s Review of Tetra Tech’s SOQ

Staff reviewed the SOQ received from Tetra Tech Inc. and determined that its proposal meets the qualifications outlined in the RFQ. Based on the evaluation, staff gave Tetra Tech’s SOQ a score of 81 out of 100 points total. Tetra Tech is proposing a comprehensive team consisting of a project engineer(s), geophysicist, geologist, environmental engineer, hydrogeologist, environmental chemist, geographical information system (GIS) specialist, and a communications manager. Its proposal highlights extensive involvement in multiple PFAS projects; including pilot studies and the application of innovative technologies to destruct PFAS. The firm has experience supporting PFAS projects across California and the United States, working with clients such as: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States Navy (including Naval Base San Diego), Army National Guard, Orange County Water District, and Irvine Ranch Water District. The project examples provided demonstrate experience across all areas specified in the RFQ scope of work.

Based on this information, staff believes that Tetra Tech is well qualified to serve as the Authority’s Owner’s engineer and effectively guide the agency through the PFAS mitigation process.

Staff Conducted Interview of Tetra Tech

Staff conducted an interview of Tetra Tech on June 18, 2025. The interview provided an opportunity for staff to ask questions and learn more about Tetra Tech’s qualifications as related to the RFQ. Tetra Tech highlighted past project experience and its proposed team’s experience relevant to the project that confirmed the qualifications presented in their SOQ (Attachment 8).

Tetra Tech submitted cost proposal delineating anticipated tasks as the owner’s representative with associated fees for initial phase of the project until the completion of preliminary design report as specified in the RFQ documents. Staff agrees the identified tasks and its associated fees meet the agency’s best interest and timeline. Tetra Tech’s outlined tasks and its fees are presented in Table 2.

Based on Tetra Tech's demonstrated expertise and proven track record, staff confidently anticipates a productive partnership, supported by ongoing quality control checks throughout the project.

Table 2

Task	Estimated Costs
Program Management & Coordination	\$37,520
Program Management	\$14,140
Project Coordination/Meeting	\$13,140
Public Outreach/Community Presentation	\$10,240
Prepare a Request for Proposals for a PFAS desktop alternatives analysis, water quality analysis, pilot test and preliminary design report (PDR)	\$44,160
Desktop alternatives analysis review	\$14,680
Pilot study evaluation	\$17,920
Pilot test protocol evaluation	\$28,540
Pilot test report evaluation	\$28,580
Preliminary design report review	\$91,980
Estimated scope total	\$263,380
Mileage/Miscellaneous Reimbursable	\$1,497
Total Fee Submitted by Tetra Tech	<u>\$264,877</u>
10% contingency	<u>26,488</u>
Estimated scope total including contingency	<u>\$291,365</u>

Staff will provide periodical updates to the board and the public as this initial phase develops. Following completion of the scope of work, staff will bring a funding plan and recommendation for next steps back to the Governing Board for consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Authority has received the first payment from the 3M PFAS settlement in the amount of \$957,868.11. This amount will be allocated to the PFAS Mitigation Reserve on July 1, 2025, at the beginning of the fiscal year. Staff recommends that the Board allocate \$291,365 from the FY 2025-26 PFAS Mitigation Reserve to the FY 2025-26 Budget Operating Expense line item 10-40-400-5650 Engineering General – Consulting for the Tetra Tech scope of work tasks summarized in Table 2.

OPTIONS

1. Award a contract to Tetra Tech Inc. of San Diego, CA, in the amount not to exceed \$291,365 for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Professional Engineering Consulting Services in accordance with the scope of work presented, which includes a ten percent contingency fund in the amount of \$26,488 and allocate \$291,365 from the FY 2025-26 PFAS Mitigation Reserve to the FY 2025-26 Expense Budget.
2. Reject Tetra Tech Inc.'s proposal and direct staff to re-advertise the Request for Qualifications.
3. Other direction as determined by the Governing Board.

Staff Contact:

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Attachments

1. Staff Presentation - Professional Engineering Consulting Services
2. RFQ for Professional Engineering Consulting Services
3. RFQ - Exhibit A - Agreement for Services Template
4. RFQ - Exhibit B - 2022 Perdue Master Plan
5. RFQ - Exhibit C - Perdue Water Treatment Plant Process Schematic
6. RFQ - Exhibit D - Water Quality Data
7. RFQ - Exhibit E - 2022 Sweetwater and Loveland Watershed Sanitary Survey
8. SOQ – Tetra Tech
9. Billing Rates and Scope Cost - Tetra Tech

Strategic Plan

The FY 2025-26 Strategic Plan Detailed Workplan

Strategic Plan Goal #1: Water Quality (WQ) – Provide high quality water that meets regulatory requirements

- Objective WQ1: Meet all primary and secondary water quality standards
 - (6) Competitively procure a consultant to perform a preliminary design report and pilot study for the installation of a treatment system at the Perdue Water Treatment Plant for per and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) removal.

Past Board Actions

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| June 11, 2025 | The Governing Board recommended a name change to the Environment task for floating solar panels and corrections to the resolutions; adopted Resolution 25-04, Approving the FY 2025-26 Budget; and adopted Resolution 25-05, Approving the updated Financial Policies (Board Policy 517). |
| June 11, 2025 | The Governing Board recommended changes to the detailed work plan, and approved the FY 2025-26 Strategic Plan Detailed Work Plan. |