

Western Regional Water Commission

STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 15, 2018

TO: Chairman and Members, Western Regional Water Commission

FROM: Jim Smitherman, Water Resources Program Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion and possible approval of a request from the University of Nevada, Reno ("UNR") for funding in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 from the Regional Water Management Fund ("RWMF"), in increments of \$25,000 per fiscal year for three years, to support the Water Innovation Campus Project; if approved, authorize the Chairman to execute an Interlocal Agreement ("ILA") with UNR for that purpose; and possible direction to staff.

SUMMARY

In March 2017, the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission ("NNWPC") received a presentation from Dr. Krishna Pagilla of the UNR Environmental Engineering Department on a proposal to develop a Water Innovation Campus over the next three years. The concept is to create a self-sustaining center to develop and implement, through collaborative efforts, leading edge, integrated water solutions for regional needs, and to demonstrate national leadership in the water sector by UNR, local governmental entities in the Truckee Meadows region, and the State of Nevada.

The request was for \$75,000 from the RWMF, in three increments of \$25,000 per year. The NNWPC directed staff to include a \$25,000 item in the WRWC FY 17-18 Tentative Budget, which was approved in May, 2017. In June 2017, the NNWPC authorized the Program Manager to execute an ILA with UNR, under his delegated contract authority, to partially fund the project for FY 17-18. After conferring with WRWC Legal Counsel, staff is recommending that the WRWC approve the total amount of the request for \$75,000, in three increments not to exceed \$25,000 per fiscal year, and authorize the Chairman to execute the required ILA. This process will eliminate the need for a second approval by the WRWC, and an amendment to the ILA, after the Program Manager reaches his delegated contract limit.

Water Innovation Campus areas of focus will include water reclamation and reuse applications, water treatment, resource recovery, sustainable water management, storm water management, surface and groundwater quality, and water education. Activities envisioned to address these topics include regional needs assessments, research and development of technology solutions, pilot and full-scale demonstrations, leading edge technology adoption and validation, technical training, knowledge exchange, public outreach and communication, human resource development, intellectual property and national and international conferences and workshops.

The Nevada Water Innovation Campus concept has received strong institutional support from UNR, and representatives of the following proposed initial participating entities:

- City of Reno
- City of Sparks
- Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility, through Reno and Sparks
- WRWC/NNWPC
- Truckee Meadows Water Authority
- Washoe County
- Nevada Department of Transportation

Each initial participating entity has committed, in concept, to provide similar funding for three years to support the operation and maintenance of the project. An Inaugural Event was held at UNR on August 24, 2017, which marked the official initiation of the Nevada Water Innovation Campus

BACKGROUND

The Northern Nevada region is experiencing economic expansion as it transitions to a more knowledge-based / technology-centric economy. Sustainable water strategies, thoughtfully planned infrastructure, and water sector leadership are vitally important to the community at this time. Development of the Nevada Water Innovation Campus is a unique and timely opportunity to address regional needs locally by developing sustainable solutions that fit the Truckee Meadows, and build technology capacity in the region. The project should provide for economic development and job creation, national visibility and the ability to attract resources and qualified people to the region.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact to the RWMF for this item, if approved, will be \$25,000 per year in FY 17-18, FY 18-19, and FY 19-20, for a total amount not to exceed \$75,000. Budget authority is located in the FY 17-18 budget, in Fund Group 766, Fund 7066, Account Number 710100, Professional Services, Cost Object WP310200.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the WRWC approve UNR's request for funding in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 from the RWMF, in three increments of \$25,000 per fiscal year, to support the Nevada Water Innovation Campus Project and, if approved, authorize the Chairman to execute an ILA with UNR for that purpose. The WRWC may also provide additional direction to staff, as appropriate.

POSSIBLE MOTION

"Move to approve funding in an amount not to exceed \$75,000 from the RWMF, in three increments of \$25,000 per fiscal year, to support the Nevada Water Innovation Campus Project, and authorize the Chairman to execute an ILA with UNR for that purpose."

JS:jp