

Environment Committee

Meeting date: June 23, 2015

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 24, 2015

Subject: Authorization to Execute a Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for Supplemental Funding of the EIMS Redesign Project

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statute 471.59

Staff Prepared/Presented: Judy Sventek, 651-602-1156

Division/Department: MCES c/o Leisa Thompson, 651-602-8101

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes the Regional Administrator, or his delegate, to execute a joint powers agreement (JPA) with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to receive supplemental money for the Environmental Information Management Redesign Project.

Background

The Environmental Information Management System (EIMS) is the Council portal for providing timely and reliable information for environmental planning and decision-making for the metro area. MCES developed the EIMS to provide access to environmental data, analysis, and documents from various sources through a single, integrated system.

EIMS is primarily an Oracle database that contains mainly lake and river/stream data collected by the Water Quality Monitoring section, some NPDES permitting information, and some precipitation data collected by the Interceptor section at the Council.

The current EIMS web reporting tool is over ten years old, requires a downloaded plug-in (Sagent) to view data, and has compatibility issues with various operating systems and browsers. As of July, 2015 the Sagent Server and Plug-in are being decommissioned at the Council. The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) linkage was fractured several years ago by an update in the reporting tool software and has not been reestablished.

The Council is re-designing the web interface, finding a replacement for the Sagent Software, and improving the performance and access of the EIMS data and reports, as well as restoring the lost GIS capabilities. It is critical that the new web interface have the look and feel of a modern, clean and easy to navigate, user-focused design. The audience for this site includes non-technical citizens, so navigation that is user friendly and simple is of the utmost importance. All of this work is required to make the site and data accessible for internal and external users as well as to update the site in order to continue to provide data to the state's Key Water Information (KWI) page which is the State's current solution to providing better integrated and accessible water data and any future state data portal projects.

Rationale

Council staff have been working with the other state agencies on the State Data Portal Project for several years now. One outcome of the work effort so far was a report that concluded there is a need for agencies to update their database structures and accessibility to allow for easier data sharing and access. The Council's current EIMS redesign project was designed with our needs and the future Data Portal

needs in mind. The State Data Portal Project was funded with Clean Water Funds. The funding to date was allocated through this fiscal year which ends June 30, 2015. There is money left in the fund and agencies were asked to request funds needed to work on their databases. Since the Council had a project ready to go, Council staff were in a good position to ask for Clean Water Funds through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to supplement funds set aside for the EIMS redesign project.

The entire project is anticipated to take about 2081 hours and cost approximately \$283,000. The Council is requesting \$90,800 in order to help offset costs for this project.

Funding

Clean Water Funds through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Known Support / Opposition

None. The partners on the State Data Portal Project supported this request.