



May 26, 2020

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SUBJECT: Sierra RCD / Southern Sierra IRWM Group's Responses to DWR's notes regarding conditional awarded proposals within the Mountain Counties Funding Area.

REFERENCE: DWR Draft Recommended Funding List – Round 1 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Implementation Grant Funding Announcement of April 24, 2020.

Dear Ashley,

On behalf of the Southern Sierra Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Group, I'm submitting the following information in response to the draft funding recommendations. We are very pleased that we have been recommended for funding for one of our projects in the amount of \$50,555 under our proposal. The following attached response in reference to DWR's Recommended Funding List for our Proposal Package and the following specific projects recommended for funding:

- Project 1 – Well Vulnerability Support Tool

We look forward to working in partnership with DWR on the successful implementation of this important project. Please let me know if you have any questions – and/or require additional information.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobby Kamansky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Bobby Kamansky
Regional Water Management Group Coordinator
559.287.3311

Proposal Note D – *Proposal did not include sufficient justification to support that at least one project address AB 1249 contaminants. Submit a justification of why a project that addresses AB1249 contaminants was not included in the application.*

As originally submitted, Project 1 – ***Well Vulnerability Support Tool*** complies with the mandates of AB1249. Additionally, AB1249 requires IRWM Plans to address nitrate, arsenic, perchlorate, or hexavalent chromium (Cr6) contamination within the IRWM boundary. Investigations and research must include the location and extent of any contamination in the region and the impacts caused by any contamination to communities within the region. The IRWM Plan also needs to include any actions currently being undertaken to address the contamination, and any additional actions that are needed to address the contamination.

It should be noted that the applicant, Sierra RCD for the Southern Sierra IRWM Group has been awarded funding from DWR directed specifically towards Tribal Communities, DACs and underserved communities within the Tulare-Kern and Mountain Counties Funding Areas in which to commence the implementation of addressing AB1249 under its IRWM Plan. This includes four (4) Tribal Community water systems: Big Sandy Rancheria, Cold Springs Rancheria, Dunlap Band of Mono Indians and Tule River Indian Reservation.

Project Number 1 – *Well Vulnerability Decision Support Tool*

As previously responded to in Proposal Note D above, this project as proposed is specifically a continuation of addressing key contaminants as required by AB1249.

Southern Sierra's IRMW Plan lists several Resource Management Strategies to Improve Water Quality. The project includes three strategies that are directly applicable in the Southern Sierra Region: (1) Outreach and Education, (2) Drought Planning, and (3) Climate Change Mitigation. To benefit the drinking water quality of DACs, outreach and education is a critical component of addressing AB1249 contaminants. Our project involves direct community engagement within the region. In addition, the Decision Support Tool (DST) which will enable well owners, agencies and local jurisdictions to select management options from a menu of items. This process will provide actionable information to the community well managers and individual well owners, as well as entire communities, including assessing the vulnerability of their wells in the Drought Planning and Climate Change Mitigation strategies.

In the Southern Sierra region, essential information is missing to develop cost-effective plans to address the occurrence of AB1249 contaminants in groundwater and community supply wells. Geogenic contaminants (specifically arsenic, but also gross alpha and uranium) are of most concern in the Southern Sierra Region. Because of the nature of these contaminants, strategies involving mitigation of these contaminants at the source are not possible. In contrast, mitigating nitrate contamination at the source could include reducing nitrogen application to agricultural lands, as an example. Therefore, these contaminants need to be mitigated at the wellhead. Actions to address contamination at the point-of-use are expensive, and often include relocating or deepening a well or installing treatment technology. In order to be cost-effective, they need to be based on an evaluation of mitigation strategies, including the benefits and feasibility of

multiple options. In addition to evaluation and mitigation strategies, outreach and engagement are required to provide these services to remote areas. These are not yet available for the DAC wells in the Southern Sierra Region. This project directly addresses that gap. Future projects will build on the results of this project, providing water quality benefits and further addressing the AB1249 contaminants.