

**Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
Proposition 50 Grant Program
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

On July 12, 2021, the [Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission](#) (Commission) will begin accepting applications for the Commission's Proposition 50 grant program to support projects that restore and protect the water quality and habitats of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds.

The Commission is a non-regulatory, locally based state entity established by an act of the California Legislature in 2002 to monitor, assess, coordinate, and advise the activities of state programs and oversee funding that affects the beneficial uses, restoration, and enhancement of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds. The Commission serves as the Management Conference for the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) and is comprised of the Governing Board, Executive Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Commission staff, and Santa Monica Bay Stakeholders.

A. Background

In 2002, California voters approved Proposition 50, the "Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002," providing over \$3 billion for water supply and water quality protection programs throughout the state.

Section 79543, subdivision (a), of the Water Code allocated \$100 million to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) to finance projects to restore and protect the water quality and environment of coastal waters, estuaries, bays and near-shore waters, and groundwater. Of that \$100 million, section 79543, subdivision (c), of the Water Code allocated \$20 million to implement priority actions specified in the Santa Monica Bay NEP's [Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CCMP), formerly known as the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Plan.¹ To date, approximately \$16 million in Proposition 50 grants have been awarded to projects that restore and enhance Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds. The remaining balance available for grants is approximately \$3.2 million, most of which must be encumbered by June 30, 2023.

Section 79148.8, subdivision (a)(2), of the Water Code stipulates that Proposition 50 grants may be awarded for projects that provide comprehensive capability for monitoring, collecting, and analyzing ambient water quality, including monitoring technology that can be entered into a statewide information base with standardized protocols and sampling, collection, storage and retrieval procedures.

¹ The CCMP is a long-term framework that addresses a range of environmental problems facing Santa Monica Bay, while recognizing and balancing the needs of the local community.

The Santa Monica Bay NEP is required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to develop and implement a comprehensive monitoring program to track and detect changes and improvements within the study area and effectiveness of CCMP actions. In August 2018, the Governing Board established the implementation of the [Comprehensive Monitoring Program](#) and other monitoring needs identified in the CCMP as the funding priority for the remaining Proposition 50 grant funds. In April 2021, the Governing Board approved a major revision to the Comprehensive Monitoring Program, which contains new indicators, especially indicators for assessing climate change vulnerability, and correspondingly new monitoring programs, new technologies, a synthesis of new research and monitoring objectives, and directions for future studies.

Approximately \$3.2 million will be available under this RFP. The Commission will convene a panel to review proposals and develop recommendations for the Governing Board's consideration. The Governing Board will recommend projects to the State Water Board for Proposition 50 grant funding. The Commission and State Water Board will work together to review project proposals and determine consistency with State requirements. Projects funded under this grant program will be implemented through the execution of a standard grant agreement between the applicant and the State Water Board. The disbursement period for grant funds will be established in the grant agreement for each funded project. Final disbursement requests will generally be due no later than March 2025.

B. Project Eligibility

All projects funded under this grant program must be located within and primarily benefit the waters, habitats, natural resources or other beneficial uses of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds. Pursuant to section 79148.8 of the Water Code, this grant funding may be awarded to projects that provide comprehensive capability for monitoring, collecting, and analyzing ambient water quality, including monitoring technology that can be entered into a statewide information base with standardized protocols and sampling, collection, storage and retrieval procedures. Projects funded under Proposition 50 must also meet additional applicable eligibility requirements in the enabling legislation outlined in Attachment 1 (page 8).

In addition, projects must support one or more of the following overarching goals of the [CCMP Action Plan](#):

1. Protect, enhance, and improve ecosystem of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds.
2. Improve water availability.
3. Improve water quality.
4. Enhance socio-economic benefits to the public.
5. Enhance public engagement and education.
6. Mitigate impacts and increase resiliency to climate change.
7. Improve monitoring and ability to assess effectiveness of management actions.

Grant applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Commission staff to ensure project proposals meet eligibility requirements and conform to Commission priorities prior to application submittal.

C. Priority Projects

Priority will be given to projects that fulfill monitoring needs identified in the Comprehensive Monitoring Program.² Qualifying projects include data collection and assessment and technology development, including:

1. **Development of habitat assessment indices.** Projects in this category include the collection, compilation, and synthesis of information to develop quantitative indices needed to support assessment of Santa Monica Bay habitats for use in future State of the Bay reports.³
2. **New monitoring to support habitat assessments.** Projects in this category include conducting monitoring to fill data gaps and provide the information needed to facilitate application of standardized habitat assessment indices. Management of new monitoring data is also included in this category.
3. **Compilation and management of existing monitoring data.** Data from ongoing monitoring programs has not been fully utilized in State of the Bay assessments due to the difficulty in locating and compiling this information in a timely manner. Projects in this category include compiling, managing, and analyzing data from ongoing monitoring programs to support the application of standardized assessment indices.
4. **Monitoring and evaluation using other indicators not included in standardized indices.** Projects in this category include either new measurements (using established methods) or synthesis of existing information to assess biological condition and provide a more comprehensive evaluation of habitat condition.
5. **Development and testing of new monitoring/assessment technologies.** Projects in this category include research to apply these technologies, using Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds as a test case, and using the results to help refine new technologies to improve understanding of conditions in the watershed.

² Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive Monitoring Program (page 115) summarizes priority data gaps across seven key habitats in the Santa Monica Bay watershed. Chapters 2-8 further describe data gaps and future studies for each habitat.

³ [State of the Bay](#) reports are a science-based comprehensive assessment of Santa Monica Bay's environmental condition and are developed every five years.

D. Project Funding Limits, Cost Match, and Other Requirements

A minimum of \$50,000 and a maximum of \$1 million may be awarded to any one project. The Commission strongly encourages collaboration between organizations involved in similar or related project activities.

Applicants are not required to secure matching funds for consideration under this RFP. However, the Commission seeks to leverage support for Proposition 50 grant funds and therefore, strongly urges applicants to secure matching funds in the form of cash, resource donations, or in-kind services contribution. Priority consideration will be given to applications that have secured a significant matching contribution.

As a condition of grant funding, all applicable monitoring data collected under the funded projects must be integrated into the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) administered by the State Water Board.

All projects funded under this grant program must comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, PRC § 21000 et seq.). No work that is subject to CEQA may proceed until CEQA is complete and the State Water Board issues clearance to proceed. The minimum requirements due with the application is the completion of the Environmental Compliance Summary Form (Attachment 2, page 10). Draft environmental documents are acceptable for application purposes.

E. Who May Apply

Entities eligible to apply for grant funds under this program include the following, all of which must reside in, be located in, be headquartered in, or be incorporated in California:

- Educational institutions, as defined in section 79148.2, subdivision (a), of the California Water Code;
- Local public agencies, as defined in section 79148.2, subdivision (b), of the California Water Code;
- Municipalities, as defined in the section 502, subdivision (4), of the Clean Water Act and section 79148.2, subdivision (c), of the California Water Code;
- California Native American Tribes, as defined in the State Water Board's Tribal Consultation Policy available here: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/tribal_affairs/tribal_consultations; and
- Nonprofit organizations, as defined in section 79148.2, subdivision (d), of the California Water Code.

Proposals involving multiple organizations involved in similar or related activities are strongly encouraged. However, these proposals should be submitted under one application and with only one organization as the applicant. For projects approved for Proposition 50 funding under this program, the applicant would be responsible for the development and execution of the grant agreement and compliance with the grant agreement terms and conditions. There is no limit to the number of applications an organization may submit.

F. Proposal Solicitation, Review, and Selection Process

The application solicitation is a competitive two-step process: 1) Proposal, which will be used to determine eligibility for grant funding; and 2) Detailed work plan, which will be used to develop a grant agreement for projects approved for Proposition 50 grant funding. (See Attachment 3, page 11, for the Proposition 50 Grant Program Timeline.)

Commission staff will conduct a public workshop to provide information on this grant program. The date, time, and location of the public workshop will be provided on the Commission's website at: www.smbrc.ca.gov/. Applicants requesting funds from this grant program must submit an electronic application between **July 12, 2021 and September 24, 2021**, using the State Water Board's online Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST) system at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>. To be considered complete, the electronic applications must include all of the **required** items in the Project Proposal Application Checklist (Attachment 4, page 12).

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will be evaluated and screened by Commission staff for completeness and eligibility based on the criteria outlined above in Section B (page 2). Project proposals that are deemed complete and eligible will be submitted to the review panel. The review panel will evaluate and score proposals based on technical feasibility and ability to address the priorities outline above in Section C (page 3). Reviewers will not be able to review or participate in discussion of proposals for which they have a conflict of interest. All reviewers will be required to submit a statement disclosing any conflict of interest. Based on evaluation and scores, the review panel will compile two lists for the Governing Board's consideration: (1) a proposed Recommended Project List, which will include the highest scored projects up to the amount of available funds for this grant program, and (2) a ranked standby list of proposals. Commission staff may request additional information during the review and selection process.

The review panel's proposed Recommended Project List and ranked standby list will be forwarded to the Governing Board for review and consideration of adoption. Commission staff will submit the Recommended Project List adopted by the Governing Board to the State Water Board for consideration of approval.

Applicants whose projects are on the approved Recommended Project List will be invited to submit detailed work plans, which will be used as the basis for grant agreements with the State Water Board. Lack of responsiveness during the detailed work plan and grant agreement development may result in withdrawal of the award by the State Water Board. If a proposal is removed from the Recommended Project List, proposals on the ranked standby list may be considered for funding approval in the order of their ranking.

Because the number of qualifying proposals on the Recommended Project List may exceed the available funding, detailed work plans will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, and grants executed in order of readiness until the remaining balance for this grant program is encumbered. Placement on the Recommended Project List is **not** a commitment to provide grant funds. Commitment of grant funds to a specific project will be based on the availability of bond funds, consistency with bond requirements, adherence to enabling legislation and grant agreement terms and conditions, the Commission's project priorities, the ability of the applicant to implement the project as described, technical feasibility, implementation readiness, and the applicant's past performance in implementing projects. Any award of grant funds is contingent on an applicant accepting the State Water Board's final grant agreement.

For additional information, contact:

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Attachments

Attachment 1	Eligible Project Types
Attachment 2	Environmental Compliance Summary Form
Attachment 3	Proposition 50 Grant Program Timeline
Attachment 4	Project Proposal Application Checklist

Attachment 1

Eligible Project Types

All projects funded under the Commission's Proposition 50 grant program must be located within and primarily benefit the waters, habitats, natural resources or other beneficial uses of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds. In addition, projects must support one or more of the following overarching goals of the CCMP Action Plan:

1. Protect, enhance, and improve ecosystem of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds.
2. Improve water availability.
3. Improve water quality.
4. Enhance socio-economic benefits to the public.
5. Enhance public engagement and education.
6. Mitigate impacts and increase resiliency to climate change.
7. Improve monitoring and ability to assess effectiveness of management actions.

Projects funded under Proposition 50 must also meet the applicable eligibility requirements in the enabling legislation. Pursuant to section 79148.8 of the Water Code, this grant funding may be awarded for the following project category:

A project to provide comprehensive capability for monitoring, collecting, and analyzing ambient water quality, including monitoring technology that can be entered into a statewide information base with standardized protocols and sampling, collection, storage and retrieval procedures.

The following provisions also apply to projects funded under this grant program. The grant agreement for projects funded under this grant program may include additional terms and conditions for funding.

- The projects funded shall demonstrate the capability of contributing to sustained, long-term water quality or environmental restoration or protection benefits for a period of 20 years, shall address the causes of degradation, rather than the symptoms, and shall be consistent with water quality and resource protection plans prepared, implemented, or adopted by the State Water Board, the applicable regional water quality control board, and the California Coastal Commission.

- An applicant for funds shall be required to submit to the State Water Board a monitoring and reporting plan that does all of the following:
 1. Identifies the nonpoint source or sources of pollution to be prevented or reduced by the project.
 2. Describes the baseline water quality or quality of the environment to be addressed.
 3. Describes the manner in which the project will be effective in preventing or reducing pollution and in demonstrating the desired environmental results.
- Upon completion of the project, a recipient of funds shall submit a report to the State Water Board that summarizes the completed activities and indicates whether the purposes of the project have been met. The report shall include information collected by the recipient in accordance with the project monitoring and reporting plan, including a determination of the effectiveness of the project in preventing or reducing pollution. The State Water Board shall make the report available to the public, watershed groups, and federal, state, and local agencies.
- An applicant for funds from the subaccount shall inform the State Water Board of any necessary public agency approvals, entitlements, and permits that may be necessary to implement the project. The application shall certify to the State Water Board, at the appropriate time, that those approvals, entitlements, and permits have been granted.
- Where recovery plans for coho salmon, steelhead trout, or other threatened or endangered aquatic species exist, projects funded under this article shall be consistent with those plans, and to the extent feasible, shall seek to implement actions specified in those plans.

Attachment 2

Environmental Compliance Summary Form

Lead Agency:

County:

INDICATE BELOW THE DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED WITH APPLICATION, INCLUDING SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL LISTED (DRAFTS ACCEPTABLE FOR APPLICATION PURPOSES. IF CEQA IS NOT FINAL, PLEASE INDICATE EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE):

Notice of Exemption (NOE):

NOE filed and stamped by the County Clerk and State Clearing House

Date filed:

OR, if not yet finalized/filed, expected date to do so:

Negative/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Neg Dec):

Does or will the Negative Declaration include Mitigation measures? Yes No

Neg Dec filed and stamped by County Clerk and State Clearing House

Date filed:

OR, if not yet finalized/filed, expected date to do so:

Environmental Impact Report (EIR):

EIR filed and stamped by County Clerk and State Clearing House

Date filed:

OR, if not yet finalized/filed, expected date to do so:

Attachment 3

Proposition 50 Grant Program Timeline

July 12, 2021	Request for Proposals issued Applications available at https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov
August 2021	Information workshop (Date, time, and location will be posted on the Commission's website at https://www.smbrc.ca.gov/ and distributed through the Commission's email list. Please subscribe to the email list for notifications)
September 24, 2021	Deadline for submitting proposal applications (5:00 p.m.)
September-October 2021	Review and evaluation of proposals
November 2021	Evaluation results and ranked standby list compiled Draft proposed Recommended Project List developed and submitted to Executive Committee
December 2021	Proposed Recommended Project List submitted to SMBRC Governing Board for review and consideration of adoption
January 2022	Adopted Recommended Project List submitted to State Water Board for consideration of approval
February 2022	Begin detailed work plan review and grant execution process

Attachment 4

Project Proposal Application Checklist

- Required:** FFAST application (available at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>)

Attachments (submitted electronically during the FFAST application process):

- Required:** Project description - Include summarized application information, the applicant's qualifications (e.g., expertise, experience, resources) to successfully complete the project, the project's budget summary, and any additional information that helps describe the project (e.g., photos, designs). (10 pages maximum, Arial 12-point font.)
- Required:** Map(s) of project location - Map should include waterbody and/or watershed boundary and project location (3 pages maximum).
- Required:** Environmental Compliance Summary Form and corresponding CEQA-related document (Attachment 2, page 10, of this RFP).
- Optional:** Stakeholder support documents, if available.