

Memorandum

To: Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors
From: G. Patrick O'Dowd, Executive Director /GM
Date: September 12, 2024

Re: Education, Outreach, and Advocacy

Since its inception in 1993, the Authority has played a leading role in giving voice to opportunities and challenges at the Sea. The scope and nature of that effort has evolved over time, driven by an array of factors including the QSA, better scientific understandings, and political will to name a few. But there has never been a more critical time than now for the Authority to undergird and elevate this role due to real time pressing issues and efforts, including:

- **Feasibility Study** - collecting community input for and providing community feedback for a comprehensive ecosystem restoration plan eligible for 65% federal funding
- **Local Projects** – Support community outreach and engagement relating to Authority-led Special Projects including but not limited to North Lake Pilot Demonstration Project and Desert Shores Restoration Project
- **Climate Resiliency Bond** - advocating for passage and implementation, which provides \$170 million for the Salton Sea, including \$10 million for the Conservancy and the Authority
- **Salton Sea Conservancy** - collaborating in the creation of the to be formed entity which will be responsible for owning lands at and around the Sea and maintaining projects completed by the Salton Sea Management Program
- **Colorado River impacts** - articulating to community members and other affected stakeholders the local impacts (including Health, Ecosystem, and Economic) and mitigation measures associated with both recently implemented and anticipated future measures to improve the health of the Colorado River
- **Legislative Advocacy** – In support of the above efforts and in order to secure continued funding at the federal and state levels, continue to advocate for sound polices and adequate resources.

Authority staff have long been in discussions with CV Strategies, a well established and highly regarded local public relations firm with extensive experience in the water

industry. We had initially engaged in conversations to explore whether they would be able to partner with us to implement the scope of work outlined under the now expired state contract, but were informed by the state that only employees of the Authority or its member agencies could be reimbursed for work thereunder. Nonetheless, our conversations continued, and as a result thereof and to accomplish the necessary effort discussed above, a six-month scope of work was created (see attached) which when completed will lay the foundation for a focused effort to advance the priorities of the Authority.

Through a three phased process and working together with the Authority, its member agencies, our partners and other local stakeholders, CV Strategies will develop and assist in the implementation of a program of "Engagement Implementation & Outreach Support". While we have long recognized the need for this work, it was not included in the Fiscal 2025 budget as there was a pending formal request for extension of our agreement as expressly provided therein, which we reasonably anticipated that they would honor, which did not happen.

As a result, in the alternative therefore, and in order to fund this agreement, staff is recommending that state advocacy budget allocation be redirected for a period not to exceed six months while this program is developed and implemented. In that interim period, the Executive Director, working in collaboration with the Authority's member agencies and their advocacy teams, will ensure that state legislative matters relating to the Salton Sea are responsibly considered and addressed. That effort will further be supported in part by CV Strategies as appropriate under their agreement, and by board oversight, either by the Executive Committee or possibly a new committee of the board formed specifically to provide guidance and oversight in this area.

One alternative the board may consider would be to fund this agreement from budgeted operating surpluses. Our preliminary annual report shows that in fiscal 2024 the Authority performed to expectations with positive operating results, and that next year an operating surplus of approximately \$50,000 is budgeted, which was intended to be set aside to increase reserves. At the discretion of the board, some or all of that surplus could be used to fund this agreement. With reflection and consideration, it is also possible to revisit the need for state advocacy sooner than six months if warranted, perhaps after and informed by the completion of the first two phases of the CV Strategies agreement.

Recommendation:

Because of the pressing needs around outreach, engagement, and education, staff is recommending a pause in the state advocacy contract effective 9/30/2024, and the authorization to enter into an agreement with CV Strategies for the scope of work outlined in the attached proposal.

July 14, 2024

G. Patrick O'Dowd
Executive Director/General Manager
Salton Sea Authority
82-500 CA-111 Suite 4,
Indio, CA 92201

Dear Patrick:

Thank you for allowing CV Strategies the opportunity to assist the Salton Sea Authority with its communication needs.

As requested, we are providing a proposal for local, regional and legislative outreach, acting as a community liaison for the Salton Sea Authority and engaging media, residents, elected officials and stakeholders with accurate information and meaningful interaction. ***Simply put, our goal is to help you educate and activate our Coachella Valley and Imperial County communities.***

As a comprehensive public engagement firm, CV Strategies is involved in active, ongoing communications work with more than 150 public agencies, municipalities, special districts, and retail clients, tackling issues such as engagement campaigns, awareness initiatives and strategic planning.

With a history of moving the needle on brand awareness and credibility building, we will leverage past successes to increase awareness and public perspective. We know what works and what does not, and our holistic approach to outreach ensures that each tactic is considered, evaluated and implemented with precision.

We look forward to collaborating with you and helping the Authority achieve its outreach goals. Please see the attached proposal for initial suggestions and scope of work.

Sincerely,



Erin LaCombe
Founder, President
CV Strategies
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Scope of Work

CV Strategies understands this engagement to include the following communications support.

Phase One // Month 1

Development of a Community Outreach and Resource Plan

Phase One includes a swift assessment of current resource allocations and communications tools, in addition to the development of a more detailed engagement plan. Phase one also involves creation of an outreach timeline, which includes matching audiences, key messages, and delivery vehicles for the most effective communication effort.

- Facilitated kickoff workshop with staff to identify key issues and relevant facts
- Prioritize information to provide maximum value to stakeholders
- Conduct a comprehensive review of past and current outreach efforts
- Review current media coverage and reporting to gauge current public perception and inform the plan
- Identify key stakeholders and influencers, including:
 - Counties Officials and Key Staff
 - Legislators
 - Local City Government
 - Economic Organizations
 - Special Interest Associations
 - Media
 - NGOs and Environmental Audiences
 - Local and Impacted Tribes
 - Nonprofits
 - Residents & Businesses
 - Other Influencers
- Build a vertical messaging strategy designed to garner support and educate stakeholders
- Provide a report of initial findings, goals and objectives
- Attend meetings to ensure key stakeholders are continually informed of progress and garner organizational feedback

Proposed Hours: 35-40

Not to Exceed Cost: \$

Phase Two // Months 2-3

Brand Enhancement & Primary Resource Development

Phase Two includes building a campaign aesthetic that clearly identifies the “promise” of the initiative. In addition, key branded templates and tools will be created and designed to ensure a consistent look, feel and message.

- Build key message plan highlighting key story elements, facts and benefits
- Develop the nexus points available among initiatives, vehicles and audience
- Craft talking points supporting initial messaging plan and incorporating staff feedback
- Craft campaign look and feel, incorporating organizational input
- Identify earned media strategy and contacts
- Provide related strategic support
- Facilitate video and photography shoot to create a baseline of resources
- Create initial materials such as presentations, documents, flyers, etc. used to support the effort

Proposed Hours: 75-80

Not to Exceed Cost: \$

Phase Three // Months 2-6

Engagement Implementation & Outreach Support

Phase Three is built based on organizational input. In this phase, CV Strategies will leverage targeted vehicles to distribute key messages and serve as a repository of information for participating agencies, cities and counties.

- Build suite of outreach and education tools
- Mobilize and train speakers and advocates team
- Execute meeting/presentation strategy to groups and organizations identified
- Identify potential communication challenges and opportunities as they arise
- Propel positive stories using various mediums
- Execute public information functions, as needed
- Keep a pulse on stakeholder attitudes
- Produce video series to support outreach
- Incorporate lessons learned and opportunities revealed from other experience
- Update interactive web presence with digital engagement tools
- Assess and update website content to ensure that all existing information remains accurate and timely
- Create collateral and presentation materials for use in supporting outreach efforts
- Facilitate Community Meetings and Tours, providing personal interactions with the Coachella Valley and Imperial County communities, key stakeholders and the media

Proposed Hours: 100-110

Not to Exceed Cost: \$

Professional Services

OUTREACH STRATEGY	DELIVERABLES	ESTIMATE
Phase 1 // Assess & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Key Audiences » Outreach Plan » Timeline » Account Management & Meetings 	
Phase 2 // Initial Resource Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Key Message Plan & Message Deck » Campaign Look » Photo & Video Resource Library » Collateral, Presentations and Digital Resources » Account Management & Meetings 	
Phase 3 // Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Additional Outreach Tools, as needed » Video Series » Spokesperson Training » Website Content Update » Press Releases & Distribution » Account Management & Meetings 	
Subtotal		
Total Not to Exceed		

..... Rates for Communication Services

- » President - \$/hour
- » Executives - \$/hour
- » Directors - \$/hour
- » Specialists/Design/Video/Photography - \$/hour
- » Translation - \$/hour
- » Support Staff - \$/hour

..... Terms & Compensation

Either party may end this agreement by providing written notice to the other party. In the event of termination, CV Strategies shall be paid for all hours and expenses accrued up to the date of termination.

Hard costs incurred by CV Strategies will be billed to the client with a nominal service charge of 10% (not to exceed \$250 per item). This includes all anticipated hard costs such as printing, mailing, photography, video, advertising, etc. Required travel mileage will be billed at the published IRS rate.

All services and hard costs will be billed monthly. Invoices should be paid in full upon receipt.

..... Agreed & Approved

Name	Signature
Title	Date