



November 18, 2021

To: Legislative and Communications Committee

From: Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: Performance Evaluation of State Legislative Advocate, Topp Strategies

Overview

The firm Topp Strategies provides state legislative advocacy services for the Orange County Transportation Authority. 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 state advocacy services of Topp Strategies as an information item and provide any additional comments.

Background

Since 2007, Moira Topp has served as the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) primary state legislative advocate through her former employment with Sloat Higgins Jensen and Associates, and then as a subcontractor on OCTA's prior contract Platinum with Platinum Advisors, LLC. On October 26, 2020, the OCTA Board of Directors (Board) awarded a new contract for state legislative advocacy services to Topp Strategies, with Platinum as a subcontractor. Under the new contract, Moira Topp continues in her role as lead state legislative advocate for OCTA. The new agreement took effect on January 1, 2021, for a two-year term, with two, two-year option terms. Staff annually reviews the performance of the firm. This review focuses on work conducted during the initial year of the contract with Topp Strategies.

Discussion

Annually, OCTA staff evaluates the services provided by the state legislative advocate with respect to major issues addressed and general services provided. Staff's evaluation of the services provided by Topp Strategies is

included in Attachment A. The major issues and general services provided by Topp Strategies have been evaluated based on effort and outcome using a rating of excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

Staff has rated Topp Strategies' efforts overall as "very good" based on responsiveness, advancing OCTA's positions and policies, and assisting in building cooperative relationships with legislators and members of various state departments, boards, and commissions. Staff has rated Topp Strategies' outcomes overall as "very good" based on the outcomes of the issues discussed.

Next year, the priority focus of Topp Strategies will be on state budget actions related to transportation funding, including efforts to provide additional funding for transit capital projects, active transportation and resiliency projects, and advocating to ensure OCTA receives funding through any available funding provided. In addition, priorities for Topp Strategies will include advancement of OCTA's positions on legislation and policy goals contained in the Board-adopted 2021-22 OCTA State Legislative Platform, engaging in legislation and policy discussions related to implementation of the Governor's executive orders related to greenhouse gas emission reductions and expanded use of zero-emission vehicle technology, including proposals on how to prioritize transportation funding expenditures and competitive grant awards, incentive programs to attract transit ridership, including funding to maintain free transit programs, implementation of zero-emission bus purchase requirements, and potential revisions to SB 375 (Chapter 728, Statutes of 2008) requirements related to regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

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

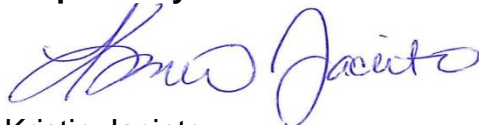
Summary

An evaluation of state legislative advocacy services performed by Topp Strategies is presented to the Board of Directors for information and further comment.

Attachments

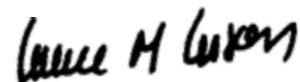
- A. Staff Evaluation of Services Provided by Topp Strategies for 2021
- B. Sacramento Legislative Advocacy and Consulting Services Scope of Work

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