



**STAFF REPORT**  
**4/24/2024**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Cástulo Estrada, Utilities Manager

**SUBJECT:** Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Corona Environmental Consulting, LLC for Testing and Evaluation of an Alternative Treatment Process for Removal of Chromium-6 from Groundwater and Water System Planning in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve and authorize the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Corona Environmental Consulting, LLC for Testing and Evaluation of an Alternative Treatment Process for Removal of Chromium-6 from Groundwater and Water System Planning in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00

**BACKGROUND:**

On August 1, 2023, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) released a proposed hexavalent chromium (Cr-6) regulation which again proposes a 10 ug/L maximum contaminant level (MCL) for drinking water. The State Water Board will consider adopting the MCL for CR-6 on April 17, 2024.

The proposed compliance period after the regulation takes effect is two years for water systems with >10,000 service connections and three years for water systems with 1,000 to <10,000 service connections. The City of Coachella through its Water Authority operates a public water system (PWS) that would be impacted by the proposed Cr-6 regulation. Under the proposed regulation, the compliance period would be three years, we have approximately 9025 connections.

The proposed Cr-6 regulation identifies three treatment technologies as Best Available Technologies (BATs): ion exchange, reduction/coagulation/filtration (RCF), and reverse osmosis; but it also recognizes that there are conditions in which other means of compliance may be available, including the use of stannous chloride (SnCl<sub>2</sub>) to reduce Cr-6 to Cr-3 without filtration. In its Initial Statement of Reasons for the Hexavalent Chromium Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) Regulation, State Water Board acknowledged that there may be conditions under which SnCl<sub>2</sub> could be a viable technology for decreasing Cr-6, and a PWS can use SnCl<sub>2</sub> under the correct conditions. However, State Water Board determined that for SnCl<sub>2</sub> to be considered a BAT, additional information on the capability of the technology to meet the proposed MCL would

be necessary, including information on re-oxidation in the distribution system and the ability to meet a potential MCL without exceeding the tin (Sn) NSF 60 maximum use level (MUL) of 0.063 mg/L, as well as the fate of all forms of chromium (Cr) when SnCl<sub>2</sub> is used. The State Water Board intends to request additional evaluation of the distribution system water quality should this technology be proposed for use by a PWS.

On September 27, 2023, State Water Board, DDW, issued a conditional approval for the Coachella Valley Water District to extend a full-scale demonstration project in their ID-8 PWS to gather more data to address areas of uncertainty with the use of SnCl<sub>2</sub> without filtration as a treatment technology and the fate of Sn and Cr-6 in the distribution system and premise plumbing. The Division of Drinking Water (DDW) also requested the submittal of a work plan by March 31, 2024, with additional monitoring protocols and a pipe loop study to evaluate Sn and Cr accumulation on different pipe materials representative of distribution system and premise plumbing.

Given that the State Water Board has stated that the use of SnCl<sub>2</sub> will be evaluated on system by system approach and given that the Division of Drinking Water has already instructed CVWD to perform additional monitoring, continue its pilot testing, and provide various data gathered via the work plan. City staff recommends that we begin our own data gathering via a pilot test.

City staff wishes to follow parallel compliance tracks that include (1) further evaluation of the use of SnCl<sub>2</sub> to reduce Cr-6 to Cr-3 without filtration to meet the proposed Cr-6 MCL, including the development of a work plan (2) evaluating other treatment options.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

On April 11, 2023 the City of Coachella respectfully urged Senator Padilla and Assemblymember Garcia to request a \$500,000.00 appropriation through the 2023-2024 state budget to help the City finance a pilot demonstration project that could provide the needed data to the Division of Drinking Water to consider allowing the City to use SnCl<sub>2</sub> to lower levels of Chromium-6 in its drinking water. Later in July, 2023 the City was notified that it had secured the appropriation through the state budget.

On November 08, 2023 the City published a Request for Proposals for the subject work and received two proposals. City staff from the Engineering Department, Public Works Department and the Utilities Department evaluated the proposals. City staff is recommending an award to Corona Environmental Consulting. Corona is one of the most recognized drinking water consulting firms addressing Chromium-6 compliance concerns for drinking water in the state. They previously provided support to our City in 2016-2017 and have a deep understanding of our water quality and the region, having also performed work for the Coachella Valley Water District, Indio Water Authority and Mission Springs Water District.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Staff is requesting \$100,000.00 from the Water Fund be allocated to this years approved budget, the remaining \$100,000.00 will be accounted in the FY 2024-25 budget. These expenses are expected to be reimbursed by the state through the appropriation that was made as described above.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Budget Support for Innovative Pilot Project Letter