



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs

- External Affairs Monthly Activities Report for April 2025

Summary

This report provides a summary of External Affairs' group activities for April 2025.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Highlights

Metropolitan named the Wildflower Trail at Diamond Valley Lake in honor of longtime board director Judy Abdo, recognizing her work in water conservation and sustainability. In attendance were Chair Ortega, Vice Chairs Camacho and Sutley, Directors Armstrong, Dennstedt, Erdman, Fellow, Gold, Kurtz, and McCoy, former chair Tim Brick, GM Upadhyay, General Counsel Sully, General Auditor Suzuki, AGM Zinke, and many other local officials, water industry leaders and Metropolitan staff. (April 17)



Director Judy Abdo at the dedication of the Wildflower Trail at Diamond Valley Lake in her honor



Visiting Hoover Dam with congressional staff

Nineteen congressional staff members joined Metropolitan on an infrastructure tour of the Colorado River and Southern California. The tour began at Hoover Dam, stopped in the Palo Verde Valley and Weymouth, and concluded at the Pure Water Southern California Napolitano Innovation Center. Along the way, Metropolitan staff highlighted operations and issues that staff works on in DC, including the Lower Colorado River Multispecies Habitat Conservation program and the Salton Sea. (April 22-25)

Metropolitan debuted its immersive campaign to encourage Southern Californians to say "Goodbye Grass." The new Bloom Box made its debut at the Cherry Blossom Festival in Monterey Park and at Metropolitan's headquarters for Earth Week. The Bloom Box will bring California Friendly® and native plants to festivals and events across Southern California in the coming months. It is designed to allow visitors to truly experience the beauty of water-efficient landscaping with floor-to-ceiling poppies, succulents, rosemary and other plants. (April 12, April 22-23)

Date of Report: 5/13/2025

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Directors Kurtz and McMillan and General Counsel Scully experience the Bloom Box.



Legislative Services

Federal

Staff tracked nominations, hearings, and appointments for key positions, including EPA's Assistant Administrator for Water and General Counsel, Assistant Secretary for the Army for Civil Works, NRCS Chief, and Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of Interior.

Staff also tracked funding programs and hearings related to water infrastructure, including the budget reconciliation process, SRF allotment to states, Title XVI water recycling projects, WIIN Storage Act, WIFIA, and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing entitled "Building on the IJIA's Successes: Identifying Opportunities to Strengthen Water Infrastructure Programs."

During the Congressional recess, Metropolitan conducted a Colorado River inspection trip with 19 staff members, including Hoover Dam, Weymouth and the Pure Water Southern California Napolitano Innovation Center. (see Highlights section)

State

AB 580 (Wallis) to extend Metropolitan's alternate authority under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act moved to Assembly Appropriations.

Metropolitan staff worked to advance the following bills: AB 259 (Rubio) eliminating the sunset provision in the Brown Act for teleconferencing; AB 532 (Ransom) for local water agencies to establish low-income rate assistance programs; SB 31 (McNerney) increasing the use of recycled water in non-potable applications; SB 72 (Caballero) to improve future planning of California water supplies; SB 394 (Allen) increasing penalties for fire hydrant water theft; and SB 454 (McNerney) establishing a PFAS Mitigation Fund to address PFAS contamination in California's drinking water and wastewater systems. Metropolitan maintains an oppose position on SB 601 (Allen) increasing the State Water Board's authority to regulate wastewater discharges; an oppose unless amended position on AB 794 (Gabriel), which would allow for an emergency regulatory process for the State Water Board's PFAS regulations on drinking water standards; and an oppose position on AB 1146 (Papan) which would authorize the State Water Resources Control Board to issue an interim relief order to prohibit release of stored water if the release is done under false pretenses. Staff is working with the bills' authors to address concerns.

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Local

Presented, monitored, and/or participated in 52 webinars, meetings, and events with community organizations and trade associations on Metropolitan activities, issues, and other topics.

Sponsored the Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County's annual Water Symposium and the Valley Industry & Commerce Association's annual State Officeholders Dinner. (April 17 and April 25)

Provided briefings on Metropolitan's legislative priorities and local programs to district office staff for the following elected officials: Representative Robert Garcia (D-CA-42), Senator Steven Choi (R-Irvine), Senator Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach), Senator Tony Strickland (R-Huntington Beach), Assemblymember Jessica Caloza (D-Los Angeles), Assemblymember Phillip Chen (R-Yorba Linda), Assemblymember Corey Jackson (D-Moreno Valley), Assemblymember Tri Ta (R-Westminster), Assemblymember Avelino Valencia (D-Anaheim), and Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn.

Media and Communications

Press Releases and Statements

- Board approval of Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water
- San Marino Mayor Gretchen Shepherd Romey joining Metropolitan board
- Department of Water Resources' fourth snow survey of the year
- Dedication of the Wildflower Trail at Diamond Valley Lake in honor of former director Judy Abdo (see Highlights section).

Coordinated interview between Spectrum news reporter Sarah Pilla and Chief SRI Office Crosson regarding the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water and supported Spectrum's coverage of CAMP4W board vote.

Coordinated interview between ABC7 Meteorologist Brianna Ruffalo and Section Manager Demetri Polyzos regarding California's snowpack trifecta and what it means for our water supply and reservoirs.

Arranged follow-up interviews between LA Times reporter Ian James and GM Upadhyay and Mai Hattar regarding the San Jacinto Tunnel, which resulted in a front-page feature in the Sunday edition.

Metropolitan's Goodbye, Grass water conservation campaign series is in full swing on billboards, transit shelters, and on radio and Dodger broadcasts. New platforms include Latino "mini billboards" at markets and ads in ethnic community press in Korean, Chinese, Spanish, Armenian and Tagalog. We are piloting a targeted campaign on LinkedIn to those in the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors and generating impressive results to date, including 167,000 impressions and a high click-through rate, signaling engagement with the turf rebate information.



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Celebrated Earth Day and Earth Week with a series of posts focused on the release of the 2024 Climate Action Plan Implementation Progress Report. Highlighted Environmental Education Week through with a video of Senior Public Affairs Representative Ivonne Castillo sharing the Pure Water Activity Book.

On National Arbor Day, featured a post about adding trees to California Friendly® landscapes, with a mention of the \$100 rebate per tree thanks to the Turf Replacement Program.

The Water Champions employee social media series continues to receive strong engagement. In April, employees from the Property Management Team, Rates and Financial Team, and Desert Business Support Team were among those featured.



From left, Khanh Phan, Unit Manager - Rates, Charges & Financial Planning; Malcolm Hamilton, Principal Resource Specialist; Arnout Van den Berg, Section Manager - Revenue & Budget; and Sean Tran, Principal Resource Specialist



Anne Reed
Administrative Assistant II

Water Champions

Rates and Financial
Planning



Water Champions

Desert Facilities
Guest Services



The Metropolitan overview document "Leadership Today, Water Tomorrow" was updated and provides a descriptive discussion of achievements and priorities for the district in the areas of infrastructure, imports and local resource development, water quality, climate-related planning and workforce development.

Community Outreach

Conducted inspection trips for Directors Fellow, Gray, Jung, Phan and Seckel, congressional staff, and employees.

Gave presentations on Pure Water Southern California to TreePeople and San Gabriel Economic Partnership Legislative Action committee; provided tours of the Pure Water Southern California Napolitano Innovation Center for Sydney Water, SCE, UCLA Nursing students, and Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning.

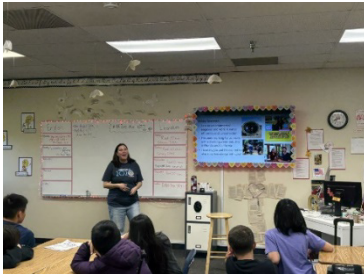
Celebrated Earth Week in the rotunda with staff sharing Metropolitan's sustainability measures and debuted the "Bloom Box."

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Supported community engagement with member agencies and external organizations, including Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' Earth Day, Strength-Based Community Change Earth Day & Del Niño, Bob Baker Marionette Theater Water Wise Day, Inland Empire Utilities Agency Earth Day, Oceanographic Teaching Stations Earth Day Festival, Niguel Botanical Preserve Earth Day 2025 and Weaving Earth Waters Becoming.

Education staff engaged over 2,400 teachers, students, and community members through field trips, events, meetings, and advisory boards. Highlights include participation in the Orange County Children's Water Education Festival, the Student Calendar Traveling Art Gallery, and the awards ceremony for Water Engineering 4 Good (WE4G), a STEAM contest for secondary students to design water-saving devices out of recycled and upcycled materials.

Supported workforce development for students with participation in Long Beach City College Water Industry Advisory Board, University of La Verne Business Advisory Council, St. Mark's Elementary School STEM Career Day, and Macy Intermediate School Career Day.



Provided notices for construction and maintenance activities and assisted impacted residents and businesses:

- Communities of Carson, Torrance, Los Angeles, and Lomita regarding shutdown activities on the Second Lower Feeder
- Yorba Linda regarding road maintenance on the East OC Feeder
- Lomita for the WB-08 valve replacement
- Perris Valley Pipeline shutdown
- Los Angeles for a valve replacement on the Culver City Feeder
- Local communities for the Rialto Pipeline / Glendora Tunnel / La Verne Pipeline shutdown