

November 11, 2019

Consulting
Engineers and
Scientists

Mark Norton PE LEED AP ENV SP
Water Resources & Planning Manager
Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
11615 Sterling Avenue
Riverside, CA 92503

Re: Proposal to Prepare CEQA Compliance Documentation for Basin Plan Amendment

Dear Mr. Norton,

The purpose of this letter is to present the GEI Consultants (GEI) and LeClaire & Associates (L&A) Team (“GEI Team”) proposal to the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) to complete the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and documentation applicable to a proposed Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (“Santa Ana Water Board”) amendment to the Salt Management Plan (SMP) in the Santa Ana River Basin Water Quality Control Plan (“Basin Plan”). The following sections provide the project background and objectives and the GEI Team’s proposed scope of work, schedule and cost estimate.

Project Background

Santa Ana Water Board Resolution R8-2004-001 (adopted January 22, 2004) amended the Basin Plan to establish an SMP that included revised groundwater management zones, revised total dissolved solids (TDS) and nitrate-nitrogen water quality objectives, revised TDS and nitrogen wasteload allocations for discharge of recycled water to the Santa Ana River and its tributaries, and revised reach designations for selected waterbodies. The 2004 Basin Plan Amendment was subsequently approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (September 30, 2004), Office of Administrative Law (December 23, 2004), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (January 20, 2007).

The 2004 Basin Plan Amendment also included a watershed-wide monitoring program to determine compliance with water quality objectives. The Regional Board uses the monitoring data to assess whether applicable water quality standards are being attained, determine if any assimilative capacity exists in each groundwater management zone, and, when needed, revise wasteload allocations.

Since adoption of the original SMP, the Basin Monitoring Program Task Force (“BMP Task Force”), which includes Santa Ana Water Board staff, have worked collaboratively to analyze monitoring data, prepare triennial assessment reports and update the watershed model to update the SMP. The outcome of these combined efforts is the need to implement

a Basin Plan Amendment process to incorporate the latest technical and regulatory findings.

As the Lead Agency for the Basin Plan amendment process, the Santa Ana Water Board is required to comply with CEQA when considering amendments to the Basin Plan. Attachment A identifies the probable provisions to be included in the planned 2020 Basin Plan Amendment process to amend the SMP. Of these provisions four are anticipated to require analysis to comply with CEQA:

- Adopt revised and updated TDS/total inorganic nitrogen (TIN) wasteload allocations (including any allocations of assimilative capacity where necessary and appropriate);
- Revise TIN objectives in Table 4-1 to require compliance be based on analyzing Total Nitrogen using a filtered sample;
- Approve a Drought and Conservation Policy; and
- Add text confirming the primacy of TDS objectives, over individual salt ion objectives, for implementing state antidegradation policy.

Attachment A also identifies one probable provision where the need for a CEQA analysis is uncertain, i.e., Revise Chapter 5 (Implementation) of the Basin Plan to merge requirements of the Imported Water Recharge Workgroup (IWRW) Cooperative Agreement with the BMP Task Force.

For the purposes of CEQA compliance the Basin Plan amendment process is considered functionally equivalent to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or a Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA. However, in lieu of preparing these documents, an environmental analysis of the Basin Plan Amendment is required to be provided in a Substitute Environmental Document (SED). The purpose of this proposal is to provide the scope of work, budget, and schedule to prepare the SED on behalf of the BMP Task Force to support the 2020 Basin Plan Amendment process to incorporate the provisions described above.

Scope of Work

An SED will be prepared to address the potential environmental effects of the five planned revisions to the Basin Plan listed above in the Project Background. The SED will include an Environmental Checklist that serves as the basis for a systematic evaluation of the potential for the amendments to result in a significant impact relative to a variety of environmental factors such as biological resources, recreation, water quality and other such topics as required by CEQA. Each checklist item will have an explanation supporting the checklist entry. For each checklist item a determination will be made as to whether no impact is anticipated, or, if an impact may occur, determine whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant after mitigation, or less than significant. The explanation for each issue will identify the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question, and the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact

to less than significant. The following sections provide the proposed scope of work to complete this analysis.

Task 1 – Prepare Draft CEQA Documentation

The GEI Team will prepare a draft SED using a format acceptable to the Santa Ana Water Board, but similar to the format used to prepare the previous SED developed for the 2017 amendment to the Basin Plan’s SMP (*Environmental Analysis and Checklist: Proposed Basin Plan Amendment to Revise the Water Quality Objective for Nitrate-Nitrogen in the Chino South Groundwater Management Zone*, adopted in August 14, 2017).¹ The proposed SED will include the following sections:

- *Section - Introduction*, which provides the document’s purpose and the regulatory context for the CEQA analysis;
- *Section 2 – Proposed Action Description*, which presents the proposed action along with the specific Basin Plan amendments;
- *Section 3 - Environmental Setting*, which describes the area where the regulatory action is proposed;
- *Section 4 - Environmental Issues*, which evaluates the potential impact(s) of the proposed action relative to environmental issue areas (Environmental Checklist), and presents mandatory findings of significance, as required under CEQA;
- *Section 5 - Alternatives*, which presents the analysis of any reasonable alternatives to the proposed action; and
- *Section 6 – References*.

The following assumptions are included in the scope of work for this task:

- The environmental analysis will be limited to the five provisions currently planned to be incorporated into the Basin Plan amendment (as summarized above in the Project Description and Attachment A);²
- The final proposed Basin Plan amendment language for each of the five provisions will be provided to the GEI Team in a timely manner;
- Any data, data analyses, summary tables, or figures that have been developed by the BMP Task Force to support the preparation of the Basin Plan Amendment language will be provided in a format for relatively straightforward inclusion into the SED, i.e., only minimal editorial modification would be required.

¹ https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/santaana/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/salt_management_plan.html

² Note: Although Attachment 1 lists one of these probable provisions as “uncertain” with regard to the need for CEQA analysis, this item is included in this proposal. However, a final decision regarding its inclusion in the CEQA analysis should be made by the time this scope of work is implemented.

A draft SED will be submitted electronically to SAWPA for subsequent review by the appropriate stakeholders, e.g., the Santa Ana Water Board, and the BMP Task Force.

Task 2 – Prepare Final CEQA Documentation

The GEI Team will prepare a final SED document based on comments received from the reviewers on the draft document. The final SED with response to comments will be submitted to SAWPA electronically for appropriate distribution.

Task 3 – Project Coordination

The GEI Team has budgeted up to two face to face meetings with the Santa Ana Water Board and BMP Task Force to (a) confirm the project scope and CEQA analysis requirements at the beginning of the project; and (b) review and discuss comments on the draft SED. Additional project coordination will occur as needed via email and teleconference.

Project Schedule

The GEI Team proposes to submit the draft SED document to SAWPA for review within four weeks after (a) completion of the first Task 3 project coordination meeting to confirm the project scope and CEQA analysis requirements; and (b) receiving all materials necessary to prepare the document (see Task 1). A final SED document will be prepared within four weeks of receipt of final comments on the draft SED.

Project Cost Estimate

GEI proposes to conduct this scope of services on a time and materials basis with a not to exceed fee of \$31,900. This fee is based on an estimated 154 labor hours as shown in Table 1. Attachment B provides the rate schedule for GEI. Dr. LeClaire (L&A) will bill at a labor rate of \$175/hour. Expenses include travel to two BMP Task Force meetings.

Table 1. Project Cost Estimate

Task/Description	Hours	Project Costs		
		Labor	Other Direct Costs	Totals
Task 1 – Draft CEQA Documentation	110	\$21,500	\$0	\$21,500
Task 2 – Final CEQA Documentation	20	\$4,000	\$0	\$4,000
Task 3 – Project Coordination	24	\$5,300	\$1,100 ¹	\$6,400
Totals	154	\$30,800	\$1,100	\$31,900

¹ Note: This covers only a portion of expected travel costs for Dr. Meyerhoff; he will coordinate travel for these BMP Task Force meetings with other meetings in the Riverside area, including his work with other SAWPA Task Forces. Dr. LeClaire's travel will also be coordinated with other meetings in the Inland Empire.

Key Personnel

Two key personnel are included in this proposal:

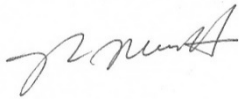
- Dr. Richard Meyerhoff (GEI) will serve as the Project Manager and assist with the development of the SED. Dr. Meyerhoff has worked on the development of other SED documents including: (a) SED prepared for the current Lake Elsinore/Canyon Lake Basin Plan amendment process to revise the existing TMDLs; (b) SED prepared for the previous 2017 revision to the SMP in the Basin Plan; and (c) SED prepared for the recently adopted Central Valley Salt and Nitrate Control Program, where the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board was the Lead Agency.
- Dr. Joseph LeClaire (L&A) will be the Principal Scientist and will provide critical support in the development of the SED. He has executed numerous projects in the past for the BMP Task Force (and other SAWPA Task Forces), including the SED for the Basin Plan Amendment to Revise the Water Quality Objective for Nitrate-Nitrogen in the Chino South Groundwater Management Zone.

Closing

We appreciate having the opportunity to provide you with this proposal. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact me at 303-345-3083.

Sincerely,

GEI CONSULTANTS, INC.



Richard Meyerhoff, PhD, Associate
Senior Water Quality Specialist

Attachment A
Handout at the October 25,
2019 BMP Task Force Meeting



Probable Provisions of the 2020 Basin Plan Amendment

Element in Basin Plan Amendment	CEQA/Econ. Required	Notes
1) Adopt revised and updated TDS/TIN Wasteload Allocations (incl. any allocations of assimilative capacity where necessary and appropriate).	Yes	Wasteload allocations to no impose more stringent effluent limits on any discharger; therefore, CEQA/Econ should be relative straightforward.
2) Add definition of "Baseflow" for water quality objectives in SAR-Reach 3.	No	Memorializing, not changing, the current approach; clarifies compliance assessment.
3) Add footnote to Table 4-1 to identify objectives that are antidegradation targets not use-protection thresholds.	No	Documenting original basis for some water quality objectives; exceedances do not imply that beneficial uses are impaired.
4) Add text explaining that purpose of some surface objectives was/is to protect MUN use in underlying groundwater basins.	No	Documenting basis for TIN/TDS objectives in MUN-exempt surface waterbodies; no substantive changes to water quality standards or implementation requirements.
5) Add text describing when and where Increment-of-Use limits should be applied.	No	Clarifying, not changing, existing permitting practice.
6) Revise TIN objectives in Table 4-1 to require compliance based on analyzing Total Nitrogen using filtered samples.	Yes	Making all other stream segments consistent with SAR-R3. If it is appropriate there, it is appropriate everywhere for the same reasons.
7) Add text to Chapter 5 (Implementation) identifying all dischargers required to participate in AWQ & WLAM updates and Annual Report of SAR Water Quality (incl. all other permittees).	No	Memorializing, not changing, current permits and practice. At present, only IEUA, EMWD, YVWD and Beaumont are named in Basin Plan. Others have it in their permit. Many not yet included (MS4, CAFO, Deminimus, & Gen. Orders).
8) Approve a Drought & Conservation Policy.	Yes	Authorizes use of long-term averages and offsets in permits.
9) Add text confirming the primacy of TDS objectives, over individual salt ion objectives, for implementing state antidegradation policy.	Yes	This was agreed to in 2004 but was accidentally omitted from the BPA; it represents long-standing Regional Board practice but must be institutionalized in the Basin Plan.
10) Revise Chapter 5 (Implementation) to merge requirements of IWRW Cooperative Agreement w/ BMPTF.	Uncertain	Only significant change is frequency of model updates; was every 5 years, will be every 10 as part of WLAM.

ATTACHMENT B: GEI SAWPA 2020 LIFE SCIENCES FEE SCHEDULE AND PAYMENT TERMS**FEE SCHEDULE**

<u>Personnel Category</u>	<u>Hourly Billing Rate \$ per hour</u>
Staff Professional – Grade 1	\$ 95
Staff Professional – Grade 2	\$ 108
Project Professional – Grade 3	\$ 114
Project Professional – Grade 4	\$ 130
Senior Professional – Grade 5	\$ 154
Senior Professional – Grade 6	\$ 187
Senior Professional – Grade 7	\$ 230
Senior Consultant – Grade 8	\$ 265
Senior Consultant – Grade 9	\$ 290
Senior Principal – Grade 10	\$ 290

Senior CADD Drafter / Designer / GIS	\$ 129
CADD Drafter / Designer	\$ 114
Field Professional	\$ 110
Technician 1	\$ 78
Technician 2	\$ 83
Technician 3	\$ 90
Technician 4	\$ 103
Word Processor, Administrative Staff	\$ 83
Office Aide	\$ 78

These rates are billed for both regular and overtime hours in all categories.

Rates will increase up to 5% annually, at GEI's option, for all contracts that extend beyond twelve (12) months after the date of the contract. Rates for Deposition and Testimony are increased 1.5 times.

OTHER PROJECT COSTS

Third Party Project Charges – All third party project charges will be billed at cost plus a 5% service charge. Examples of such charges include chemical laboratory charges; rented or leased equipment; printing and communication costs; shipping and mailing costs; sample disposal costs; transportation costs, project permits, and licenses.

Field Equipment Charges – GEI-owned field equipment will be billed at the following rates:

Backpack and shoreline electro-fishers	\$ 175/day	Invertebrate equipment package	\$ 60/day
Boat electro-fisher	\$ 450/day	Flow meter	\$ 90/day
Boat only	\$ 280/day	Multi-probe	\$ 170/day
IFIM equipment package	\$ 90/day		

Transportation Charges - Automobile expenses for GEI or employee owned cars will be charged at the rate per mile set by the Internal Revenue Service for tax purposes plus tolls and parking charges or at a rate negotiated for each project. When required for a project, four-wheel drive vehicles owned by GEI or the employees will be billed at \$25/day plus mileage. Travel costs including airfare, rental vehicles, taxis, parking, tolls, and other transportation charges will be billed at cost plus 5% service charge.

Subsistence – Lodging and meal costs at job sites, and in transit to and from job sites, will be billed at cost plus 5% service charge.

PAYMENT TERMS

Invoices will be submitted monthly or upon completion of a specified scope of service, as described in the accompanying contract (proposal, project, or agreement document that is signed and dated by GEI and CLIENT). Payment is due upon receipt of the invoice. Interest will accrue at the rate of 1% of the invoice amount per month, for amounts that remain unpaid more than 30 days after the invoice date. All payments will be made by either check or electronic transfer to the address specified by GEI and will include reference to GEI's invoice number.