



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: AUGUST 16, 2022
FROM: PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL
SUBJECT: PARTICIPATION IN THE SOLVE THE WATER CRISIS COALITION

ISSUES:

Approve participation in the Solve the Water Crisis Coalition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve an annual expenditure of \$15,000 for participation in Solve the Water Crisis Coalition for Fiscal Years 2022/23 and 2023/24, at the discretion of the Utilities General Manager, for a total expenditure not to exceed \$30,000, subject to the availability of budgeted funds; and
2. Designate Public Utilities General Manager as the designee and Assistant General Manager as the alternate designee to represent the City of Riverside in the Solve the Water Crisis Coalition.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

The Board of Public Utilities met on July 11, 2022 and, after discussion, voted unanimously to approve an annual expenditure of \$15,000 for participation in Solve the Water Crisis Coalition; and to designate Public Utilities General Manager as the designee and the Assistant General Manager as the alternate designee to represent the City of Riverside on the Solve the Water Crisis Coalition.

BACKGROUND:

As a result of changing climate and ongoing drought coupled with declining water supplies throughout the State, Western Municipal Water District (Western) has taken the initiative to create a coalition of water agencies titled "Solve the Water Crisis." This Coalition intends to raise awareness among the public and California policymakers of the water supply crisis and the urgency that requires bold and immediate State action to secure California's future through long-

term investments, improved science, and regulatory reforms to increase water supply and reliability for California.

While Riverside has water rights in local groundwater basins that it relies on to produce 100% of its water supply, these basins, like all the other groundwater basins throughout the State, are experiencing drought conditions that will require future investment to ensure continued water supply resiliency into the future. Riverside has identified through its Urban Water Management Plan the need for imported water in the future; consequently, a resilient state water capture, storage and conveyance system is critically important. Through this Coalition, Riverside will have the opportunity to participate with Western Municipal Water District and other stakeholders to bring awareness to the need for greater water supply reliability and investing in the State's water infrastructure to the State legislators and leaders. The Coalition consists of public and private agencies and organizations from both southern and northern California. There are currently 21 member agencies and up to 48 other agencies in the outreach group considering membership.

DISCUSSION:

The mission of the Solve the Water Crisis Coalition is, through a critically needed education effort, to bring into sharp focus the ongoing water supply crisis that is already impacting residents' quality of life, economic growth, community health, and the environment, as well as risking California's future. By raising awareness among California policymakers and thought leaders, Solve the Water Crisis Coalition will demonstrate the enormous water supply crisis and the urgency that requires bold and immediate State action to secure California's future.

Solve the Water Crisis Coalition will elevate the discussion of the water crisis plaguing California and use this drought as an opportunity to educate State leaders about the water supply crisis that must be addressed immediately to protect California's future and provide reliability to the State. The Coalition will educate the legislature and state officials about California's deteriorating water supply and the benefits of a comprehensive, long-term solution that results in increased water reliability. The Coalition will educate key audiences about the need for solutions to address the State's water supply and reliability issues and how new hydrologic realities require immediate investments in California's water management infrastructure. The Coalition will also focus its message on allocating a portion of the state's budget surpluses to help fund solutions to these statewide problems.

Western Municipal Water District developed this Coalition and has taken the lead in advocating for the region's water agencies. As of mid-June, there are 21 confirmed Coalition members and an additional 48 agencies have expressed interest in joining. A Coalition Board made up of the paying members will meet monthly to assess progress and discuss strategy. A Steering Committee made up of 7-10 general managers will lead the Coalition, while obtaining feedback from the Coalition Board. Each participating agency is being asked to contribute a payment of \$15,000 to fund the program. Western hired KP Public Affairs to manage this effort, and all the funds raised will cover the operating costs of running the Coalition, developing material, messaging, outreach and coalition building, media and website campaigns, completing research, and tracking and measuring the effects of this Coalition. By the end of September 2022, KP Public Affairs will create a report summarizing the outcomes and effectiveness of the Coalition, as well as recommendations for next steps. Depending on the success of this effort, a second phase may be implemented at which time a continued participation effort and a second round of funding may be requested.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Priority No. 4 – Environmental Stewardship** and **Goal 4.2** – Sustainably manage local water resources to maximize and advance water reuse to ensure safe, reliable and affordable water to our community.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

- 1. Community Trust** – The intent behind joining the Solve the Water Coalition is to start an open discussion bringing awareness to the State’s water supply crisis and to begin identifying solutions in an open and engaging way.
- 2. Equity** – All City residents equally receive water produced from the same source throughout the City. The Solve the Water Coalition will work to improve the reliability of the States overall water supply which in turn would add reliability to the Southern California region including the groundwater basins in which Riverside produces water from.
- 3. Fiscal Responsibility** –The Solve the Water Crisis Coalition is comprised of multiple water agencies all sharing in the costs to advocate for improved water supply reliability throughout the State.
- 4. Innovation** – Riverside is inventive and timely in meeting the community’s changing needs and prepares for the future through collaborative partnerships such as the Solve the Water Crisis Coalition, which will openly discuss California’s water supply troubles to begin identifying innovative solutions to this problem.
- 5. Sustainability & Resiliency** – Riverside is committed to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future. Water Agencies throughout the State have recognized the need for the State to invest in water supply reliability to ensure the resiliency and success of California in the coming years.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact of this action is \$30,000, or \$15,000 annually for Fiscal Years 2022/23 and 2023/24. Sufficient funds are available in the Water Fund, Public Utilities Water Engineering, Professional Services account no. 6210000-421000. Appropriations for future fiscal years will be included in the Department’s budget submissions for those fiscal years to be presented to the City Council for approval.

Prepared by: Todd M. Corbin, Utilities General Manager
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Solve the Water Crisis Fact Sheet
2. Presentation