

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
Thursday, August 11, 2016
Regional Water Board Office
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Funding and Technical Assistance Opportunities for Wastewater Projects Serving Small and Disadvantaged Communities (State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, North Coast Resources Partnership) (*Charles Reed, Jennifer Toney, Karen McBride, Katherine Gledhill*)

BOARD ACTION: This is an information item only. No action is necessary.

BACKGROUND: Small and disadvantaged communities within the North Coast Region can tap into a variety of technical assistance and funding resources for the planning and construction of needed water quality (including wastewater) and drinking water projects. These include but are not limited to grants/loans and technical assistance from entities such as the State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance (DFA), the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), and the North Coast Resources Partnership (NCRP).

DFA administers financial assistance programs that include loan and grant funding for the planning and construction of various water quality and drinking water projects. Specifically, the DFA Small Community Wastewater Unit is responsible for awarding grant funding to small disadvantaged communities for eligible wastewater projects. Proposition 1 Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Prop 1) allocated \$260 million for wastewater projects and a total annual appropriation of \$8 million for the Small Community Grant program. All funds are administered consistent with the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Intended Use Plan, and the CWSRF Policy.

The CWSRF Intended Use Plan specifies the grant amounts available for Small Community Grant projects, and how the Prop 1, Small Community Grant, and CWSRF requirements will be coordinated for projects receiving funding from these sources.

In addition to capital projects, up to 15 percent of the funds available from Prop 1 will go to a multi-disciplinary technical assistance (TA) program. The Prop 1 TA Funding Plan (Plan) was adopted by the State Water Board on November 4, 2015. The Plan outlines the general process to administer Prop 1 TA funds. The TA efforts are focused on helping small disadvantaged communities develop, fund, and implement capital improvement projects. This is a multi-disciplinary approach, intended to address small disadvantaged communities' drinking water, wastewater, groundwater quality, and storm water needs under one program.

RCAC is a nonprofit 501c(3) organization that provides a wide range of community development services for rural low-income communities, Native American communities and community-based organizations in 13 western states. RCAC has an annual operating budget of more than \$19 million and more than 100 employees working from 52 field offices. Services RCAC staff provide include training, technical and financial resources, and

advocacy to rural communities. Program areas include affordable housing and environmental infrastructure development and community development financing. RCAC also offers leadership and economic development training and technical assistance.

The NCRP is a coalition of local and Tribal governments, water and wastewater service providers, non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, resource conservation districts, and interested stakeholders from Tribes and the following North Coast counties: Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Modoc, Siskiyou, Sonoma and Trinity. Economically disadvantaged communities and Tribes in the region have been involved in all aspects of the NCRP's planning effort and comprise a significant proportion of the NCRP leadership. To date, the NCRP conducts outreach to these communities and provides technical assistance to develop local plans and projects. Over the past ten years, the NCRP has identified and managed over \$60 million in California Department of Water Resources Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) project implementation funding with over 87percent (\$53 million) of that funding substantially contributing towards drinking water and water quality improvement projects in disadvantaged communities (e.g., including but not limited to habitat restoration, wastewater, water recycling, and storm water projects). In all, 145 projects have been or are being implemented using local labor, creating over 613 jobs during economically challenging times.

DISCUSSION: State Water Board staff, Jennifer Toney, will provide an update on current activities related to Small Community Grant and CWSRF funding, including eligible applicants, eligible projects, maximum grant amounts, funding process, and existing projects in our region. The presentation will also touch on the challenges to funding septic (i.e., onsite wastewater treatment systems) to sewer or septic replacement projects.

RCAC staff, Karen McBride, will provide an overview of its recent activities assisting rural communities in the North Coast Region and will discuss opportunities to support wastewater infrastructure needs in the lower Russian River Watershed.

North Coast Resource Partnership staff, Katherine Gledhill, will provide an overview of NCRP projects, quantified project benefits, and its Disadvantaged Community Outreach and Involvement Program. Additionally, she will provide an overview and update on the Prop 1 IRWM Project Solicitation schedule and process.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Small Community Wastewater Grant Program:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/small_community_wastewater_grant/projects.shtml

Clean Water State Revolving Fund:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/srf/index.shtml

North Coast Resource Partnership:

<http://www.northcoastresourcepartnership.org/>

Rural Community Assistance Corporation:

<http://www.rcac.org/>