



ACTION ITEM

Consideration and 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 appoint Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers, the current Delta Lead Scientist, for a second term of up to three years commencing on December 1, 2026 (California Water Code Section 85280(b)(2)).

Requested Action

The Delta ISB recommends that the Council appoint Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers for a second term (see Attachment A to Resolution 2026-07 (Attachment 1 to this staff report)). The Delta ISB asks the Council to consider and potentially adopt Resolution 2026-07 (Attachment 1 to this staff report) for the appointment of Dr. Lisamarie Windham-Myers to a second term of up to three years as the lead scientist for the Delta Science Program, from December 1, 2026, through November 30, 2029.

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. Windham-Myers is the current Delta Lead Scientist, appointed by the Council in October 2023 on an interim basis with a term from December 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. In April 2024, the Council appointed Dr. Windham-Myers to a full three-year term from December 1, 2023, through November 30, 2026. Dr. Windham-Myers is interested in serving a second term. A three-year second term would be from December 1, 2026, through November 30, 2029.

The Council appoints the lead scientist for the Delta Science Program after consultation with the Delta ISB (California Water Code Section 85280(b)). On July 17, 2026, in a duly noticed closed session, the Delta ISB voted unanimously to recommend to the Council to appoint Dr. Windham-Myers for a second term as Delta Lead Scientist (see the Delta ISB recommendation in Attachment A to Resolution 2026-07 (Attachment 1 to this staff report)).

The Delta Lead Scientist is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Delta Science Program (California Water Code Section 85280 (b)(3)). As described in California Water Code Section 85280(b)(4), “The mission of the Delta Science Program is to provide the best possible, unbiased scientific information to inform water and environmental decisionmaking in the Delta. That mission shall be carried out 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.”

As described in the Delta ISB’s recommendation letter (Attachment A to Resolution 2026-07), Dr. Windham-Myers has epitomized the leadership role of a lead scientist in this important and challenging position. Among her many accomplishments, she has:

1. Guided the development of the 2026 Delta Science Plan, which provides the vision, principles, and approaches for conducting, coordinating, and communicating science in the Delta;
2. Facilitated five Delta Science Program peer reviews, helping to ensure scientific rigor, transparency, and credibility in the process;
3. Oversaw the development of the progress summary report of the 2022-2026 Science Action Agenda, helping to clarify achievements and highlight priorities for continued science investment; and
4. Continued to provide leadership on the Collaboratory, a networked community of modelers and modeling resources to support integrated modeling.

Based on her qualifications and accomplishments, the Delta ISB recommends that the Council consider the appointment of current Delta Lead Scientist Dr. Lisamarie

Windham-Myers to a second term and adopt Resolution 2026-07 (Attachment 1 to this staff report), appointing Dr. Windham-Myers as the Delta Lead Scientist for a second term from December 1, 2026, through November 30, 2029.

Fiscal Information

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

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: Resolution 2026-07, including Attachment A (Delta Independent Science Board's Recommendation dated September 1, 2026, for the Appointment of a Delta Lead Scientist)

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A recording of the presentation will be available on the Delta Council's YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@DeltaCouncil>.