



November 16, 2023

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darrell E. Johnson", is written over the "From:" line of the memo.

Subject: Performance Evaluation of Federal Legislative Advocate, Potomac Partners, DC

Overview

The firm Potomac Partners, DC provides federal legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority in Washington, D.C. A staff evaluation of the services provided this legislative session is presented to the Board of Directors for consideration and further comment.

Recommendation

Receive and file the staff evaluation of the federal advocacy services of Potomac Partners, DC as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Background

Since 2003, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) has contracted with Potomac Partners, DC (PPDC) for federal legislative advocacy services. On October 22, 2018, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) approved a contract with PPDC to provide federal advocacy and consulting services for an initial term of two years through December 31, 2020, with two, two-year option terms. On June 22, 2020, the Board exercised the first two-year option term, which expired on December 31, 2022. Most recently, on July 25, 2022, the Board exercised the second two-year option which took effect on January 1, 2023, and will expire on December 31, 2024. The federal legislative advocacy and consulting services provided by PPDC are led by Richard Alcalde, Daniel Feliz, and Adam Cross.

Discussion

The evaluation of federal legislative advocacy services covers major issues addressed and general services provided by PPDC, mirroring the process also

used to evaluate the state legislative advocacy services. Staff's evaluation of the services provided by PPDC is included in Attachment A. The major issues and general services provided by PPDC have been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

Staff has rated PPDC's efforts overall as "very good" based on responsiveness, advancing OCTA's positions and policies, and assisting in building cooperative bipartisan relationships with members of Congress and the Administration. Staff has rated PPDC's outcomes overall as "very good" based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

Priorities for PPDC for the upcoming Second Session of the 118th Congress will continue to focus on implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, ensuring that programs are funded at least at the levels authorized, eligibility for transportation and transit agencies is considered for relevant programs, and statutory intent is honored in implementation. As part of this effort, if Congress continues to authorize community project funding and congressionally directed spending requests in future appropriations bills, PPDC will also be focused on seeking opportunities to fund specific OCTA projects, consistent with Board priorities and direction. Next year, there will also be the opportunity to begin coordinating on developing priorities for the next surface transportation reauthorization bill. Additionally, PPDC will seek to advance OCTA's policy positions outlined in the 2023-24 OCTA Federal Legislative Platform, including seeking funding, project delivery, and planning assistance to address environmental impacts occurring throughout the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor within Orange County and informing any proposals that may impact formula funding or which may delay OCTA federal grants.

To assist the Board in fully evaluating PPDC, the federal legislative advocate's current scope of work is included as Attachment B.

Summary

An evaluation of federal legislative advocacy services performed by Potomac Partners, DC is presented to the Board of Directors for information and further comment.

Attachments

- A. Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Potomac Partners, DC for 2023
- B. Scope of Work Federal Legislative Advocates

Prepared by:



Lance M. Larson
Executive Director,
Government Relations
(714) 560-5908