



SWEETWATER AUTHORITY

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May 6, 2025

Subject: REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING CONSULTING SERVICES

To Whom It May Concern:

Sweetwater Authority (Authority) is seeking Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from professional engineering services Consultants to serve as the Authority's representative, and guide the selection of an engineering firm to develop a basis of design memorandum, providing the most efficient and effective mitigation strategy for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) compounds for the Authority to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Primary Drinking Water Standard (NPDWS) Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) by April 2029.

Raw water tests from Sweetwater Reservoir (SWR) and treated water tests from the Authority's Perdue Water Treatment Plant (WTP) while drafting from SWR have resulted in PFAS detections in excess of the EPA's future MCLs and current California Notification Levels (NLs) and Response Levels (RLs). The Authority does not actively mitigate any levels of PFAS with the current treatment processes. Potential mitigation strategies should integrate with the existing Perdue WTP and be designed to reduce the PFAS levels to below all state and future federal standards (less than detectable levels) for all Perdue WTP operational conditions.

The Authority encourages participation by local, small, and/or disadvantaged businesses. Persons or entities submitting a proposal in response to this RFQ are referred to herein as "Consultant", "Proposer", or "Responder".

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Authority

The Authority was formed in 1977 as a Joint Powers Agency between the City of National City and South Bay Water. Governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, the Authority is a publicly-owned water agency that serves potable water to a population of approximately 200,000 in the City of National City, the western portion of the City of Chula Vista, and the unincorporated areas of Bonita and Lincoln Acres, in San Diego County, CA. The Authority's service area covers approximately 36 square miles.



The Authority has several sources of water supply including surface water, fresh and brackish groundwater, and raw and treated imported supplies purchased from the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA). The Authority's mission is *"to provide its current and future customers with a safe and reliable water supply through the use of the best available technology, sound management practices, public participation and a balanced approach to human and environmental needs"*.

Perdue Water Treatment Plant (WTP)

The possible potential PFAS mitigation strategy will be evaluated at the Perdue WTP. The Perdue WTP, located in Spring Valley, CA, which has a rated treatment capacity of 30 million gallons per day (MGD) and is deemed a conventional water treatment plant. Several upgrades have been performed over a period spanning from 2008-2016. Upgrades have included the complete refurbishment and automation of the chemical feed systems, including flow pacing; addition of variable frequency drives to selected pumps at the raw water pump station; replacement of the filter underdrains, media replacement and addition of air scour to the dual media filters; reconfiguration of the existing gravity sedimentation basins to a dissolved air flotation system (DAF) system; and the addition of a fluoridation system. These improvements also included physical infrastructure upgrades of the plant electrical and controls systems. At this point, the Perdue WTP is in excellent operating condition and is capable of meeting all current regulatory requirements for surface water treatment plants.

The Watershed

Within the 230 square mile Sweetwater River Watershed (watershed), the Authority owns and manages approximately 5,200 acres of property in the middle and upper portions of the watershed, which includes the Sweetwater Reservoir property and the Loveland Reservoir property. Within these properties, the Authority maintains paved and unpaved roads, drainage conveyance systems, allows recreational use (limited riding and hiking trails and fishing), and many other facilities that are compatible with and/or contribute to watershed protection and stewardship. The Authority also maintains facilities within the middle and upper watersheds that are located in Authority easements. These facilities include the Sloane Canyon slide gate at Willow Lake and a diversion system that protects Sweetwater Reservoir from polluted runoff, known as the Sweetwater Reservoir Urban Runoff Diversion System (URDS).

In addition to facilities and properties in the upper and middle watershed, the Authority owns and manages many facilities located within its service area, including two water treatment plants, multiple well sites, and a distribution system that includes various tank sites, pump stations, and approximately 400 miles of transmission and distribution mains. The Authority also supports natural habitat and species protection, including management of the Sweetwater Reservoir Habitat Management Program (HMP), Skelton Habitat Mitigation Area (HMA), and the Sweetwater Reservoir Shoreline Fishing Program Conservation Easement Area (CEA) that serve as mitigation for various Authority projects.

For more general information on the Authority visit: www.sweetwater.org.

Potential Projects at the Perdue Water Treatment Plant

Lake Aeration/Destratification System:

An aeration system will ensure consistent levels of dissolved oxygen and water quality throughout the water column, which will improve the treatability of water in the reservoir by reducing the occurrence of taste and odor causing algae blooms, reduce levels of dissolved manganese (color), reduce nutrient loading from the sediment into the water column, and improve the stability of the chloramine residual in the treated water by reducing total organic carbon (TOC) levels. Staff intends to bid this project in FY 2024-25.

Dredging:

The Authority is in the process of reviewing environmental constraints and obtaining necessary permits, and reviewing provisions and constraints that would be necessary to keep Sweetwater Reservoir operating as a drinking water supply throughout the duration of a dredging effort for water quality and capacity enhancement.

For more information on the Authority's planned projects at the Perdue Water Treatment Plant, please see Exhibit B.

B. SCOPE OF SERVICES

This section provides the Consultant with a general overview. As mentioned, the Authority is looking to select an owner's representative to assist in the development of a detailed scope of work and selection of a design engineer to develop a basis of design memorandum providing the most efficient and effective mitigation strategy for PFAS compounds for the Authority to meet the 2029 EPA requirements. The Authority has detected some PFAS in excess of the EPA's future MCLs and current California NLs and RLs, and is aware of current best available technologies (BATs) for PFAS removal such as granular activated carbon (GAC), ion exchange (IX), reverse osmosis (RO), and nanofiltration (NF); however, there is interest in exploring other non-traditional technologies that may be available if they are fully proven, efficient, and cost effective.

The Authority does not currently have any BATs in place for PFAS treatment; however some level of removal is being achieved within the existing treatment process. Potential mitigation strategies should fully integrate with the existing Perdue WTP and be designed to reduce the PFAS levels to less than detectable levels. The Authority would also be interested in exploring PFAS solutions that could provide additional benefits to water quality and assist with current and future regulatory compliance.

Tasks associated with the implementation of PFAS mitigation treatment technologies include, but are not limited to, performing an operational needs analysis of the current Perdue WTP and treatment processes (including pilot study), evaluate alternatives and

recommend renovations to the existing WTP required to mitigate PFAS compounds to ensure compliance with all EPA MCLs and California NLs and RLs, and provide a total project cost estimate for the recommended improvements.

The final preliminary design report is expected by the end of April 2026, including alternatives and cost estimates of the most effective system.

While the Owner's Representative will finalize a detailed scope of work, the following are important considerations in project implementation:

- Perform a desktop alternatives analysis for compliance with the EPA's future MCLs and current California NLs and 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 WTP.
- Develop a pilot test protocol, and assist the Authority with the execution and operation of the pilot.
- Prepare a pilot test report that, based upon the study results, makes 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.

C. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals submitted by potential Consultants shall be concise, well organized, and demonstrate the responder's experience applicable to the requirements of this RFQ. **SOQs should be prepared simply and economically.** The proposal shall be limited to no more than 25 pages, excluding resumes and other supporting information. Resumes or supporting documentation must be provided in separate appendices, and do not count toward the 25-page limit. A short, biography of the project manager and key personnel that includes relevant information is preferable over full resumes.

Consultants shall show they have experience and capabilities in managing projects of similar nature, and have dedicated experience in improving existing water treatment systems for PFAS mitigation. Prospective firms must have the necessary technical and professional qualifications, skills and facilities to perform the required work, and must have a demonstrated satisfactory record of performance. In their SOQs, firms having such experience should list projects that demonstrate explicitly the consultant's ability to complete such a project.

A proposal submitted in response to this RFQ shall be in the following order and shall include:

1. *Introductory Letter*: Describe firm's basic understanding of the Authority's request for qualifications of the firm.
2. *Identification of Responder*:
 - a. Provide legal name and address of company.
 - b. Provide legal form of company (partnership, corporation, joint venture, etc.).
 - c. Identify any parent companies.
 - d. Provide addresses of office(s) and number of employees.
 - e. Provide name, title, address, telephone number, and email of a person to contact concerning the proposal.
3. *Financial Relationships Disclosure(s)*:
 - a. Identify all existing and past financial relationships between Consultant's firm and current members of the Authority's Governing Board and staff and entities for which said members are employed or have an interest, both past and present. If there are none, clearly state this.
 - b. Identify all existing and past financial relationships between Consultant's proposed sub-consultants and current members of the Authority's Governing Board and staff and entities for which said members are employed or have an interest, both past and present. If there are none, clearly state this.
 - c. For a list of the Authority's Governing Board members, see the following link:
<http://www.sweetwater.org/35/Governing-Board>
4. *Required Qualifications and Experience*: The following are the minimum required qualifications for proposers. Interested parties should not submit a proposal if they do not meet these required qualifications:
 - a. The Consultant's primary business or the primary business of a department within the Consultant's firm shall include direct experience on the subject for at least 5 years.
 - b. The Consultant shall provide a single Project Manager as the primary point of contact with the Authority. This Project Manager must have at least 10 years (total, with current firm or other employers) of experience in the implementation of large-scale projects, with experience preferred in the analysis of water quality data, conventional surface water treatment plants, and PFAS removal treatment.
 - c. Provide a list of past and on-going qualifying projects for which the Consultant's services were or are similar to those described in this RFQ. Limit the list to no

- more than 10 projects the Consultant feels are most relevant to the RFQ. For each project, include the following:
- A brief description of the project, date initiated, date completed (if applicable).
 - Name of owner and owner's project manager with contact information (e-mail and/or phone).
- d. Present the experience of any sub-consultants in the same manner. If no sub-consultants are anticipated to support scope items, please state so.
5. *Consultant's Organization and Key Personnel:* Describe proposed Consultant's organization, years of experience, and competence of key personnel to provide Consulting Services. Provide an organizational chart showing the relationship and titles of key personnel. Identify roles of the key personnel, their main work location, and any relevant certifications or permits held by each. Identify the Project Manager who will be responsible for the direct supervision and coordination of all work activities. The Authority prefers one point of contact for all Task Order requests and proposals, Task Order management, and Quality Assurances and Quality Control (QA/QC).
 6. *Approach to complete tasks identified in the Scope of Services:* Provide a narrative and work flow chart that describes your firm's approach to completing requested tasks in the Scope of Services. A general strategy or one that describes a representative task(s) would suffice that would include but not limited to initial task order request, task order proposals, award, and work flow, response times, and assumptions leading to the desired product(s).
 7. *Costs:* Provide costs in Portable Document Format (PDF), that include billing rates per hour for every staff position to work on the proposed project, including sub-consultants. Costs shall be provided in a separate document from the submittal with the file name titled "Billing Rates and Costs."
 8. *Exceptions to the RFQ:* The proposer shall certify that it takes no exceptions to this RFQ, including but not limited to the Authority's Professional Services Agreement (Agreement), as attached in Exhibit A. If the respondent does take exception(s) to any portion of the RFQ or Agreement, the specific portion of the RFQ or Agreement to which exception(s) is taken shall be identified and proposed alternative language shall be provided and explained in the proposal. Taking exception(s) to the RFQ does not guarantee Authority approval, even if awarded, rather it is a prospective Consultant's disclosure that Authority will evaluate in the review of a prospective Consultant's proposal.
 9. *Amendments to the RFQ:* Proposal documents must acknowledge receipt of any amendments issued before May 30th, 2025. Amendments will be available on PlanetBids, as well as the Authority's Bid Opportunities and Results webpage.

10. *Proposal Authorization:* The proposal shall be signed by an individual authorized to bind the Consultant and shall contain a statement to the effect that the submittal is in effect for ninety (90) days.
11. *Proposal Submittal:* Provide one (1) electronic copy of the proposal document, and one (1) electronic copy of the proposed costs in separate PDF files. The proposal document file and separate cost proposal file shall be uploaded to PlanetBids at the link below:

<https://vendors.planetbids.com/portal/69501/bo/bo-detail/128905>

SOQs in response to this RFQ are due to the PlanetBids submission portal no later than 3:00 p.m., on Friday, June 6th, 2025.

SOQs submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.

D. REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS SCHEDULE

1. The Request for Qualifications is released on:
Tuesday, May 6th, 2025
2. There will be a non-mandatory, but highly-encouraged, Pre-Submission Meeting:
Tuesday, May 20th, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.
Perdue Water Treatment Plant
100 Lakeview Avenue
Spring Valley, CA 91977
3. The deadline for Questions will be:
Friday, May 23rd, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.
4. Published Pre-Submission meeting notes and questions:
Tuesday, May 27th, 2025
5. Statements of Qualifications are due to PlanetBids no later than:
Friday, June 6th, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

E. CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

The Authority will evaluate all proposals based on the evaluation criteria presented in this section, as well as other information obtained through background information and references. Proposals will initially be reviewed by Authority staff responsible for the management, operation, and engineering of the Perdue WTP. For firms that are deemed

to be equally qualified, costs may be considered in the selection process. The Authority reserves the sole right to select the most qualified firm based on best overall qualifications that is most advantageous to the Authority.

Final approval of any selected firm is subject to the approval of the Authority's Board of Directors (Board), providing a clear and concise description of the Firm's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the request. At the Authority's discretion, the Board may convene a Committee for consultant selection on this RFQ. The Committee would be made up of three Board Members assisted by Authority staff. Using the established evaluation criteria, the Board or Committee will evaluate the proposals based on the firms' qualified personnel and organization, experience and past performance, costs, and other information included in the proposal. To determine the firm(s) deemed most qualified to perform the requested services, the Board or Committee will evaluate responses to ensure the Consultant meets all required qualifications.

The Board or Committee may choose to select a short list from the proposals received based on proposal evaluation, and conduct interviews of the short-listed firms. After the interviews, short-listed firms may be re-evaluated and ranked based upon the combined proposal/interview process or based solely on the interview process. The Authority reserves the right to eliminate the interview step of the procurement process and reserves the right to cancel the RFQ process.

Proposals that do not meet all required information will be rejected and not reviewed further. Those proposals that clearly show the meets proposal requirements will be evaluated further and scored based on the criteria listed below. Firms that submit SOQs will be notified of the selection results. The Consultant who is selected as the Owner's Representative for this RFQ will not be able to submit a proposal for the future preliminary study and design advertisement.

The evaluation criteria that will be used by the Board or Committee are as follows:

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

F. AGREEMENT EXECUTION, AND TASK ORDER APPROVAL

The selected Consultant(s) will be expected to execute the Authority's Professional Services Agreement, referred herein as "Agreement". A copy of the Agreement is provided as Exhibit A. Exceptions to the Agreement should be noted in the SOQ for consideration. If Proposers do not submit Exceptions to the Agreement, it will be assumed that the Proposer agrees fully with the Agreement. All services shall be performed on a time and materials basis in accordance with the standard hourly rates as submitted by the Consultant and the terms of the Agreement.

The Authority's Engineering and Operations Department will serve as the administrative lead on the proposed contract. The Authority's Engineering Manager of Water Resources and Environmental will serve as the project manager.

The Agreement with selected Consultant will be in effect for the duration of the task as proposed by the consultant and agreed by the Authority. Additional time may be granted on a mutually agreed to basis.

G. DISCLAIMER

This RFQ does not commit the Authority to enter into an agreement for services, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of SOQs, or to procure or contract for services or supplies. The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all SOQs received as a result of this request, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFQ, if it is in the best interest of the Authority to do so. The Authority shall not be obligated to contract any or all of the requested services to the retained Consultant(s). Further, even upon execution of the Agreement, the selected Consultant(s) will not be guaranteed any work under the Agreement as services will only be requested as needed or as defined in an agreed Scope of Services.

If you have any questions regarding this RFQ or the described scope of services, please contact Kyehee (Kay) Kim, Engineering Manager of Water Resources and Environmental, at kkim@sweetwater.org, or at 619-409-6751.

Sincerely,

SWEETWATER AUTHORITY



Roberto Yano, P.E.
Assistant General Manager

enclosures: Exhibit A – Professional Services Agreement (Template)
Exhibit B – 2022 Perdue Master Plan

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Exhibit C – Perdue Water Treatment Plant Process Schematic
Exhibit D – Water Quality Data
Exhibit E – Sweetwater and Loveland Reservoir Watershed Sanitary Survey