BOARD MEETING DATE: April 4, 2025 AGENDA NO. 6

PROPOSAL: Execute Contract to Maintain Real-Time Public Alerts of Hydrogen Sulfide Events in the Coachella Valley

SYNOPSIS: In response to odor events related to the Salton Sea, South Coast AQMD began continuous measurements of hydrogen sulfide (H2S) at two Coachella Valley locations in November 2013. In 2017, South Coast AQMD contracted with Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI) to implement an automated real-time email system to provide H2S exceedance notifications. An additional contract was signed with STI in 2021 to continue supporting this system and integrate data from an additional H2S monitor located in Indio. This action is to execute a contract with STI to integrate data from additional monitors and maintain a real-time alert system for H2S in the Coachella Valley at a cost not to exceed $47,102 from the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35).

COMMITTEE: Administrative, March 14, 2025; Recommend for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:
Authorize the Executive Officer to execute a sole-source contract with Sonoma Technology, Inc. for the following actions with a combined cost not to exceed a total of $47,102 over two years from the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35):

1. Annual operational support of the public alert system at an annual cost not to exceed $19,300 for the first year with an option to renew the annual operation support of the public alert system at an annual cost not to exceed $19,300 in the next year; and
2. Integration of data from up to three additional stations as needed at a one-time cost of $2,834 per station

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

SR:SE:NS:QB

Background
Following a widespread hydrogen sulfide (H2S) odor event in 2012, South Coast AQMD started continuous H2S measurements at two locations in the Eastern Coachella Valley in 2013 to better understand the processes that lead to odors and to better communicate odor events to the public.

H2S is a product of anaerobic organic decay at the bottom of the shallow Salton Sea that occurs throughout the year and smells like rotten eggs. This process is especially active in the summer months with the abundant desert sunlight and heat. Shifting winds and chemical reactions within the sea cause H2S to be released from the Salton Sea and transported to communities in the Eastern Coachella Valley. While severe events like that of September 2012 are uncommon, less-extreme releases of H2S frequently cause odors in areas near the Salton Sea. From 2022 to 2024, there were 33 days where the H2S levels at one or more stations in the Coachella Valley exceeded the 30 parts-per-billion 1-hour California Ambient Air Quality H2S standard, which is based on a one-hour average.

Under a contract executed in 2017, Sonoma Technology, Inc. (STI) implemented a real-time H2S alert system that used data from two H2S monitors maintained by South Coast AQMD. These monitors are located in Mecca and at a site along the northern shore of the Salton Sea. Under a contract executed in 2021, STI upgraded the system to improve reliability and uptime and added data collected at a third H2S monitor located in Indio. The contracts included implementation of web interfaces for subscribers, as well as the administration of the subscription services and operational support.

Proposal
Staff propose a sole-source contract with STI, the contractor responsible for the development of our current real-time H2S alert system, to continue maintaining the system. The automated alerts are available via email with subscriber signups through a web interface. The initial cost for the first year of maintenance will not exceed $19,300 with an option to renew the annual operational maintenance support at an annual cost not to exceed $19,300 in the next year and an option to add up to three new monitoring stations at a cost of $2,834 per station. The total cost over two years is $47,102 if the annual operational maintenance support contract is renewed in the following year and data from three additional monitoring stations is integrated into the web interface.

The AES Settlement Project Funds (35) were used for the initial contract with STI in 2017 and the second contract in 2021. Prior to the STI contract, the Board had used this fund for fleet rules, but the funds can be directed to other projects, with Board approval.

Sole Source Justification
Section VIII, B.2 of the Procurement Policy and Procedure identifies four major provisions under which a sole-source award may be justified for non-federally funded procurement.

The request for a sole-source contract for the upgrade and operational support of a real-time H2S alert system is made under Section VIII, B.2.c.1 of the Procurement Policy and Procedure which states: Except for contracts funded in whole or in part with federal funds, written justification for a sole-source award must be provided documenting that the desired services are available from only the sole-source based on the unique experience and capabilities of the proposed contractor or contractor team.

STI has unique experience and capabilities for upgrading and maintaining the H2S alert system due to their experience developing and operating the system for the past eight years.

Resource Impacts
Sufficient funds for this contract are available in the AES Settlement Projects Fund (35). This contract will require staff oversight but is not expected to have other fiscal impacts.