



Legislation Text

File #: 16-376, **Version:** 1

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SUBJECT: Supplemental Appropriation to Fund Special Groundwater Testing for the Airport Hazardous Waste Site

REPORT IN BRIEF

Consider authorizing a supplemental appropriation to fund special groundwater well sampling analytical services at the Airport Hazardous Waste Site.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion approving a supplemental appropriation from the General Fund unreserved Fund Balance in the amount of \$3,750 transferring to Fund 561 Airport, and appropriating the same to Professional Services account 561-1303-562.17-00.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve, as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve, subject to modifications as conditioned by City Council; or,
3. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items; or,
4. Deny.

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200, et seq;
Merced Municipal Code Section 3.04.110- Authorizes exemptions to competitive bidding for professional services;
California Water Code Section 13267 - Authorizes the Regional Water Quality Control Board to require investigation and reporting on suspected waste discharges.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Not applicable.

DISCUSSION

Merced Regional Airport Hazardous Waste Site

The City has been working since the 1980's to investigate and remediate contamination at the Merced Regional Airport Hazardous Waste Site, located in the vicinity of Riggs and West Avenues. The site contains contaminants from old crop dusting operations, petroleum hydrocarbons, solvents and other volatile substances from a fire department training area. Investigation and asphalt capping of portions of the site has been completed. In 2004, a City consultant performed groundwater

remediation by injecting the site with a “hydrogen-releasing compound” to accelerate natural degradation of the contaminants. This action has had a positive effect in reducing contaminant concentrations at the site, but the chlorinated solvent PCE (perchloroethylene) remains in groundwater and it is difficult to address. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Board) has acknowledged that the contaminant concentrations have declined and they reduced groundwater sampling and reporting requirements to reduce project costs. However, the residual levels of PCE still exceed the Board’s water quality objectives and they require ongoing semi-annual monitoring and reporting actions.

New Regional Water Quality Control Board Directive

The City has received a June 9, 2016, letter directive to submit a work plan to investigate a new set of chemicals at the subject site. The Board letter includes a US EPA Health Advisory for perfluoroalkyl substances (PFOA & PFOS) and requested a work plan to investigate the potential presence of these chemicals in groundwater. They are associated with firefighting foam agents at airfields and the Board references the former fire department training area at the subject site.

The City has currently contracted with HerSchy Environmental, Inc., of Bass Lake, California, to conduct groundwater sampling of the Airport site’s monitoring wells for a three year period. The sampling is conducted in accordance with the Board’s Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R5-2011-0808. The next event is tentatively scheduled for late September 2016.

In response to the Board directive the City proposes to conduct concurrent sampling during the scheduled September 2016 event with separate groundwater samples to be analyzed for PFOA and PFOS. The PFOA and PFOS analyses will be conducted by Eurofins Eaton Analytical, Inc., of Fresno, California. The City also has a concurrent three year contract with this laboratory.

City staff will manage the sampling activities and submit a report of findings to the Board. If the chemicals are found in groundwater at the site then the City can expect further directives from the Board to continue investigation and cleanup.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

This regulatory compliance activity was not included in the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget and a supplemental appropriation from the General Fund is necessary for the Eurofins Eaton Analytical, Inc., laboratory fees of \$3,750. Additional funding may be required in the future if the chemicals are detected in groundwater at the site.

ATTACHMENTS

1. California Regional Water Quality Control Board June 9, 2016, letter
2. Eurofins Eaton Analytical, Inc., fee proposal