VENTURA REGIONAL SANITATION DISTRICT
4105 WEST GONZALES ROAD, OXNARD, CA 93036-2748
A Public Waste Management Agency

October 15, 2026

Board of Directors
Ventura Regional Sanitation District
Ventura, California

AUTHORIZE AND APPROVE ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $63,000 FOR LEBEAU THELEN LLP FOR LEGAL SERVICES RELATED TO THE COMPREHENSIVE GROUNDWATER ADJUDICATION CASE, OPV COALITION, ET AL. V. FOX CANYON GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY, ET AL., SANTA BARBARA SUPERIOR COURT CASE NO. VENCI00555357.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Authorize and approve additional funding pursuant to the September 15, 2026, engagement letter with LeBeau Thelen for legal services in an amount not to exceed $63,000 regarding *OPV Coalition et al. v. Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency, et al.*, Santa Barbara Superior Court Case VENCI00555357.

FISCAL IMPACT

An allocation of $63,000 is necessary to cover these attorney fees and litigation costs as they were not anticipated nor included in the Adopted FY 2026-27 Budget. While the expenditure is attributed to the Bailard Landfill, the funding for this activity would come via a transfer from Toland Landfill Available Fund balance or Assigned Reserves (depending on ending balances for FY 2026) as the Bailard Landfill fund lacks available funding.

BACKGROUND

On May 15, 2025, the Ventura Regional Sanitation District (VRSD) Board approved an engagement letter with LeBeau Thelen LLP, a law firm in Bakersfield, CA with water rights litigation expertise, for the subject of legal services. So far, $54,350 has been paid on this case, which includes the retainer fee of $3,500 and is being held in trust by the law firm for the District's account. An estimated $63,000 in additional legal fees is required to continue this multi-phased groundwater rights adjudication or lawsuit which should be sufficient to cover the law firm's costs up to the Water Rights phase of the trial which is set for April 2028. This figure does not include expert fees which have yet to be determined as necessary for VRSD's groundwater rights.

Given that the District has a need for water from the Oxnard Pleasant Valley groundwater basin for regulatory compliance purposes at its facilities and currently lacks the information necessary to perform a cost-benefit assessment of participation in the *OPV*

Coalition et al. v. Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency, et al., Santa Barbara Superior Court Case VENCI00555357 and the groundwater right associated with overlying land ownership that is one of the primary issues of this groundwater adjudication case. VRSD staff recommends the District's continued participation in this case.

PROPOSAL

Staff recommends that the Board approve an additional amount of $63,000 for LeBeau Thelen, LLP, for its water litigation counsel in this subject matter.

This letter has been reviewed by Legal Counsel as to form.

If you should have any questions or need additional information, please contact Eric Zetz by phone at (805) 658-4648 or email at ericzetz@vrsd.com.

APPROVED FOR FISCAL IMPACT: _____
Tina Rivera, Director of Finance/ Administrative Services

APPROVED FOR AGENDA: _____
Eric Zetz, General Manager

Attachments: None