



ACTION ITEM

Consideration and Possible Approval of a Contract with the Regents of the University of California San Diego, California Sea Grant for the 2022 Class of Delta Science Fellows and 2022/2023 Classes of State Policy Fellows

Summary: Council staff recommends that the Council approve a new contract with the Regents of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), California Sea Grant, in the amount of \$2,069,146, for the class of 2022 Delta Science Fellows Program and the class of 2022/2023 Delta State Policy Fellows Program. The contract term would be from November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2024. This agreement will support long-standing programs that provide fellowship opportunities for early-career scientists and have a proven track record of nurturing the growth and diversity of the region's scientific community.

REQUESTED ACTION

Council staff requests that the Council approve a new contract agreement with UCSD, California Sea Grant in the amount of \$2,069,146, for a contract term of November 1, 2021, through October 31, 2024.

The Executive Officer has delegated authority up to \$500,000 to enter into contracts and interagency agreements on the Council's behalf. Because this agreement exceeds that amount, this contract requires Council approval.

BACKGROUND

Since 2003, the Delta Science Program has partnered with UCSD/California Sea Grant to fund Delta Science Fellows (graduate students and postdocs conducting research at academic institutions) and State Policy Fellows (recent graduates with advanced degrees who work in the Council's offices in support of the Council's priorities). Since 2003, 107 graduate and post-graduate level researchers have been supported through the Delta Science Fellows program. The partnership expanded in 2013 to include the State Policy Fellows and has since supported 25 scientists.

California Sea Grant sponsors and administers scientific research, fellowships, and panels of scientific advisors that contribute to the growing body of knowledge about coastal and marine resources and help solve contemporary marine-related problems. California Sea Grant is the largest of the 34 Sea Grant programs nationwide and draws on the talents of scientists and engineers at public and private universities, as well as other research institutions throughout the state. It is administered by UCSD and is based at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. The California Sea Grant program is funded by the National Sea

Grant College Program, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, with matching funds from State and local resources.

As identified in the Delta Reform Act, the mission of the Delta Science Program is “to provide the best possible scientific information for water and environmental decision-making in the Bay-Delta system... through funding research, synthesizing, and communicating scientific information to policymakers and decisionmakers, promoting independent scientific peer review, and coordinating with Delta agencies to promote science-based adaptive management,” (Water Code Section 85280(b)(4)). The Delta Science Program does this in part by initiating, evaluating, and funding research to fill critical gaps in our understanding of the current and changing Bay-Delta system. In addition, this agreement with UCSD/California Sea Grant will enable the continuation of a long-standing partnership between the Delta Science Program and this entity to provide fellowship opportunities for early-career scientists. This program is essential to fostering the growth and diversity of the region’s scientific community.

DELTA SCIENCE FELLOWS PROGRAM

This program pairs the next generation of Delta scientists with academic and community mentors to conduct critical science investigations targeting high-priority Delta issues. Numerous past Delta Science Fellows have continued to work in science (in many cases the Delta region) building on the work they conduct as Fellows to launch full careers centered on developing scientific information for improved management.

Research funded by the Delta Science Fellows program is critical for addressing the priority science actions in the 2017-2021 Science Action Agenda (SAA), a four-year science agenda for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that aims to fill gaps in knowledge, promote collaborative science, and build science infrastructure.

Delta Science Fellows are selected through a competitive solicitation process, with resulting candidate proposals undergoing a rigorous review and selection process administered by California Sea Grant. A key selection criterion will be whether the proposal addresses one of the five overarching science topics identified in the SAA. If the Council approves the current funding request, the next Class of Delta Science Fellows (2022) will continue to focus on research topics that address the actions identified in the SAA.

Research highlights from recent classes of Science Fellows include:

- A new model that can be used to predict river temperatures and their response to streamflow management (e.g., evaluate the effectiveness of flow releases in modifying high water temperatures).
- An in-depth understanding of fish behavioral (including predation) responses to multiple environmental stressors associated with drought and climate change. This work may inform management strategies to protect at-risk fish species.
- Use of remote sensing technology to monitor vegetation dynamics of restoration sites. This work can help measure how wetland restoration promotes ecosystem services in the Delta and inform the design of future efforts.

STATE POLICY FELLOWS

The State Policy Fellows are recent post-graduates interested in exploring a career path in the public sector at the science-policy interface. State Policy Fellows work with Council staff in the Science and Planning Divisions for 12 months to support the Council's high priority tasks. Though not all-inclusive, previous work performed by Policy Fellows includes:

- providing substantial support to the Delta Independent Science Board;
- assisting in Delta Plan amendments and updates;
- assisting the Delta Lead Scientist on the monthly "Lead Scientist Report" to the Council;
- gathering data and presenting the "By the Numbers" report to the Council;
- supporting the Interagency Adaptive Management Integration Team, and;
- participating in the Delta Science Plan and Science Action Agenda Updates.

The current request for a new contract with UCSD will fund nine State Policy Fellows (four per calendar year 2022 and five per calendar year 2023).

FISCAL INFORMATION

The budget information is summarized below.

Budget Category	11/1/21-10/31/24
Personnel	\$227,475
Science Fellowships	\$1,177,800
State Policy Fellowships	\$463,537
Travel	\$29,448
Indirect Costs	\$133,340
Other Direct Costs (Workshops, Panelists)	\$37,546
Total	\$2,069,146

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

None.

CONTACT

Lauren Hastings
Program Manager III
Phone: (916) 275-1155