Attachment 1

Central Coast Community-Based Water Quality Grants Program Docket

The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment administered this fund in collaboration with the Bay Foundation of Morro Bay and Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board pursuant to Resolution RB3-2022-0015. After several months of public solicitation and outreach to with potential applicants to discuss the grant opportunity earlier this spring, the Rose Foundation received 15 "small track" proposals ($50,000 or less) and 10 "large track" proposals (up to $200,000) totaling $2.46 million in funding requests. The Rose Foundation recruited a volunteer funding board composed of six volunteers with expertise both in water quality issues as well as familiarity with the organizations and agencies addressing these issues in the Central Coast region. The funding recommendations were made through a combination of numeric scoring and multiple discussions on the merits of each proposal. At the end of this extensive process, the team recommended 13 projects for funding, including 4 large track projects totaling $625,000 and 9 small track projects totaling $417,000. Recommended grantees include governmental bodies such as community service districts, large non-profits, and small community groups, with projects focused on a wide range of water issues in the region such as sea water intrusion, nitrate contamination, and groundwater recharge. The proposed projects will impact several counties across the Central Coast, with many taking place in disadvantaged communities in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Luis Obispo counties. Given the grantees are primarily municipalities and large organizations, Rose Foundation will only reserve $14,000 in funding for capacity building mini grants to be offered to small track grantees in 2025.

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.
Central Coast Water Quality and Drought Resilience
Large track – $175,000 – 12 months

Nitrate contamination of the Central Coast's shallow groundwater is at crisis levels. Compared to white communities, Latino communities with shallow wells are 4 times as likely to have contaminated drinking water. However, data on where nitrate levels are highest and how they vary over time (i.e., with seasons or droughts) has not been systematically collected and analyzed. This lack of data and analysis hampers communities' ability to get sustainable access to safe water. California Rural Legal Assistance will use this funding to advance the right to clean water in rural, low-income Central Coast communities by conducting a robust analysis of water quality data. CRLA will work with residents to gather and share water safety information and help communities partner with agencies to address water quality issues. Over the course of a year, the group will first analyze existing data on nitrates and other contaminants in subbasins, conduct outreach to learn about potential contamination, offer free well testing in areas by likely nitrate sources, and provide information about access to clean drinking water. CRLA will also conduct outreach to educate communities and enable them to interact with agencies to assist in developing solutions to safe water access by engaging in public comment opportunities and offering input on the Regional Water Board's creation of a replacement water program. One of the project goals is to build rural communities' capacity to become involved and advocate for

themselves regarding environmental justice and water policy, and to do so, they communities need accurate data and the ability to provide input to the decision-making processes.

City of Buellton
Implementation of New Groundwater Monitoring Well
Small track - $50,000 – 24 months

In the City of Buellton, potable water is primarily sourced from groundwater. However, the City's existing groundwater monitoring well is in a site that is directly influenced by agriculture and stormwater runoff, and the City cannot therefore obtain accurate groundwater samplings. Specifically, the current well is affected by a regional swale creek (fed by active agriculture activity) to the north, and other agriculture activity to the south and west. Data obtained from this site produces heavily influenced results that do not clearly reflect impacts from the community and the City's wastewater treatment processes. This is important to understand because discharge wastewater treated from the Wastewater Treatment Plant flows into basins which then percolate into ground. There are pollutant limits that can't be exceeded with treated wastewater effluent, and it clear that a new monitoring station will give City better insight into this process and help ensure that the basins from which potable water are obtained remain sustainable. Once the City can accurately assess which pollutants are being discharged, it can implement any mitigation measures that could be needed. Because there is a viable and immediate need for a new station in a location that will be unaffected by agriculture and stormwater runoff, the funds will be used to explore an appropriate site for new groundwater monitoring well as well as the subsequent construction and permitting of the well. The City hopes to share its successes and challenges with its neighbors to support their efforts to ensure safe groundwater resources.

Cabrillo Estates Property Owners Association
Cabrillo Estates Sewer Connection to Help Reduce Nitrates in the Los Osos Basin
Small track - $40,000 – 6 months

The neighborhood of Cabrillo Estates, a community of 246 homes located in unincorporated Los Osos, was built in the 1960s and 1970s with individual septic systems that are nearing their life expectancy. The cost of replacing or retrofitting a septic system average between $70,000-$100,000 per home. In 2020, the San Luis Obispo County (SLO) published its Local Area Management Program (LAMP) which indicated that the Cabrillo Estates development ranked among the highest severity nitrate loading zone in the County. The beneficial effects from replacing individual septic systems on a piecemeal basis will not have nearly as positive an impact as connecting the entire neighborhood to the existing Los Osos Water Treatment Plant, which has available capacity. This is because treated effluent from the WWTP is treated for reuse and can be distributed for other beneficial uses such as landscape irrigation and aquifer recharge. The grant funds will be used for a Preliminary Engineering Report to determine the feasibility for a sewer collection system, including the potential for forming a tax assessment district to pay back the cost of funding the construction. Given the impact of individual septic systems failures on the aquifer would be significant and the costs to individual homeowners is

expected to be very high, time is of the essence in determining the feasibility of constructing a collection system. Many homeowners have indicated they favor the collection system, and information from the feasibility study will facilitate cost-effective decisions, which need to be made soon, to keep nitrogen from entering the groundwater through failing septic systems over time.

Community Water Center
Delivering on the Human Right to Water for Central Coast EJ Communities
Large track - $100,000 –24 months

Community Water Center (CWC) works to address the barriers and root causes of the lack of safe drinking water in the Central Coast including, but not limited to, community organizing and education, bottled water delivery, and the development of long-term infrastructure solutions. This grant will be used for deeper community engagement and focused on access to Safe, Clean and Affordable Drinking Water and Sustainable Groundwater Protection. While there are state funds to advance long-term drinking water projects for Disadvantaged Communities (DACs), from which CWC receives Technical Assistance funding, this funding does not cover staff time on advancing systemic change in protecting drinking water supplies and ensuring that drinking water is affordable for low-income DAC residents in the Central Coast region. Grant funds will fill this gap and ensure that DAC communities can contribute to this effort. The project goals will be to engage impacted residents and allied organizations about issues including low-income rate assistance programs, effective implementation of the SAFER Program, as well as promoting groundwater and drought planning to ensure drinking water for DACs. An ongoing challenge for DACs is that the regulatory and legislative processes that impact communities' access to safe, clean and affordable water are often very technical and convoluted. It takes a significant amount of effort to support impacted residents in engaging in these processes. In particular, some of the mechanisms for impacted resident input (i.e., SAFER Advisory Group, Drought Task Force, etc.) are challenging for individuals to access and participate in due to unequal power dynamics that create a barrier for participation as well as a large amount of technical information being covered in a short amount of time. In addition, the DAC residents that rely on domestic wells are even more vulnerable to contamination, drought impacts, and over pumping, and there is not enough data about the scope of those problems. It makes it even more critical that these residents are engaged in public decision-making spaces to ensure their voices and concerns are heard. This funding will facilitate their being able to do so by allowing Community Water Center to bridge the gap in access and technical information to DAC residents.

Los Osos Basin Management Committee
Los Osos Basin Management Committee Lower Aquifer Water Quality Monitoring Well
Large track - $150,000 – 10 months

The Los Osos Groundwater Basin (Basin) is the sole drinking water source for the community of Los Osos. Rampant development in the 1970-80’s led to rapid increases in water demand and unsustainable levels of groundwater pumping. This resulted in seawater intrusion in the lower aquifer, estimated to have intruded at rates exceeding 500 feet per year. Additionally, decades

of high-density septic tank discharges contaminated the upper aquifer with nitrate concentrations above the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), making it unsafe to drink. These conditions prompted several actions including: the California Department of Water Resources declaring the Basin to be in critical conditions of overdraft, a Basin adjudication, formation of the Los Osos Basin Management Committee (BMC), and development of the 2015 Basin Plan that outlines the strategy to bring the Basin back into sustainability. Through implementation of the Basin Plan and other measures, the BMC and the community of Los Osos have made significant progress toward halting seawater intrusion, raising groundwater levels, and reducing nitrate contamination. However, much of the recent state funding that has been made available for groundwater monitoring and management has only been available to basin's managed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and not Adjudicated basins such as Los Osos. Also, state and federal funding is typically prioritized for larger projects and often have more stringent requirements, therefore, small agencies tend to struggle to obtain external funding to support implementation of their projects. This funding will allow BMC to improve monitoring for seawater intrusion and to protect water quality for the community by constructing a new lower aquifer monitoring well. This will fill a critical gap in the BMC's monitoring network and help the BMC better detect seawater intrusion potentially occurring in that portion of the Basin as well as provide data on potential lower aquifer nitrate contamination. The design of the monitoring well and program can be utilized as a template for other agencies seawater intrusion monitoring wells.

Monterey Waterkeeper
Healthy Central Coast Watersheds
Small track - $35,000 – 24 months

The funds will enable the group to increase awareness and knowledge by Salinas Valley communities about agricultural nitrate pollution in drinking water and the Salinas River as well as increase knowledge by Salinas Valley communities on the importance of protecting and restoring riparian habitats for pollution filtering, flood protection, and groundwater recharge. Monterey Waterkeeper will engage and educate community members about the need for nitrate reduction, sustainable agriculture (e.g. organic farms and farms that adopt compost, cover-cropping, and other practices to reduce nitrogen/pesticide input into water systems), and riparian habitat protection. Specifically, MWK will perform water quality testing and facilitate outdoor trips where community members learn about the connection between safe drinking water and a clean and swimmable Salinas River, as well as the importance of protecting riparian habitats. Water quality monitoring will include testing for pH, temperature, nitrate, conductivity, and total coliform and bacteria to determine if sampled water is drinkable, swimmable, or fishable. MWK will create a quality assurance project plan with and receive data entry training from Moss Landing Marine Labs for this portion of the project. In addition, the group will engage several farms in the Salinas Valley and Central Coast region that use sustainable agriculture practices and showcase these practices via an online water quality dashboard, California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN). Other deliverables include numerous newsletter and blog posts on the topics of agricultural pollution impacts from community

members, the increasing costs of nitrate treatment in small communities and municipalities, and case studies on farms carrying out sustainable farming practices.

Northern Chumash Tribal Council
Northern Chumash Tribal Council Monitoring Program
Large track - $200,000 – 24 months

With this grant, the Northern Chumash Tribal Council (NCTC) project will facilitate Tribal outreach and education while increasing Tribal community engagement in the Central Coast region. NCTC is a small disadvantaged HUBZone-certified organization led by Tribal members, 70% of whom are women. Since its inception, the group has worked to advance environmental justice and Tribal leadership in all aspects of land and ocean management by promoting inclusion, multilingual and multicultural outreach focusing on underserved communities. However, tribal members need to better understand contemporary scientific methods and tools to implement water quality projects and climate plans, including the inclusion of Traditional Ecological Knowledge Indigenous ways into management decisions for the waters and waterways that flow to the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary boundaries. The grant will enable training focused on GIS, water quality monitoring, data collection, and analysis of data from Water Board database, and members will learn about water sampling protocols using the Regional Board's Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program as well as US EPA's protocols. The funds will also be used to obtain equipment and training needed to use geographic information systems to map sampling data. This effort will advance environmental justice and provide benefits to underrepresented communities by training Indigenous Tribes and Tribal organizations to perform water quality monitoring themselves for a variety of parameters in surface waters impacting the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. The project will conclude with the creation of a Chumash Tribal Monitoring Training Program Handbook and outreach materials that will be shared with other Central Coast Chumash communities. Further, the project will serve as a model and empower other Tribes with the information gained and empower Chumash people to perform their science-based citizen monitoring to further Tribal Collaborative Management approaches. This work will facilitate more equitable and collaborative management of natural resources that includes all who are culturally affiliated with the area of the proposed sanctuary and/or the surrounding lands and waterways.

Oceano Community Services District
Oceano CSD New Well House
Small track - $45,000 – 4 months

Oceano Community Services District is an independent special district established in 1981, serving a population of approximately 7,200. The grant will be used to design and install a new well house for the proper storage of ammonia and chlorine chemicals, which are used to disinfect OCSD's main groundwater source. The current well house, constructed in 1984, only has space for storing chlorine, and it is both unsafe and beyond repair. The new well house will enhance the water quality for OCSD's service area, which is a disadvantaged community,

because the new structure will allow the District to mix ammonia and chlorine at the well location to match the mixture of water coming from their other surface water supplies from the State Water Project and the County's Lopez Treatment Facility. Since the District has only one service line to customers, its groundwater supply needs to be treated at the pump house before being blended into the line containing its surface water supply. Enhancing the quality of the District's groundwater will improve the overall water reliability of their most cost-effective water source. The new well house will have separate storage areas for ammonia and chlorine, a static mixer, a pump, and an injector, ensuring safer storage for staff and the community.

Safe Ag Safe Schools
Reducing the Water Quality Threat from Pesticides in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties
Small track - $50,000 – 12 months

Safe Ag Safe Schools (SASS) will use this grant to conduct community-based monitoring of pesticide pollution in school drinking watering partnership with USGS. The group will also educate Monterey and Santa Cruz County residents and youth on the risks to water quality and community health posed by agricultural pesticide use and engage them in collaborative efforts and governmental processes to reduce those risks. This community-based monitoring and assessment project will focus on drinking water in schools in the Pajaro and Salinas River watersheds. SASS has an existing internship program in several high schools which will be expanded to include education and training designed to promote skills as environmental monitors, leaders, and future advocates. The group also has three coalitions based in Salinas, Watsonville and Greenfield, and they will build capacity with the coalitions and provide logistical support for greater community participation. SASS will enable residents to identify positive solutions that reduce drinking and surface water pollution as well as pesticide exposure among farmworkers, children and other residents. The group also will continue to engage with the Monterey and Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioners on local enforcement of pesticide regulations. Bilingual outreach will be used to educate at least 500 members of the broader community of parents, students, teachers, farmworkers and other residents in Monterey County and Santa Cruz County about water quality and health risks of pesticide exposure.

San Lucas County Water District
San Lucas Water District- Small System Upgrades
Small track - $50,000 – 12 months

San Lucas is a small, disadvantaged community in Monterey County that has faced water quality issues for 12 years including a contaminated groundwater well that has had nitrate level spikes. This project aims to upgrade the District's wastewater system (not related to groundwater issues) as it is not properly treating sewer water correctly. The funds will allow interim upgrades to the District's outdated wastewater system including a flow meter, new sewer pond liners, and aerator replacement. The funding will also be used to upgrade extremely outdated office equipment which will allow staff to work more efficiently. The District is currently receiving technical assistance from the State and Regional Board on its treatment system and settling ponds that will help ensure successful completion of this critical project.

San Miguel Community Service District
San Miguel CSD Drought Related Water Supply Resiliency Project - Monitoring Improvements
Small track -$47,000 -9 months

San Miguel CSD solely relies on groundwater production wells to provide water to its customers. This grant will be used for the purchase of water level and flow monitoring equipment for six production and monitoring wells owned and operated by San Miguel CSD. This project advances the human right to water by providing the equipment needed to collect essential data used for determining long-term groundwater supply availability for the Community of San Miguel and for meeting water quality objectives of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. This project also assists in advancing the human right to water by providing robust monitoring of shallow wells surrounding the wastewater treatment ponds. Data collected will determine groundwater flow gradients surrounding wastewater percolation ponds, and determining accurate flow gradients is essential in ensuring that discharged wastewater meets identified discharge standards to protect downstream water users from pollution.

SLO Beaver Brigade
San Luis Obispo Beaver Brigade Paso Robles Drinkable Rivers
Small track - $50,000 – 9 months

This project proposes the establishment of a "Drinkable Rivers" program in Paso Robles, in which the group will engage five Spanish- and Mixtec-speaking youth in a summer internship program. The student training will include scientific and indigenous knowledge of the river, exploration of connections of the Salinas River with water sources in their communities of origin, strategies for water conservation, water quality and data collection and compilation, as well as public dissemination of information about the health of our community water. The underlying goal of the program is to initiate discussion and actions on water quality and protection of beavers whose dams can reduce common aquatic pollutants such as nitrates, phosphates, metals, and excess sediments. The biggest obstacle for beavers in SLO County is lack of education on the benefits of beavers to area watersheds. The potential benefits of this project are significant, not only for water quality but to environmental justice, as youth will engage in science and nature-based education and experiences, gain career preparation skills, including data collection skills and presentation skills. Participants will also establish relationships with Cal Poly College Corps Fellows collaborating on the project, and experience new roles in their communities as river stewards, all of which will be favorable on college, job, and scholarship applications.

Sustainable Systems Research Foundation
Applying compost to reduce nitrate pollution on small farms operated by Latine farmers
Small track - $50,000 – 12 months

Nitrate pollution of groundwater is a serious problem in Southern Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey Counties with the primary source coming from the application of synthetic fertilizers to field crops and runoff from animal manures. There are, however, a considerable

number of small farms (less than 50 acres) across the Central Coast, of which many are marginal operations with limited sales and income. For these farmers, improvement of soil quality and fertility is costly and out of reach, but regular application of compost on these small farms could reduce nitrate contamination of groundwater, even if on a limited basis, while also enhancing soil organic matter, increasing soil fertility, retaining water and protecting soil biotic communities. This grant will be used to provide education and training to smaller growers on practices that reduce nitrogen runoff, specifically the use of compost in lieu of chemical fertilizers. While compost can produce nitrate pollution if used injudiciously, when properly applied, it can enhance the uptake of nitrogen from the soil and lead to reduced leaching into groundwater. The project will provide both technical and financial assistance to a cohort of low-income Latine farmers through workshops, field demonstration and subsidies to the purchase of certified compost for regular application on their farms. The group will conduct soil sampling before and after application to measure nitrate concentration to verify desired outcomes. The project builds on a series of technical assistance workshops for low-income Latin farmers offered by the Sustainable Systems Research Foundation and its collaborators over the past three years. The goal of the organization is to develop a replicable blueprint for scaling this project in other locations across California.