



Napa County

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Legislation Text

File #: 23-0230, **Version:** 1

TO: Napa GSA Board of Directors

FROM: Brian Bordona - Interim Director of Planning, Building and Environmental Services

REPORT BY: Jamison Crosby - Natural Resources Conservation Manager

SUBJECT: Approval of Agreement No. 230312B with SCI Consulting Group

RECOMMENDATION

Interim Director of Planning, Building and Environmental Services requests approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign Agreement No. 230312B with SCI Consulting Group for an amount not to exceed \$84,088 and for the term February 7, 2023, through June 30, 2024, in order to evaluate options and make recommendations for the establishment of fee, special tax or benefit assessment to fund implementation of Napa County's Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and overall groundwater sustainability program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On January 31, 2022, the Napa Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR). On February 8, 2022 staff made a report to the Napa County Groundwater Sustainability Agency (NCGSA) about options for funding implementation of the GSP with the recognition that while implementation grants would be sought, those grants would not be adequate to fully fund activities moving forward. Several options were presented and direction was provided to take action to further explore funding options and alternatives. Under Agreement No. 230312B, SCI Consulting Group will evaluate options and make recommendations for the establishment of fee, special tax or benefit assessment to fund implementation of the GSP and the County's comprehensive groundwater sustainability program. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation and recommendations, SCI will prepare a comprehensive Fee Report for the proposed programs and improvements to be funded.

FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	Yes
Where is it budgeted?	Groundwater Special Revenue Fund - 272000
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary

Discretionary Justification:	Successful implementation of the GSP would be facilitated if a dedicated source of funds could be developed beyond County General Fund.
Is the general fund affected?	Yes
Future fiscal impact:	If a groundwater fee is established, there will be a need for future funding to revise and update the fee structure as necessary to adapt it to future circumstances.
Consequences if not approved:	Implementation of the GSP would have to be funded entirely through the County General Fund.
County Strategic Plan pillar addressed:	Vibrant and Sustainable Environment

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

On January 31, 2022, the Napa Valley Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) was submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and on January 26, 2023, DWR approved it, validating the course of action laid out in the plan.

In the year since the GSP was submitted, a number of steps were taken to begin implementation including: appointment of a five-member Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which has met monthly since August 11, 2022; development of a Stormwater Resource Plan (SWRP) which is in Draft Final form and being circulated among the public and stakeholders for comments through March 2, 2023; the initial stages of development of 3 workplans for Groundwater Pumping Reduction, Vineyard and Winery Water Conservation and Interconnected Surface Waters; submittal of a Prop 68 grant proposal to DWR for \$8.83M; and commencement of drilling of four (4) nested, dual completion monitoring wells.

On February 8, 2022, staff made a report to the NCGSA about options for funding implementation of the GSP with the recognition that while implementation grants would be sought, those grants would not be adequate to fully fund activities moving forward. The staff report put forward four options for funding ongoing operations: 1. County General Fund (current condition); 2. Special Tax approved by the voters; 3. Special Assessment approved by the voters; and/or 4. Fee. Background information on the different options were presented and discussed and the GSA Board gave the direction to staff to move forward with developing a professional services agreement to further study the options at hand.

If approved, the agreement which is the subject of this action will further explore funding options and alternatives and make recommendations for the establishment of fee, special tax or benefit assessment to fund

implementation of the GSP and the County's overall groundwater sustainability program. Depending on the outcome of the evaluation and recommendations, SCI will prepare a comprehensive Fee Report for the proposed programs and improvements to be funded. Included in the agreement are plans for two presentations to the GSA Board to apprise them of progress and receive the Board's input and direction.