



Sites Project Authority

Request for Qualifications Federal Government Affairs Services RFQ No. 19-02

June 14, 2019

Proposal Submittal Deadline

July 8, 2019

Noon Pacific Standard Time (PST)

Form of Submission

Electronic Submittal Only

jtrapasso@sitesproject.org

Contact Person

Joe Trapasso

Program Operations Manager

Sites Reservoir Project

jtrapasso@sitesproject.org

Request for Qualifications

Federal Government Affairs Services

RFP No. 19-02

1.0 Overview/Background

The Sites Project Authority (Authority) is soliciting Request for Qualifications (RFQs) from firms (each a Respondent) interested in providing Federal Government Affairs Services for the implementation of the Sites Reservoir Project (Project).

It is the intent of the Authority to award a contract to the best-qualified firm that demonstrates extensive experience with federal government affairs and advocacy services tailored to the Authority's current and future needs, which is primarily focused on the development of a large surface water infrastructure project that can also provide incidental hydroelectric power.

The Authority, Reservoir Committee, and the Project

The Authority is a joint exercise of powers authority formed on August 26, 2010 pursuant to Government Code Section 6500 *et seq.*, and its mission is:

- To be a proponent and facilitator to design and potentially acquire, construct, finance, manage, govern, and operate Sites Reservoir and related facilities;
- To increase and develop water supplies;
- To improve the operation of the state's water system; and
- To provide a net improvement in ecosystem and water quality conditions in the Sacramento River system and the Delta.

The Authority is currently governed by a 9-voting member Board of Directors (17 agencies total) that includes several local water agencies and both Colusa and Glenn Counties. Further, the Authority is the lead agency for compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is working with the 21 local water agencies located statewide (Reservoir Committee) who have entered into agreements to advance the Sites Reservoir and related facilities.

Together, the Authority and Reservoir Committee are working in partnership with both the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Water Resources to improve the operation of the state's interdependent water system for both consumptive and environmental beneficial uses. Participants in the Project through its Authority voting members and Reservoir Committee members represent 39 of California's 53 congressional districts.

Located 10 miles west of the town of Maxwell in rural Glenn and Colusa counties, the Sites Reservoir would be a 1.8 million acre-foot off-stream surface water storage facility that conserves stormwater flows in the Sacramento River—after all other water rights and regulatory requirements are met—for release in dry and critical years for environmental use and for California communities, farms and businesses when it is desperately needed. It would be the state's 7th largest reservoir and would

increase surface water storage in the Sacramento Valley by over 15%.

When operated in a cooperative manner with other Northern California reservoirs such as Shasta, Oroville and Folsom – which function as the backbone to both the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project – Sites Reservoir will greatly increase flexibility, reliability and resiliency of statewide water supplies in drier periods.

With Sites Reservoir, California has a rare opportunity to enhance statewide water supplies and provide an allocation of water specifically for the environment. It provides federal and state resource agencies with a dedicated and reliable supply of water they can manage to provide environmental benefits, especially during drier years.

In keeping its commitment to move the Project forward on behalf of the region, the Authority has spent the last several years working towards accomplishing its mission by engaging the stakeholders and participants, initiating the required environmental planning process, and conducting feasibility studies, among other efforts. The Authority is working in close coordination with other stakeholders in the region interested in the eventual construction of the Project.

The Project's direct construction is expected to cost approximately \$5.2 billion (dollars in year 2015). Funding for the Project is expected to come from federal and state sources, as well the Project's participants. In July 2018, the Authority was awarded \$816 million of funding from the California Water Commission (CWC) under its Water Storage Investment Program funded by Proposition 1 which was approved by California voters in November 2014, and in November 2018 was awarded a \$449 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for construction of the Maxwell Water Intertie.

The Authority and the United States Bureau Reclamation released both a joint public draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) and draft congressionally mandated Feasibility Report in August 2017. In addition to needing to complete the final EIR/EIS and related decision documents per the CEQA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), several other permits and authorizations will be required prior to the Water Commission encumbering funds for final design and construction (expected by January 1, 2022). Many of these permit applications require a sufficient level of engineering design, field surveys (some multiple year), public review, and agency input and review which can, in many cases, take multiple years to complete. As such, multiple activities need to be initiated to maintain the Project's schedule, including continued engineering design to finalize all facility locations, permit application development and required surveys, and review of anticipated impacts and proposed/required impacts minimization and mitigation measures.

2.0 Scope of Work

The selected Consultant will be a direct report to the Public Affairs and Real Estate Manager with direction from the Authority's Ad Hoc Legislative and Outreach Committee who sets the Authority's legislative, regulatory affairs, and communications strategy.

Federal Government Affairs services under this contract may include the following activities:

1. **Establish an Active Presence** – The Consultant shall have its primary office located in the Washington D.C area. The Consultant shall actively establish a strong identity and presence in Washington D.C. on behalf of the Authority. This effort shall be reinforced by involvement in the political and regulatory actions on behalf of the Authority. Consultant will arrange meetings, appointments, and invitations to speak with members of Congress and federal agencies for Authority Board members, Reservoir Committee members and Authority staff, as required.
2. **Issue Monitoring** – The Consultant shall serve as a conduit of information to and from the Senate and House of Representatives and shall monitor and provide regular oral and written reports on current legislation, the budget process, or any congressional activities that may directly or indirectly impact the Authority. The consultant shall work closely with the Board, General Manager, and Government Affairs Manager to assist in developing the Authority’s legislative priorities and identifying current needs. Frequent contact should be made with members of Congress and their staff, as well as Committee and federal agency staff on matters concerning the development of future legislation and regulations impacting the Authority. The consultant shall keep policy makers aware of the potential effect of specific legislation and regulations relative to the Authority’s interests.
3. **Legislative & Regulatory Advocacy** – Consultant shall represent the Authority’s position on key legislative action and shall transmit that position to members of Congress and their staff, as well as Committees and federal agencies (as appropriate) and other interest groups. This may be accomplished through personal discussions with congressional delegation, committee consultants and agency representatives, direct lobbying of legislators, testifying at appropriate policy and fiscal committees and agency hearings, orchestrating statements of legislators, preparing and sending letters notifying appropriate officials and agencies of the Authority’s position and drafting announcements.

Consultant shall develop a regulatory affairs strategy that advocates for the Authority’s positions regarding proposed federal regulatory agency rules, actions or policies which have a bearing on the development of the Sites Project or the operations of the Authority.
4. **Federal Budget Matters** - Support the Authority’s funding requests and other legislative actions on relevant authorization and appropriations legislation. Consultant shall help the Authority identify and secure additional federal funding for the Sites Project through grants or other federal funding programs.
5. **Bill Tracking Service** – Consultant shall obtain and monitor all bills, resolutions, files, journals, and histories that are determined to have an impact on the legislative and regulatory interests of the Authority.
6. **Coordination on State-level Governmental Affairs activities (by others)** - When requested by the Authority, the Consultant shall coordinate with the Authority’s state-level governmental affairs team to coordinate work activities including legislative strategies, regulatory affairs activities, meeting coordination, and events.

3.0 General RFQ Requirements

a. RFQ Questions and Clarifications Requests

Prospective RFQ respondents may submit written questions pertaining to this RFQ prior to **noon on June 19, 2019** via email to: jtrapasso@sitesproject.org.

The Contact Person (refer to cover page), who is an Authority's Agent, will officially respond to any questions and clarifications in an addendum which will be provided to all parties who were provided the RFQ.

Once the RFQ has been publicly released, any communications related to the preparation of an SOQ by a prospective respondent with any of the Authority's members; Reservoir Committee's members; Authority's Agents, Advisors or staff, other than the Contact Person, may result in any ensuing SOQ that was submitted by the prospective respondent as being deemed not accepted, which will result in the SOQ not being further considered.

b. SOQ Submittal

Receipt of the following material is **required by noon on Monday, July 8, 2019**, for a Respondent to be considered:

- An electronic copy of the SOQ and all its appendices in a single PDF with an index should be addressed to:

Joe Trapasso
Sites Project Authority Program
Operations Manager
jtrapasso@sitesproject.org

- The SOQ shall include the following:

Cover Letter listing RFQ No.19-02

Sections: Must be limited to no more than 15 pages (page size of 8.5 by 11 and 11-point font minimum, not including cover page or table of contents, unless otherwise specified)

1. Firm Profile and Qualifications
2. Experience and Qualifications of Project Team
3. Recommended Approach to Scope of Services
4. Fee Proposal

Appendices: Will not be counted within the page limit

- A. Proposed Exceptions to the Sample Agreement
- B. Disclosure of Legal Actions and Conflicts
- C. Other Required Information (refer to Specific Requirements):
 - Item C1: Insurance

- Items C2: 2-page resumes of key personnel

c. **Specific Requirements:**

1. **Cover Letter**

The cover letter must not exceed two pages and must be signed by a representative of the Respondent who is authorized to negotiate on behalf of, and to contractually bind, the Respondent during the evaluation. The letter should summarize the key points contained in the SOQ, as well as provide the name, title, address, email address and telephone and fax numbers of the key contact person.

2. **Firm Profile and Qualifications**

a. **Firm Overview**

Provide an overview of Respondent, including ownership, staff size, organizational structure, and business strategy. Specify the office and its address that would serve as the “lead office” for this Project and its primary functions. Include a discussion of the Respondent’s resources, including personnel by category (e.g., management, professional, and clerical).

b. **Firm Experience**

Indicate Respondent’s federal government affairs experience on large California water infrastructure projects and for clients including water districts and irrigation districts, and experience providing federal advocacy services to local government agencies (city and county). List at least four relevant projects/clients.

For each listing of experience, list the dates services were provided, client/project name, type and size of project, and the name of Respondent’s lead professional on the project. If the project was shared with another firm, provide the other firm’s name and role.

c. **Client References**

For each of the projects/clients listed in 1b, provide the clients’ references for which the Respondent has provided services similar to those sought by the Authority. Provide the name, address, telephone number, email address, contact person(s) and title(s) of an appropriate individual with each client. Briefly summarize the main services or initiatives the Respondent provided to the referenced client.

3. **Experience and Qualifications of Project Team**

- a. Identify the professionals who will be assigned to support the project (including teaming and/or subconsultants) and what their role would be on the project. Provide a brief narrative on each key member of the respondent’s team, highlighting their experience providing services similar to those sought by the Authority on large California infrastructure projects (especially for California water projects). In addition, highlight relevant experience representing a Joint Powers Authority or joint venture. Finally, note any experience representing clients like public agencies in the development of

hydropower, pump-storage, or other large MW renewable energy project.

- b. Provide a brief resume (no more than 2 pages) for each of the identified team members. All resumes may be included in Appendix C to the response to this SOQ and will not be counted in the 15-page limit for the submittal. The Authority reserves the right to approve assigned staff and any requested key personnel changes during the contract.

4. Recommended Approach to the Scope of Services

- a. Describe the Respondent's envisioned approach to implement the scope of work, including its approach to legislative advocacy, regulatory support activities and federal funding strategies. Identify approach to communicating with the Authority, Reservoir Committee and project staff. Demonstrate the Respondent's effectiveness and the ability to manage changes in administrations or congressional party leadership. Demonstrate the Respondent's knowledge of the Sites Project, local, state-wide and national political issues as it relates to the Sites Project, and other legislative and regulatory issues that could impact the development of the Project.
- b. Provide a summary of the services and the work products that Respondent proposes to provide to the Authority. What unique services or approach would Respondent provide? What specific benefits does Respondent believe its team will bring?
- c. Describe any other directly related or unique services Respondent may be able to provide to the Authority.

5. Fee Proposal

- a. The Authority intends to contract the scope of services outlined in this RFQ on a negotiated monthly retainer basis. The Respondent should include in its fee proposal its estimated monthly retainer fee to address the scope of services. The Respondent shall include in its fee proposal a breakdown of the costs (labor, ODC, etc.) that make up the monthly retainer fee.

Respondents may propose an alternative fee schedule as part of their SOQ; however, any alternative fee proposals should include a narrative of the proposed fee schedule and how it will benefit the Authority.

6. Appendices:

- a. Proposed Exceptions to the Sample Agreement (**Refer to Section 4**)
- b. Disclosure of Legal Actions, Conflicts of Interest, or other potential Conflicts

Provide information regarding the following:

- Any pending investigations of the Respondent, and any enforcement, settlements, or disciplinary actions taken within the past five years by any regulatory body and any litigation challenging the manner in which the Respondent has provided services in the past five years.
- Any finder's fee, fee splitting, payments to consultants, or other contractual arrangements of the Respondent that could present a real or perceived conflict of

interest.

- Any actual or potential conflicts of interest between the Authority, its Board members, its Reservoir Committee members, Project staff, and any other person or entity represented by Respondent to this SOQ. Identify any Authority members or Reservoir Committee members that the Respondent has represented in the last five years.

c. Other Required Information

- Item B1: Insurance. Evidence of insurance, including amounts and types of insurance carried and deductible amount to cover errors and omission, improper judgments, or negligence.
- Item B2: Team Resumes. Brief resume (no more than 2 pages) for each of the identified team members. If Respondent is teaming with or planning to subcontract services to another firm, also include their resumes.

4.0 Sites Project Authority Consulting Agreement

1. Respondents are instructed to carefully review and comment, as necessary, on the Authority's proposed Consulting Agreement (Exhibit A). Any proposed exceptions to the Agreement shall be provided in Appendix A in a list format that references the section and subsection along with the proposed changes in redline strikeout format. Exceptions shall be accompanied with a short description stating the business reasons why the Authority should consider any modifications to Exhibit A.
2. The Authority is planning to execute a contract with a term expected to commence on July 22, 2019. The Authority will determine the term of the contract, in its sole discretion, at the time of the negotiation of the contract with the selected Respondent. The term the Authority implements may include a contract that extends through December 31, 2019 or it may extend, either initially or with extension options, through the end of December 31, 2022. The contract shall state the conditions under which the contact can be terminated, including termination for convenience by the Authority upon 30 days' notice.
3. The Authority will determine contract term extension options at the time of the negotiation of the contract with the selected Respondent.
4. The Authority reserves the sole right to not execute a task and to terminate the task before its completion pending 30-day written notice.
5. The Respondent shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Authority, Reservoir Committee and their respective directors, members, officers, employees and agents from any claim or liability related to or arising from the services provided for under the contact, except to the extent caused solely by the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the Authority, Reservoir Committee and their respective directors, members, officers, employees and agents.
6. The Respondent shall identify the nature and extent of insurance policies that it has and will keep in place during the term of the contact, including general liability, workers compensation and professional liability.

5.0 Evaluation and Selection Procedure

An evaluation team comprised of Authority project staff will evaluate each submitted SOQ relative to the criteria listed below. The firms judged to be best qualified by the evaluation team may be invited to participate in an interview and make a presentation to an interview panel that is expected to consist of Authority Board and/or Reservoir Committee members, project staff, and/or technical advisors.

After the interview(s), the interview panel will then recommend the selected firm to the 2019 Authority Ad Hoc Legislative and Outreach Committee. The Committee will make a recommendation to the Authority Board of Directors for their consideration. Based on the Board's decision, the services contract will be negotiated. If acceptable terms and conditions with the recommended Respondent cannot be reached in a timely manner, the Respondent ranked second will be contacted to begin negotiations. However, the Authority is not bound to accept the recommendation or award the contract to the recommended or second recommended Respondent.

The Authority reserves the right to select the Respondent which in its sole judgement best meets the needs of the Authority for the federal advocacy services contract, and the Authority reserves the right to select the services of more than one firm if it deems the services of more than one firm will best meet its needs.

The Authority will evaluate qualifications submittals based on the below criteria. The order of the listed criteria is not indicative of their priority, weighting, or importance; however, the respondent's proposed personnel and demonstrated ability to provide value are important evaluation criteria.

- SOQ completeness
- Relevant and applicable experience and qualifications of the Respondent and the key staff that would specifically be assigned to work with the Authority
- Record of past performance of the Respondent and individual staff in client relationship and delivering services on scope, quality, schedule, and budget
- A demonstrated understanding of the Sites Project
- Other unique services and approaches to meeting the Authority's needs
- Legal issues, conflicts of interest, or other conflicts
- Proposed fee structure and budget

6.0 Tentative Proposal Schedule

Proposals are due on July 8, 2019 at noon PM, PST. SOQs received after this time will not be accepted. In addition, after receipt of a respondent's SOQ, no additional version of the Respondent's SOQ will be accepted.

RFQ Contact Person

Joe Trapasso
Program Operations Manager
Sites Reservoir Project
jtrapasso@sitesproject.org

Tentative Solicitation Schedule (subject to change)

Activity	Date (2019)
Release of RFQ	June 14
Submission of written RFQ questions	June 19 Noon
Response to written questions emailed to Respondents	June 21
SOQs due to Authority	July 8 noon
Authority Review of Proposals/Firms Selected for Interview	July 9
Notification of Interviews, if appropriate	July 9
Interviews, at Authority’s discretion	July 15
Authority Board reviews and approves contract award	July 22

7.0 Solicitation Disclaimer

The Authority reserves the right to reject any and/or all responses, negotiate with any Respondent that submits a response or waive any informality or irregularity. All responses to this RFQ become the property of the Authority upon submission. The costs of preparing a SOQ and participating in an interview are at the sole expense of the Respondent.

8.0 Attachments and Additional Information

Exhibit A – Sites Project Authority Consulting Agreement

For more information on the Sites JPA, please visit <https://www.sitesproject.org/>