



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs

- **Monthly Activity Report for May 2026**

Summary

This report provides a summary of External Affairs activities for April 18, 2026, through May 15, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Attachments

Detailed Report – External Affairs Group’s Monthly Activities for April 18, 2026, through May 15, 2026

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Activities Supporting the General Manager's Business Plan Goals

Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements

- **Educate legislators so they will champion the District's interests**

Federal Legislative staff provided updates to congressional staff on the Lower Basin Plan submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation for near-term operations of the Colorado River.

The Press Office issued a statement from GM Deshmukh on the Lower Basin Plan for near-term Colorado River operations and provided responses to LA Times reporter Ian James regarding the proposal.

The Press Office coordinated interviews with Shane Chapman, and Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Alan Halaly, and Arizona Daily Star Tony Davis regarding the anticipated decrease in hydropower production at Hoover Dam as Lake Mead levels drop.

Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect Our Bay-Delta Interests

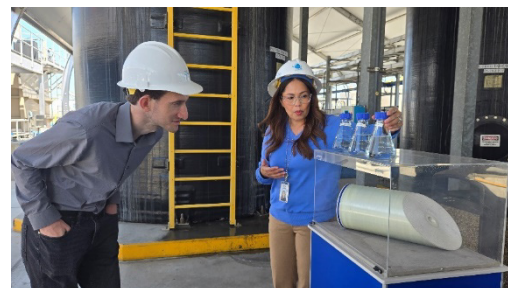
- **Maintain and advocate for Metropolitan's interests in Regional Water Supply Reliability**

In support of Bay-Delta Initiatives, the Legislative Services Section and state legislative staff coordinated preparation of a coalition letter with the member agencies to the Delta Stewardship Council on its consideration of the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR's) certification of consistency for the Delta Conveyance Project.

Complete EIR and Planning, for Board to Consider Pure Water Southern California

- **Complete EIR analyses and public process (continue with notable outreach activities)**

Community Relations staff continued engagement and coordination efforts supporting the Pure Water Southern California program. Staff hosted several tours at the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center, including visits with the League of Women Voters, the Northern California Water Association, UCLA Nursing students, Metropolitan Desert employees, the Engineering Services Group Career Launch Program, and representatives from Congresswoman Barragán's office.



Tour with staff from Congresswoman Barragán's office

Staff also supported a joint public tour with the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts to support regional outreach and public education efforts related to recycled water and infrastructure investments.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Staff conducted outreach at community events, including tabling at the Strength-Based Communities for Change annual conference, Upper Water's WaterFest, the Water Replenishment District's Groundwater Festival, and Metropolitan's Earth Day event to share information about the program and engage directly with community members.



Tour with UCLA Nursing Students



Tabling at Upper Water's WaterFest



Tabling at WRD's Groundwater Festival

In addition, staff continued coordination efforts related to community benefits discussions and outreach planning. Staff also coordinated with Media Services on the development of promotional social media content supporting public awareness efforts and provided support for a Cal Poly Pomona outreach presentation hosted at Metropolitan headquarters. Staff also presented to Los Angeles Trade Technical College students on the Pure Water Southern California program and participated in the Recycled Water Communications and Engagement Working Group meeting.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

The Press Office coordinated GM Deshmukh's appearance on the national YouTube show The Fire Pit, produced by United by Nature, where the main topic of discussion was recycled water and its future role in Southern California water reliability, including its potential to augment diminishing Colorado River supplies for agencies in Arizona and Nevada.



Improve the Workplace and Promote START Values

- **Promote START values (Safety, Trust, Accountability, Respect, Teamwork)**

The Media Services Team visited staff at Jensen Water Treatment Plant during their morning meeting, presenting about Inside Met and social media efforts and soliciting feedback and story ideas. They are working to develop closer relationships with staff, while also providing an opportunity for staff to be involved in different social media videos being planned.

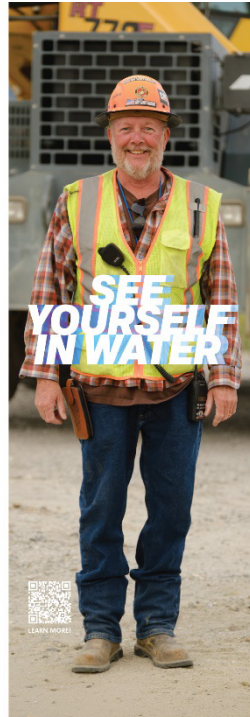
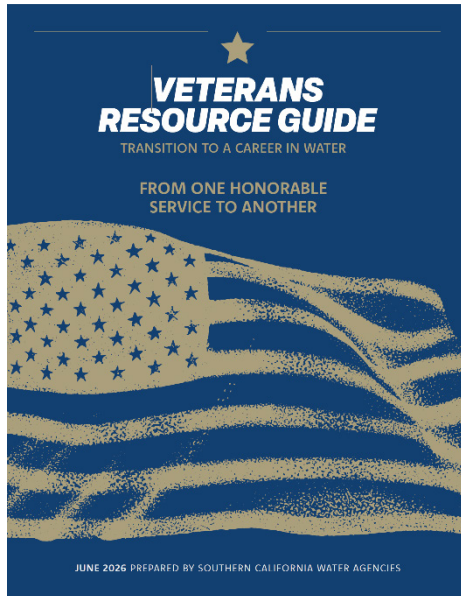


Creative Design Team videographers created a [video](#) highlighting teamwork across the District for the past shutdown season. It featured staff and footage from eight different facilities and projects. A new video was created for the mwdh2o.com homepage to communicate Metropolitan's priorities in the coming year.

The Creative Design team prepared a complete campaign for the DEI office to promote water industry job opportunities. "See Yourself in Water" has a suite of materials, including handouts for veterans and those new to the workforce, numerous displays for community engagement, cover art for a Veterans Guide, social media templates and a style guide so that the program can be easily replicated by our member agencies and others. This culminates many months of gathering input from different audiences, and the work will be introduced at DEI's Workforce Development Summit on June 24.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report



Creative Design also partnered with the Operations Groups to create new branding for future communications/events—as deliverables were created for their May Managers meeting. This included creation of a new masthead, event save the date, invitation, agenda and handout materials as well as directional signage.

Creative Design supported Integrated Operations and Planning Support Services with the design of the upcoming Desert Housing Newsletter.



Provide Organizational Stability and Deliver Operational Excellence

- Support a smooth and efficient transition to the next GM**
 Member Services and Public Outreach, Media Services and Creative Design supported the special board meeting and reception where the General Manager discussed his key areas of focus and vision. Member agencies and other guests participated.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

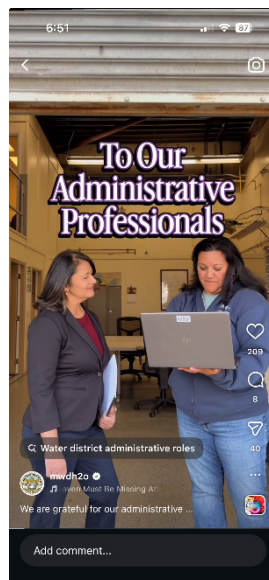
Monthly Activity Report

Other Activities Supporting the General Manager's Strategic Priorities

Empower the workforce and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

Media Services recognized Administrative Professionals Day on April 22, highlighting administrative staff from across the District on social media.

The Water Champions series recognized staff who conduct water quality sampling and dive to monitor water quality and maintain infrastructure. This campaign was recognized by the National Association of Government Communicators with a third-place award in nonpaid Digital-Social Media Outreach in the 2026 Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Awards.



Water Champions
Sampling for Water Quality Control



66 1 5

Liked by socialwater and others
mwdh2o Meet Alysa Dean, one of six dedicated water sampling field technicians keeping your water safe every day. She collects 50+ samples each week across... more
April 27



Water Champions
Diving to Monitor Water Quality & Maintain Infrastructure



85 5 18

mwdh2o Meet Armando Riveroll, a member of Metropolitan's commercial diving team. Alongside his teammates, he keeps our infrastructure clean and... more
May 4

Adapt to changing climate and water resources

The Press Office coordinated an interview with GM Deshmukh and host Justin Chapman about Metropolitan, climate change and future investments for Pasadena Monthly, a Pasadena Media-produced TV talk show.



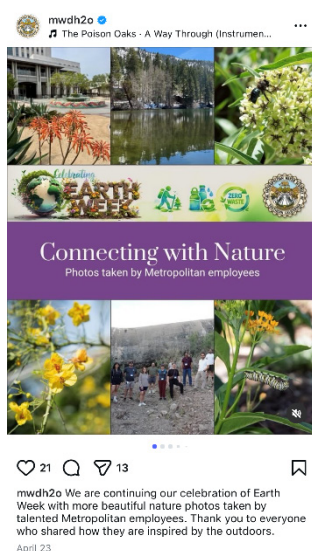
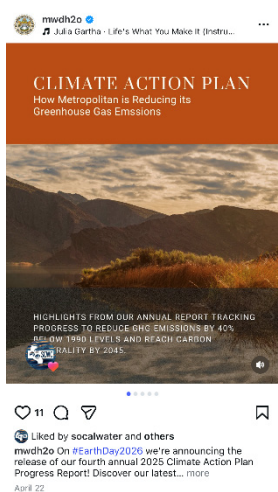
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Media Services promoted the release of the 2025 Climate Action Plan Progress Report on Earth Day, April 22, with a post on social media and a new feature story on the mwdh2o.com home page.

Member Services and Public Outreach staff collaborated with Sustainability, Resilience and Innovation and other groups to celebrate Earth Week. Staff hosted information tables, led a discussion on Jane Goodall's challenge to make a difference, provided learning sessions, and created staff challenges on connecting with nature, using refillable water bottles, and going to zero waste for a day.

We continued the campaign for the Commercial, Industrial and Institutional sectors to promote awareness of the non-functional turf irrigation ban that becomes law in January 2027. The campaign is being promoted regionally, with co-branding from some member agency partners, on platforms like billboards and bus shelters.



Protect public health, the regional economy, and Metropolitan's assets

The Washington, DC Legislative staff are closely monitoring the FY27 appropriations process. Members' statements this month during budget hearings indicate that Congress is not going to move forward with the President's proposed reductions to water infrastructure funding. Metropolitan staff will continue to advocate for increased federal funding.

The Sacramento Legislative staff are closely monitoring budget proposals and legislation. On May 14, the Governor released his May Revise budget proposal, presenting a balanced budget that removes the structural deficit over the next two fiscal years. While this puts the state in a strong position for the coming Administration, the Governor has committed to limiting new spending and will likely lead to limited opportunities for funding new programs through the General Fund. Notable budget items in the

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

May Revise include an additional \$25 million for implementation of Healthy Rivers and Landscapes, as the Water Board moves closer to approving a final update to the Bay-Delta Plan.

May 14 was also the day when both houses of the Legislature held their Appropriations Committee suspense hearings. While numerous bills were held in committee, the three tribal bills that have raised significant concerns for the water community are continuing to move forward. These proposals in their current form are intended to advance protections for tribal cultural resources and rectify past injustices; however, they would also extend additional powers to tribes. Metropolitan is closely monitoring the bills as we expect they will pass into the next house.

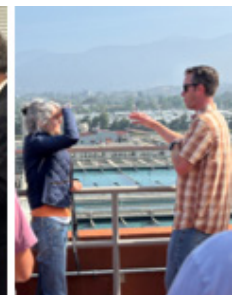
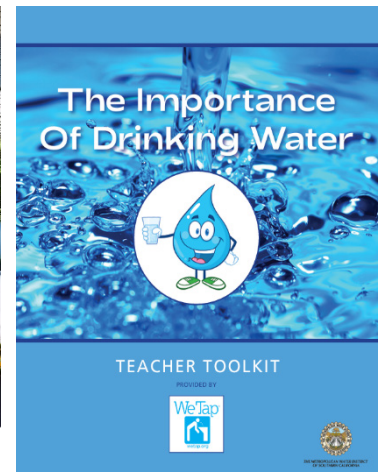
Staff are actively advocating for legislation that Metropolitan is supporting, including AB 2215 (Calderon) which would extend the time for the State Water Project to maximize use of DWR's existing water right, and SB 872 (McNerney) which seeks to provide funding for repairs related to State Water Project subsidence and levee projects in the Delta. Information on Metropolitan's positions on legislation is available in the [State Legislative Matrix](#) posted on mwdh2o.com.

May is Water Awareness Month, and Tap Water Day is the first Thursday in May. Media Services recognized the occasion on social media. The Education Team promoted the teacher toolkit developed in collaboration with WeTap.org.

Member Services and Public Outreach staff hosted and coordinated the District's first public tour at the F.E. Weymouth Water Treatment Plant on May 2. The tour provided participants with an inside look at how Metropolitan treats, tests, and delivers reliable drinking water from source to tap. Attendees had the opportunity to engage directly with staff, ask questions, and learn more about Metropolitan's water quality processes and operations.



58 7 8
mwdh2o Happy Tap Water Day. No matter where we are in SoCal, we stay hydrated and refreshed with @wettap.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Media Services and Community Relations are developing a tap water awareness campaign, “Can’t Beat the Tap.” The draft campaign was shared with numerous groups for their input and recommendations. Once approved, the campaign will be distributed digitally on social media, integrated into community events and shared with the member agencies for their use. A style guide will enable member agencies to create their own content while maintaining the campaign style.

Partner with interested parties and the communities we serve

Legislative Services

Legislative Services staff participated in chambers of commerce and regional associations across Metropolitan’s service area. These forums provided opportunities to communicate Metropolitan’s positions on priority legislation and reinforce partnerships with civic and economic stakeholders.

Additional outreach included briefings with Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo’s district office and a tour of the Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center for the office of Representative Nanette Barragán. Staff also contributed to policy discussions through committees of the League of California Cities, Los Angeles County Division, the Association of California Cities–Orange County, BizFed, the Building Industry Association’s Southern California Water Conference planning group, and participation at the California Contract Cities Association Annual Municipal Seminar.

Media Services

The Press Office issued press releases and media statements on the following:

- New director Paula Daniels, representing the City of Los Angeles joining Metropolitan’s Board of Directors
- State Water Project allocation going up to 45 percent

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

The Press Office coordinated the participation of various Metropolitan staff in a Water Research Foundation video about their partnership with Metropolitan. Interviewees included Warren Teitz, Paul Rochelle, Heather Collins and Ai Jia.



Member Services and Public Outreach

Community Relations staff Elisa Mendez and Ivonne Castillo presented at the California Association of Public Information Officials Conference in San Diego on communicating with Spanish-speaking communities. The presentation focused on culturally responsive communication strategies, community engagement, and approaches for improving public understanding of technical infrastructure and water-related projects across diverse communities.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Education Programs

In recognition of Teacher Appreciation Week and Environmental Education Week, staff highlighted educational resources through social media and public engagement efforts. Featured programs included K–12 field trips and Merit Badge programs for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The team issued its quarterly newsletter and published website content promoting the Tap Water Awareness Day Toolkit for grades K–12.

On April 17, the culminating Water Engineering 4 Good (WE4G) presentations brought students together to present conservation projects before engineers and professionals from Metropolitan and partner agencies. All participating students received award certificates recognizing their innovation, teamwork, and environmental problem-solving efforts.

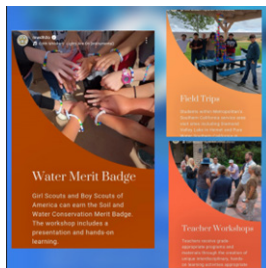
On April 22, Cal Poly Pomona graduating seniors presented their capstone research projects focused on sustainability, engineering, communications, and public service careers. Students also completed an architectural model showcasing the proposal for an Earth Day and Career Awareness event for college students at Pure Water Southern California.

Staff attended the National Science Teachers Association Conference in Anaheim and participated in presentations and outreach efforts with the Water Energy Education Alliance. Additional collaboration included meetings, tours, and presentations with the West Basin Municipal Water District, Tree People's Equity Event, Elsinore Valley's Splash Fest, and the Western Science Center's "Science Saturdays."

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

The Education Team continued expanding regional engagement through outreach activities and partnership meetings with organizations, including Pando Days, Magenta House, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, and Descanso Gardens. Staff also supported legislative and public outreach events while preparing logistics, partnerships, and educational programming for upcoming summer interns/fellows and the annual Summer Teacher Institutes.



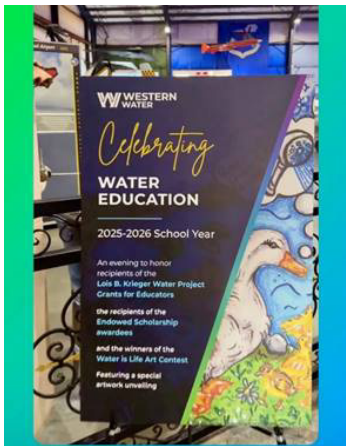
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Community Partnering Program

The Community Partnering Program sponsored three water education and conservation partnerships this period:

- The Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District's WaterFest 2026 is a community festival that features interactive water-themed educational booths, environmental displays, informative presentations, and water conservation rebate resources. Funding supported the water conservation youth workshops and activities throughout the event.
- Sustainable Claremont's 2026 Earth Day Celebration features water-wise gardens and healthy soil educational booths, as well as California native plant and tree giveaways. The objective of the event is to discuss the importance of water conservation through garden transformations. Funding supported the plant and tree giveaways and educational resources to support engagement.
- Western Municipal Water District's Celebrating Water Education – Arts and Grants Event is an annual community event that celebrates students' creativity and recognizes grant and scholarship recipients. Funding went to materials and supplies that supported the celebration of completed topics such as water quality, resource protection, efficiency, and environmental stewardship.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Inspection Trips Program

The Inspection Trips Team organized and led a trip to the Robert A. Skinner Water Treatment Plant and Diamond Valley Lake for Directors Dennstedt and Fong-Sakai and a trip to the Colorado River Aqueduct for member agency general managers. The team also led one employee inspection trip to the Colorado River Aqueduct and one trip for desert employees to the District's southland facilities.

Additionally, team members led tours of Gene Camp and W.P. Whitsett Intake Pumping Plant for a Business Outreach event with local chambers of commerce members; the State Water Project and Central Valley for Water Education for Latino Leaders; and the Joseph Jensen Water Treatment Plant for the Northern California Water Association.



Desert employees visiting Union Station headquarters on a Southland Facilities Inspection Trip.



Metropolitan executives and member agency managers at the Inland Feeder/San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District Foothill Pump Station Intertie as part of an inspection trip to the Colorado River Aqueduct.

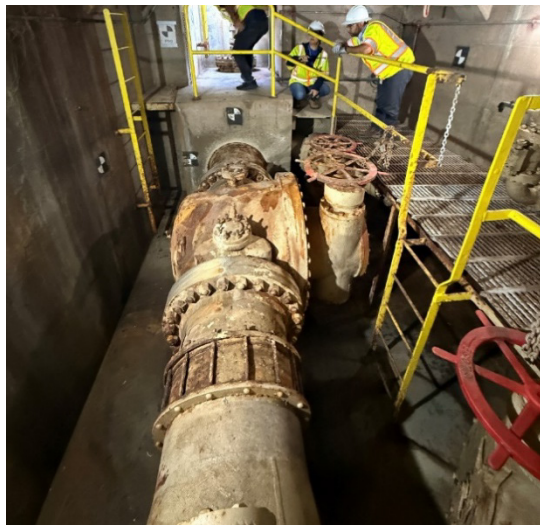
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Construction Outreach

The Community Relations team continued proactive communications and coordination to support operational activities and infrastructure projects. Staff met with the City of Highland regarding Metropolitan's Foothill Pump Station Intertie Project and coordinated with LA Metro regarding proposed drawings affecting Metropolitan's headquarters building.

Staff also conducted a site visit to the Palos Verdes Feeder/Long Beach Lateral turnout structure to support ongoing coordination efforts related to system facilities and maintenance activities.



Onsite meeting to discuss potential impacts of upcoming rehabilitation work