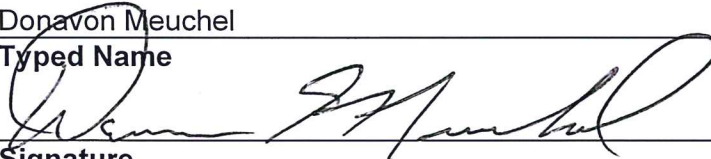


## CONTRACT NUMBER AM-881-23

<b>Administrator:</b>	State of North Dakota Public Service Commission State Capitol - 12th Floor Bismarck, ND 58505-0480 (701) 328-2400
 _____ <b>Steven Kahl</b> Executive Director	<u>6/30/23</u> _____ <b>Date</b>

<b>Contractor</b>		
Earth Energy & Water Systems, Inc.		
<b>Name</b>		
3890 Judson Street	New Salem, ND 58563	701-843-8479
<b>Address</b>	<b>City/State/Zip</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Donavon Meuchel	Owner/President	
<b>Typed Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	
	J 44R 9 - 2023	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>	

<b>Agreement Information</b>	
Case No.:	<u>AM-23-073</u>
Contract No.:	<u>AM-881-23</u>
Start Date:	<u>Upon execution</u>
End Date:	<u>December 31, 2023</u>
Program Title:	<u>AML Reclamation</u>
<b>Type of Contract:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fixed Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Cost Reimb.	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

<b>Budget Information</b>	
Cost Center:	<u>9000</u>
Services:	<u>Construction Services</u>
Expenses:	<u>\$326,500</u>
ID	<u>Case No. AM-23-073</u>
<b>Type of Contractor:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/> Partnership
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Agency
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Organization	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

This Contract is entered into between the State of North Dakota acting through the Public Service Commission (State) and **Earth Energy & Water Systems, Inc.** (Contractor). This Contract consists of this sheet, general provisions and specific provisions.

## GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Parties to this Contract (Contract) are the State of North Dakota, acting through its Public Service Commission (STATE) and **Earth Energy & Water Systems, Inc.** having its principal place of business at 3890 Judson Street, New Salem, ND 58563 (CONTRACTOR);

### 1. SCOPE OF WORK

CONTRACTOR, in exchange for the compensation paid by STATE under this Contract, shall provide the work as described in Section 6, SPECIFIC PROVISIONS and ATTACHMENTS in the 2023 Exploratory Drilling AML Project Invitation for Bid.

### 2. COMPENSATION

#### Contractual Amount

STATE shall pay for the accepted services provided by CONTRACTOR under this Contract an amount not to exceed **Three Hundred Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred dollars (\$326,500)** (Contractual Amount).

The Contractual Amount is firm for the duration of this Contract and constitutes the entire compensation due CONTRACTOR for performance of its obligations under this Contract regardless of the difficulty, materials or equipment required, including fees, licenses, overhead, profit and all other direct and indirect costs incurred by CONTRACTOR, except as provided by an amendment to this Contract.

#### Payment

- A. Payment made in accordance with this Compensation section shall constitute payment in full for the services and work performed and the deliverables and work(s) provided under this Contract and CONTRACTOR shall not receive any additional compensation hereunder.
- B. STATE shall make payment under this Contract within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of an approved invoice.
- C. Payment of an invoice by STATE will not prejudice STATE's right to object to or question that or any other invoice or matter in relation thereto. CONTRACTOR's invoice will be subject to reduction for amounts included in any invoice or payment made which are determined by STATE, on the basis of audits conducted in accordance with the terms of this Contract, not to constitute allowable costs. At STATE's sole discretion, all payments must be subject to reduction for amounts equal to prior overpayments to CONTRACTOR.
- D. For any amount that is or will become due and payable to STATE by CONTRACTOR, STATE reserves the right to deduct the amount owed from payments that are or will become due and payable to CONTRACTOR under this Contract.

#### Travel

CONTRACTOR acknowledges travel costs are covered by the Contractual Amount and shall not invoice STATE for travel costs.

#### Prepayment

STATE will not make any advance payments before performance by CONTRACTOR under this Contract.

#### Payment of Taxes by STATE

STATE is not responsible for and will not pay local, state, or federal taxes. STATE sales tax exemption number is E-2001. STATE will furnish certificates of exemption upon request by CONTRACTOR.

#### Taxpayer ID

CONTRACTOR shall provide STATE with its federal employer ID number and North Dakota tax ID number upon executing this Contract.

### **Purchasing Card**

STATE may make a payment using a government credit card. CONTRACTOR will accept a government credit card without passing the processing fees for the government credit card back to STATE.

### **3. TERM OF CONTRACT**

This Contract **begins upon complete execution of the contract by all Parties and ends on December 31, 2023.**

#### **No Automatic Renewal**

This Contract will not automatically renew. If STATE intends to renew this Contract, STATE shall provide written notice to CONTRACTOR of STATE's intent to renew this Contract before the scheduled termination date.

#### **Extension Option**

STATE reserves the right to extend this Contract for an additional period of time, not to exceed six (6) months, beyond the current termination date of this Contract.

#### **Renewal Option**

STATE may renew this Contract upon satisfactory completion of the initial Contract term. STATE reserves the right to execute up to one (1) option to renew this Contract under the same terms and conditions for a period of six (6) months.

### **4. TIME OF PERFORMANCE**

The project performance period is from July 5, 2023, to August 18, 2023. STATE will issue a Notice to Proceed to begin the performance period. CONTRACTOR shall return an acknowledged copy of the Notice to Proceed to STATE. If work cannot begin on the date specified in the Notice to Proceed, CONTRACTOR shall provide a written explanation of the reasons for the delay with a written request for an alternate firm start date. The performance period will not be extended without a written request by CONTRACTOR and approval by the Commission's Project Manager. Failure to provide services required by this contract within the time specified may result in contract termination.

### **5. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE**

CONTRACTOR hereby acknowledges that time is of the essence for performance under this Contract unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Parties.

### **6. TERMINATION OF CONTRACT**

#### **Termination by Mutual Agreement**

This Contract may be terminated in whole or in part without cause by mutual consent of both Parties executed in writing. The parties shall agree upon the termination conditions including the effective date and, in the case of partial terminations, that portion to be terminated.

#### **Early Termination in the Public Interest**

STATE is entering into this Contract for the purpose of carrying out the public policy of the State of North Dakota, as determined by its Governor, Legislative Assembly, Agencies and Courts. If this Contract ceases to further the public policy of the State of North Dakota, STATE, in its sole discretion, by written notice to CONTRACTOR, may terminate this Contract in whole or in part.

#### **Termination for Lack of Funding or Authority**

STATE, by written notice to CONTRACTOR, may terminate the whole or any part of this Contract under any of the following conditions:

- A. If funding from federal, state or other sources is not obtained or continued at levels sufficient to allow for work performed or purchases of the services or goods in the indicated quantities or term.

- B. If federal or state laws or rules are modified or interpreted in a way that the services or goods are no longer allowable or appropriate for purchase under this Contract or are no longer eligible for the funding proposed for payments authorized by this Contract.
- C. If any license, permit, or certificate required by law or rule, or by the terms of this Contract, is for any reason denied, revoked, suspended or not renewed.

Termination of this Contract under this subsection is without prejudice to any obligations or liabilities of either Party already accrued prior to termination.

#### **Termination for Cause**

STATE may terminate this Contract effective upon delivery of written notice to CONTRACTOR, or any later date stated in the notice:

- A. If CONTRACTOR fails to provide services or goods required by this Contract within the time specified or any extension agreed to in writing by STATE; **or**
- B. If CONTRACTOR fails to perform any of the other provisions of this Contract, or so fails to pursue the work as to endanger performance of this Contract in accordance with its terms.

The rights and remedies of STATE provided in this subsection are not exclusive and are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under this Contract.

### **7. FORCE MAJEURE**

Neither Party shall be held responsible for delay or default caused by fire, riot, terrorism, pandemic (excluding COVID-19), acts of God or war if the event was not foreseeable through the exercise of reasonable diligence by the affected Party, the event is beyond the Party's reasonable control, and the affected Party gives notice to the other Party promptly upon occurrence of the event causing the delay or default or that is reasonably expected to cause a delay or default. If CONTRACTOR is the affected Party and does not resume performance within fifteen (15) days or another period agreed between the Parties, then STATE may seek all available remedies, up to and including termination of this Contract pursuant to its Termination Section, and STATE shall be entitled to a pro-rata refund of any amounts paid for which the full value has not been realized, including amounts paid toward software subscriptions, maintenance, or licenses.

### **8. INDEMNIFICATION**

CONTRACTOR agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the State of North Dakota, its agencies, officers and employees (State), from claims resulting from the performance of CONTRACTOR or its agent, including all costs, expenses and attorneys' fees, which may in any manner result from or arise out of this agreement, except claims based upon STATE's sole negligence or intentional misconduct. The legal defense provided by CONTRACTOR to STATE under this provision must be free of any conflicts of interest, even if retention of separate legal counsel for STATE is necessary. Any attorney appointed to represent STATE must first qualify as and be appointed by the North Dakota Attorney General as a Special Assistant Attorney General as required under N.D.C.C. § 54-12-08. CONTRACTOR also agrees to reimburse STATE for all costs, expenses and attorneys' fees incurred in establishing and litigating the indemnification coverage provided herein. This obligation shall continue after the termination of this agreement.

### **9. INSURANCE**

**Required Coverages.** CONTRACTOR shall secure and keep in force during the term of this agreement and CONTRACTOR shall require all subcontractors, prior to commencement of an agreement between CONTRACTOR and the subcontractor, to secure and keep in force during the term of this agreement, from insurance companies, government self-insurance pools or government self-retention funds authorized to do business in North Dakota, the following insurance coverages:

- A. Commercial general liability, including premises or operations, contractual and products or completed operations coverages (if applicable), with minimum liability limits of **\$1,625,000** per occurrence.

- B. Automobile liability, including Owned (if any), Hired and Non-Owned automobiles, with minimum liability limits of **\$406,250** per person and **\$1,625,000** per occurrence.
- C. Workers' compensation coverage meeting all statutory requirements. The policy shall provide coverage for all states of operation that apply to the performance of this Contract.
- D. Employer's liability or "stop-gap" insurance of not less than **\$1,625,000** as an endorsement on the workers compensation or commercial general liability insurance.

**General Insurance Requirements.** The insurance coverages listed above must meet the following additional requirements:

- A. Any deductible or self-insured retention amount or other similar obligation under the policies shall be the sole responsibility of CONTRACTOR. The amount of any deductible or self-retention is subject to approval by STATE.
- B. This insurance may be in policy or policies of insurance, primary and excess, including the so-called umbrella or catastrophe form and must be placed with insurers rated "A-" or better by A.M. Best Company, Inc., provided any excess policy follows form for coverage. Less than an "A-" rating must be approved by STATE. The policies shall be in form and terms approved by STATE.
- C. STATE will be defended, indemnified, and held harmless to the full extent of any coverage actually secured by CONTRACTOR in excess of the minimum requirements set forth above. The duty to indemnify STATE under this agreement shall not be limited by the insurance required in this Contract.
- D. The State of North Dakota and its agencies, officers, and employees (STATE) shall be endorsed on the commercial general liability policy on a primary and noncontributory basis, including any excess policies (to the extent applicable), as additional insured. STATE shall have all the benefits, rights and coverages of an additional insured under these policies that shall not be limited to the minimum limits of insurance required by this Contract or by the contractual indemnity obligations of CONTRACTOR.
- E. The insurance required in this agreement, through a policy or endorsement, shall include:
  - i. A "Waiver of Subrogation" waiving any right to recovery the insurance company may have against STATE;
  - ii. A provision that CONTRACTOR's insurance coverage shall be primary (i.e. pay first) as respects any insurance, self-insurance or self-retention maintained by STATE, and that any insurance, self-insurance or self-retention maintained by STATE shall be in excess of CONTRACTOR's insurance and shall not contribute with it;
  - iii. Cross liability/severability of interest for all policies and endorsements;
  - iv. The legal defense provided to STATE under the policy and any endorsements must be free of any conflicts of interest, even if retention of separate legal counsel for STATE is necessary;
  - v. The insolvency or bankruptcy of the insured CONTRACTOR shall not release the insurer from payment under the policy, even when such insolvency or bankruptcy prevents the insured CONTRACTOR from meeting the retention limit under the policy.
- F. CONTRACTOR shall furnish a certificate of insurance to the undersigned State representative prior to commencement of this agreement. All endorsements shall be provided as soon as practicable.
- G. Failure to provide insurance as required in this Contract is a material breach of Contract entitling STATE to terminate this Contract immediately.
- H. CONTRACTOR shall provide at least 30-day notice of any cancellation or material change to the policies or endorsements. CONTRACTOR shall provide on an ongoing basis, current certificates of insurance during the term of the contract. A renewal certificate will be provided 10 days prior to coverage expiration.

**Pollution Liability.** CONTRACTOR shall provide CONTRACTOR's Pollution Liability coverage for Personal Injury, Property Damage and Cleanup Cost arising from pollution conditions caused by the operations of CONTRACTOR for limits of **\$2,000,000**. Occurrence coverage is preferred but coverage may be provided

on a claims-made form that includes a three-year tail coverage endorsement. Coverage shall include contractual liability coverage for claims arising out of liability of subcontractors, loading and unloading, unlimited complete operations, and non-owned disposal site coverage.

## 10. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

CONTRACTOR shall keep informed of and comply with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and other legal requirements governing the safety, health, sanitation, and performance of the Contract in general. In addition, CONTRACTOR shall provide, inspect and maintain all safeguards, safety devices, protective equipment, safety programs and other needed actions CONTRACTOR determines necessary to reasonably protect the life, health and property of CONTRACTOR, subcontractors, STATE, the public and each of the employees, officers, assigns and agents of CONTRACTOR, subcontractors and STATE, in connection with the performance of work resulting from or arising out of the Contract.

CONTRACTOR shall have a written safety program to be used as guidelines and direction for CONTRACTOR's and subcontractor's activities. This program must meet all federal, state and local laws, regulations and other legal requirements and include the following minimum provisions.

- A. A worksite safety policy and mission statement.
- B. Assigned responsibilities among management, supervisors and employees.
- C. System for periodic self-inspections, including inspections of job sites, materials, work performance and equipment.
- D. A thorough accident and injury reporting and investigation process.
- E. Safety orientation program including first aid, medical attention, emergency facilities, fire protection and prevention, housekeeping, illumination, sanitation, personal protective equipment, and occupational noise exposure.
- F. Safety training program including safety "toolbox" meetings and other systems for ongoing training and also including training for employees on the recognition, avoidance and prevention of unsafe conditions.

A copy of the written safety program must be provided to STATE.

It is a condition of this Contract and must be made a condition of each subcontract entered into pursuant to this Contract that STATE assumes no liability relating to its receipt and review of CONTRACTOR's safety plan or activities. Safety remains the responsibility of CONTRACTOR. Furthermore, the right of STATE to receive and review the safety plan or activities does not give rise to a duty on the part of STATE to exercise this right for the benefit of CONTRACTOR or any other person or entity.

## 11. WORKS FOR HIRE

CONTRACTOR acknowledges that all work(s) under this Contract is "work(s) for hire" within the meaning of the United States Copyright Act (Title 17 United States Code) and hereby assigns to STATE all rights and interests CONTRACTOR may have in the work(s) it prepares under this Contract, including any right to derivative use of the work(s). All materials developed by CONTRACTOR in performance of this Contract for STATE must be the sole property of STATE, and CONTRACTOR hereby assigns and transfers all its right, title, and interest therein to STATE. CONTRACTOR shall execute all necessary documents to enable STATE to protect STATE's rights under this section. CONTRACTOR shall include provisions appropriate to effectuate the purposes of this condition in all subcontracts entered into relating to this project.

## 12. WORK PRODUCT

All work product, equipment or materials created for STATE or purchased by STATE under this Contract belong to STATE and must be immediately delivered to STATE at STATE's request upon termination of this Contract.

### 13. NOTICE

All notices or other communications required under this Contract must be given by registered or certified mail and are complete on the date postmarked when addressed to the Parties at the following addresses:

STATE:	CONTRACTOR:
Steven Kahl, Executive Director	Donavon Meuchel, Owner
Public Service Commission	Earth Energy & Water Systems, Inc.
600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 408	3890 Judson Street
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480	New Salem, ND 58563

Notice provided under this provision does not meet the notice requirements for monetary claims against STATE found at N.D.C.C. § 32-12.2-04.

### 14. CONFIDENTIALITY

CONTRACTOR shall not use or disclose any information it receives from STATE under this Contract that STATE has previously identified as confidential or exempt from mandatory public disclosure except as necessary to carry out the purposes of this Contract or as authorized in advance by STATE. STATE shall not disclose any information it receives from CONTRACTOR that CONTRACTOR has previously identified as confidential and that STATE determines in its sole discretion is protected from mandatory public disclosure under a specific exception to the North Dakota public records law, N.D.C.C. ch. 44-04. The duty of STATE and CONTRACTOR to maintain confidentiality of information under this section continues beyond the Term of this Contract.

### 15. COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC RECORDS LAWS

Under the North Dakota public records law and subject to the Confidentiality clause of this Contract, certain records may be open to the public upon request.

Public records may include: (a) records STATE receives from CONTRACTOR under this Contract, (b) records obtained by either Party under this Contract, and (c) records generated by either Party under this Contract.

CONTRACTOR agrees to contact STATE immediately upon receiving a request for information under the public records law and to comply with STATE's instructions on how to respond to such request.

### 16. INDEPENDENT ENTITY

CONTRACTOR is an independent entity under this Contract and is not a STATE employee for any purpose, including the application of the Social Security Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Federal Insurance Contribution Act, the North Dakota Unemployment Compensation Law and the North Dakota Workforce Safety and Insurance Act. CONTRACTOR retains sole and absolute discretion in the manner and means of carrying out CONTRACTOR's activities and responsibilities under this Contract, except to the extent specified in this Contract.

### 17. ASSIGNMENT AND SUBCONTRACTS

CONTRACTOR may not assign or otherwise transfer or delegate any right or duty without STATE's express written consent, provided, however, that CONTRACTOR may assign its rights and obligations hereunder in the event of a change of control or sale of all or substantially all of its assets related to this CONTRACT, whether by merger, reorganization, operation of law, or otherwise. Should Assignee be a business or entity with whom STATE is prohibited from conducting business, STATE shall have the right to terminate in accordance with the Termination for Cause section of this Contract.

CONTRACTOR may enter into subcontracts provided that any subcontract acknowledges the binding nature of this Contract and incorporates this Contract, including any attachments. CONTRACTOR is solely responsible for the performance of any subcontractor with whom CONTRACTOR contracts. CONTRACTOR does not have authority to contract for or incur obligations on behalf of STATE.

#### **18. SPOILIATION – PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE**

CONTRACTOR shall promptly notify STATE of all potential claims that arise or result from this Contract. CONTRACTOR shall also take all reasonable steps to preserve all physical evidence and information that may be relevant to the circumstances surrounding a potential claim, while maintaining public safety, and grants to STATE the opportunity to review and inspect such evidence, including the scene of an accident.

#### **19. MERGER AND MODIFICATION, CONFLICT IN DOCUMENTS**

This Contract, including the following documents, constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties. There are no understandings, agreements, or representations, oral or written, not specified within this Contract. This Contract may not be modified, supplemented or amended, in any manner, except by written agreement signed by both Parties.

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, in the event of any inconsistency or conflict among the documents making up this Contract, the documents must control in this order of precedence:

- A. The terms of this Contract as may be amended.
- B. STATE's Solicitation: Invitation for Bid 408.23.04.005, 2023 Exploratory Drilling AML Project.
- C. CONTRACTOR's Bid Response.

#### **20. SEVERABILITY**

If any term of this Contract is declared to be illegal or unenforceable by a court having competent jurisdiction, the validity of the remaining terms is unaffected, and, if possible, the rights and obligations of the Parties are to be construed and enforced as if this Contract did not contain that term.

#### **21. APPLICABLE LAW AND VENUE**

This Contract is governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Dakota. Any action to enforce this Contract must be adjudicated exclusively in the state District Court of Burleigh County, North Dakota. Each party consents to the exclusive jurisdiction of such court and waives any claim of lack of jurisdiction or *forum non conveniens*.

#### **22. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION – JURY TRIAL**

By entering this Contract

STATE does not agree to binding arbitration, mediation, or any other form of mandatory Alternative Dispute Resolution. The Parties may enforce the rights and remedies in judicial proceedings. STATE does not waive any right to a jury trial.

#### **23. ATTORNEY FEES**

In the event a lawsuit is instituted by STATE to obtain performance due under this Contract, and STATE is the prevailing Party, CONTRACTOR shall, except when prohibited by N.D.C.C. § 28-26-04, pay STATE's reasonable attorney fees and costs in connection with the lawsuit.

#### **24. NONDISCRIMINATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS**

CONTRACTOR agrees to comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules, and policies, including those relating to nondiscrimination, accessibility and civil rights. (See N.D.C.C. Title 34–Labor and Employment, specifically N.D.C.C. § 34-06.1 Equal Pay for Men and Women). CONTRACTOR agrees to timely file all required

reports, make required payroll deductions, and timely pay all taxes and premiums owed, including sales and use taxes, unemployment compensation and workers' compensation premiums. CONTRACTOR shall have and keep current all licenses and permits required by law during the Term of this Contract. CONTRACTOR's failure to comply with this section may be deemed a material breach by CONTRACTOR entitling STATE to terminate in accordance with the Termination for Cause section of this Contract.

## **25. STATE AUDIT**

Pursuant to N.D.C.C. § 54-10-19, all records, regardless of physical form, and the accounting practices and procedures of CONTRACTOR relevant to this Contract are subject to examination by the North Dakota State Auditor, the Auditor's designee, or Federal auditors if required. CONTRACTOR shall maintain these records for at least four (4) years following completion of this Contract and be able to provide them upon reasonable notice. STATE, State Auditor, or Auditor's designee shall provide reasonable notice to CONTRACTOR prior to conducting examination.

## **26. COUNTERPARTS**

This Contract may be executed in multiple, identical counterparts, each of which is to be deemed an original, and all of which taken together shall constitute one and the same contract.

## **27. EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTRACT**

This Contract is not effective until fully executed by both Parties. If no start date is specified in the Term of Contract, the most recent date of the signatures of the Parties shall be deemed the Effective Date.