

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
DES MOINES, IOWA**

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 96-491
NOVEMBER 18, 1996 AGENDA**

SUBJECT:	TYPE:	SUBMITTED BY:
MERCURY TOXICITY STUDY— DES MOINES RIVER WATERSHED	◆ RESOLUTION ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	HAROLD E. SMITH CITY ENGINEER

SYNOPSIS —

An agreement has been negotiated with the engineering firm of Montgomery Watson Americas to provide engineering services for a Mercury Toxicity Study Project. The proposed agreement is on a cost plus fixed fee arrangement and provides for general engineering services. The proposed fee for general engineering services is \$91,846 plus a fixed fee of \$8,154 which results in a total maximum fee of \$100,000 for this agreement.

FISCAL IMPACT —

Funding for this project is provided for on page 268 of the 1996-97 CIP. A United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) grant in the amount of \$95,000 has been awarded to the City of Des Moines to assist in funding this project. The remaining costs will be paid from sewer user fees.

RECOMMENDATION —

Approval of the proposed Engineering Agreement with Montgomery Watson Americas.

BACKGROUND —

On June 17, 1996, by Roll Call No. 96-2228, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute and file an application on behalf of the City of Des Moines with the United States Government for a grant to aid in the study of mercury toxicity in the Des Moines River watershed in Des Moines. The USEPA had advised that federal grant funds were available to communities for the purpose of performing water quality studies of the nation's watersheds. The Des Moines project was in competition with many other similar projects in EPA Region 7 and was selected by EPA as the only project in the State of Iowa to qualify for such funds. A 95 percent project cost grant in the amount of \$95,000 was awarded to the City of Des Moines on October 4, 1996 to assist the City in funding the project.

The project is necessary to provide data for a determination on the proposed mercury limits in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued to the City of Des Moines for wastewater treatment activities pursuant to the requirements of the Federal Clean Water Act. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has issued an NPDES permit to the Des Moines WRA wastewater treatment facility which has been appealed because of certain restrictive requirements. The IDNR has proposed a revised NPDES permit that continues to contain restrictive standards in particular for mercury concentration in the effluent discharged into the Des Moines River from the WRA wastewater treatment plant. Since historical data has indicated the presence of mercury in measurable quantities in the Des Moines River and in the effluent of the treatment facility, the permit further requires the City to perform a site specific water quality toxicity study to determine: a) if the

levels of mercury are valid or of concern; b) if a modified water quality standard and hence permit limit would be appropriate to locate potential sources of mercury in the collection system; and c) to devise a means to control these sources.

This study will provide sufficient data to make the necessary determination regarding the mercury limitations in the proposed NPDES permit at a minimum local cost and will serve to provide compliance with the permit requirements.