



WATER RESOURCES AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

Monterey County

DATE: April 28, 2026

TO: Planning Committee

FROM: Ara Azhderian, General Manager

SUBJECT: Annual General Manager Performance Evaluation Process – Staff Survey

BACKGROUND:

The Agency Act (§62) provides that the Agency’s Directors prepare an annual performance evaluation of the General Manager in cooperation with the County Administrative Officer and that the evaluation be sent to the Board of Supervisors for their final review. Current practice is for the Agency to rely upon the County’s consultant to facilitate the evaluation. The full-year evaluation typically occurs in late spring, while the mid-year evaluation occurs in late fall. To complement the existing evaluation process, the Board of Directors has requested development of a staff survey to help bring intra-Agency perspectives to inform the General Manager’s annual evaluation.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Timing:** When should the survey be conducted? December through May is a demanding period for staff as budget preparation is underway and the uncertainty of winter storm response is always present. April through October is a demanding time as annual maintenance, water operations, and groundwater monitoring activities are in full swing. Thus, it is recommended that an annual staff survey be performed in the November timeframe.
- **Performance:** Shall the survey be developed and performed by Agency staff, County staff, and/or consultants? As consulting cost can be significant, it is recommended that the initial survey be developed by the Agency with assistance of a consultant and performed by the County Counsel Office, to maximize objectivity and confidentiality, and ensure compliance with the relevant labor Memorandums of Understanding and the law. Consultant supported review and revision of the survey should happen periodically, i.e. every 5 years, or as conditions warrant.
- **Scope:** Shall the survey focus narrowly on the General Manager, or more broadly to consider the performance of the Board of Directors and/or Agency as a whole? While the Agency does not have a large workforce, staff have widely varying opportunities to engage

with the General Manager and Directors, therefore, one's ability to respond to questions narrowly focused upon executive management and/or policy direction is limited. Therefore, it is recommended a comprehensive survey be developed that provides opportunity for staff to respond to questions about the General Manager and/or Directors to the extent that they can, but to also share perspectives about their experiences working for the Agency, which can help inform future decisions affecting both management and policy.

- **Criteria:** What categories of issues should the survey test? It is recommended a final decision on this question be made in consultation with a consultant; however, categories could include: Leadership & Governance; Strategic Planning; Financial Management; Staff Management, Development, & Ethics; Operational Performance; Community Relations; and Emergency Response & Risk Management.
- **Tools & Scoring:** How should a survey be conducted and responses assessed? It is recommended a final decision on this question be made in consultation with a consultant; however, considerations include use of a standardized rubric and grading criteria, classifying categories of issues, and providing opportunity for narrative comments.
- **Deliverables:** How should survey results be delivered to the Directors? Maintaining respondent confidentiality to the extent allowed by law will likely improve candor and the survey's value towards evaluating the General Manager, Agency governance, and Agency performance overall. Therefore, it is recommended County Counsel consolidate and anonymize the survey results into a confidential report for presentation to the Directors and executive management team in Closed Session. Subsequently, the Directors could direct preparation of an Open Session presentation.
- **Other?**

A finalized annual survey process will be documented in a section of the forthcoming Governance Policies Manual.