



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 Counsel  
**Department No.:** 013  
**For Agenda Of:** October 19, 2021  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** 4/5<sup>ths</sup>

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**TO:** Board of Directors, Flood Control and Water Conservation District  
**FROM:** County Counsel Rachel Van Mullem, County Counsel (805) 568-2950  
Contact Info: Amber Holderness, Chief Assistant County Counsel (805) 568-2950  
**SUBJECT:** Approve First Amendment to the Agreement for Professional Legal Services with Outside Counsel Rutan & Tucker, LLP

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

County Counsel recommends that the Board of Directors:

- a) Approve, ratify, and authorize the Chair to execute the attached First Amendment to Agreement for Professional Legal Services between the County of Santa Barbara and attorney Douglas Dennington, of the law firm Rutan & Tucker, LLP, to increase the maximum contract amount by \$150,000 for a new maximum contract amount not to exceed \$300,000 and to extend the term of the contract to June 30, 2023; and
- b) Determine that the above action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378(b)(4) and 15378(b)(5) because it consists of government administrative or fiscal activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary Text:**

On October 6, 2020, the Board executed an Agreement for Professional Services between the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) and Douglas Dennington of the law firm Rutan & Tucker, LLP. The primary purpose of the Agreement was to retain a law firm with expertise in the specialized area of law on eminent domain proceedings and litigation due to the retirement of the District's prior Outside Counsel for these matters, Duff Murphy, of Oliver, Sandifer and Murphy.

Since that time, Mr. Dennington and his firm have assisted the District with legal services and expertise as needed from time to time, including on projects by the District and currently pending eminent domain

litigation involving the Lower Mission Creek Project and Randall Road Debris Basin Project. A separate approval of your Board is required before the initiation of any additional eminent domain proceedings.

**Performance Measure:** N/A

**Contract Renewals and Performance Outcomes:** N/A

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted – Outside Counsel Designation: \$300,000 paid by Department 054, Fund 2610, Line Item 8400.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

The contract has a not-to-exceed amount of \$300,000. This cost will be paid from the District's project budget for each of the individual projects on which Outside Counsel is consulted. No General Fund monies will be used to pay for work associated with this agreement.

**Key Contract Risks:**

This contract does not include the District's indemnification clause; however, the firm is required to and does maintain professional liability insurance. This professional liability insurance is likely to cover any malpractice claims that may arise. Even without this clause, County Counsel views this Agreement as low risk because the involved partners from Rutan & Tucker, LLP are highly experienced and have worked successfully with the District and with other government agencies for many years.

**Staffing Impacts:**

Contracting with Outside Counsel will allow the District to obtain the specialized legal services needed in these matters without hiring additional staff attorneys.

**Special Instructions:** Please forward a signed copy to Amber Holderness at [aholderness@countyofsb.org](mailto:aholderness@countyofsb.org).

**Attachments:**

- a) First Amendment to Agreement for Professional Legal Services
- b) Agreement for Professional Legal Services

**Authored by:** Amber Holderness, Chief Assistant County Counsel