

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

TO: BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
FROM: ROBERT C. WILSON, LABORATORY SUPERVISOR
SANTA ROSA WATER

SUBJECT: MATERIALS TRANSFER AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF
SANTA ROSA AND VERILY LIFE SCIENCES FOR SARS-COV-2
TESTING IN WASTEWATER AT THE LAGUNA TREATMENT
PLANT

AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Water Department that the Board of Public Utilities, by motion, authorize the Chair to sign the Materials Transfer Agreement with Verily Life Sciences for SARS-CoV-2 testing in wastewater at the Laguna Treatment Plant.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff will present a material transfer agreement between the City of Santa Rosa (City) and Verily Life Sciences (Verily) to study SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in wastewater. Verily is a research analytics firm and is coordinating a nationwide study of COVID-19 in wastewater from treatment plants that serve a population of more than 50,000 people. Under this agreement the City will provide Verily three samples of wastewater per week for one year and Verily will provide the sample bottles, sample kits, pay all shipping costs and pay the City \$200 for each sample received.

BACKGROUND

The Water Department has participated in the monitoring of COVID-19 tracers in wastewater at the Laguna Treatment Plant as a part of studies sponsored by the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The data provided by these studies is valuable as the samples indicate viral load in a population where individual testing is logistically impossible or impractical. These previous studies have data gaps due to inconsistent funding from the federal government. This study is privately funded for one year and will provide a more consistent dataset for public health decision making. Additionally, coordination of these sampling projects has been independent of local Public Health officials and the data are not readily available to the Public Health staff.

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During the pandemic policy decisions regarding public health and COVID-19 have been supported by medical evaluation at testing centers. Due to the rise of at home testing, data regarding infected population is not being submitted into the databases utilized by Public Health policy makers.

The COVID-19 Wastewater study with Verily uses samples collected from settled influent solids along with Digital Droplet Polymerase Chain Reaction (ddPCR) analytical methods to quantify the presence of COVID-19 RNA. Quantification of the data provides numerical values that will create a national COVID-19 incidence and variant monitoring system that can be generalized to test for new infectious diseases or future pandemics. This wastewater based epidemiological study will provide the City and Sonoma County a community wide infection rate whereas clinical testing determines whether an individual may be infected. The data will be provided via an online, public dashboard, as well as sharing data with the City, the CDC, Stanford, and Sonoma County Public Health.

PRIOR BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES REVIEW

Non applicable

ANALYSIS

Entering into the Agreement with Verily will provide needed public health data regarding COVID-19 community infection rates. This data will be publicly available and contribute to existing data collection efforts with the CDC, Stanford, and local Public Health officials. Verily will provide all the materials needed for sampling, pay shipping costs and provide the City with \$200 per sample to offset any labor costs the City may have in handling these samples. Considering the public health issues with individualized COVID-19 testing, it is recommended that the Board, by motion, authorize the Chair to sign the Materials Transfer Agreement with Verily for SARS-CoV-2 testing in wastewater at the Laguna Treatment Plant.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Agreement will require less than one half hour of staff time per sample and be paid \$200 per sample to offset those costs.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378.

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BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – DRAFT Materials Transfer Agreement with Verily Life Sciences

CONTACT

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