



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

Administration

601 SE 25th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34471
Phone: 352-438-2300
Fax: 352-438-2324

RECEIVED

JUL 18 2025

CLERK OF COURSE ADMIN

DATE: July 17, 2025

TO: Mounir Bouyounes, P.E, County Administrator

THROUGH: Angel Roussel, P.E, Assistant County Administrator

FROM: Caley Conard

SUBJECT: 25BE-150 Coliform Bac-T and E. Coli Testing

[Handwritten signature] 7/18/25

Please find attached the signed Solicitation Waiver form requesting approval to utilize Plant Technicians, Inc. for Coliform Bac-T / E. Coli testing using the County's preferred membrane filtration methodology.

While we currently have a contract in place with Advanced Environmental Laboratories (AEL) for Water and Wastewater Laboratory Services, we have encountered multiple false positive results from their testing method for Coliform Bac-T / E. Coli. Upon further review, we determined that AEL utilizes the Total Coliform MPN-MUG method, which has proven less reliable in our recent testing comparisons.

We requested that AEL adopt the membrane filtration method; however, they are not certified for this testing methodology and have indicated they do not intend to pursue certification.

As such, in order to ensure accurate and reliable results consistent with our operational standards, we are requesting approval to proceed with Plant Technicians, Inc., under a bid exemption.

Thank you,
Caley Conard

SOLICITATION WAIVER

This form is for requesting an exemption to a quote, bid, RFP or RFQ. If under \$50,000 will require County Administrator approval and if over \$50,000 the request will need BCC approval. Use your cursor to hover over a field for help.

Please send completed and digitally signed form to Procurement@marionfl.org

Date: 7/16/2025

Using Department: Utilities

Request Type:

Requesting Department: Utilities

☒ Bid Exemption

☐ Standardization of Product/Brand

☐ Sole Source Provider of Good/Service

☐ Piggyback Agency

Purchase ☐ 1 time or ☒ recurring purchase with this year's total expenditure estimated is at \$ 42,350.00

Justification and/or Description:

Marion County Utilities is requesting a bid exemption for laboratory testing services for Coliform Bac-T and E. Coli analysis to allow continued use of Plant Technicians, Inc. as the designated laboratory. The justification for this request is based on the testing methodology and the reliability of results critical for regulatory compliance. Plant Technicians performs testing using the membrane filtration method, which is the preferred method due to its accuracy and consistency. Recently, test results from another vendor, who uses the Total Coliform MPN-MUG method, showed multiple positive hits for coliform. To validate the results, we split samples and submitted them to both laboratories for testing using their respective methods. The samples analyzed by Plant Technicians using the membrane filtration method were returned absent of Coliform Bacteria, in contrast to the results from the other lab. We offered the current vendor the option to use the membrane filtration method; however, they are not certified to perform testing using this method. In order to maintain compliance with FDEP and EPA regulations and to ensure the accuracy of our water quality monitoring, it is in the County's best interest to utilize Plant Technicians for Coliform Bac-T and E. Coli testing. Plant Technicians was our previous lab provider, and we have established a strong working relationship with them. Their testing methods have consistently met Marion County's standards and regulatory requirements. For these reasons, we respectfully request approval of a bid exemption to allow Marion County Utilities to continue using Plant Technicians for these critical testing services.

SA 7/17/25
Project Manager Signature:

7/16/25
Director Signature:

*Procurement Use Only

The following request is in accordance with the Procurement Manual, and meets the requirements to complete the exemption request and ☐ DOES ☒ DOES NOT require Board Approval.

Caley Conard
PCA:

7/17/25
Date:

7-17-25
Procurement Director:

Date:

Do not sign below without prior signatures from Procurement Services above.

[Signature]
County Administrator Signature

N/A
Chairman Signature

Reset Form

Email Form

Revised 6/2025