



Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** ID19-1777    **Version:** 1    **Name:**

**Type:** Action Item    **Status:** Passed

**File created:** 5/28/2019    **In control:** City Council

**On agenda:** 6/13/2019    **Final action:** 6/13/2019

**Title:** Actions pertaining to Plant Nitrate Assessment and Treatment Evaluation/Selection at the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility (Council District 3)  
 1. Adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Class 6, Section 15306 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines  
 2. Approve consultant services agreement with Carollo Engineers in an amount not to exceed \$399,082

**Sponsors:** Department of Public Utilities

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. Attachment 1 - Consultant Service Agreement.pdf, 2. Attachment 2 - Fiscal Impact Statement.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
6/13/2019	1	City Council	approved	

**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**June 13, 2019**

**FROM:** MICHAEL CARBAJAL, Director  
Department of Public Utilities

**THROUGH:** BRIAN S. SPINDOR, PE<sup>(WA)</sup>, Assistant Director - Wastewater  
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**SUBJECT**

Actions pertaining to Plant Nitrate Assessment and Treatment Evaluation/Selection at the Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility (Council District 3)

1. Adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Class 6, Section 15306 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines
2. Approve consultant services agreement with Carollo Engineers in an amount not to exceed \$399,082

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Class 6, Section 15306 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines; approve a consultant services agreement in an amount not to exceed \$399,082 including a contingency of \$25,000 with Carollo Engineers (Consultant) for the Plant Nitrate Assessment and Treatment Evaluation/Selection at the City of Fresno (City's) Regional Wastewater Reclamation Facility (RWRF) (Project) to evaluate and recommend the best technology for long-term nutrient removal; and authorize the Director of Public Utilities, or designee, to execute the Agreement on behalf of the City.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the RWRF's latest discharge requirements, the City must complete a nitrate study and implement procedures to reduce total nitrogen in the treated effluent. The Consultant will complete a study of present and anticipated influent loading, explore nutrient reduction alternatives, perform weighted evaluation of alternatives, and present a conceptual design of the selected technology.

## BACKGROUND

In May 2018, the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) adopted Basin Plan amendments incorporating new programs for addressing ongoing salt and nitrate accumulation in the Central Valley. Once the Basin Plan amendments are approved and implemented, the RWRF's discharge requirements will be modified to reflect stringent limits for salts and nitrates on the RWRF's final effluent. For the Nitrate Control Program, the Water Board will adopt a ten milligrams per liter (mg/L) limit for nitrate as nitrogen ( $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$ ) with a required Action Plan at a level of 7.5 mg/L. Currently, the RWRF discharges wastewater to its disposal ponds at levels averaging 20 mg/L of  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$ . The Water Board has established priorities areas for implementation of the Nitrate Control Program and the City is in Priority 1 area. Once the Basin Plan is implemented, the Water Board will issue a Notice to Comply with the new limits and action plan and the City will have to provide an assessment of nitrate impacts to groundwater caused by the RWRF and its impact to nearby drinking water sources. Part of the assessment requires an Early Action Plan for facilities like the RWRF to bring short and long term measures to address non-compliant levels of  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$ .

This Project is a preemptive attempt to determine the best direction for the RWRF to comply with anticipated  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$  limits. Considerations will be given to planned expansion projects, Wastewater Master Plan, Bio solids Master Plan, anticipated state regulations, developing technologies, budget, and maximum efficiency.

Following Fresno Municipal Code Chapter 4, Article 1 and Administrative Order 6-19, the Department of Public Utilities solicited qualified applicants through the City's Planet Bids website. Qualified consulting firms were asked to submit Statements of Qualifications (SOQs). DPU received three qualified applicants for this highly specialized solicitation. All three applicants were asked to submit detailed proposals. A panel of subject matter experts reviewed all three proposals on the basis of problem assessment, design approach, schedule, and cost. The panel determined that the most benefit to the City would be provided by Carollo Engineers. A consultant services agreement has been negotiated in an amount not to exceed \$374,082 and a \$25,000 contingency for the Project, for a total not to exceed amount of \$399,092.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS**

Staff has performed a preliminary environmental assessment for this Project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA and has determined that it is exempt under Class 6, Section 15306 of the CEQA Guidelines. Class 6 exempts basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. This Project involves compliance with requirements set forth by a regulatory agency for protection of both natural resources and the environment. The study of alternatives for nutrient removal will involve data collection and result in the evaluation of work plans. No construction is involved in this study. Furthermore, staff has determined that none of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 apply to this Project.

## **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

Local preference was not considered because a bid or award of a construction contract is not included in this Project.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no impact to the General Fund. This Project is located within Council District 3. This project was identified in the Wastewater Management Division five-year Capital Improvement Plan or current rate structure as a separate project. The planned outcome of this contract will be to develop a long term plan to reduce nitrate levels. Funds in the amount of \$466,600 are available in the Sewer Enterprise Fund 40501.

### **Attachments:**

Attachment 1 - Consultant Services Agreement

Attachment 2 - Fiscal Impact Statement