



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Administration Committee Members, Alternates  
Board of Directors, Alternates

FROM: Ray Tarka, Director of Finance

DATE: March 6, 2023

RE: Execution of Contract Extension with External Auditor

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### **BACKGROUND**

In March 2019, the Water Authority Board of Directors authorized engagement of external audit firm Richardson & Company, LLP. The engagement covered fiscal years 2018 and 2019, with the option to renew for fiscal years 2020 to 2022. Richardson and Company, LLP subsequently audited the Water Authority's financial statements for fiscal years FY18, FY19, FY20, FY21, and FY22.

Per California Government Code section 12410.6, "a local agency shall not employ a public accounting firm to provide audit services to a local agency if the lead audit partner or coordinating audit partner having primary responsibility for the audit, or the audit partner responsible for reviewing the audit, has performed audit services for that local agency for six consecutive fiscal years." This restriction requires the Authority to employ a public accounting firm with a different lead audit partner after the sixth consecutive year. Within these constraints, the Authority has the opportunity to utilize the existing auditor for one additional year.

### **ISSUE FOR DECISION**

Whether the Finance & Administration Committee should recommend, and the Board of Directors should authorize execution of a contract extension to engage the existing external audit firm for one additional year.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the previous services provided by this firm and the reasonable quotation received for an extension of services, which is within the authorized budget, staff recommends execution of a contract extension with Richardson & Company, LLP, including Brian Nash, its audit engagement partner, for one additional year.

**ANALYSIS**

Over the course of their engagement, the Water Authority has entered into multiple debt instruments requiring the audit firm to provide additional disclosures and analysis. Richardson & Company, LLP, has completed the audits and provided services to staff's satisfaction.

The historical fee schedule and the fee for the proposed engagement follows:

**RICHARDSON AND COMPANY, LLP**

**FEES FY18-FY23**

	<b>Not to Exceed</b>	<b>Not to Exceed Change</b>
	<b>Audit fees</b>	<b>From Prior Year</b>
FY18	\$ 36,500	
FY19	\$ 34,500	-5.48%
FY20	\$ 35,400	2.61%
FY21	\$ 36,300	2.54%
FY22	\$ 37,400	3.03%
FY23 proposed	\$ 40,000	6.95%

**ATTACHMENT**

Audit firm engagement letter



550 Howe Avenue, Suite 210  
Sacramento, California 95825

Telephone: (916) 564-8727  
FAX: (916) 564-8728

February 27, 2023

To the Board of Directors and Management  
San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority  
842 Sixth Street, Suite 7  
Los Banos, California 93635

We are pleased to confirm our understanding of the services we are to provide the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority (the Authority).

#### **Audit Scope and Objectives**

We will audit the financial statements of the Authority and its fiduciary fund, and the disclosures, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements of the Authority as of and for the year ended February 28, 2023. Accounting standards generally accepted in the United States provide for certain required supplementary information (RSI), such as management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), to supplement the Authority's basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to the Authority's RSI in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). These limited procedures will consist of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We will not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance. The following RSI is required by generally accepted accounting principles and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited:

1. Management's Discussion and Analysis.

We have also been engaged to report on supplementary information other than RSI that accompanies the Authority's financial statements. We will subject the following supplementary information to the auditing procedures applied in our audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS, and we will provide an opinion on it in relation to the financial statements as a whole in a report combined with our auditor's report on the financial statements:

1. Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, if applicable.

In connection with our audit of the basic financial statements, we will read the following other information and consider whether a material inconsistency exists between the other information and the basic financial statements, or the other information otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work performed, we conclude that an uncorrected material misstatement of the other information exists, we are required to describe it in our report.

1. Statement of Fiduciary Net Position and Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position – Section 401a Retirement Plan 109164
2. Statement of Fiduciary Net Position and Statement of Changes in Fiduciary Net Position – Section 401a Retirement Plan 109325

The objectives of our audit are to obtain reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion about whether your financial statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with GAAP; and report on the fairness of the supplementary information referred to in the second paragraph when considered in relation to the financial statements as a whole. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements, including omissions, can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment of a reasonable user made based on the financial statements.

The objectives also include reporting on internal control over financial reporting and compliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and award agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*.

#### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

We will conduct our audit in accordance with GAAS and the standards for financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and will include tests of your accounting records of Authority and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such opinions. As part of an audit in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We will evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management. We will also evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation. We will plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether from (1) errors, (2) fraudulent financial reporting, (3) misappropriation of assets, or (4) violations of laws or governmental regulations that are attributable to the government or to acts by management or employees acting on behalf of the government. Because the determination of waste and abuse is subjective, *Government Auditing Standards* do not expect auditors to perform specific procedures to detect waste or abuse in financial audits nor do they expect auditors to provide reasonable assurance of detecting waste or abuse.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, combined with the inherent limitations of internal control, and because we will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements may not be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, we will inform the appropriate

level of management of any material errors, fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets that comes to our attention. We will also inform the appropriate level of management of any violations of laws or governmental regulations that come to our attention, unless clearly inconsequential. Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any later periods for which we are not engaged as auditors.

We will also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the government's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Our procedures will include tests of documentary evidence supporting the transactions recorded in the accounts, tests of the physical existence of inventories, and direct confirmation of receivables and certain assets and liabilities by correspondence with selected customers, creditors, and financial institutions. We will also request written representations from your attorneys as part of the engagement.

We have identified the following significant risks of material misstatement as part of our audit planning and have designed audit procedures to address these risks.

- Revenue recognition and management override of controls
- Cut-off of revenues and expenses

We may, from time to time and depending on the circumstances, use third-party service providers in serving your account. We may share confidential information about you with these service providers but remain committed to maintaining the confidentiality and security of your information. Accordingly, we maintain internal policies, procedures, and safeguards to protect the confidentiality of your personal information. Furthermore, we will remain responsible for the work provided by any such third-party service providers.

Our audit of financial statements does not relieve you of your responsibilities.

#### **Audit Procedures—Internal Control**

We will obtain an understanding of the government and its environment, including internal control relevant to the audit, sufficient to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and to design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. Tests of controls may be performed to test the effectiveness of certain controls that we consider relevant to preventing and detecting errors and fraud that are material to the financial statements and to preventing and detecting misstatements resulting from illegal acts and other noncompliance matters that have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. Our tests, if performed, will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on internal control and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation, or the override of internal control. An audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Accordingly, we will express no such opinion. However, during the audit, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance internal control related matters that are required to be communicated under AICPA professional standards and *Government Auditing Standards*.

#### **Audit Procedures—Compliance**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of the Authority's compliance with the provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants. However, the objective of our audit will not be to provide

an opinion on overall compliance and we will not express such an opinion in our report on compliance issued pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards*.

### **Other Services**

We will also assist in preparing the financial statements and related notes of the Authority in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America based on information provided by you. These nonaudit services do not constitute an audit under *Government Auditing Standards* and such services will not be conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards. The other services are limited to the financial statement services previously defined. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities.

You agree to assume all management responsibilities relating to the financial statements and related notes and any other nonaudit services we provide. You will be required to acknowledge in the management representation letter our assistance with preparation of the financial statements and related notes and that you have reviewed and approved the financial statements and related notes prior to their issuance and have accepted responsibility for them. Further, you agree to oversee the nonaudit services by designating an individual, preferably from senior management, with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of those services; and accept responsibility for them.

### **Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements**

Our audit will be conducted on the basis that you acknowledge and understand your responsibility for designing, implementing, establishing, and maintaining effective internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and for evaluating and monitoring ongoing activities to help ensure that appropriate goals and objectives are met; following laws and regulations; and ensuring that management and financial information is reliable and properly reported. Management is also responsible for implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. You are also responsible for the selection and application of accounting principles, for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and all accompanying information in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements.

Management is responsible for making drafts of financial statements, all financial records, and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information (including information from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers). You are also responsible for providing us with (1) access to all information of which you are aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as records, documentation, identification of all related parties and all related-party relationships and transactions, and other matters; (2) additional information that we may request for the purpose of the audit; and (3) unrestricted access to persons within the government from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence. At the conclusion of our audit, we will require certain written representations from you about your responsibilities for the financial statements; compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and other responsibilities required by GAAS and *Government Auditing Standards*.

Your responsibilities include adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements and for confirming to us in the written representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements of each opinion unit taken as a whole.

You are responsible for the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting the government involving (1)

management, (2) employees who have significant roles in internal control, and (3) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. Your responsibilities include informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the government received in communications from employees, former employees, grantors, regulators, or others. In addition, you are responsible for identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants and for taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, or contracts or grant agreements that we report.

You are responsible for the preparation of the supplementary information, which we have been engaged to report on, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). You agree to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the supplementary information. You also agree to include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the supplementary information that includes our report thereon. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the supplementary information in accordance with GAAP; (2) you believe the supplementary information, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with GAAP; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the supplementary information.

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining a process for tracking the status of audit findings and recommendations. Management is also responsible for identifying and providing report copies of previous financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits or other studies related to the objectives discussed in the Audit Scope and Objectives section of this letter. This responsibility includes relaying to us corrective actions taken to address significant findings and recommendations resulting from those audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or other studies. You are also responsible for providing management's views on our current findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as your planned corrective actions, for the report, and for the timing and format for providing that information.

#### **Audit Administration**

We understand that your employees will prepare all cash, accounts receivable, or other confirmations we request and will locate any documents selected by us for testing.

We will provide copies of our reports to the Authority; however, management is responsible for distribution of the reports and financial statements. Unless restricted by law or regulation, or containing privileged and confidential information, copies of our reports are to be made available for public inspection.

The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Richardson & Company, LLP and constitutes confidential information. However, pursuant to authority given by law or regulation, we may be requested to make certain audit documentation available to a federal agency providing direct or indirect funding, or the U.S. Government Accountability Office for purposes of a quality review of the audits, to resolve audit findings, or to carry out oversight responsibilities. We will notify you of any such request. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Richardson & Company, LLP personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to the aforementioned parties. These parties may intend, or decide, to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

The audit documentation for this engagement will be retained for a minimum of seven years after the report release date or for any additional period requested. If we are aware that a federal awarding agency

or auditee is contesting an audit finding, we will contact the parties contesting the audit finding for guidance prior to destroying the audit documentation.

In the event we are requested or authorized by you or required by government regulation, subpoena, or other legal process to produce our workpapers or our personnel to respond to inquiries or serve as witnesses with respect to this or any engagement for you, you will, reimburse us for our professional time and expenses, as well as the fees and expenses of our counsel, in responding to such a request. If such a request is made, and unless we are obligated by law or legal process to the contrary, we will inform you prior to providing such access. This paragraph shall not apply to legal and/or court action arising from the wrongful conduct of the auditor.

At the conclusion of the engagement, if a single audit is required, we will complete the appropriate sections of and sign the Data Collection Form that summarized our audit findings. We will provide copies of our reports to the Agency; however, it is management's responsibility to submit the reporting package (including financial statements, schedule of expenditures of federal awards, summary schedule of prior audit findings, auditors' reports, and a corrective action plan) along with the Data Collection Form to the designated federal clearinghouse. We will coordinate with you the electronic submission and certification. If applicable, we will provide copies of our report for you to include with the reporting package you will submit to pass-through entities. The Data Collection Form and the reporting package must be submitted within the earlier of 30 days after receipt of the auditors' reports or nine months after the end of the audit period, unless a longer period is agreed to in advance by the cognizant or oversight agency for audits.

Brian Nash is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the reports or authorizing another individual to sign them.

*Government Auditing Standards* require that we provide you with a copy of our most recent external peer review report and any letter of comment, and any subsequent peer review reports and letters of comment received during the period of the contract. Our peer review report accompanies this letter.

### **Professional Fees**

Our fees for the audit of the financial statements will be \$40,000. The fees include all out-of-pocket expenses. Therefore, our fees are all inclusive and represent a not to exceed amount. The fees assume the audit will begin approximately June 30 and we will have time to complete the audit prior to the end of August 2023. It assumes the books will be closed and the prep list available when we begin the audit. The fees assume there will be less than 10 audit adjustments during the audit and the general ledger will not need to be reimposed. The fees assume there is no new debt issued and there are no leases to which GASB Statement No. 87 will apply that will increase the hours needed to audit the Authority.

These estimates also do not include fees for a single audit and do not take into consideration changes in the scope of the audit due to the loss of key accounting personnel, material weaknesses in the internal control environment, or significant changes in the scope of the Authority's operations. We will discuss a new fee estimate with the Authority if such events occur.

Other Audit Services: The fee for other audit services is proposed on a per hour basis by staff classification. The rates proposed are as follows:

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Rate Per Hour</u>
Partner	\$ 220
Tax Director	260
Senior Manager	180
Manager	160
Supervisors	145



Seniors	120
Staff	110
Administrative or clerical	70

## Reporting

We will issue a written report upon completion of our audit of the Authority's financial statements. Our report will be addressed to the Board of Directors of the Authority. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinions, add a separate section, or add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraph to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from this engagement. If our opinions are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If, for any reason, we are unable to complete the audit or are unable to form or have not formed opinions, we may decline to express opinions or issue reports, or we may withdraw from this engagement.

We will also provide a report (that does not include an opinion) on internal control related to the financial statements and compliance with the provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements as required by *Government Auditing Standards*. The report on internal control and on compliance and other matters will state (1) that the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance, and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control on compliance, and (2) that the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The report will also state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose. If during our audit we become aware that the Authority is subject to an audit requirement that is not encompassed in the terms of this engagement, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance that an audit in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards and the standards for financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* may not satisfy the relevant legal, regulatory, or contractual requirements.

\* \* \* \* \*

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you and believe this letter accurately summarizes the significant terms of our engagement. If you have any questions, please let us know. If you agree with the terms of our engagement as described in this letter, please sign the enclosed copy and return it to us.

San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority

February 27, 2023

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Very truly yours,

RICHARDSON & COMPANY, LLP



Brian Nash, CPA

Partner

Response:

This letter correctly sets forth the understanding of the Authority.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_



*Jones, Nale & Mattingly PLC*

## REPORT ON THE FIRM'S SYSTEM OF QUALITY CONTROL

To the Partners  
Richardson & Company, LLP  
and the Peer Review Committee of the California Society of CPA's

We have reviewed the system of quality control for the accounting and auditing practice of Richardson & Company, LLP (the firm) in effect for the year ended March 31, 2021. Our peer review was conducted in accordance with the Standards for Performing and Reporting on Peer Reviews established by the Peer Review Board of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Standards).

A summary of the nature, objectives, scope, limitations of, and the procedures performed in a System Review as described in the Standards may be found at [www.aicpa.org/prsummary](http://www.aicpa.org/prsummary). The summary also includes an explanation of how engagements identified as not performed or reported in conformity with applicable professional standards, if any, are evaluated by a peer reviewer to determine a peer review rating.

### **Firm's Responsibility**

The firm is responsible for designing a system of quality control and complying with it to provide the firm with reasonable assurance of performing and reporting in conformity with applicable professional standards in all material respects. The firm is also responsible for evaluating actions to promptly remediate engagements deemed as not performed or reported in conformity with professional standards, when appropriate, and for remediating weaknesses in its system of quality control, if any.

### **Peer Reviewer's Responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the design of the system of quality control and the firm's compliance therewith based on our review.

### **Required Selections and Considerations**

Engagements selected for review included engagements performed under Government Auditing Standards, including a compliance audit under the Single Audit Act.

As a part of our peer review, we considered reviews by regulatory entities as communicated by the firm, if applicable, in determining the nature and extent of our procedures.

### **Opinion**

In our opinion, the system of quality control for the accounting and auditing practice of Richardson & Company, LLP in effect for the year ended March 31, 2021, has been suitably designed and complied with to provide the firm with reasonable assurance of performing and reporting in conformity with applicable professional standards in all material respects. Firms can receive a rating of pass, pass with deficiency(ies) or fail. Richardson & Company, LLP has received a peer review rating of pass.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jones, Nale &amp; Mattingly, P.C."

Louisville, Kentucky  
August 13, 2021