

WaterSMART Drought Response Program: Drought Resiliency
Projects for Water Year 2024

Funding Opportunity No. R24AS00007

Cawelo Water District

Reservoir C Auxiliary Recharge Facility

Applicant

Cawelo Water District
17207 Industrial Farm Road
Bakersfield, CA 93308

Project Manager

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November 7, 2023

Table of Contents

1. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL	1
1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1.2 PROJECT LOCATION.....	4
1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION.....	4
1.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	4
1.5 EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	6
1.5.1 <i>Evaluation Criterion A – Project Benefits</i>	6
1.5.2 <i>Evaluation Criterion B – Planning and Preparedness</i>	10
1.5.3 <i>Evaluation Criterion C – Severity of Drought Impacts</i>	11
1.5.4 <i>Evaluation Criterion D – Presidential and DOI Priorities</i>	14
1.5.5 <i>Evaluation Criterion E – Readiness to Proceed and Project Implementation</i>	15
1.5.6 <i>Evaluation Criterion F – Nexus to Reclamation</i>	18
1.5.7 <i>Evaluation Criterion G – Stakeholder Support for Proposed Project</i>	19
2. PROJECT BUDGET	20
3. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE.....	21
4. OVERLAP OR DUPLICATION OF EFFORT STATEMENT	23
5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT	24
6. UNIFORM AUDIT REPORTING STATEMENT.....	25
7. SF-LLL: DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITY	26
8. OFFICIAL RESOLUTION	27
9. LETTERS OF FUNDING COMMITMENT	28
10. UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER & SYSTEM OF AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM).....	29
APPENDIX A – DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN EXCERPTS	
APPENDIX B – PRELIMINARY PROJECT DESIGN	
APPENDIX C – LETTER OF SUPPORT	

1. Technical Proposal

1.1 Executive Summary

Project Information	
Date	November 7, 2023
Project Name	Reservoir C Auxiliary Recharge Facility
Applicant Information	
Name	Cawelo Water District
City, County, State	Bakersfield, Kern County, California
Applicant Category	Category A – Water District
Funding Group	Funding Group II

The Cawelo Water District (Cawelo, District) proposes to utilize their resources in a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation, USBR) to construct *the Reservoir C Auxiliary Recharge Facility* (Project) consisting of a 33-acre feet (AF) capacity reservoir, 1,200-linear feet of an 18-inch conveyance pipeline, and a 24-acre recharge facility. The Project is a Task A: Increasing the Reliability of Water Supplies through Infrastructure Improvements project that will improve drought resiliency by providing capacity to recharge a new and alternative firm water supply of up to 3,360-acre-feet per year (AFY). Until recently, the region Cawelo resides in was experiencing extreme drought, which was ended by a severe and unprecedented wet year. California is highly prone to swings between extreme dry periods and severe wet periods which is displayed through several ongoing legislations and state initiatives such as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and the Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR) program that focuses on achieving groundwater sustainability through conjunctive use practices to balance wet and dry periods in the state. The infrastructure improvements will add storage and conveyance capacity that will allow for delivery and recharge of treated produced water from a small independent oil producer (Producer) to Cawelo’s proposed recharge facility to increase drought resilience. Unlike surface water supplies from the State Water Project (SWP) or the Central Valley Project (CVP) that are less reliable in dry or drought years, delivery and reuse of treated produced water is a firm, reliable supply that will occur continuously, 365 days of the year, 7 days a week, 24 hours per day. This Project will therefore add a new firm water supply that will improve Cawelo’s ability to deliver reliable water during any water year type, including drought years. Additionally, the recharge site will have capacity beyond recharging treated produced water to be able to utilize this facility during wet years to divert and store up 106 AFY of uncontrolled floodwater. This project is directly supported by the Poso Creek IRWM Plan, the Poso Creek DCP, and the District’s Groundwater Sustainability Plan developed under California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The proposed Project is to be completed within 36 months from the time of a grant funding agreement. Construction is anticipated to be complete by the end of May 2027 and start no earlier than October 31, 2024. The proposed Project is not located within a federal facility.

Provide relevant background information about the applicant and service area such as services provided, population served, irrigated acres served, crops grown in the project area, etc.

The District was formed in 1965 under the provisions of Division 13 of the Water Code of the State of California for the purpose of obtaining a “supplemental or partial water supply” for irrigation. In other words, the District was formed for the purpose of obtaining water supplies to supplement the pumping of groundwater for irrigation. Prior to formation of the District, irrigation water was obtained almost exclusively from groundwater sources, resulting in a decline in groundwater levels averaging about ten feet per year. At the time the District was formed, approximately 38,200-acres within the District were under full irrigation. Although the total number of irrigated acres has since decreased, the District encompasses an area of 45,724-acres.

Cawelo lies between California State Highway 99 to the west and Highway 65 to the east and extends from the community of McFarland to the north and Oildale to the south. The City of Bakersfield is approximately 6-miles southeast of the District. Cawelo sustainability manages surface water and groundwater resources through conjunctive use practices throughout the district. Additionally, Cawelo operates a long-term “in-lieu” water banking program that allows banking partners to store water in Cawelo’s district boundary for later recovery when needed.

Include details regarding the applicant’s water supplies.

Cawelo’s primary source of surface water is SWP water delivered through the California Aqueduct and the Cross Valley Canal. Per the signed contract with the Kern County Water Agency, the District has an allocated amount of 38,200-AFY. However, in recent drought years, allocations have decreased to a lower percentage, resulting in a decrease in water supply reliability. The District’s SWP via the California Aqueduct has restrictions resulting from Court Orders and regulatory actions of wildlife agencies related to endangered species actions of the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) that restrict pumping operations managed by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR). Pumping restrictions have adversely affected the reliability of this supply. Additionally, the recent California drought reduced allocations to 5 percent, which is why the District has been implementing projects such as the proposed Project, as it will bring in a new, firm source of supply to offset effects of drought.

Supplementing SWP deliveries with water originating from other water sources, such as treated produced water from local oil operations, allows for an increase in water supply reliability and operational flexibility. Table 1 presents calendar year data for Cawelo’s diversions from surface water sources for the years 2013 through 2022. During that time, Cawelo received a total of 567,596 AF, with a ten-year average of 56,760 AFY.

Table 1. Cawelo Water District Surface Water Supplies (AF)

Source	Diversion Restriction	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Kern River	Water year type and priority rights	2,619	536	0	107	7,014	2,000	3,848	0	0	0
State Water Project (SWP)	Water year type and priority rights (state).	13,370	8,238	7,640	17,614	34,363	12,178	39,092	9,869	1,076	551
Central Valley Project (CVP) ⁽¹⁾	Water year type and priority rights (federal).	0	0	0	0	2,221	0	0	0	0	0
Treated Produced Water		34,030	32,089	31,009	29,161	24,566	28,221	31,833	30,403	29,655	26,928
Other ⁽²⁾		2,500	1,228	2,194	11,421	48,075	2,299	29,103	9,062	1,483	0
Totals		52,519	42,091	40,843	58,303	116,239	44,698	103,876	49,334	32,214	27,479

(1) District facilities were not capable of accepting CVP water during these years, except in 2017.

(2) These deliveries are from various suppliers that include Kern Water Bank or water from north of the Delta but are not yearly programs and vary from year to year. [Zone 7 to CWD (6,621, 6,645, 10,000), Semitropic to CWD (14,963), SWID and TID to CWD (3,045), Oildale Mutual Water Company to CWD (1,483)]. Values also include releases from in-District regulating surface reservoirs used to balance the pressurized distribution system, and negative values indicate water stored in the same reservoirs.

1.2 Project Location

The Project is in Kern County within the Southern San Joaquin Valley of California. The reservoir component of the project is located at latitude 35°36'42"N and longitude 119°05'48"W. The recharge site component is located at latitude 35°36'56"N and longitude 119°06'01"W. The 18-inch pipeline will be constructed between the two facilities to deliver water from the holding reservoir to the recharge site as shown in Figure 1.

1.3 Project Description

This Project proposes to construct a 33-AF auxiliary reservoir and an 18-inch pipeline that spans approximately 1,200-LF to convey water to the proposed 24-acre recharge site that will be constructed adjacent to the reservoir. Implementation of this project will convey, recharge, and allow reuse of up to 3,360 AFY of treated produced water and occasional wet year supplies up to 106 AFY. The treated produced water will be blended with District surface and groundwater supplies then conveyed to the auxiliary reservoir and 24-acre recharge facility and later used during dry or drought periods. The construction of the reservoir, the lateral conveyance pipeline, and recharge site are typical construction activities for the District and can be accomplished using normal practices. The design, construction, and permitting will be similar to and based on other treated produced water projects already operating within the District.

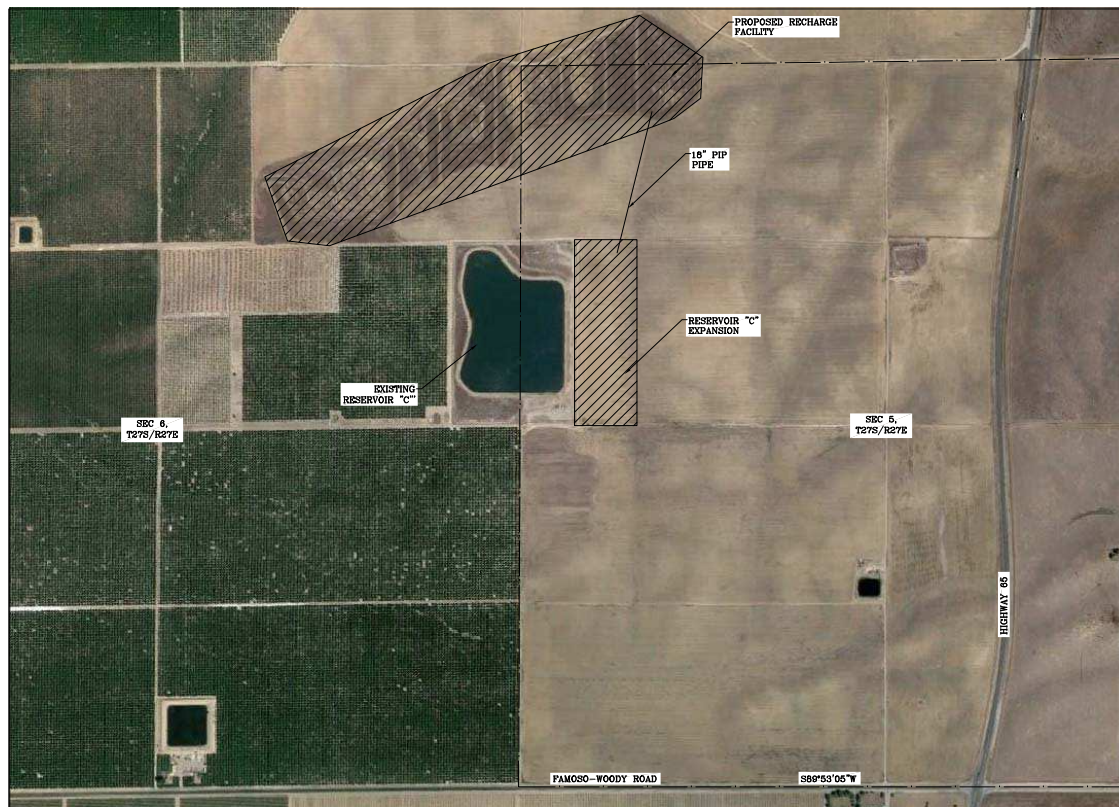
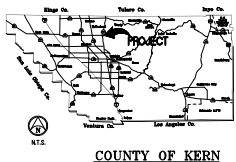
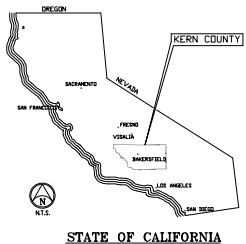
Project implementation increases drought resiliency by building recharge capacity for the District to expand its water portfolio. With droughts becoming more frequent, the District is seeking new, alternative supplies that are not susceptible to drought. The proposed Project will build the capacity for the District to store their newly contracted treated produced water and provide additional capacity to capture wet year supplies. Recharged water can then be later used during dry years when surface water is scarce. This effort is directly supported by the District's ongoing SGMA, IRWM, and DCP planning efforts and seeks to promote drought resiliency, groundwater sustainability, and supply reliability.

1.4 Performance Measures

The proposed Project will have a meter measurement point that will allow Cawelo to measure all water supplies received at the facility. The meter will be certified at a minimum of every 3 years to maintain accuracy. By measuring the volume of water input to the District via the Project, Cawelo will determine the total amount of water supply made available and can report the measured volume that is of benefit to the District.

CAWELO RESERVOIR "C" EXPANSION PROJECT

OCTOBER 2023



VICINITY MAP
SCALE: NTS



SHEET INDEX	
COVER SHEET	SHT 1
SITE PLAN	SHT 2
CROSS SECTION	SHT 3-4
MISCELLANEOUS DETAILS	SHT 5
INTERBASIN STRUCTURE DETAILS	SHT 6
EARTHWORK NOTES	SHT 7

NOTES:
 CONTRACTOR SHALL CALL U.S.A. FOR LOCATION OF UNDERGROUND UTILITIES PRIOR TO EXCAVATION (1-800-642-2444).
 CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL NECESSARY PERMITS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, SJAQCD DUST CONTROL PERMIT AND SWPPP.

BENCHMARK, BL. 750.9
 PID - F10548 BRASS CAP LOCATED 0.95 MILE NORTH OF THE JUNCTION OF FAMOSO WOODY RD. IN THE TOP AND 0.8 FOOT NORTH OF THE SOUTH END OF THE EAST CONCRETE HEAD WALL OF A 24-INCH PIPE CULVERT, 39' EAST OF THE CENTERLINE OF THE HWY, AND ABOUT 10' LOWER THAN THE HWY.

BASIS OF BEARINGS
 THE BEARING OF SOUTH 89°53'05" WEST, FOR THE SOUTH LINE OF SECTION 5, T27S, R27E M.D.M., AS SHOWN ON K.C. PARCEL MAP NO. 5696 IN BOOK 25 OF PARCEL MAPS AT PAGE 178 FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE KERN COUNTY SURVEYOR, WAS USED AS THE BASIS OF BEARINGS ON THIS MAP.

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 CIVIL ENGINEERS
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CAWELO WATER DISTRICT
KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Draft

Figure 1. Project Location

1.5 Evaluation Criteria

1.5.1 Evaluation Criterion A – Project Benefits

Sub-Criterion A1.a: Adds to Available Water Supplies

How will the project build long-term resilience to drought? How many years will the project continue to provide benefits? This Project will build long-term resilience to drought by constructing a recharge facility capable of storing a new, reliable water source that is available every day during any type of water year, 24 hours per day. Additionally, the District will be able to use the proposed Project to recharge wet-year supplies as an additional benefit, maximizing the full capacity of the recharge site. The approximate amount of additional annual water supply is 3,466 acre-feet per year (AFY). The Project will add to the District's existing treated produced water projects, which increases District supplies during wet and dry periods and is reliable during a drought. Unlike surface water sources such as the SWP or the CVP, treated produced water is a firm, reliable supply that is not affected by drought conditions, and supplies are available year-round. The project is expected to provide benefits for at least 30 years.

What percentage of the total water supply does the additional water supply represent? How was this estimate calculated? The total District supplies for the recent 10-year period shown in Table 1 (Section 1.1) is 567,596 -AF, and the average for the 10-year period is 56,760 AFY. With the additional supply of 3,466 AFY, the Project is estimated to add approximately 6 percent to the District's water supply ($3,466 \text{ AFY} / 56,760 \text{ AFY} = 6 \text{ percent}$).

What is the estimated quantity of additional water supply the project will provide and how was the estimate calculated? The Project is estimated to add up to 3,466-AFY to the District's total water supplies. The primary benefit of this Project is the recharge of the contracted treated produced water of 3,360 AFY. Since delivery of treated produced water will occur every day of the year, 24-hours per day, 7-days per week, in all types of water years, the average annual benefit over ten years is the same as the annual benefit, 3,360-AFY. The 24-acre recharge site is anticipated to absorb 0.5 acre-feet per day (AFD) on 21.6 effective acres, or 10.8 AFD for 12 months per year. This equates to an annual recharge capacity of 3,888 AFY ($10.8 \text{ AFD} \times 30 \text{ days} \times 12 \text{ months}$), which is sufficient capacity to recharge the contracted amount of 3,360 AFY. Since the primary Project water is a firm supply not susceptible to drought, the average benefit over 10 years is 33,600 AF ($3,360 \text{ AFY} \times 10 \text{ years}$).

As an additional benefit, the Project will have remaining capacity for storage of flood flows during wet years of up to 528 AFY ($3,888 \text{ AFY} - 3,360 \text{ AFY}$) or 44 AF/month ($528 \text{ AFY} / 12 \text{ months}$) after recharging treated produced water. The project is expected to provide benefits during wet years which are estimated to occur every 4 out of 10 years for up to 6 months per year. Given the wet year frequency, the additional supply from wet year water is approximately 106 AFY ($44 \text{ AF/month} \times 6 \text{ months} \times 4/10 \text{ years}$). Over ten years, this would yield approximately 1,060 AF ($106 \text{ AFY} \times 10 \text{ years}$) of additional supplies.

The total Project 10-year benefit is 34,660 AF (33,600 AF + 1,060) or 3,466 AFY as displayed in Table 2. This additional supply includes both the firm, treated produced water supply and the wet year supply expected to recharge every 4 out of 10 years.

Table 2. Estimated Additional Water

Total Additional Water Available	Estimate Annual Benefits (AFY)	10 Year Benefits (AF)
Treated Produced Water	3,360	33,600
Wet-Year Supplies	106	1,060
Total	3,466	34,660

Provide a qualitative description of the degree/significance of the benefits associated with the additional water supplies. Treated produced water provides an additional high quality water source, suitable for irrigation, that would otherwise be disposed of in an underground injection well (UIC). With implementation of the proposed Project, the high-quality treated produced water will be reclaimed and beneficially reused within the District. With extreme drought conditions in the Central Valley, reuse of water sources like this is essential to sustainable management of groundwater and agricultural production. The use of this additional water source will partially replace the extraction of groundwater and help maintain a balance between groundwater recharge and extraction. With decreased imported surface supply caused by the other conditions previously discussed (e.g., drought and environmental constraints), implementation of the proposed Project provides the District with a new, firm water supply that can be beneficially used in the region while allowing the District to be less reliant on imported supplies and more resilient to the effects of drought.

Subcriterion A2.a: Climate Change

In addition to drought resiliency measures, does the proposed project include other natural hazard risk reductions for hazards such as wildfires or floods? While the main benefit of Project implementation provides Cawelo capacity to recharge a new firm alternative supply, the proposed facilities have additional capacity beyond the contracted treated produced water amount that allows for the capture and storage of floodwater. This provides Cawelo with an opportunity to mitigate flood impacts to users downstream of their diversions. Historically, Cawelo has purchased CVP “Section 215” water, which is referred to as uncontrolled flood flows, or has received floodwater on behalf of neighboring CVP contractors through banking agreements. During high flow events, CVP water is released from Millerton Lake both north through the San Joaquin River System and south through the Friant Kern Canal (FKC) to mitigate overflow in the reservoir. Releases of this nature often impact downstream users on both ends of the system and require diversion to recharge to mitigate flood impacts along major waterways. This activity is known as Flood Management Aquifer Recharge (Flood-MAR), an ongoing statewide initiative that Cawelo has participated in since its inception. While this is an ongoing effort, recent California storms prompted Governor Newsom to take immediate action through executive orders (EOs) and subsequent legislation outlining emergency actions and streamlined processes for diverting

floodwater for recharge, which shows direct support for Cawelo’s proposed Project. Recent EOs and legislation are as follows.

- EO N-4-23: In March 2023, EO-N-4-23 was issued, which outlined emergency actions to allow expedited floodwater diversions for groundwater recharge to mitigate flood impacts to downstream beneficial users¹.
- EO N-7-23: In May 2023, EO N-7-23 was issued to extend EO N-4-23 expedited floodwater diversions for groundwater recharge through August 31, 2023².
- California Senate Bill (SB) 122: In July 2023, SB 122 codified EO N-4-23 and N-7-23 into law and allows the expedited diversions of floodwater for groundwater recharge through January 1, 2029³.

These EOs and subsequent legislation not only detail the severity of the unprecedented wet year but also highlight how climate change contributes to large swings between extreme wet and extreme dry conditions. Building recharge capacity to allow for the diversion and storage of floodwater will mitigate the immediate impacts of flood while simultaneously promoting long-term drought resiliency by building stored supply for use during dry or drought periods.

Does the proposed project include green or sustainable infrastructure to improve community climate resilience? Project implementation will reduce energy needs to manage water by bringing in a new and alternative, firm supply using gravity-based energy that will offset the need to pump groundwater. Water delivered will be recharged or put to direct beneficial use thereby offsetting the need to extract groundwater. Groundwater pumping with no recharge leads to lowering of groundwater levels. Increased depths to groundwater will result in increased power and energy requirements for groundwater pumping, which has its own GHG implications and would increase the cost per acre-foot of water delivered to farmers. Thus, project implementation will not only replenish groundwater levels but reduce GHG emissions by reducing the energy required to pump groundwater.

Additionally, Project implementation provides a sustainable solution for the small independent oil producer to reuse water. Rather than injecting produced water back into the aquifer, which can have high associated energy costs, Cawelo can reuse the treated produced water for direct beneficial use. Not only does it provide a sustainable alternative for the oil producer, but it also provides Cawelo with a sustainable and reliable water source that would otherwise be disposed of in an underground injection well.

¹[California Executive Order N-4-23](#)

²[California Executive Order N-7-23](#)

³[California Senate Bill 122](#)

Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above? Cawelo’s surface water supply is currently dictated by changes in the volume, nature, and timing of precipitation in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as the receiving watershed is the source of supply for the SWP. The DWR examined 12 future climate scenarios in a report titled *Using Future Climate Projections to Support Water Resources Decision Making in California* (Chung et al. 2009) to assess future reliability issues with the SWP and the CVP due to climate change. For all climate projections studied, the reliability, and thus volume of water delivered, by the SWP and CVP water supply systems is expected to be reduced. For instance, average annual SWP exports under future climate scenarios from 2013 to 2033 conditions are projected to decrease 5.6 percent (DWR, 2013). Current long-term reliability predictions of SWP Table A deliveries, modeled under historic (1921-2003) precipitation and runoff patterns and accounting for future conditions such as land use and climate change, are expected to decrease 6 percent from the historic average (DWR, 2013). These decreases in annual Delta exports would reduce water deliveries south of the Delta, which directly affects the water volume supplied to Cawelo. These effects would be magnified by similar changes to other potential surface water supplies, which have been used in the past by the District when water is available.

To offset the effects of climate change, the District has committed to diversifying its water portfolio to bring in more reliable and firm sources of supply, which will increase conjunctive use activities focused on decreasing groundwater pumping. As the District’s control over imported SWP water supplies is limited, Projects such as the proposed are critical to bring in alternative, more reliable water supplies, which ultimately contributes to drought resiliency.

Subcriterion A2.b: Environmental Benefits

Does the project seek to improve ecological climate change resiliency of a wetland, river, or stream to benefit to wildlife, fisheries, or habitats? Do these benefits support an endangered or threatened species? Relevant species that may be impacted by the drought include Delta Smelt (federally endangered), Longfin Smelt, and Chinook Salmon (federally threatened in spring/endangered in winter). Increasing the regional drought resiliency will allow more flexibility on the timing of delivery of surface water supplies. Any measure to increase available water supply improves water management for the region and reduces demands on the San Joaquin River System and the Delta. Implementation of this Project will bring in a new, firm water supply and reduce demand on the San Joaquin River System and the Delta thereby benefiting species that rely on its water for habitat.

Subcriterion A2.c: Other Benefits

Will the project benefit multiple sectors and/or users? Will the project benefit a larger initiative to address sustainability? Project implementation benefits California’s SGMA, a statewide policy focused on achieving groundwater sustainability by 2040. Cawelo developed and is in the process of implementing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) under SGMA. The District’s GSP effort developed minimum thresholds and measurable objectives with consideration

of beneficial uses and users of groundwater through the analysis of past and projected conditions to maintain sustainable groundwater levels as the potential for drought increases and reliability of imported surface water decreases. As the basin is a shared aquifer, users including agricultural, municipal, and industrial will all benefit from Project implementation. Any water brought in by the District will support groundwater levels in the area, which in turn promotes supply reliability for all users and maintains system affordability for disadvantaged communities that are often financially impacted by lowered groundwater levels (e.g., increased pumping and maintenance costs, risk of well failure).

The GSP also includes a water budget that was developed for the District to assess the current conditions of the region. Accordingly, projects and management actions presented in the GSP were developed to balance and enhance the District’s water budget and achieve groundwater sustainability by the required 2040 timeframe under SGMA. This project is directly supported and identified in Section 8 of their GSP as “Increase Recharge and Banking Capacity”⁴. Building capacity for recharge of floodwater and new alternative water sources bolsters the District’s supplies and helps maintain groundwater sustainability, especially with reduced reliability of imported surface water supplies.

1.5.2 Evaluation Criterion B – Planning and Preparedness

Cawelo is a long-standing member of the Poso Creek Integrated Regional Water Management Group (Group). The Group has focused on several planning efforts since its formation in 2007 and recently recognized the need for integrated planning between two California statewide planning efforts and the added component of drought resiliency. Recognizing the need for increased coordination, the Group developed the Poso Creek Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) in collaboration with Reclamation, who approved the plan in 2022. This plan was adopted by the Group in 2023 and is updated every 5 years. Ultimately, the DCP builds off complementary SGMA and IRWM planning to strengthen regional planning coordination efforts. Key aspects of the DCP include established monitoring in coordination with SGMA; expansion of climate assessments to understand drought impacts and vulnerabilities; and identification of mitigation and response actions to build long-term resiliency to drought. Climate change projections are included in Section 3 of the DCP and are based on historical data that indicate warmer and drier conditions will result in lower allocations of the main surface water supplying the region including the CVP and SWP, concluding that drought vulnerabilities will increase as surface water reliability decreases. These projections are based on hydrological factors including rainfall, snowpack, runoff, and reservoir storage. Relevant DCP excerpts are provided in Appendix A. A copy of the DCP may be provided upon request.

The DCP was developed under the direction of USBR to prepare for and better manage water supplies during dry or drought periods with the goal of achieving regional drought resiliency. A

⁴ [2022 Cawelo Groundwater Sustainability Plan](#)

Task Force was formed consisting of all members of the Group and various stakeholders throughout the region for the sole purpose of developing and implementing the DCP through a collaborative process. The Task Force identified several DCP objectives including 1) enhance reliability and effectiveness of surface water supplies delivered to the region, 2) improve regional water conveyance, direct recharge, and in-lieu service action, 3) improve reliability of delivering water supplies to stakeholders, and 4) enhance regional conjunctive water use, all of which are supported by implementation of the proposed Project. Projects that support DCP objectives are considered high priority projects; thus, implementation of this Project is critical in supporting the regional DCP objectives.

In direct support of the DCP effort, Cawelo provided information on in-district drought vulnerability as well as potential mitigation and response actions to be incorporated into the DCP that are specific to the District. During drought, the District is vulnerable to reduction of imported surface water supplies and/or potential reduction in groundwater levels. With climate change, more frequent and severe droughts are expected to be experienced in the region which requires the District to proactively address drought identified vulnerabilities. To do this, the District has developed wet and dry year response actions to address immediate concerns and mitigation actions to be implemented for long-term drought planning. This Project is directly supported by the DCP as it is part of the following listed mitigation actions for the District (Appendix A, Section 4).

- New Water Supply Purchases – Expand the District’s water portfolio to acquire long-term new water purchase contracts and/or establish a water purchase fund if contracts are difficult to secure because of high demand and competition and resulting high costs.
- Increase Recharge and Banking Capacity – Increase recharge capacity to capture and recharge additional wet year high flow waters to store for future use.

By constructing this Project, the District will be able to convey and store a new and reliable water supply acquired to mitigate the impacts of decreased imported water supply. This is achieved by building an additional reservoir, pipeline, and recharge capacity to allow an increase in treated produced water supplies. Notable sections of the DCP pertaining to implementation and support for this Project are included in Appendix A.

1.5.3 Evaluation Criterion C – Severity of Actual or Potential Drought Impacts to be Addressed by the Project

Describe the severity of impacts that will be addressed by the project. Is the project in an area that is currently suffering from drought, or which has recently suffered from drought or water scarcity? On average, drought in the region is experienced six out of every ten years. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, the region where Cawelo resides is not currently experiencing drought as of October 26, 2023. However, while the severe and unprecedented wet year ended California’s third consecutive year of “D4 (Exceptional Drought)”, swings between severe drought periods and extreme wet years are expected to continue. In recent years,

California's Governor has issued the following drought related proclamations and executive orders (EO) since the beginning of the most recent drought.

- Proclamation of a State of Emergency: On May 10, 2021, the California Governor issued a proclamation of a state of emergency declaring drought in over 41 California counties, including Kern County with which the proposed Project and District resides.
- Executive Order No. N-10-21: Adopted in July 2021, this EO asked all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 15 percent compared to their 2020 water use for the duration of the declared emergency.
- Executive Order No. N-7-22: Adopted on March 28, 2022, this EO increases conservation measures and provides new well permitting rules to limit the number of new wells in the state for the duration of the declared emergency.

Several other proclamations followed the initial Proclamation of a State of Emergency on July 8, 2021, and October 19, 2021, declaring a drought emergency. While California has experienced an unprecedented wet year and multiple EOs have been issued for flood diversions as discussed in Section 1.5.1, the State of Emergency Proclamation dated May 10, 2021 remains in full force and effect.

Describe any projected increases to the severity or duration of drought or water scarcity in the project area resulting from changes to water supply availability and climate change.

Availability of imported water supply is largely dependent on climate change conditions. Cawelo's main source of supply is SWP water delivered via the California Aqueduct. With climate change and increased frequencies of drought, SWP reliability has decreased significantly. In early 2022, allocations were cut from 15 percent to 5 percent or even 0 percent for some SWP contractors as California entered year three of drought. Several investigations were conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the California Water Science Center (CAWSC) regarding hydrological effects of climate scenarios in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range (USGS 2009; Water Resources Research, 2012). SWP water supplies are directly affected by the quantities of runoff and recharge in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Each of these investigations predict that California's climate will become warmer (+2° to +4° C) and drier (10-15 percent) during the mid- to late-21st century, relative to historical conditions. These scenarios were based on a commonly accepted projection of 21st century climate from the GFDL CM2.1 (Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Lab Climate Model 2.1) global climate model, responding to assumptions of rapidly increasing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions. The California Energy Commission's Cal-Adapt web site predicts temperature differences in the District service area from a baseline historical average (1961 to 1990) to a projected average (2070 to 2090). The projection shows an increase in annual average temperature of about 3.4°F to 6.1°F under a low carbon and high carbon emission scenario, respectively. If these predictions materialize, the level of runoff from the Sierra Nevada Mountains is expected to be much less reliable, with quantities presumably declining over time. Reduced surface water deliveries for agriculture in the Central Valley, combined with increased demands

for irrigation water due to the increasingly warmer, drier climate, will therefore result in increased use of groundwater. This, in turn, would lead to the following impacts:

- Reduced base flow in streams;
- Reduced groundwater outflows;
- Increased depths to groundwater, and
- Increased land subsidence.

These combined effects have the potential to shift the District from a surface water dominated system, relying on groundwater to supplement years when surface supplies are inadequate to meet demand, to a groundwater dominated system (Water Resources Research, 2012). Implementation of this Project will bring in a new firm source of supply, reducing the impacts of variable imported surface water the District relies on to supply beneficial uses and users. With climate change, the District has limited control of imported supplies. Any alternative sources of supply the District can bring in will reduce dependence on variable surface water supplies and increase drought resiliency.

Additionally, Cawelo's 2020 Agricultural Water Management Plan analyzed the effects of Climate Change and assigned a vulnerability rating with regard to the District's drought resiliency. Overall, the District noted its vulnerability to drought and climate change as 'high', since each year the groundwater elevation lowers, the existing groundwater supply decreases, along with its resiliency. The Project helps to mitigate the impact of drought by storing wet period water for delivery in dry years, so that a portion of the groundwater overdraft is offset.

What are the ongoing or potential drought or water scarcity impacts to specific sectors in the project area if no action is taken, and how severe are those impacts? It is apparent that California experiences extreme drought that impacts water supply reliability throughout the state. California is urging conservation measures and reduction of groundwater usage. If no action is taken and this Project is not implemented, there will be no diversification or increase in quantity of imported supplies, which will leave the District more reliant on groundwater pumping. Increasing the District's supply reliability is critical in their goal of building long-term resiliency to drought. In times of drought, irrigation and municipal agencies often meet shortfalls in surface supplies by pumping groundwater. Implementation of this Project seeks to offset groundwater pumping by bringing in a new and alternative, firm source of supply. In turn, water will be beneficially used to offset pumping or will be diverted to recharge to help maintain groundwater levels.

Whether there are public health concerns or social concerns associated with current or potential conditions? While the District's predominant water use is for agricultural purposes, there are several disadvantaged communities within the region that rely on groundwater as their sole source of supply. Additionally, the economic viability of the region and those communities depend heavily on the effective and efficient use of surface water supplies and groundwater in this shared basin. With drought, it has become increasingly difficult to increase supply reliability since imported surface water supplies are heavily impacted by climate change induced drought. As such,

providing the means to effectively bring in a new, firm source of supply that is not susceptible to drought increases water supply reliability and drought resiliency in the region. Without Project implementation, water supply will not increase which has consequences including increased costs of agricultural production; decreased workforce; and significant local and statewide economic losses. As drought continues to threaten reliability of imported surface supply, the reliance on other supply sources, such as treated produced water, becomes increasingly critical for drought resiliency.

Whether there are local or economic losses associated with current water conditions that are ongoing, occurred in the past, or could occur in the future? If historical drought conditions continue, there could be a loss of prime farmland and reduced agricultural real estate values as a result. Agriculture is reliant on prime farmland, so reduction of water supplies due to drought directly impacts the acres of crops that can be grown. Consequently, reduced supplies create a loss of agriculture, thereby directly impacting the region economically. During the most recent drought, reduced water availability heavily impacted the agricultural industry. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, the agricultural industry employs over 420,000 people and generates more than \$50 billion in annual revenue. With climate change and regulatory constraints, surface water has been limited in recent decades. In 2021, Drought impacts resulted in crop revenue loss and increased pumping costs estimated at \$436 million in the Tulare Lake Basin (where Cawelo resides) and approximately 8,700 full and part-time jobs lost across the state⁵. There are several disadvantaged communities in the region that rely on the agricultural industry for jobs. Failure to increase water supply could result in loss of agricultural production and, in turn, decrease in workforce. While the 2023 wet year ended the most recent drought and helped stabilize supplies, California droughts are cyclical and will continue to impact the area. Proactively implementing projects in anticipation of drought periods will increase long-term drought resiliency and strengthen water supply reliability for all beneficial users and the economic vitality of the region.

1.5.4 Evaluation Criterion D – Presidential and DOI Priorities

Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities. According to the White House Council on Environmental Quality’s interactive Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool, the entire area within Cawelo’s boundaries is classified as disadvantaged. Local communities, including disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the region, rural residences, and businesses utilize groundwater from the Kern County Subbasin (Subbasin) as a source of supply. Currently, Cawelo recharges surplus surface water supplies to groundwater during wet years in spreading ponds across the basins. Recharge activities benefit all users of groundwater in the Subbasin, including DACs, as groundwater is a shared resource. Should climate change result in a reduction in water available from surface supplies, the increased frequency of groundwater storage without the necessary means of replenishing leads to depleted storage. Thus, implementation of this Project

⁵Public Policy Institute of California. Policy Brief: Drought and California’s Agriculture. April 2022. <https://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/policy-brief-drought-and-californias-agriculture.pdf>

will support the District’s effort to maintain and replenish groundwater through diversifying imported supply and enhancing recharge activities, which increases their conjunctive use program for the benefit of all users within the District. When groundwater levels are reduced, communities are faced with higher groundwater pumping cost and risks of well failure with prohibitive replacement costs, which decreases drinking water supply reliability. Direct benefits to DACs from increasing groundwater levels through recharge include supply reliability, drought resiliency, and system affordability.

1.5.5 Evaluation Criterion E – Readiness to Proceed and Project Implementation

Describe the implementation plan of the proposed project. Please include estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates. The Project schedule is presented in Table 3. Project construction is expected to begin May 2026, following completion of a successful permitting process, with an anticipated completion date of May 2027. The Project is not expected to deviate from Reclamation’s proposed schedule of a construction start date of October 31, 2024, and a completion within the 24-month duration. Construction will not start until after the District receives a notice to proceed from Reclamation’s grant officer confirming the completion of the environmental review and the construction component has completed the bid process.

Table 3. Project Schedule

Milestone	Estimated Start Date	Estimated Finish Date
Grant Administration	October 2024	August 2027
Project Reporting	October 2024	August 2027
Design and Project Layout	August 2023	April 2026
Environmental Documentation & Regulatory Compliance	October 2024	November 2025
Permits & Approval	November 2025	April 2026
Construction	May 2026	May 2027
Construction Administration & Management	May 2026	May 2027

Cawelo will own, operate, and maintain the Project for the benefit of its landowners. During Project development, the District will work closely with consultants, contractors, and vendors to implement each component. As previously mentioned, the District has completed several previous treated recharge projects and has a good understanding for successful implementation of the Project. All Project work is expected to be completed by October 2026. The following is a description of tasks to be completed under the proposed Project.

- **Grant Administration** – Coordination of all Project activities, including budget, schedule, communication, and grant and cost-share administration.

- **Project Reporting** – Report on project financial status on a semi-annual basis and prepare significant development reports and a Final Project Report. In addition, the Project will comply with any other reporting requirements specified in the potential grant agreement between Cawelo and Reclamation.
- **Design and Project Layout**– Design is expected to be similar to previous treated produced water projects in the District. In preparation of this funding application, preliminary design for the reservoir, conveyance pipeline, and recharge site were completed by one of the District’s professional services consultants in October 2023. The District will coordinate development and completion of design, plans and specifications for bidding the Construction components with their local design consultant. See Appendix B for preliminary design documentation.
- **Environmental Documentation and Regulatory Compliance** – The project will require compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). For the NEPA environmental compliance work, Cawelo proposes to work with the NEPA Reclamation team to determine what level of NEPA is required, including a Categorical Exclusion Checklist or an Environmental Assessment Document. For both efforts, Cawelo will retain a consultant to help prepare the appropriate document, including conducting cultural and biological surveys to support the CEQA and NEPA document. Prior to commencing earth-disturbing activities, Cawelo will complete pre-activity biological surveys by a qualified biologist and participate in an Awareness Program that describes habitats within the project area.
- **Permits & Approval** – The engineer and contractor will collaborate to obtain needed permits. Specific, anticipated permits are discussed in detail below.
- **Construction** – The Project involves the construction of a 33-AF reservoir followed by an 18-inch pipeline that will be connected to the 24-acre recharge site proposed for construction. The proposed Project includes several construction components that can be contracted within one overall construction contract, including equipment mobilization, earthwork for excavation and levee construction of the reservoir as well as construction of the pipeline and recharge site. Construction activities include mobilization and demobilization; site preparation; pipeline placement; and excavation and levee construction for the reservoir.
- **Construction Administration and Management** – The District or its representative will be performing all construction administration and management for all components of the Project. District staff or consultants will conduct necessary construction management, administration, reporting, and coordination with local firms needed to comply with all grant requirements. Construction Administration involves everything from the solicitation of bids from qualified contractors to filing a Notice of Completion for the Project and preparation of “As-Builts” drawings. Construction Management activities can generally be

categorized as field observation and contract administration, where the latter includes items such as the Notice to Proceed, pre-construction conference, correspondence with the Contractor, submittal review, progress payments, periodic meetings with the Contractor, Contract Change Orders, etc.

Describe any permits that will be required, along with the process for obtaining such permits.

It is anticipated that the proposed Project will be located exclusively within property owned by Cawelo or property that Cawelo would have access through via land purchase or easements. As design plans and specifications are further developed, the District will engage Reclamation and local agencies to ensure all required permits, reviews, and special approvals are met prior to construction. It is anticipated that only two permits related to construction will be required and application will be made for these permits prior to construction commencing.

1. **National Pollutant Elimination System (NPDES) Permit** – Application will be made to the State Water Resource Control Board for an NPDES permit related to storm water discharges from construction activities (such as clearing, grading, excavating, and stockpiling). A Notice of Intent (NOI) will be submitted certifying that all permit eligibility conditions have been met. As part of the preparation of an NOI, a State Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) will be developed and implemented during construction of the Project. The SWPPP will spell out Best Management Practices to prevent waste and pollutants from flowing to surface water and groundwater. This permit will be obtained by the contractor immediately prior to construction and is expected to take a duration of approximately four months.
2. **PM-10 Dust Control Permit** – Application will be made to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control Board for a PM-10 Dust Management Plan permit. This permit will require that a dust control management plan be prepared and implemented during construction to prevent air pollution. This permit will be obtained by the contractor immediately prior to construction and is expected to take a duration of approximately four months.

It is noted that the District is not subject to the County’s jurisdiction regarding building and grading permits. Accordingly, no County-issued permits will be required. The District will comply with CEQA and NEPA before commencing any ground disturbing activities. It is anticipated that if required, the CEQA process will include preparing reports and documentation, and public noticing. CEQA is anticipated to take approximately a year and would likely be completed concurrently with the NEPA process. This process is expected to commence shortly after notification if selected for an award. The District expects to work closely with Reclamation’s staff to fulfill NEPA requirements. Additionally, a pre-activity survey and constructor worker awareness training will be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to the start of construction.

In addition to the two required permits required prior to construction the District is also in the process of obtaining Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) permit through California’s Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board). Approximate timeline to receive the WDR after Report of Waste Discharge (RWD) is anticipated as 1 year once submitted to the Regional Board.

Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project. Cawelo has completed a preliminary design of the Project, which includes one design drawing package, including both the layout and installation of new reservoir, conveyance pipeline and recharge site, included as Appendix B. The District intends to move forward with the Project with the assistance of consulting firms already under professional services contracts regarding grant administration, reporting, environmental document support, design, cost estimating, and construction management services. The final design and specifications will support the construction components through an advertised and competitively bid process to select a construction contractor.

Describe any land purchases that must occur before the project can be implemented. No land purchases are required. The District owns the land for the proposed Project site.

Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project. The policies and administration actions are not new for this Project, they will follow along similar planning and permitting process as previous permitted projects.

1.5.6 Evaluation Criterion F – Nexus to Reclamation

Describe the nexus between the proposed project and a Reclamation project or Reclamation activity. The proposed Project location is in Kern County, east of Reclamation’s Friant Kern Canal (FKC). Cawelo has completed a pipeline connection from the FKC to their existing Famoso Spreading Basins and is in the process of engineering a new turnout structure and pump station that will allow the District to divert water from the FKC for direct recharge for the benefit of both the District and its neighboring banking partners. While Cawelo is not a long-term CVP contractor, USBR has historically made annual contracts available to non-CVP contractors for the purchase and diversion of “Section 215” water, which is generally characterized as un-storable and unmanaged flood flows of short duration. Cawelo has received some wet period surface water from the FKC for their own supplemental water use and through banking agreements with other neighboring CVP contractors who are participants in the Poso Creek IRWM Plan. The neighboring CVP contractors receive both Class 1 and Class 2 allocations through the FKC. Additionally, the CVP contractors often purchase and divert “Section 215” water when available as well. The proposed Project will diversify the District’s water portfolio and become a permanent part of Cawelo’s water supply that will enhance the use of the groundwater and reduce reliance on “Section 215” water. In turn, this benefits CVP contractors as it lessens the competition and frees up the availability of potential “Section 215” water.

Additionally, Cawelo's Project will add a source of supply that will benefit the region's groundwater conditions, including neighboring CVP contractors within the CVP Place of Use. As previously discussed, the Kern County Subbasin is a shared basin where recharge benefits are experienced by all beneficial users. By adding a new source of supply, Cawelo can divert water for direct beneficial use, which reduces the need to extract groundwater, or can recharge the imported supply in proposed recharge site. Both activities reduce groundwater pumping activities which, in turn help maintain groundwater levels. With SGMA, maintaining groundwater levels is crucial in avoiding undesirable results, both within the District and with its neighboring CVP contractors. Thus, benefits of implementing this project are realized by both the District and neighboring CVP contractors.

1.5.7 Evaluation Criterion G – Stakeholder Support for Proposed Project

Describe the level of stakeholder support for the proposed project. Are letters of support from stakeholders provided? Are any stakeholders providing support for the project through cost-share contributions or through other types of contributions to the project? Explain whether the project is supported by a diverse set of stakeholders, as appropriate, given the types of interested stakeholders within the project area and the scale, type, and complexity of the proposed project. As previously mentioned, this Project is supported by the 2019 Poso Creek IRWM Plan Update, the Poso Creek DCP, and Cawelo's GSP developed under SGMA and is critical for enhancing groundwater sustainability and drought resiliency in the region. Each of these planning efforts entailed a collaborative regional and basin wide effort ranging across agricultural, industrial, and municipal sectors. A letter of support is provided by the Poso Creek IRWM Group (Appendix C) who developed both the 2019 Poso Creek IRWM Plan and the Poso Creek DCP. Cawelo is a member of the Poso Creek IRWM Group, which is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders including water districts, multiple DACs, and one conservation district.

Additionally, all participating members of the Poso Creek IRWM Group are involved in the SGMA process and have collaborated with and supported Cawelo in its efforts to achieve groundwater sustainability. Since the basin is a shared aquifer, there are multiple complementary planning efforts that overlap and include a wide range of stakeholder support to support the sustainable management of water resources that support all beneficial users.

2. Project Budget

The mandatory Budget Narrative and Budget Detail are uploaded into Grants.gov with the submission of this application. A summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal Funding Sources

Funding Sources	Funding Amount
Non-Federal Entities	
1. Cawelo Water District	\$1,342,111
<i>Non-Federal Subtotal:</i>	\$1,342,111
Requested Reclamation Funding:	\$1,342,111

3. Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

The following section summarizes Cawelo’s approach to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any potential environmental impacts related to the construction of the proposed Project. The following paragraphs address the specific questions posted in the Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance section of the NOFO.

Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? Please briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. Please also explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts.

The extent of construction activities (footprint) is relatively small for this Project and located within property owned by Cawelo. At this time, the District is not aware of any part of this Project that will have a significant impact on soil, air, water, or animal habitat, since all work will be on actively disturbed property. However, all applicable environmental compliance measures will be followed, to ensure no improper disturbances are made to the environment and animal life. Such environmental measures include executing the PM-10 Dust Control Plan, Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, and the necessary biological site surveys.

Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?

Cawelo is aware that threatened and endangered species exist in the Southern San Joaquin Valley. The FWS Endangered Species Database listed several threatened and endangered species within Kern County. However, based on experience and federally listed species mapping, no endangered species habitats have been found within the Project’s footprint.

Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “Waters of the United States?” If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.

No.

When was the water delivery system constructed?

As discussed in Cawelo’s 2020 Agricultural Water Management Plan, Cawelo’s main canal and pipeline distribution system and related works were originally completed in 1975, with additional features and enlargements (e.g., pumping stations, discharge pipelines, and reservoir systems) constructed since that time.

Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.

There will be no modifications to the existing irrigation distribution system.

Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?

No. Cawelo will contract with a private cultural resources management consultant after coordinating with Reclamation staff to determine what, if any previous cultural resources surveys have been conducted in the project area. The District currently does not expect to encounter any obstacles in receiving clearance.

Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?

No. Since the Project area has been disturbed previously for the construction of farm roads, fields, and other local facilities, it is expected that there will be no obstacles to receipt of clearance with respect to archeological sites. In addition, the District is prepared to implement any necessary mitigation measures should cultural resources be identified.

Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations?

No. Construction of the project will support the important agricultural-based economy in the Southern San Joaquin Valley and should have only positive impacts on low income or minority populations in the region.

Will the proposed project limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands?

No.

Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?

No.

4. Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

In terms of costs and activities, no overlap exists between this Project and any other active or proposed projects. David Ansolabehere, General Manager of Cawelo, will serve as Project Manager for this Project. Similarly, Mr. Ansolabehere will serve as Project Manager for other projects previously or to be submitted to Reclamation for funding. This proposal does not duplicate any proposal that has been or is anticipated to be submitted for funding Federal or non-Federal funding.

5. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

At the time of submission of this proposal, no actual or potential conflict of interest exists.

6. Uniform Audit Reporting Statement

The Applicant was not required to submit a Single Audit for the most recently closed fiscal year.

7. SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activity

The District does not participate in lobbying activities and will therefore not be submitting an SF-LLL at this time. This District has not made nor has agreed to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered Federal action.

Further, the District is submitting with this application form SF-424. As stated in the NOFO, the signature on the SF-424 represents the required certifications regarding lobbying.

8. Official Resolution

If selected, Cawelo will provide an official resolution adopted by their board of directors, committing the applicant to the financial and legal obligations associated with receipt of an award under Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) No. R24AS00007.

9. Letters of Funding Commitment

Cawelo Water District is the sole entity responsible for providing cost-share funding.

10. Unique Entity Identifier & System of Award Management (SAM)

The District is providing this screen shot (below) of their account as sufficient verification of an open and active System of Award Management (SAM) account with their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number displayed.

Additionally, the UEI is provided on the SF-424 form.

CAWELo WATER DISTRICT ● Active Registration			Entity
Unique Entity ID	CAGE Code	Physical Address	Expiration Date
F769KBLENNM3	6DRZ8	17207 INDUSTRIAL FARM RD, BAKERSFIELD, CA 93308 USA	Jan 23, 2024
			Purpose of Registration Federal Assistance Awards