

**FILE NUMBER: 2025-107**

**DATE:** Tuesday, May 6, 2025

**SUBJECT: As Needed Environmental Review Consulting Services**

**DESCRIPTION: Resolution Selecting and Authorizing Three-Year Agreements with AECOM Technical Services, Inc.; Anchor QEA, Inc.; Ascent Environmental, Inc.; Chambers Group, Inc.; DUDEK; ECORP Consulting Inc.; Environmental Science Associates (ESA); Eyestone Environmental, LLC.; Harris & Associates, Inc.; and HDR Engineering, Inc. for As-Needed Environmental Review Consulting Services for an Aggregate Amount not to Exceed \$1,500,000 Beginning July 1, 2025 and Ending June 30, 2028. All Funds for Future Fiscal Years will be Budgeted in the Appropriate Fiscal Year, Subject to Board Approval upon Adoption of each Fiscal Year's Budget.**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The San Diego Unified Port District's (District) Development Services Department (DSD) reviews District- and tenant-sponsored development projects for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA), the California Coastal Act (Coastal Act), as well as other applicable laws and regulations (e.g. Port Master Plan). For many years, DSD has established as-needed environmental review consulting services agreements (as-needed agreements) in order to retain consultants in a more efficient manner to facilitate project processing. The eight existing as-needed agreements were approved by the Board of Port Commissioners (BPC or Board) in 2018 and staff would like to establish a new set of as-needed agreements for future projects.

Pursuant to BPC Policy No. 110, District staff issued Request for Qualifications (RFQ) 24-23JR for as-needed environmental review consulting services on September 26, 2024. The District received a total of 11 responsive submittals, and developed a short list of ten firms to interview. Based on the written proposals, interviews, and a decision analysis conducted utilizing the criteria stated in the RFQ, District staff is recommending the Board select and authorize agreements with the following ten firms as they were all determined to be qualified for the services solicited: AECOM Technical Services, Inc.; Anchor QEA, Inc.; Ascent Environmental, Inc.; Chambers Group, Inc.; DUDEK; ECORP Consulting Inc.; Environmental Science Associates (ESA); Eyestone Environmental, LLC.; Harris & Associates, Inc.; and HDR Engineering, Inc.

Each agreement is for a three-year period. The aggregate total of all agreements will not exceed \$1.5 million. All funds for future fiscal years will be budgeted in the appropriate fiscal year, subject to Board approval upon adoption of each fiscal year's budget.

Upon Board approval, Agreement No. 09-2025JR (Attachment A), 10-2025JR (Attachment B), 11-2025JR (Attachment C), 12-2025JR (Attachment D), 13-2025JR (Attachment E), 14-2025JR (Attachment F), 15-2025JR (Attachment G), 16-2025JR (Attachment H), 17-2025JR (Attachment I), and 18-2025JR (Attachment J), will be

executed. Each agreement is for a three-year period beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution Selecting and Authorizing Three-Year Agreements with AECOM Technical Services, Inc.; Anchor QEA, Inc.; Ascent Environmental, Inc.; Chambers Group, Inc.; DUDEK; ECORP Consulting Inc.; Environmental Science Associates (ESA); Eyestone Environmental, LLC.; Harris & Associates, Inc.; and HDR Engineering, Inc. for As-Needed Environmental Review Consulting Services for an Aggregate Amount not to Exceed \$1,500,000 Beginning July 1, 2025 and Ending June 30, 2028. All Funds for Future Fiscal Years will be Budgeted in the Appropriate Fiscal Year, Subject to Board Approval upon Adoption of each Fiscal Year's Budget.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Funds required for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) will be budgeted in Development Services' Professional Services expense account. Funds for FY 2026 and funds required for future fiscal years will be budgeted for in the appropriate fiscal years and cost account, subject to Board approval upon adoption of each fiscal year's budget.

**COMPASS STRATEGIC GOALS:**

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

- A Port that the public understands and trusts.
- A thriving and modern maritime seaport.
- A vibrant waterfront destination where residents and visitors converge.
- 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.

**DISCUSSION:**

Background

DSD reviews District- and tenant- sponsored development projects for compliance with CEQA, NEPA, Coastal Act, and various applicable laws and regulations. Project analyses required by CEQA may result in preparation of CEQA documents, such as a Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), Environmental Impact Report (EIR), or other relevant technical studies. Consistent with the requirements under BPC Policy No. 110, DSD retains environmental review consultants to provide professional environmental consulting services for the preparation of environmental review documents and technical studies that meet the mandates of CEQA, NEPA, the Coastal Act and other applicable laws and regulations.

For many years, DSD has established as-needed environmental review consulting services agreements in order to retain consultants in a more efficient manner to facilitate project review. The current as-needed agreements, with eight different environmental consulting firms, were approved by the Board in 2018, and have been extended twice since then. All current agreements will expire on June 30, 2025, and staff would like to establish a new set of as-needed agreements for future projects. Accordingly, pursuant to BPC Policy No. 110, District completed an RFQ process, and ten firms are recommended for as-needed agreements as they meet the necessary requirements and specifications outlined in the solicitation document, as more fully described below.

Updating DSD's list of as-needed environmental review consulting services will continue to streamline the solicitation process for retaining consultants to prepare environmental review documents and technical studies. Use of the current as-needed agreements has allowed DSD staff to more efficiently and expeditiously retain environmental review consultants as needed, rather than going through a separate RFQ consultant procurement process each time a project is required to conduct an environmental review. Staff has also found that retaining as-needed consultants ensures a prompt response and competitive pricing for the requested services.

For District-sponsored development projects, staff will select a consultant and develop a scope of work and negotiate an appropriate fee that will be memorialized in an individual task authorization. Any authorized funds for District projects will be expended, as needed, and based on specific requirements as determined by the District.

For tenant-sponsored development projects, as the need for environmental review arises, staff will select a consultant from the as-needed list, develop a scope of work, and negotiate an appropriate fee that will be memorialized in a Three-Party Agreement amongst the District, tenant/applicant, and the consulting firm. Under the Three-Party Agreement, the tenant/applicant is solely responsible for the cost of retaining the consultant, and the consultant performs the required services under the direction of the District. An example of the District's Three-Party Agreement for tenant-sponsored development projects was provided to prospective proposers for reference as part of the RFQ process.

### RFQ Process and Analysis

Staff has implemented the process for procurement of consultants in accordance with BPC Policy No. 110. The RFQ (RFQ 24-23JR) for as-needed environmental review consulting services was issued on September 26, 2024, an information exchange meeting was held on October 10, 2024, and the interviews were conducted on January 28 and 29, 2025. During the advertisement period, there were 1,907 vendors notified and 77 vendors who downloaded the RFQ and associated files. The District received 11 responsive submittals as follows (in alphabetical order):

- AECOM Technical Services, Inc.
- Anchor QEA, LLC
- Ascent Environmental, Inc.
- Chambers Group, Inc.

- DUDEK
- ECORP Consulting, Inc.
- Environmental Science Associates (ESA)
- EPD Solutions
- Eyestone Environmental, LLC
- Harris & Associates, Inc.
- HDR Engineering, Inc.

Qualifications were reviewed by a panel of District staff from Development Services and Real Estate Departments. Ten of the 11 firms were selected for interviews based on their written submittals, and interviews were conducted on January 28 and 29, 2025. The panel considered the written submittals, presentations, and responses to interview questions. Based on a decision analysis process facilitated by the Procurement Department, the firms were evaluated based on the criteria established in the RFQ and weighted scoring system established in the RFQ as illustrated in the following table:

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Maximum Score</u>
Experience of Proposed Staff	10	100
Approach to the Project	9	90
Capability to Perform	8	80
Fair and Reasonable Cost	5	50
Firm's Relevant Experience	6	60

As a result of the decision analysis, the following ten firms (in alphabetical order) were determined to be the qualified firms for the services solicited and are being recommended to the Board for three-year agreements not to exceed an aggregate amount of \$1.5 million:

**AECOM Technical Services, Inc.** – AECOM has been providing land development, planning, and environmental services to public agencies under master agreements or as-needed contract throughout Southern California, including San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) District 11, County of San Diego, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDGE), Southern California Gas Company, Port of Long Beach, and the U.S. Navy Southwestern Division. The project team members have worked on a variety of projects along or in San Diego Bay, including habitat restoration in Chula Vista/National City, road/bridge improvements in Coronado, San Diego, and National City, and marine biology surveys along the Coronado Bridge pilings. Moreover, the Project Managers have more than 20 years of relevant experience preparing CEQA/NEPA documents. AECOM included four subconsultants to provide technical services: Merkel & Associates, Inc for marine biological services; San Diego Natural History Museum Paleo Services for paleontological resources; CR Associates for traffic engineering; and Scout Environmental, Inc. for port and marine environment expertise.

AECOM demonstrated relevant firm experience and staff experience providing environmental review consulting services for other public agencies and ports, a general

understanding of the District's needs related to CEQA/NEPA, and a well thought-out process for quality assurance/quality control.

**Anchor QEA, LLC** – Anchor QEA specializes in maritime/in-water projects and has provided multidisciplinary support to the District and several District tenants for over 20 years. Services provided include ensuring CEQA mitigation measure compliance, managing contaminated sediments, and developing strategies for habitat mitigation. The firm also has experience preparing all levels of CEQA and NEPA documents and related technical studies for other port and waterfront clients throughout California including, but not limited to, the Port of Los Angeles, Port of Long Beach, Oxnard Harbor District, Port of Stockton, Department of Toxic Substances Control, City of Newport Beach, University of California – San Diego, California Department of Parks and Recreation, U.S. Navy, National Park Services, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Maritime Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Two of the three Project Managers have nearly 20 years of experience managing and preparing CEQA/NEPA documents. Anchor QEA included eight subconsultants to provide technical services: Fehr and Peers for transportation and Parking; Sapere Environmental for terrestrial biology; Marine Taxonomic Services for marine biology; M.S. Hatch Consulting for air quality, greenhouse gas and energy; FMF Pandion for water quality; American Language Services for translation services; Scout Environmental for water quality; and Illingworth & Rodkin for noise and vibration.

Anchor QEA demonstrated extensive experience in maritime/in-water projects, as well as experience with other ports. Its Program Manager has extensive experience working with District tenants (e.g. BAE System, NASSCO, Austal USA, Huntington Ingalls Industries, Inc., Harbor Island West, Pacific Maritime Group, Lockheed Martin, and Silvergate Yacht Club) on project permitting, project implementation, and CEQA compliance.

**Ascent** – The majority of Ascent's proposed staff has more than 20 years of professional experience in environmental and community planning in San Diego. The project team has provided environmental planning consulting services for various public agencies including, but not limited to, the District, SANDAG, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, Port of Long Beach and Port of Los Angeles. Ascent included ten subconsultants to provide technical services: 3D Scape for visual simulation and viewshed analysis; ASM Affiliates for cultural/historic/tribal cultural resources; GHD for sea level rise and coastal planning; Illingworth & Rodkin for noise and hydroacoustic; Intersecting Metrics for transportation mobility planning and parking; Kleinfelder for geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials; MBC Aquatic Sciences for hydrology/water quality; Marine Taxonomic for marine biology; Ridgeline Environmental for CEQA/NEPA compliance, quality control, and California Coastal Act support; Scout Environmental for NEPA compliance and hydrology/water quality.

Ascent demonstrated excellent proposed staff experience which is evidenced by their extensive experience in providing environmental review consulting services for District and other public agencies. The project team also demonstrated a clear understanding of District's issues and needs related to CEQA and the Coastal Act, and identified a well-thought quality assurance/quality control process to ensure their work products are of high quality.

**Chambers Group, Inc** - Chambers' proposed Project Manager has over ten years of experience in preparing environmental documents and technical studies pursuant to CEQA and NEPA. Chambers also has experience providing on-call environmental consulting services to other public agencies including, but not limited to, the District, City of San Diego, City of Carlsbad, City of Encinitas, SDGE, Otay Water District, San Diego Unified School District, County of Los Angeles, and County of Orange. Chambers Group included five subconsultants to provide technical services: LDN Consulting for air quality/greenhouse gas and noise; CR Associates for transportation; Ninyo & Moore for hazards and geotechnical; Moffat & Nichol for hydrology and water quality; and Estrada Land Planning for visual simulations and community engagement.

Chambers demonstrated relevant proposed staff experience by providing environmental review consulting services for the District and other public agencies, demonstrated a clear understanding of CEQA, NEPA, and the Coastal Act, and has a well-established quality assurance/quality control program to ensure their work products are of high quality.

**DUDEK** – The majority of DUDEK'S proposed staff has over 20 years of experience in CEQA and NEPA. Both DUDEK's staff and subconsultants have extensive District experience or are former California Coastal Commission or Army Corps of Engineering staff. The DUDEK team also has experience working on projects for various public agencies including, but not limited to, the District, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, SANDAG, Port of Los Angeles, State Lands Commission, and California Department of Water Resources. DUDEK included five subconsultants to provide technical services: Intersecting Metris for transportation; Ninyo & Moore for hazardous material; Merkel & Associates, Inc. for biology; iLanco Environmental for air quality/greenhouse gas/ energy; and Excel Interpreting for translation and outreach.

DUDEK demonstrated strong proposed staff experience by providing environmental review consulting services to the District and other public agencies, demonstrated a clear understanding of the District's issues and needs related to CEQA and the Coastal Act, and has a well-established quality assurance/quality control system.

**ECORP Consulting, Inc.** – ECORP Consulting's proposed staff has almost 20 years of experience in preparing environmental documents and technical studies pursuant to CEQA/NEPA. ECORP has extensive experience providing as-needed environmental consulting services to various public agencies, including but not limited to the County of Los Angeles, City of San Marcos, City of Costa Mesa, City of Laguna Beach, City of Santa Ana, and County of Riverside. In addition, ECORP included four subconsultants to provide technical services: ENGEO for geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality; sea level rise/coastal planning; Tetra Tech for geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality; sea level rise/coastal planning, Arellano Associates for public outreach and translation services; and CR Associates for transportation.

ECORP demonstrated relevant firm and proposed staff experience providing environmental consulting services to various public agencies, demonstrated a good understanding of key issues for the District related to CEQA and the Coastal Act, and has a thorough quality assurance/quality control program.

**Environmental Science Associates (ESA)** – ESA’s proposed staff has over 25 years of experience in CEQA/NEPA. In addition, ESA has extensive experience working on projects for ports along the west coast including, but not limited to, the District, Port of Long Beach, Port of Los Angeles, Port of Redwood City, Port of Oakland, Port of San Francisco, Port of Richmond, Port of Portland, Port of Vancouver, Port of Grays Harbor, Port of Tacoma, Port of Seattle and Port of Anacortes. Furthermore, the ESA team also has experience working on projects for various public agencies, such as County of San Diego, County of Orange, and California Department of Water Resources. ESA included seven subconsultants to provide technical services: Continental Interpreting for translation services; CR Associates for transportation; Great Ecology, Inc. for biological resources; Kearns & West for community/public outreach services; Merkel & Associates, Inc. for marine biology; Ninyo & Moore for geotechnical and hazards; and VisionScape Imagery, Inc. for visual simulations.

ESA demonstrated relevant proposed staff experience by providing environmental review consulting services for the District, other ports and public agencies, demonstrated a clear understanding of District’s issues and needs related to CEQA and the Coastal Act, and identified a well-developed quality assurance/quality control process to ensure their work products are of high quality.

**Eyestone Environmental, LLC** - Eyestone Environmental’s proposed staff have more than 15 years of experience in preparing CEQA and NEPA documents for various public agencies including, but not limited to, the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, City of Beverly Hills, City of Long Beach, and City of Pasadena. Eyestone Environmental included 13 subconsultants to provide technical services: Acoustical Engineering Services for noise and vibration; Architectural Resources Group for historical resources; California Coastal Works for coastal planning, and quality assurance/quality control; Continental Interpreting for translation and interpretation services; Francis Krahe and Associate for photometric; Fuscoe Engineering for hydrology, water quality, and utilities; GeoPentech for geologic hazards and hydrogeology; Intersecting Metrics for transportation and parking; Kleinfelder for hazards and hazardous materials and geotechnical; Moffat & Nichol for sea level rise; Scout Environmental for water quality, hazards and hazardous materials, archeological resources, paleontological resources, tribal resources, and NEPA; Teirra Data for biological resources; and VisionScape Imagery for visual simulations.

Eyestone Environmental demonstrated relevant firm and proposed staff experience providing environmental consulting services to other public agencies, have a good understanding of District’s issues and needs related to CEQA and the Coastal Act, and a well-established quality assurance and control protocol.

**Harris & Associates, Inc** – The majority of Harris & Associates’ proposed staff has over 20 years of experience in preparing CEQA and NEPA documents for various public agencies including, but not limited to, the District, County of San Diego, City of San Diego, University of California, San Diego, and U.S. Navy. Harris & Associates included seven subconsultants to provide technical services: ASM Affiliates for cultural resources; CR Associates for transportation; Civitas for visual simulation, urban design, and landscape architecture; GHD for climate adaptation, sea level rise, coastal planning; Katz &

Associates for public outreach and public engagement; Merkel & Associates for biological resources; and Ninyo & Moore for geology/hazards.

Harris & Associates demonstrated excellent proposed staff experience by providing relevant environmental consulting services to the District and other agencies, presented a clear and concise approach to projects, and identified a robust project management approach (including quality assurance and control)

**HDR Engineering, Inc**– The majority of HDR’s proposed staff has over 15 years of experience in preparing CEQA/NEPA documents for various public agencies including, but not limited to, the District, Port of Long Beach, Port of Los Angeles, and SANDAG. HDR included nine subconsultants to provide technical services: Bargas for paleontological resources; Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc. for noise/vibration; Intersecting Metrics for transportation and parking; Merkel & Associates for biological resources; Miller Marine Science & Consulting, Inc. for biological resources, hazard/hazardous materials/sediment quality, Moffatt & Nichol for sea level rise and coastal engineering, Pi Environmental, LLC for biological resources and hydroacoustics; Southwest Strategies, LLC for public outreach, and ZM Associates Environmental Corporation for air quality and health risk assessment.

HDR demonstrated significant proposed staff experience by providing relevant environmental consulting services to other agencies, a clear understanding of the District’s issues and needs related to CEQA and the Coastal Act, and identified a rigorous quality control process for work projects.

### Conclusion

The recommended firms (AECOM Technical Services, Inc.; Anchor QEA, Inc.; Ascent Environmental, Inc.; Chambers Group, Inc.; DUDEK; ECORP Consulting Inc.; Environmental Science Associates (ESA); Eyestone Environmental, LLC.; Harris & Associates, Inc.; and HDR Engineering, Inc) ranked in the top ten due to the firms’ demonstration of the most relevant staff experience, thorough and well thought-out approach, understanding of the District’s needs related to CEQA, as well as fair and reasonable cost. District staff therefore recommends that the Board select and authorize as-needed agreements with these firms to provide as-needed environmental review consulting services for District-sponsored development projects for a total aggregate amount payable under the agreements not to exceed \$1,500,000 for a period of three years (Attachments A – J). District staff further recommends that the Board select and establish a list of qualified consulting firms consisting of the same ten firms to potentially provide environmental review consulting services for tenant-sponsored development projects for a period of three years.

### **General Counsel’s Comments:**

The Office of the General Counsel has reviewed this staff report and the attachments as presented to it and approves them as to form and legality.

## **Environmental Review:**

The proposed Board action, including without limitation approving the selection and authorization of three-year agreements with AECOM Technical Services, Inc.; Anchor QEA, Inc.; Ascent Environmental, Inc.; Chambers Group, Inc.; DUDEK; ECORP Consulting Inc.; Environmental Science Associates (ESA); Eyestone Environmental, LLC.; Harris & Associates, Inc.; and HDR Engineering, Inc. for As-Needed Environmental Review Consulting Services for an aggregate amount not to exceed \$1,500,000 beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028, does not constitute a project under the definition set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 because the proposed Board action will not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment. Therefore, the proposed Board action is not subject to CEQA and no further action under CEQA is required.

The proposed Board action complies with Sections 21, 35, and 81 of the Port Act, which allow for the Board to pass resolutions and to do all acts necessary and convenient for the exercise of its powers; and to use funds for necessary expenses of conducting the District. 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.

Finally, the proposed Board action does not allow for “development”, as defined in Section 30106 of the Coastal Act, or “new development” pursuant to Section 1.a. of the District’s Coastal Development Permit Regulations. Therefore, issuance of a Coastal Development Permit or exclusion is not required.

## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program:**

Due to limited subcontracting opportunities, no SBE goal was established for this opportunity.

## **PREPARED BY:**

Michelle Chan  
Assistant Director, Development Services

## **Attachment(s):**

Attachment A:	Draft Agreement 09-2025JR with AECOM Technical Service, Inc.
Attachment B:	Draft Agreement 10-2025JR with Anchor QEA, LLC
Attachment C:	Draft Agreement 11-2025JR with Ascent Environmental, Inc.
Attachment D:	Draft Agreement 12-2025JR with Chambers Group, Inc.
Attachment E:	Draft Agreement 13-2025JR with DUDEK
Attachment F:	Draft Agreement 14-2025JR with ECORP Consulting, Inc
Attachment G:	Draft Agreement 15-2025JR with Environmental Science Associates
Attachment H:	Draft Agreement 16-2025JR with Eyestone Environmental, LLC
Attachment I:	Draft Agreement 17-2025JR with Harris Associates, Inc
Attachment J:	Draft Agreement 18-2025JR with HDR Engineering, Inc.