

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Administrative Office	(2) MEETING DATE 8/20/2013	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Nikki J. Schmidt 805/781-5496	
(4) SUBJECT Consideration of Amendment No. 3 to the agreement for services with the Ferguson Group in the amount of \$72,000 to provide Federal lobbying services for FY 2013-14.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that your Board consider Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement for Services with the Ferguson Group to provide federal lobbying services for the FY 2013-14.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) FC 106 – Contributions to Other Agencies	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$72,000.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$0.00	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT { } Consent { } Presentation { } Hearing (Time Est. ___) {x} Board Business (Time Est. 30 minutes)			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS { } Resolutions {x} Contracts { } Ordinances { } N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR)		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: N/A { } 4/5th's Vote Required {x} N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY { } N/A Date: 11-20-12, item #4	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) All Districts -			

County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Nikki J. Schmidt, Administrative Office

DATE: 8/20/2013

SUBJECT: Consideration of Amendment No. 3 to the agreement for services with the Ferguson Group in the amount of \$72,000 to provide Federal lobbying services for FY 2013-14.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that your Board consider Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement for Services with the Ferguson Group to provide federal lobbying services for the FY 2013-14.

DISCUSSION

The County has contracted with the Ferguson Group (TFG) since October 2006. Since that time, TFG has assisted the County in matters pertaining to the federal government, including federal funding, legislative, regulatory and other type administrative issues of interest to the County.

Examples of the work TFG has done on the County's behalf include:

- Prior to the moratorium on earmarks, TFG worked to obtain a \$35 million authorization in the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) for the Los Osos Wastewater project. Congress has not enacted a WRDA bill since 2007; however, there is strong support for moving forward with a new WRDA bill in 2013. As those discussions on a new WRDA bill move along, the TFG will be working with Congressional delegation members to extend the authorization, provide authority for reimbursement, and to secure appropriations through Congress and the Corps of Engineers.
- TFG worked with Public Works staff, the County's Congressional delegation and staff from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to add language in the Agriculture Appropriations legislation which waived population limitations for the community of Los Osos. This waiver paved the way for a grant/loan in the amount of \$85 million for the Los Osos Wastewater Sewer project.
- In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008 and 2009, the TFG worked to obtain funding, \$188,000 and \$100,000 respectively, for the Criminal Justice Records Management System.
- Funding for an Anti-Gang Coordinator was secured in legislation; however a moratorium was placed on all earmarks prior to approval of its appropriation.

In 2010, Congress placed a moratorium on all earmarks. Since that time, the TFG has worked with the County to identify grant opportunities (competitive and discretionary) and have assisted staff in navigating the Federal government system to seek funding opportunities for priorities and regulatory consideration.

Currently, the TFG is working with County elected officials and staff on items outlined below as well as the projects outlined in the January 11 and June 2013 memorandum updates.

- Water resources – water supply and long term stability. TFG is working with the US Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, USDA, and the Bureau of Reclamation to identify any assistance available in the short term to citizens suffering hardship due to ongoing drought conditions. In addition, TFG is working with federal agencies to develop and implement a strategy to help the County stabilize water supply – both surface and ground water – in the long term.
- TFG established communications with the Bureau of Reclamation (Washington & Denver) to assess possible federal assistance on invasive species assistance.
- FEMA and Arroyo Grande levees – TFG has worked with County staff and FEMA to ensure favorable consideration of pending application for reimbursement for levee work. In addition to tracking the status of the application, TFG secured a meeting this spring with FEMA officials in Washington regarding the pending application.
- Los Osos Wastewater Project – TFG continues working with congressional offices and agencies to ensure regulatory actions help and do not hinder the progress of the project. In addition, TFG continues working to secure appropriations for the treatment plant by way of favorable congressional consideration as well as efficient consideration by relevant federal agencies. For example, TFG assisted the County in developing a working relationship with the director of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) for the US Fish & Wildlife Service in the event environmental consideration becomes unnecessarily lengthy.
- FAA – TFG is tracking negative impacts of federal budget cuts on operations at the San Luis Obispo Airport. This is an emerging and evolving matter.
- Transportation & Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) – TFG continues tracking the implementation of transportation authorization legislation and will continue assisting the County and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) in communications with congressional offices – delegation and committee offices – regarding implementation and new authorization legislation developing later this year and in 2014. TFG is also seeking federal and state funding for work on Cayucos Pier.
- Diablo Canyon – TFG established communications with NRC regional staff (Texas) and in Washington and assisted in securing a meeting with the Chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as well a staff briefing. TFG is also tracking legislation related to nuclear waste transportation and storage – this issue is elevated this year as legislation currently in the House of Representatives provides funding for facilities at Yucca Mountain.
- Environmental and energy efficiency – TFG provides regular updates to the County regarding grant funding for energy efficiency projects. Additionally, TFG facilitated a meeting this spring with EPA staff regarding creative efficiency projects including possible reuse of abandoned waste facilities in Los Osos for recycled water projects.

TFG regularly interacts with federal agencies on behalf of the County, providing answers to County questions and concerns. For example, this spring the County needed Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) budget information for FY 2013. TFG discussed the situation with PILT officials and provided near precise budget estimates to the County. TFG also provides updates regarding CDBG budgeting and other types of formula funding relied upon by the County for ongoing operations.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT

Administrative Office and the Ferguson Group staff developed the terms of the amendment. County Counsel has reviewed the agreement and approved it as to form and legal effect. Due to the Los Osos Wastewater Sewer project and transportation issues, TFG has worked extensively with Public Works staff; however, we did solicit feedback from departments pertaining to their interaction with TFG. Departments that responded noted that TFG was responsive to their requests and the information pertinent and helpful.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

During FY 2013-14 budget hearings, the Board approved funding for federal lobbyist services at the cost of \$72,000 per year including expenses.

RESULTS

Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement to Services with the Ferguson Group will continue federal lobbying effort on benefit of San Luis Obispo County with the intention of obtaining federal assistance and revenues that would not otherwise be available to us. Additional revenues contribute to the County's goal of a safe, health, livable, and prosperous community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Amendment No. 3 to the December 7, 2010 agreement for services
2. January 11, 2013 update memorandum
3. June 7, 2013 update memorandum