



ACTION ITEM

Possible Appointment of the Delta Lead Scientist

Summary

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) appoints the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program (Delta Lead Scientist) after consultation with the Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) (California Water Code Section 85280(b)). The Delta ISB is recommending that the Council reappoint Dr. Laurel Larsen, the current Delta Lead Scientist, for a second term. Dr. Larsen's current term concludes in August 2023. The ISB asks the Council to consider the reappointment of Dr. Larsen for a second term.

Requested Action

The Delta ISB recommends that the Council reappoint Dr. Laurel Larsen for a second term through June 30, 2024, as the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program (see Attachment 1- Delta Lead Scientist Reappointment).

Background

Pursuant to Water Code Section 85280(b)(2), the term of office for the Delta Lead Scientist shall be no more than three years, and the Delta Lead Scientist can serve no more than two terms. Dr. Laurel Larsen is the current Delta Lead Scientist, appointed by the Council in April 2020. Her term started on September 1, 2020, and ends on August 31, 2023. Dr. Larsen is available to serve a second term through June 30, 2024.

The Council appoints the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program after consultation with the Delta ISB (California Water Code Section 85280(b)). On April 26, 2023, in a duly noticed closed session, the Delta ISB voted unanimously to recommend to the Council the reappointment of Dr. Laurel Larsen for a second

term as Delta Lead Scientist (see Attachment 1- Delta Lead Scientist Reappointment).

The Delta Lead Scientist is responsible for providing unbiased science expertise to the Council, the Delta Science Program, and the Delta Science community, by upholding the highest possible standards of scientific integrity and credibility and for providing scientific leadership. As indicated in the Delta ISB's recommendation letter (Attachment 1 to this staff report), Dr. Larsen has galvanized a range of new Delta science, developed resources to move ideas forward, and has been a wonderful communicator of science. Among her accomplishments, she has: (1) overseen the development of the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda, which prioritizes science actions to help fill knowledge gaps; (2) helped build a shared understanding of the range of issues associated with saltwater intrusion in the Delta and the different salinity management tools and strategies via a workshop; (3) facilitated the development a modeling framework and virtual collaborative center to integrate science, data, and models to better tackle environmental management challenges in the region; and (4) led or participated in many other initiatives.

Fiscal Information

Funding for the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program is secured by a multi-year assignment with the United States Geological Survey.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Recommendation for the Reappointment of the Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program

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