



Water Storage Investment Program: Screening Process

Introduction

The Commission directed staff to open a screening process for new potential Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) projects at its December 16, 2020 meeting. The screening process will create a pool of potential projects if the Commission decides to open a second solicitation utilizing funding made available by the withdrawal of the Temperance Flat Reservoir project from WSIP or any other funds that become available in the future. A screening process allows the Commission to receive information sufficient to meet the January 1, 2022 deadline, while leaving the procedural requirements to implement a second solicitation and substantive evaluation of any new projects to a later date.

This agenda item provides an update on the screening process and provides additional information about what materials will be submitted to the Commission and how the Commission will make feasibility findings should projects come forward for screening.

Summary of Issues

WSIP requires that all projects, new or existing, must meet certain eligibility requirements to be considered for funding. Staff has opened a screening process to allow the Commission to make a finding of feasibility for the new projects. Prospective projects are asked to provide basic information as well as the statutorily required information that the Commission can use to make feasibility findings.

A form is now available on the website that asks for the basic information and the statutorily required information. Participants are strongly encouraged to submit screening materials by October 22, 2021 to allow the Commission to make feasibility determinations by the December 2021 Commission meeting. Staff may not have sufficient time to fully evaluate submission received after this date. Basic information includes items such as project name, contact information, project type, location, and general description of potential public benefits. The statutorily required information includes: completed feasibility studies, draft environmental document that is available for public review, minimum of 75% commitment for non-public benefit cost share; and a description of how the project will advance the long-term objectives of restoring ecological health and improving water management for beneficial uses of the Delta.

Agenda Item: 11

Meeting Date: January 20, 2021

Page 2

If the screening process produces potential projects, staff will review the materials and present a staff recommendation to the Commission for consideration. The Commission will decide whether to make findings that projects are feasible and will advance the long term objectives of restoring ecological health and improving water management for beneficial uses of the Delta. Projects that receive such a finding would be eligible to apply for any available funding in the Program if the Commission decides to move forward with rulemaking and a second solicitation.

Screening information submitted to CWC staff will be posted on the Program website.

Background

Through the WSIP, the California Water Commission will invest nearly \$2.6 billion in the public benefits of water storage projects, consistent with the requirements of Proposition 1 (the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014), Chapter 8. In July 2018, the Commission made Maximum Conditional Eligibility Determinations, decisions that set the amount of Proposition 1 funding available to a given project, for eight projects that will create more than four million acre-feet of storage capacity. Since then, one applicant has withdrawn from the program; the seven remaining applicants are working to complete the Proposition 1 requirements, which include obtaining permits and environmental documents, contracts for the administration of public benefits, and contracts for non-Proposition 1 funding before returning to the Commission for a final award hearing.

This agenda item implements Goal Four of the Commission's Strategic Plan, which calls on the Commission to carry out its statutory responsibilities for the Proposition 1 Water Storage Investment Program.

Meeting Overview

At the meeting, Commission staff will brief the Commission on the screening process and related Commission decisions for the upcoming year.

This is an informational item.

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