

**Association of Bay Area Governments
ABAG Administrative Committee**

October 10, 2025

Agenda Item 7d

**Contract Amendment - Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) Evaluation,
Measurement, and Valuation Services: Grounded Research (\$775,000)**

Subject:

Authorization to negotiate and enter into a third amendment for the Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) with Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC contract, to provide an additional \$775,000 for a total contract amount not to exceed \$1,878,513 for services for BayREN evaluation, measurement, and verification studies through December 31, 2027.

Background:

Since 2013, the Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN) has implemented a portfolio of energy efficiency programs across the region. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) serves as the program administrator and lead agency for a 10-member unincorporated association of local government entities. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) first authorized funding for BayREN in Decision 12-11-015. Most recently, on July 3, 2023, the CPUC issued D.23-06-055 approving BayREN's strategic business plan for eight years (2024-2031) and four-year program portfolio for 2024-2027, with an accompanying budget of approximately \$157 million.

BayREN is authorized by the CPUC to conduct evaluation, measurement, and verification (EM&V) studies of its programs, processes, and other aspects related to administration of energy efficiency programs. Further, EM&V consultants are authorized to conduct market research, focus groups, and other activities to understand if BayREN programs are serving those they intend to serve. BayREN also needs professional services to help develop compliance metrics as well as assist with ensuring proper reporting of said metrics.

On August 30, 2022, ABAG released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking Statements of Qualification (SOQ) to provide EM&V studies and support. The scope of services sought included conducting process evaluations, evaluability studies to ensure proper collection of program data, market studies to understand gaps in the market and how to better serve target audiences, and assistance with metrics tracking and development.

Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC, (Grounded) was ranked first out of the three proposers who responded to the RFQ. Based on that scoring, Grounded was awarded a contract to provide EM&V services for BayREN in 2023 and 2024, with a contract amount of \$500,000. Their contract was amended in 2023 to add \$228,513 to the budget, and again in 2024 to extend the contract through 2025 and add an additional \$375,000. The scope of work included developing program and portfolio metrics, assisting with proper tracking and reporting of metrics, and conducting market research and process evaluations to assist BayREN programs to better meet their objectives. Grounded's performance over this period has been exemplary.

BayREN will need ongoing EM&V services in 2026 and 2027 to support both its continuing programs and development of the EM&V-related portions of its 2028-2035 Business Plan.

As a result, staff recommend amending the current contract to extend it through December 2027 and to add \$775,000 to the contract budget.

Issues:

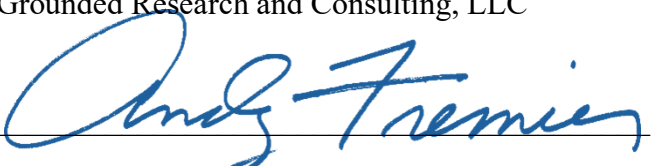
None identified.

Recommendations:

The ABAG Administrative Committee, acting for the ABAG Executive Board, is requested to authorize the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on behalf of the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Bay Area Regional Energy Network, to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment, in the amount of \$775,000, with Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$1,878,513 for evaluation, measurement, and verification studies for BayREN programs through December 31, 2027.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Small Business Enterprise Status
- Attachment B: Summary Approval – Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC


Andrew B. Fremier

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise and Small Business Enterprise Status

	Firm Name	Role on Project	DBE* Yes / No	If DBE Yes, List #	SBE** Yes / No	If SBE Yes, List #
Prime Contractor	Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC	EM&V Studies and Support	No	N/A	Yes	2000724
Subcontractor	Verdant Associates, LLC	Evaluation Support	No	N/A	Yes	2020343
Subcontractor	CivicMakers, LLC	Evaluation Support	No	N/A	Yes	2004377

*Denotes certification by the California Unified Certification Program (CUCP).

**Denotes certification by the State of California.

Request for Committee Approval

Summary of Proposed Contract Amendment

Work Item No.: 1721 (NFSN 2307)

Consultant: Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC
Oakland, CA 94611

Work Project Title: Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN)

Purpose of Project: Implement a portfolio of energy and water efficiency programs across the region.

Brief Scope of Work: Conduct evaluation, measurement, and verification (EM&V) of BayREN programs and develop performance metrics as mandated by the CPUC.

Project Cost Not to Exceed: \$1,878,513

Funding Source: PG&E (ratepayer funds) as directed by the CPUC

Fiscal Impact: Funds programmed in FY 22-23, FY 23-24, FY 24-25, FY 25-26, FY26-27 and FY27-28 Budgets

Motion by Committee: The ABAG Administrative Committee, acting for the ABAG Executive Board, is requested to authorize the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission on behalf of the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Bay Area Regional Energy Network, to negotiate and enter into a contract amendment, in the amount of \$775,000, with Grounded Research and Consulting, LLC, in an amount not to exceed \$1,878,513 for evaluation, measurement, and verification studies for BayREN programs through December 31, 2027.

ABAG Administrative
Committee:

Belia Ramos, President

Approved: October 10, 2025