



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: WRAG 25-048

April 21, 2025

Introduced: 4/14/2025

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Recommend that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to:

- a. Authorize implementation of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Stream Gage Upgrade Project and accept a funding award from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) through the California Stream Gage Improvement Program (CalSIP) funded by the Budget Act of 2023 (Stats. 2023, Ch. 189, Section 43); and
- b. Authorize the General Manager or his designee to execute and manage funding documents, and any amendments thereto with DWR, and take such other actions as necessary or appropriate to comply with funding requirements.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Directors recommend that the Monterey County Water Resources Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to:

- a. Authorize implementation of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Stream Gage Upgrade Project and accept a funding award from the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) through the California Stream Gage Improvement Program (CalSIP) funded by the Budget Act of 2023 (Stats. 2023, Ch. 189, Section 43); and
- b. Authorize the General Manager or his designee to execute and manage funding documents, and any amendments thereto with DWR, and take such other actions as necessary or appropriate to comply with funding requirements.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) California Stream Gage Improvement Program is a state funded program established to improve the stream gaging network statewide following the recommendations in the SB19 recommendations (SB 19 2022 Technical Report).

On February 19, 2025, Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) received a notification of approval of funding from DWR for the purchase, installation and initial maintenance of a new stream gage on the Salinas River, to be located on the King City Pedestrian Bridge in King City, under the auspices of the California Stream Gage Improvement Program (CalSIP) (Attachment 1).

In its application for funding to DWR, MCWRA identified the need for a rated streamflow gage at this location to:

- Fill a large gap in Salinas River stream gaging coverage that currently poses flood management challenges and requires intensive effort to ensure public safety at a low water crossing on the Salinas River during moderate storm events.
- Improve situational awareness of the advancement of reservoir releases or upper watershed flood flows.
- Provide a means of accurately evaluating and tracking flows affecting the low water crossing at Elm Avenue near the town of Greenfield. Currently, the closest existing gage is about 40 miles up valley, near Bradley, California, and travel times and flow rate changes between Bradley and Greenfield are highly variable and uncertain. A gage at King City will provide a gage about ten miles upstream of the low water crossing, thereby adding precision to conditions assessment and enabling establishment of accurate threshold flows that could trigger closure of Elm Avenue.
- Help with realtime determination of the timing and rate of inflow to the Salinas River from the tributary San Lorenzo Creek (just upstream of the proposed gage), enhancing flood control efforts by providing the timing of advancement of upper Salinas flood flows and potential impacts to downstream locations.
- Help track and improve compliance with prescribed releases from Nacimiento and San Antonio Reservoirs to support migration of federally listed Steelhead at all life cycle stages, as required by water rights that authorize MCWRA to stored water in the reservoirs and put it to various beneficial uses.
- Provide a continuous record of streamflow data which would refine our understanding of surface water-groundwater interaction along this reach of the river and inform water budgets for the Upper Valley.
- Provide a dataset to support calibration and refinement of modeling tools under development to manage the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

MCWRA has initiated a scope of work and cost schedule with DWR. The approximate level of funding is \$76,000, to be finalized upon completion of the agreement between MCWRA and DWR, pending adoption of a resolution by the MCWRA Board of Supervisors (Attachment 2).

This resolution authorizes MCWRA to enter into an agreement with DWR to obtain funding to purchase and install equipment, operate and maintain the streamflow gage and develop a rating, relating stage to flow at the site. It also designates MCWRA staff representatives who have the authority to coordinate with DWR and execute documents on behalf of MCWRA. The anticipated awarded monies are included in the FY 2025-26 Requested Budget, which is scheduled for consideration by the MCWRA Board of Supervisors in May 2025.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The MCWRA will coordinate reporting efforts with the DWR Program Representatives.

FINANCING:

Total project cost is estimated at \$76,000, which will be reimbursable by DWR. The FY 2024-2025 Adopted Budget has sufficient appropriation to fund initial cost of the project and the FY 2025-26

Requested Budget accounts for expenses needed to complete the project in FY 2025-26

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Approved by: Ara Azhderian, General Manager, (831) 755-4860

Attachment:

1. California Department of Water Resources California Stream Gage Improvement Program Award Letter.
2. Resolution
3. Board Order