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Date: July 8, 2026

To: K.C. Roestenberg
Interim County Executive Officer, County of Orange

From: Kevin Onuma
Director/Orange County Public Works

Subject: Retroactive Request to Apply for and Accept Award from the United States Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects —H2OC RainSmart Large Landscape Turf Upgrade Incentive Program

This memo is being submitted to provide justification for the retroactive approval request associated with ASR 26001446, which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on September 15, 2026. The ASR requests approval of the County's application for, and acceptance of, a United States Bureau of Reclamation grant award in the amount of \$124,980.

The grant application was submitted by the January 14, 2025, deadline; however, the request for Board authorization to apply was not presented to the Board of Supervisors prior to submission. The omission was not identified until notification of the grant award was received on March 4, 2026, and staff determined that a corresponding request for Board authorization to apply had not been completed. The omission was the result of an administrative oversight during the transition of program management responsibilities and was not an intentional bypass of County policy or Board approval requirements.

Upon discovery of the oversight, OC Environmental Resources initiated the process to obtain the necessary approvals and bring the matter before the Board of Supervisors through ASR 26001446. OC Environmental Resources has since implemented additional internal review and tracking measures for grant applications and Board authorization requirements to help ensure that future grant opportunities are brought forward for Board consideration in accordance with County policy.

The grant funds will be used to implement the H2OC RainSmart Large Landscape Turf Upgrade Incentive Program, which provides financial incentives and technical assistance to homeowner associations to replace large areas of non-functional turf with climate-appropriate, low water-use landscaping. The program will reduce potable water demand, improve water quality through reduced runoff, and increase regional drought resilience by conserving outdoor water use. The required 50 percent cost share will be met through contributions from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the Municipal Water District of Orange County, program participant contributions, and Orange County Stormwater Program shared costs funds that have been budgeted for this program.

If you have any questions about the grant, please contact Grant Sharp, Manager – South OC Watershed Management Area, (714) 955-0633

Thank you for your consideration,

Signed by:

Kevin Onuma
Orange County Public Works
Director

Signed by:

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