



April 3, 2016

California Natural Resources Agency
Department of Water Resources
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236

Attn: Craig Cross and Melissa Sparks

Thank you for the opportunity to review the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Proposition 1 Disadvantaged Community Involvement Funding.

The following comments have been developed by a variety of partners following numerous conversations and are linked to sections of the report to which they apply.

I. Introduction

The program calls for supporting the following objectives:

"Work collaboratively to involve DACs, community-based organizations, and stakeholders in IRWM planning efforts..."; "Increase the understanding, and where necessary identify the water management needs of DACs..."; and "Develop strategies and long-term solutions that appropriately address DAC water management needs..."

In essence, the RFP calls for work that focuses on improved understanding of the needs, location, and demographics of DACs along with improved DAC involvement in the IRWMs and IRWM work.

- Please consider offering the program as a two phase process, and not a single RFP.

- Phase I should be dedicated to a) initial identification of DACs based on DWR definition and expanded based on evaluation and sound science, b) outreach and explanation of the program to DACs, c) initial involvement of DACs, and d) initial needs assessment.
- Phase II should focus on deeper DAC involvement and development of strategies, with active and supported DAC involvement, achieved only after identification of avenues and effective strategies of engagement and work completed in Phase I.
- DAC identification should include not only geographically-based communities but also non-place based and typically under represented communities in the region. Some Tribes, for example, have Rancherias and definable land base and are more easily linked to geographically place-based communities, though this is not assured. Other Tribes—particularly those that are federally unrecognized—may not be tied to a place and easily obtained data; they and other underserved communities need to be identified to be part of this important work.
- Definition of DACs should remain an empirical question that is addressed in Phase I work. Median household income is an appropriate starting point. Other variables that are appropriate to the region should be evaluated for inclusion.
 - Use of the term “Economically Distressed Area” (EDA) was created to provide support to those communities with economic hardship that were excluded by the previous “Disadvantaged Communities” criteria. To establish an EDA status DWR recommends that applicants use the new “EDA Instructions and Mapping Tool” which was created in response to the *Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014* (Proposition 1). Median Household Income (MHI) is relied upon for this. The difficulty, however, is that this criterion relies on data from the US Census Bureau and/or the CA Employment Development Department (EDD) labor statistics that are problematic because many families are not documented by these systems. In many areas, families have given up seeking employment or have been unemployed so long that they are no longer eligible for EDD services. Also, a large number of families do not complete Census forms due to lack of documentation, homeless status, or mistrust of the Census process. The result is that the numbers collected and used to establish criteria are unreliable, particularly in areas where populations are small and the Census Bureau relies on sampling and projection methodologies.
 - There will likely be differences among regions that call for a definition that includes both urban and rural attributes. In urban regions, the needs of DACs are focused on legacy impacts, cleanup and poor water quality. In rural regions, the needs is to prevent degradation to these levels. In both cases, the resources

are not available to clean up or prevent water resource degradation. Therefore a DAC definition should include income markers as well as environmental markers. We recommend that the DAC definition initially include areas identified by three DAC measures: 1) DWR's 80% median definition 2) Economically Distressed Areas and 3) CalEnviroScreen DAC's. Other measures that could be evaluated for inclusion include (but are not limited to): California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, California Medical Assistance Program, Healthy Families Program, Supplemental Nutrition Program and U.S. Free and Reduced Priced Meal Program.

- DAC identification should focus on needs but DAC assessment should include identification of the strengths of the DACs/under represented communities to identify pathways to effective engagement and improve the likelihood of successful projects.

II. Funding

The Mountain Counties regional allocation is 73 percent lower than the next lowest Proposition 1 Funding area and only 13 percent of the total of the highest funded area. Population matters but so too does the large geographic scale and mostly obscured heterogeneity of the region. The very large geographic spread of the region, and the many communities (place- and non-placed based and underserved) within the region require additional resources dedicated to the task. We recommend the no less than twice the \$1.3 million be dedicated to this work. We are aware of the restrictions DWR faces in modifying this total. Yet, groups in other funding areas have suggested they are unlikely to use all the allocated dollars, and while we recognize the difficulty of any re-allocation, we ask that DWR Division of Integrated Regional Water Management think creatively about increasing the budget for the Mountain Counties region for this work.

We applaud the decision to waive the local cost share requirement.

III. Program Schedule

We applaud DWR's outreach and engagement to secure public comment on the draft RFP.

IV. Eligible Costs

Given the scale and complexity of the region, the scope of the project, and potential for extensive reimbursement, we suggest that direct administrative costs be increased to ten percent for those entities that can justify a higher rate through approved state or federal accounting review. This is more important if funding participation—recommended below—is accepted and given the numerous IRWMs and geographic spread of the region and associated costs to bring people together.

V. Proposal Process

DWR is seeking "a single Funding Area-wide proposal from each of the 12..." DWR may be reticent to select amidst competing proposals, but if agreement cannot be reached among

entities within a region we suggest DWR take responsibility for selecting one proposal that actively and substantively include the most partners working together as evidenced by letters of support from participating IRWMs, is comprehensively inclusive of DAC geographic communities and groups including Native Americans that may be less tied to specific geographic locales, and comprehensively meets the needs as defined in the RFP. DWR should also select the proposal that involves organizations with assessment capacity that are already actively involved with one or more IRWMs and are capable of addressing the complexity of DAC assessment outlined above, which includes having experience directly advancing DAC inclusion in IRWMs or processes similar to IRWMs.

- The complexity of issues associated with DAC assessment and work call for the entity(ies) conducting the work to be expert in the field and with experience working with and guided by the communities themselves. DWR can support this through both language in the final RFP and selection of the entity should there be competing proposals.

“The Applicant will act as a single point of contact and will work with DWR, the DACs, RWMG(s), community based organizations, and stakeholders in the Funding Area to develop a proposal that is responsive to this RFP.”

The development of a proposal in the Mountain County region with as many entities as there are and with the geographic spread of the region compel extensive communication and effort. In addition to identifying a two phase proposal, we urge dedication of funding to the development of the regional proposal. Too often inadequate up front work leads to incomplete or inadequate subsequent work. The importance of this cannot be understated. Comprehensiveness and inclusiveness in the proposal development will profoundly affect outcomes. The RFP should clarify if and how these expenses can be reimbursed, what sort of expenses can be reimbursed, and when the clock begins to tick on these reimburseable expenses.

VI. Responding to this Proposal

Similar to funding Phase I or proposal development work, DWR should allow support to be allocated for DAC resident involvement. Residents of disadvantaged communities and underserved communities often have no means to travel to meetings or are unable to take time off of work to do so. They will need support in order to participate. Allowing for this support will increase involvement. DWR should allow support to be used for DAC participation in initial scoping meetings along with subsequent DAC and IRWM involvement.

There also appears to be confusion over DWR standard reimbursement in arrears and the DAC RFP allowing for advance payment. This needs to be clarified. Allowing some advance payment will help facilitate payment for DAC and disadvantaged community member involvement and reduce the challenges for smaller non-profit organizations receiving payment in arrears.

There has been discussion of withholding funding for IRWMs that do not participate. A two phase process will allow and encourage involvement of all IRWMs in the region to come together for a second phase, especially if there is initial disagreement about the entity to conduct work in a region. Some may align with one or another entity and they should not be penalized for doing so.

We thank you for offering the RFP for review and comment. Should you have any questions about the suggestions and recommendations contain herein please do not hesitate to contact any of the undersigned individuals;

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Mansfield
Director, Sierra Water Workgroup
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www.sierrawaterworkgroup.org

Only the following individual member organizations of the SWWG are signatories to this letter, not the IRWM's. Each IRWM has its own process for support letters, and may be sending comments on their own. Representing the following IRWMs

*Upper Feather River IRWM
Yosemite-Mariposa IRWM
Cosumnes, American, Bear and Yuba IRWM*

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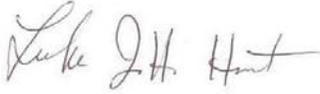
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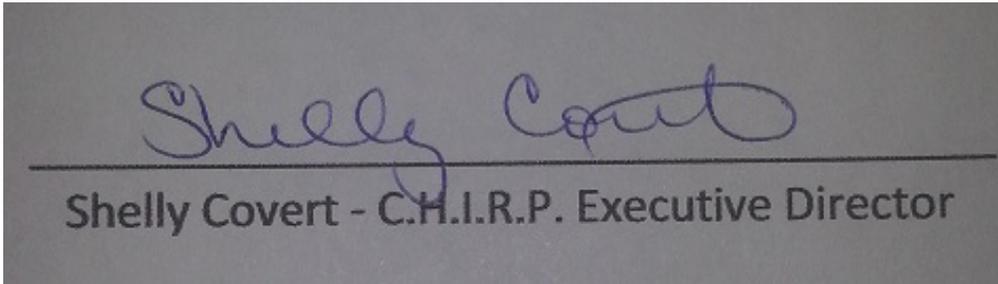
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UPPER FEATHER RIVER INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT
GROUP

April 8, 2016

California Natural Resources Agency
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Sierra Native Alliance

Hedem kawina'n ka'nte'm tawaltoto
P.O. Box 6346 ~ Auburn, CA 95604

April 8, 2016

Izzy Martin
CABY Watershed Collective
c/o The Sierra Fund

RE: DAC RFP letter

As Executive Director of the Sierra Native Alliance (SNA), I am authorizing the use of our organization logo and my signature below, in support of the CABY letter to DWR regarding DAC definitions in the DWR RFP.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Anno Nastas Nakai', written over a horizontal line.

Anno Nastas Nakai
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