

FILE NUMBER: 2025-055

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 2025

SUBJECT: Amendment No. 10 with UC Regents for Sea Grant Fellows

DESCRIPTION: Resolution Authorizing Amendment No. 10 to the Agreement with the Regents of the University of California to Extend the Current 2024 Sea Grant Fellow for Four Months for an Additional \$26,786, for a New Not to Exceed Total of \$1,098,261. Funds for Fiscal Year 2025 Have Been Budgeted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The California Sea Grant Fellowship program provides a unique educational and professional opportunity for graduate students who are interested in coastal and marine resources, and the policy decisions affecting those resources. The California Sea Grant program is a unique partnership that unites the resources of the federal government, the State of California and universities across the state to create knowledge, products and services that benefit the economy, the environment and the citizens of California. California Sea Grant is one of 33 state programs funded by the National Sea Grant College Program, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with matching funds come from the state and private sources. California Sea Grant is administered by Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) and the Regents of the University of California, San Diego (Regents).

The Sea Grant Fellowship program is designed to provide recent university graduate students an opportunity to acquire “on the job” experience in the planning and implementation of coastal and marine resource policies and programs. The Sea Grant Fellowship program matches highly motivated and outstanding graduate students with “host” agencies from municipal, state, and federal agencies within California. The District became a host agency for the first time in 2017 and since then, has annually supported one to three Sea Grant Fellows in the Planning & Environmental Branch.

The proposed Amendment No. 10 to the agreement with the Regents will allow the District to extend one Environmental Conservation 2024 California Sea Grant Fellow for an additional four months, in the amount of \$26,786, bringing the total not-exceed amount to \$1,098,261 and extending the agreement for 17 weeks, until July 10, 2025 (Attachment A).

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing Amendment No. 10 to Agreement #6171-2017 with the Regents of the University of California to extend one Environmental Conservation 2024 California Sea Grant Fellow, extending the agreement for 17 weeks and increasing the not-to-exceed amount by \$26,786 for a new total of \$1,098,261.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact caused by approval of this action. Funds for this amendment are budgeted in the Environmental Conservation FY 2025 non-personnel expense budgets.

COMPASS STRATEGIC GOALS:

This agenda item supports the following Strategic Goal(s).

- A Port with a healthy and sustainable bay and its environment.
- A Port with a comprehensive vision for Port land and water uses integrated to regional plans.
- A Port that is a safe place to visit, work and play.
- A financially sustainable Port that drives job creation and regional economic vitality.
- Not applicable.

DISCUSSION:

California Sea Grant is a unique partnership that unites the resources of the federal government, the State of California and universities across the state to create knowledge, products and services that benefit the economy, the environment and the citizens of California. California Sea Grant is one of 33 state programs funded by the National Sea Grant College Program, part of the NOAA, with matching funds coming from the state and private sources. California Sea Grant is administered by Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) and the Regents of the University of California, San Diego (Regents). The California Sea Grant Program provides a unique educational and professional opportunity for graduate students who are interested in coastal and marine resources, and the policy decisions affecting those resources.

The Sea Grant Fellowship program is designed to provide recent university graduate students an opportunity to acquire on-the-job and hands-on experience in the planning and implementation of coastal and marine resource policies and programs. The Sea Grant Fellowship program matches highly motivated and outstanding graduate students with “hosts” agencies from municipal, state, and federal agencies within California. The Sea Grant Fellowship program provides graduate students with fulltime employment for one year and serves to both increase the staffing capacity of ocean and coastal management agencies in California with highly motivated and talented graduate students, but to also facilitate the training and development of the next generation of ocean and coastal leaders.

The District became a host agency for the first time in 2017 and since then has annually supported one to three Sea Grant Fellows in the Planning & Environment Branch. Since the District hosted its first cohort, five fellows have been subsequently employed as full-time staff of the District. As a host agency the District provides an educational opportunity to fellows who will, in turn, provide substantial professional contributions and work with other staff and/or leadership, as appropriate. Hosts are expected to supervise, mentor, and provide opportunities for fellows to be involved in critical issues that support the fellow’s professional and educational goals. On an annual basis, Sea Grant conducts an open solicitation to graduate students throughout the State of California university system. The solicitation process requires graduate students to submit an application to California

Sea Grant, which screens them for appropriate academic background, employment history, community and extracurricular activities, interest in the fellowship, and for personal characteristics such as initiative, adaptability, and strong communication and analytical skills. Placement with host agencies is based on interviews and ranking of preferences by both the selected finalists and hosts after a mandatory matching workshop. Host agencies are expected to contribute at least 75% of the costs to support the first fellow and 100% of the cost for the second fellow through an agreement with the Regents. The current agreement with the Regents expires June 30, 2026.

Staff is requesting Board approved to extend one 2024 California Sea Grant Fellow for an additional four months (17 weeks) through July 10, 2025. Projects the 2024 California Sea Grant Fellow will continue to support in the Environmental Conservation department include advancing the District's Green Marine certification, natural resources management and monitoring in the Chula Vista Bayfront, Pond 20 mitigation banking, stakeholder outreach and meeting facilitation, and nature-based solutions projects.

Below is a summary of past amendments to the agreement, as well as the proposed 10th amendment:

On January 10, 2017, by resolution #2017-010, the Board of Port Commissioners approved an agreement with the Regents of the University of California (Regents) to host three California Sea Grant State Fellows for one year in the amount of \$175,067, and for mutual indemnification (Agreement #6171-2017).

On January 20, 2018, Amendment No. 1 to this agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2018-008, to allow the District to host two new Sea Grant Fellows for one year and to extend a current fellow for an additional five months for a total amount of \$138,953 bringing the total not-to-exceed amount to \$314,020.

On January 16, 2019, Amendment No. 2 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2019-003, to allow the District to host two new California Sea Grant Fellows for one year in the amount of \$116,092, as well as extend one current Sea Grant Fellow for an additional nine and one half months in the amount of \$138,778 bringing the total not-to-exceed amount to \$452,798.

On January 9, 2020, Amendment No. 3 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2020-003, to allow the District to host two new California Sea Grant Fellows for one year in the amount of \$127,049, as well as extend the two current Sea Grant Fellows, one for an additional nine and one half months at \$15,670 (credit applied from FY19), and the second for an additional four and a half months at \$28,237 for a total amount of \$170,956, for four fellows, bringing the total not-to-exceed amount to \$623,754.

On March 1, 2021, Amendment No. 4 extended the agreement with the Regents for time only, from March 31, 2021, to March 31, 2022, with no increase in funding as surplus funds from 2020 were used to support the 2021 fellowship.

On December 14, 2021, Amendment No. 5 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2021-115, to allow the District to host one new California Sea Grant Fellow for one year in the amount of \$57,809, bringing the total not-to-exceed amount to \$681,562.

On December 13, 2022, Amendment No. 6 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2022-144, to allow the District to host one new California Sea Grant Fellow for one year in the amount of \$57,809, bringing the total not-exceed amount to \$739,371.

On December 5, 2023, Amendment No. 7 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2023-110, to allow the District to host two new California Sea Grant Fellows for one year in the amount of \$156,051, bringing the total not-exceed amount to \$895,422.

On April 3, 2024, Amendment No. 8 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2024-035, to allow the District to extend the 2023 fellow for three months in the amount of \$17,776, bringing the total not to exceed amount to \$913,198.

On November 13, 2024, Amendment No. 9 to the agreement with the Regents was approved by the Board, by resolution #2024-401, to allow the District to host two new California Sea Grant Fellows for one year in the amount of \$158,277, bringing the total not to exceed amount to \$1,071,475.

Staff recommends the Board adopt a resolution for the proposed Amendment No. 10 to the agreement with the Regents to allow the District to extend one 2024 California Sea Grant Fellow, for 17 weeks, in the amount of \$26,786, bringing the new total not-exceed amount to \$1,098,26.

General Counsel's Comments:

The Office of the General Counsel has reviewed the agenda sheet and attachment, as presented to it, and approves the same as to form and legality.

Environmental Review:

The proposed Board action does not constitute a "project" or an "approval" of a "project" under the definitions set forth in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15352 and 15378 because no direct or indirect changes to the physical environment would occur. CEQA requires that the District adequately assess the environmental impacts of its projects and any reasonably foreseeable activities that may result from projects prior to the approval of the same. If a project is formulated and CEQA review is conducted, the Board reserves its discretion to adopt any and all feasible mitigation measures, alternatives to the project, including a no-project alternative, a statement of overriding considerations, if applicable, and may approve or disapprove the project and any permits or entitlements necessary for the same. Those decisions may be exercised at the sole and absolute discretion of the Board. Based on the totality of the

circumstances and the entire record, this proposed Board action does not commit the District to a definite course of action, prior to CEQA review being conducted. No further action under CEQA is required at this time.

Additionally, the proposed Board action allows for the District to implement its obligations under Sections 81 and 87 of the Port Act, which authorize: the use of funds for expenses of conducting the District; and for commercial and industrial uses and purposes, in addition to the establishment and maintenance of District lands for ecological preservation and habitat restoration. This proposed Board action furthers these requirements. The Port Act was enacted by the California Legislature and is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine. Consequently, the proposed Board action is consistent with the Public Trust Doctrine.

Lastly, the proposed Board action does not allow for “development”, as defined in Section 30106 of the California Coastal Act, or “new development”, pursuant to Section 1.a. of the District’s Coastal Development Permit (CDP) Regulations. Therefore, issuance of a Coastal Development Permit or exclusion is not required. However, the District’s projects require processing under the District’s CDP Regulations. If a project is formulated as a result of these items, the Board will consider approval of the project after the appropriate documentation under the District’s CDP Regulations has been completed and authorized by the Board, if necessary. The Board’s direction in no way limits the exercise of the District’s discretion under the District’s CDP Regulations.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program:

This agenda sheet has no direct impact on District workforce or contract reporting at this time.

PREPARED BY:

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Attachment(s):

Attachment A: Amendment No. 10 to Agreement with the Regents of the University of California