







## BOARD INFORMATION

**TO:** Governing Board (Finance and Personnel Committee)  
**FROM:** Management  
**DATE:** July 31, 2020  
**SUBJECT:** Sweetwater Authority Grant Programs

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### **SUMMARY**

At its July 8, 2020 meeting, the Board requested information about the Authority's grant program. The Authority has several different grant programs that are managed throughout the organization. For this memo, we will report on grants in three different categories for the most recently completed and upcoming fiscal years: Grants Administered, Grants Received, and Pending Grant Applications.

### **Grants Administered**

The FY 2020-21 Budget includes funds for the Authority to administer two grant programs.

The Savings Through Efficiency Program (STEP) Grant is a program designed to encourage water users in the Authority's service area to implement equipment retrofits or innovative projects/devices which maximize the efficient use of potable water for approved uses. The Authority encourages pilot water efficiency improvement projects to submit STEP Grant applications. Grant awards are limited to a maximum of \$5,000 per project. Applications for this fiscal year will be accepted and considered from July 1, 2020 through June 1, 2021 or until funds are exhausted.

The Water Education Efficiency Program (WEEP) Grant is a program designed to encourage water users in the Authority's service area to implement educational displays, programs, lectures or instructional media to teach the importance and relevance of water education. The Authority encourages its commercial, industrial, or institutional (CII) customers who are interested in promoting water efficiency through educational projects to submit WEEP Grant applications. Grant awards are limited to a maximum of \$5,000 per project. Applications for this fiscal year will be accepted and considered from July 1, 2020 through May 31, 2021 or until funds are exhausted. Limited funding is available for the program, which is a reimbursement incentive only. Projects must be completed by June 10, 2021, and all payment requests (including supporting documents) must be received from the applicant by June 15, 2021.

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These grants are administered and awarded by the Authority. In the FY 2020-21 Budget, \$20,000 has been allocated for STEP and WEEP grants. For the FY 2019-20, the Authority received a combined total of three applications for both programs. Two of the applications were withdrawn by the applicants (impacts from COVID-19 and staffing limitations). One WEEP grant was awarded to A Reason to Survive (ARTS) in National City for mural signage for their San Diego County watershed display.

### **Grants Received**

In the last fiscal year, the Authority was the recipient of a grant from the Hans and Margaret Doe Charitable Trust. Annually, applications are mailed out by the Board of Trustees to local water agencies. These grants are awarded to agencies who are looking for opportunities to create and fund programs that provide water education resources. The Authority, in a joint application with the Chula Vista Elementary (CVE) School District, applied for a grant in 2019. The Authority and CVE were awarded a grant of \$6,000 to create a display at the Hydro Station on the water treatment process at the Richard A. Reynolds Groundwater Desalination Facility. This display is being developed and will be installed at the facility in the Fall of 2020.

### **Pending Grant Application**

In November 2019, the Authority applied for a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for the Sweetwater Dam and South Dike Improvements Project. The amount requested was \$5,436,022.80, which amounts to seventy-five percent of the project cost and is the maximum percentage of the project cost that FEMA would be able to award. Even though this is a FEMA grant, it is administered by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES). The Authority's grant application has been reviewed by Cal OES and it was recommended to FEMA for grant award. The grant application is currently in review with FEMA and there is no indication on when FEMA will conclude the review of the grant application.

### **PAST BOARD ACTION**

June 24, 2020 The Governing Board adopted Resolution 20-13, Adopting a Budget for the Fiscal Year 2020-21.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Monies for the Authority administered grant programs (WEEP and STEP) are approved annually in the budget process.

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**POLICY**

Strategic Plan Goal 3: Financial Viability (FV) – Ensure long-term financial viability of the agency through best practices, operational efficiency, and maximizing assets.

Strategic Plan Goal 7: Environmental Stewardship (ES) - Provide core services while maintaining a balanced approach to human and environmental needs.

**CONCLUSION**

This is an information item.