

From: [DWR IRWM Grants](#)
To: [Maisonneuve, Vivien L.;](#)
Subject: FW: Madera Region Letter of Appeal
Date: Thursday, December 23, 2010 10:21:50 AM

From: Jeannie [info@cfwatershed.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 22, 2010 6:02 PM
To: Landis, Paula; Hoffmann, William; Yun, Joseph; Cowin, Mark; Dooley, Michelle M.; Billington, Tracie; DWR IRWM Grants
Subject: Madera Region Letter of Appeal

December 21, 2010

Re: Madera Region IRWM Planning Grant Appeal

Dear Department of Water Resources Representative:

The California Department of Water Resources did not recommend the Madera Region IRWMP for the Planning Grant funding. Many stakeholders involved in the Madera Region IRWMP application development process have determined that this result is not sufficiently justified and believe that it continues the historical neglect of the States' headwater regions. We are requesting that you reconsider your application scoring review and have the application re-evaluated.

There is a very positive history of the Madera Region that the reviewers were probably not aware of and would be missing out on advancement of this area if they decline this application. The Madera Region is one of a kind in California. We currently have an IRWM Plan that was looked as the "Poster Child" of plans for California. We were the only group that was successful in joining both the foothill/mountain area with the valley area of the San Joaquin – the Source with the Users. These are two very important areas yet two very different areas in their approach to the watershed – yet we now have them working together – this is huge for the state. DWR told us time and time again that we would be the example of what should be done; and then Prop 50 funding changed to Prop 84 funding and all of the sudden – we were wrong in what we did. Granted, we did everything we were supposed to; and then the rules and the standards changed. This is what our planning grant was about; doing the right thing with something that was not our fault, making the changes now required to follow the new standards.

It is difficult to determine exactly why the grant scored so poorly based on the

comments provided in the evaluation. But it appears that the reviewers thought that many of the activities proposed were unnecessary or unattainable in the time frame for the development of an IRWMP and that there was not sufficient detail in the application to justify these extraneous proposed activities. And many of the reviewer comments were capricious and petty based on numbering or small grammatical inconsistencies. Our application was not a cookie-cutter IRWM plan development, and our proposal may not have been as glossy and professional as those produced by high-dollar consulting firms. But we, perhaps more than any other region, developed and modeled a collaborative, pragmatic approach that we felt would bring about the best results in regional water management. We have no funds (being a DAR – Disadvantaged Region) and the grant writer wrote our application pro bono, that is what we could afford.

There was a comment stating that we were insufficient in detailing what our process is for DAC. The obvious answer to this is read the entire work plan. Our entire region is considered a DAC (DAR) so everything we do is working toward this goal. Any members, including Self Help Enterprises do not have specific roles at this time, (a reason we were marked down in this category) they are members contributing to the RAP, the Planning Grant, and the Implementation Grant processes, as well as the formation of the RWMG – we have been very busy as a group - meeting the current requirements of DWR. In addition, because of our “conditional acceptance” we have been focusing any free time on contacting and working with our adjacent watersheds and regions to sign MOUs both as a requirement to move forward, and because it is the right thing to do. This too has been very time consuming and as we are all volunteers with daily jobs to assign specifics to each member is currently unrealistic.

The Madera Region IRWM does address the goal of the IRWM program which is to encourage integrated regional strategies for management of water resources. We proposed what DWR says that they want – a way of bringing the stakeholders in the region together to collaboratively share resources, educate one another and come up with integrated strategies for resource management. Perhaps the reviewers were overly focused on the writing of the grant program, to create IRWMPs and not the long term goal of building partnerships and including stakeholders in the process to include individuals and organizations for as many regions as possible. Over the almost five years that we have been working on the IRWMP, we identified those strategies that would help us achieve the goal, at the same time that we were achieving this objective.

It appears that the reviewers did not appreciate this approach and possibly did not fully understand it. This is not surprising – they had a lot of grants to score and may not have had an understanding of the special needs of our region. But what is particularly disappointing is that this approach was accepted before and even well-liked by DWR and now it is not acceptable for further funding; even

with the added sections that are now required to meet new standards. This IRWMP funding is essential for the Madera region. We are not an area with agencies, jurisdiction or organizations that can supply funding to maintain the collaborative effort. This is an all volunteer effort; we requested a minimal amount to update our plan based on the one million dollars available to each region. Not receiving this funding is a huge set-back and obstacle to update our plan and continue to try and meet all of DWR's requirements. We are one of the few regions in the position to apply for implementation funds – that we also desperately need to continue our work in this region. Once again, this Planning Grant funding is also needed to meet the requirements of updating our plan to meet the requirements to receive the Implementation Funds.

Please reconsider your choice of turning down the funds we need to move forward. Though we did not ask for a lot in comparison to what was available per region and what other regions requested (and many received); what we requested is greatly needed to move forward with our plan and our projects as well as meet all of the requirements put forth by your agency, the Department of Water Resources.

Have a Magical Day!

Jeannie Habben

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