



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER**

**Agenda Number:**

**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** County Executive Office  
**Department No.:** 012  
**For Agenda Of:** December 13, 2022  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:** NA  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Nancy Anderson, Assistant County Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** **Federal Advocate Contract (Thomas Walters, Inc.)**

DocuSigned by:  
  
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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence: Risk Management**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the attached Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with Thomas Walters and Associates, Inc. to provide Federal advocacy services for the period of January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025 for a term of three years at a cost of \$100,000 per year for a total contract amount not to exceed \$300,000, with the option to extend for a maximum of two more years; and
- B. Determine that the above action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) because it consists of the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

**Summary Text:**

Each year the Board of Supervisors identifies specific issues, projects and/or programs (priorities) that warrant targeted legislative advocacy and includes these priorities as part of its legislative platform for the upcoming calendar year. Once the platform is adopted by the Board, staff determines various legislative strategies centered on the identified priorities such as enacting or amending legislation, creating

**Federal Advocate Contract Extension (Thomas Walters)**

Page 2

partnerships with federal agencies and exploring funding opportunities. One component of the County's legislative strategy has been to utilize the advocacy services of Thomas Walters and Associates to assist the County in implementing the legislative platform at the federal level.

**Background:**

In January 2019, the Board of Supervisors entered into a two-year contract for federal advocacy services with Thomas Walters and Associates which expired on December 31, 2021. In November 2021, your Board extended the contract for a term of one year, set to expire on December 31, 2022. At that time, staff informed your Board of the competitive bidding process for Advocacy Services would occur in 2023. In September 2022, staff released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Federal Lobbying and Advocacy Services. At the conclusion of the solicitation process, Thomas Walters and Associates was selected for Federal Advocacy Services.

It is recommended that the Board approve a three-year contract in the total amount of \$300,000, or \$100,000 per year, with the firm for federal advocacy services, including advocating for funding of the projects articulated within the County's annual legislative platform. Thomas Walters and Associates has been serving the County since 2006 as the County's liaison to Congress and federal agencies, advocating on behalf of the County on a variety of funding legislative and policy issues. The firm has facilitated meetings with federal representatives and agencies, participating in monthly Legislative Program Committee meetings, monitored legislative bills and the federal budget and researched various issues that have emerged that fall under the guidelines of the County's legislative platform.

**Performance Measure:**

The performance of Thomas Walters & Associates as the County's Washington, DC representative will be assessed based on feedback obtained from members of the County Board of Supervisors, County department directors and the County's elected representatives, as well as success in advocating for projects and programs and facilitating coordination and regulatory issues between federal agencies and the County. Over the last contract term, the firm has continued to successfully advocate on behalf of Santa Barbara County on a wide range of funding and policy issues that have contributed additional funding or savings for County programs and projects.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

**Fiscal Analysis:**

The total contract cost for Thomas Walters and Associates for a three-year term will be a maximum of \$300,000, inclusive of all costs, including travel to Santa Barbara County, communications, shipping, and other overhead, both in Washington, DC and California. In December 2025, there will be an option to extend the contract for a maximum of two years.

**Key Contract Risks:**

The County of Santa Barbara has extensive experience with Thomas Walters and Associates, Inc. and there have been no significant issues. The contract has low risk.

**Special Instructions:**

Clerk of the Board to forward one fully executed original contract and minute order to: County Executive Office, ATTN: Jasmine McGinty

**Federal Advocate Contract Extension (Thomas Walters)**

**Page 3**

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor with Thomas Walters

**Authored by:**

Jasmine McGinty, Principal Analyst

Cc: Don Gilcrest, Thomas Walters and Associates, Inc.