

Wallace, Keith A.

From: Yun, Joseph
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2010 1:28 PM
To: Wallace, Keith A.
Cc: Billington, Tracie
Subject: FW: KRCD Comments on Draft Guidelines, and Planning and Implementation PSPs for Round 1 Prop 84 IRWM

From: Eric Osterling [mailto:eosterling@krcd.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2010 1:23 PM
To: Yun, Joseph
Cc: Joseph, Trevor M.; Lutterman, Thomas J.; Dave Orth; Rick Hoelzel; David Cone
Subject: KRCD Comments on Draft Guidelines, and Planning and Implementation PSPs for Round 1 Prop 84 IRWM

Re: Public Review Drafts of Proposition 84 IRWM Guidelines, Implementation PSP, and Planning PSP

Dear Mr. Yun:

The Kings River Conservation District, as a member of the Upper Kings Basin Integrated Regional Water Management Authority (UKBIRWMA), submits the following comments and recommendations to improve the Proposition 84 IRWM Guidelines, and Round 1 proposal solicitation packages:

Draft Planning Proposal Solicitation Package

1. Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) do not come cheap. Out of necessity, a planning match beginning as high as 50% could steer some planning groups away from the IRWM program all together. Considering what information is currently available on the new plan requirements, the UKBIRWMA estimates that the total cost of preparing (or updating) its IRWMP to the new standards will be far greater than the plan developed under Proposition 50. Further impairing our situation, it appears no incentives or waivers were incorporated to address the needs of Disadvantaged Communities (DACs). Groups like the UKBIRWMA, which includes a considerable number of DAC stakeholders within its planning area, will find it much more difficult to secure the local \$400,000-plus needed to prepare an application that will be competitive against applications from other Integrated Regional Water Management Groups (IRWMPGs) possessing greater resources.

To address these issues, we request that DWR lower the minimum required match to 30%, and if possible, add a five point DAC scoring criteria to the scoring table. In addition, we request that costs associated with plan related activities since the adoption of the existing IRWMP be considered eligible funding match expenses.

2. Based on the freezes and constant uncertainties of State Bond sales over the past two years, it seems probable that only partial funding of new Prop 84 planning and implementation grant contracts is what the future holds in store for us. It is of great concern to UKBIRWMA stakeholders that we are potentially being led down the path of not only another situation where the State is unable to fulfill a funding commitment to our region, but may at the same time hold us contractually responsible to perform a very costly update to our IRWMP.

At the very least, we request that some assurances be provided that a Grantee will not be held responsible for contractual commitments (such as a Plan update), if for any reason the State defaults on the agreed upon financial commitment to that Grantee.

Draft Implementation Proposal Solicitation Package

3. The Draft Implementation Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) indicates five points will be awarded under the scoring criteria titled “Funding Area Balance Points”. While it may be implied, in regards to the description provided we are seeking added clarification on whether favor will be shown towards IRWMGs within a funding region that are in earlier stages of IRWM planning, or to IRWMGs in more advanced stages. We request that DWR modify the draft description to be clearer. Likewise, if an IRWMG has an existing IRWM grant, please specify whether that Group’s application will score higher or lower in this category than an application from a Group that does not have an existing IRWM grant.
4. At an April 12th comments meeting in Sacramento, DWR staff explained that the Final Prop 84 Guidelines will serve as a permanent standard throughout the life of the Prop 84 IRWM program (including Round 1), while each individual Prop 84 IRWM PSP is or will be written to outline the details of a specific grant. The Draft Guidelines are fairly specific about how IRWMP amendments should, and should not, be conducted for a Prop 84-compliant IRWMP. However, not much was found in the Draft Implementation PSP regarding amendments and how certain circumstances might affect the eligibility of Round 1 Implementation applicants who have amended an adopted Prop 50-compliant Plan.

The UKBIRWMA believes it has implemented an appropriate process to amend its IRWMP project list and has reached out to DWR for direction in that process numerous times over the past year. On the other hand, including detailed guidance in the Implementation PSP would provide better assurances that nothing has been, or is, being done to jeopardize Round 1 Implementation eligibility.

5. While we understand the current uncertainty of funding for the program, with the significant cost of preparing applications, we strongly recommend that DWR push for additional Implementation money to be available during the first round of funding; specifically, utilization of the SB7-8 appropriation of \$236M. UKBIRWMA will offer further support to legislators for this money to be included. And we would encourage use of that source, even if it includes adding some unique requirements to the initial round of funding.
6. Recognizing that DACs may not be able to proceed until funding is available, the Schedule scoring criteria identifies how DAC related projects are to address the project start date. However, if the DAC start date is beyond the 6 months date of award, the application may not receive the maximum score. We ask that the scoring criteria specifically allow DAC projects to receive the maximum possible scoring under this category.
7. We agree with the Economic Analysis category being the most heavily weighted category, and encourage DWR to finalize that category as-is.
8. We are supportive of the one step application process for funding, rather than the two step process which was used in administration of Prop 50 IRWM funds.
9. The timeline for application preparation is relatively short (6-8 weeks). While we understand DWR’s intent is to get IRWM money out fairly quickly, we suggest lengthening the application period to 12 weeks.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments and recommendations for the Prop 84 IRWM grant program, and look forward to working with Department of Water Resources to address our local water resources issues.

Sincerely,

Eric C. Osterling
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Water Resources Department

Kings River Conservation District

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