



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: WRAFIN 25-052

June 06, 2025

Introduced: 5/30/2025

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Matter Type: WRA Finance Item

Consider recommending that the Board of Directors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency approve Amendment No. 1 to the Joint Funding Agreement with United States Department of the Interior: United States Geological Survey to increase the dollar amount by \$19,030 for a new contract total not to exceed \$249,090 to accommodate installation of a stream gage on the Salinas River at King City and operation and maintenance of said gage for the remainder of the contract term; and authorize the General Manager to execute Amendment No. 1.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Finance Committee:

Consider recommending that the Board of Directors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency approve Amendment No. 1 to the Joint Funding Agreement with United States Department of the Interior: United States Geological Survey to increase the dollar amount by \$19,030 for a new contract total not to exceed \$249,090 to accommodate installation of a stream gage on the Salinas River at King City and operation and maintenance of said gage for the remainder of the contract term; and authorize the General Manager to execute Amendment No. 1.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On October 1, 2024, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) entered into a Joint Funding Agreement (Agreement) with U.S. Geological Survey, California Water Science Center, United States Department of the Interior for stream gaging work to be performed by the USGS during the twelve-month period, October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025.

The annually renewed cooperative program with the USGS provides quantification of flow on major streams and creeks throughout the County. Services provided by the USGS through this program include the installation and maintenance of equipment, the collection of data using mechanical recorders and USGS personnel, emergency response during flooding, and the analyses of data and preparation of annual streamflow records. Data collected through this program has been used to determine the frequency and magnitude of surface water flow in order to estimate the infiltration of water and the transport of sediment within streambeds. The data is also critical to calculating surface water travel times used in the Agency's ALERT Storm and Flood Monitoring Program and for guidance of reservoir releases year-round, including when the SRDF is operational. Complete and timely surface water data are essential to the management of water resources and greatly facilitates the utilization of modern tools such as groundwater and surface water models and forecast informed reservoir operations. The reservoir elevation gages have provided accurate high frequency logging of reservoir levels needed to meet water rights reporting requirements of the State Water Resources Control

Board. The reservoir gages also enhance flood-control monitoring through automated continuous realtime reservoir elevation reporting.

On May 6, 2025, the Board of supervisors authorized implementation of the MCWRA Stream Gage Upgrade Project and accepted a reimbursable grant of \$76,000 dollars from the California Department of Water Resources for the project's CalSIP program.

The MCWRA Stream Gage Upgrade Project will fund the installation of a USGS stream gage on the Salinas River in King City. 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.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The Agency and USGS have collaborated in the development of this Agreement and the proposed amendment. No other agencies have been involved.

FINANCING:

The total cost of this program before amendment 1 is \$285,110 reflecting an overall 81/19 split; with 81% funding from the Agency (\$230,060) matched by 19% funding from the Federal government

(\$55,050). Funding for this program comes from Agency Funds 111, 116, 122, and 124. Funding for this agreement between October 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025 has been identified in the Agency FY 2024-25 budget. Funding for July 1, 2025 through September 30, 2025 will be budgeted in FY 2025-26.

After amendment 1 the total cost of this program will be \$304,140 and the Agency's portion of the agreement will be \$249,090. The increase in Agency cost will be reimbursed by the California Department of Water Resources.

Prepared by: Joseph Klein, Water Resources Hydrologist, (831)755-4860

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

Attachments:

1. Original Joint Funding Agreement
2. Amendment No. 1