



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

● Chair of the Board Adán Ortega Jr.'s Monthly Activity Report – May 2026

Summary

This report highlights my activities as Chair of the Board for the month of May 2026, as well as highlights the activities of Board Members who have been appointed to represent The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California externally, on matters relating to the district.

Monthly Activities

Key Activities

- Attended the 2026 Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) spring conference, where I met with several water industry leaders and participated in discussions on statewide policy priorities, regulatory updates, and emerging challenges in water management. I also hosted a dinner with Chairs and Presidents from water districts across the state to strengthen interagency relationships and explore opportunities for future collaboration that support our shared mission of delivering reliable, sustainable water.
- Convened a special Board Meeting on May 11 to commemorate General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh's first 100 days as General Manager. During the meeting, General Manager Deshmukh outlined his priorities and his vision for the next two years.



- Attended the Southern California Water Coalition quarterly luncheon on "The Colorado River Reckoning - Hard truths and critical choices facing the river—and the consequences if solutions fall short". The program centered on the ongoing Colorado River negotiations. Speakers included Chuck Cullom, Executive Director, Upper Colorado River Commission; Vineetha Kartha, Colorado River Programs

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Manager, Central Arizona Project; Bart Leeftang, Assistant General Manager, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, and Metropolitan's Bill Hasencamp.

- Presented Director Paula Daniels with her Metropolitan Board pin, recognizing her as the newest member of the Board of Directors. Director Daniels represents the City of Los Angeles. Director Daniels serves as the inaugural Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Office of Food Systems, a partnership between the County and local philanthropic organizations dedicated to building a fair, resilient, and healthy food system. She succeeds Miguel Luna, who served on Metropolitan's Board since 2021. Given the strong link between water security and food security, her leadership and experience make her a valuable addition to the Board. Director Daniels and I previously served together for over a decade on the Board of Heal the Bay with Director Gold as Executive Director, and together with Vice Chair Nancy Sutley, we both were members of one of the first California Women in Water groups (myself as support staff).



Speaking Engagements/Events

- Served as a panelist for "Water Resilience for the Climate Ahead", alongside Cheree Peterson, Deputy Regional Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); Paul Gosselin, Deputy Director, California Department of Water Resources (DWR); and Nurit Katz, Chief Sustainability Officer, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), at the 2026 Los Angeles County Water Resiliency Summit. The panel, moderated by Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath from Supervisorial District 3 in Los Angeles County, highlighted the alignment between water supply and reliability goals and explored opportunities to strengthen collaboration and leverage funding to advance water resilience.





- Attended the United Contractors (UCON) Public Works Summit, where I served as a panelist alongside Southern California Water Coalition Executive Director and CEO Charley Wilson, and Chair and Chief Executive Officer of Cadiz, Susan Kennedy, for the segment titled "California's Water Future". Elizabeth Torrez, from United Contractors, moderated the panel. The discussion aimed to explore how smarter planning and operations of water projects can result in capturing more water in wet years, reducing flooding, and lessening shortages and rate spikes in dry years.



Interviews:

- Recorded a video interview celebrating the Community Partnering Program's (CPP) 25th Anniversary, which I helped form. Joe Chavez interviewed me about the program's origins, its evolution, and its ongoing success. The CPP provides sponsorship for water-related educational outreach initiatives, including community forums, workshops, water festivals, K–12 curriculum development, exhibits, promotional materials, and native plant garden signage. Over the years, Metropolitan has supported numerous impactful projects and events that advance our commitment to strengthening partnerships with the communities we serve. While the program's funding has been greatly reduced since I left Metropolitan after the CPP's founding as a result of a state audit and SB60, it remains impactful in advancing Metropolitan's strategic vision by involving the community.

**Other Activities**

- Spoke, alongside General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh, at Metropolitan's Operations Group All-Manager Meeting. I provided an update on the recently approved budget and highlighted the smooth transition to our General Manager, Shivaji Deshmukh. This in-person managers'-only meeting served as an opportunity to discuss recent accomplishments, review current priorities, and align on upcoming initiatives. I thanked the staff for their continued hard work and their commitment to the important efforts ahead in the next two fiscal years.

**Director Summaries**

At the May 26, 2026, meeting of Metropolitan's Subcommittee on Imported Water –

- Director Jacque McMillan reported on the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) Board of Directors meeting held on May 21, 2026, and the Delta Conveyance Finance Authority (DCFA) Board of Directors meeting held on May 21, 2026. The DCA Board was introduced to Greg Baughman, the Safety Manager, and they learned of his extensive professional background in construction and operational safety. Discussion focused on the significant safety initiatives being implemented to support upcoming geotechnical drilling activities, scheduled to begin in June. The DCA Board adopted a resolution authorizing the executive director to amend the National Constructors' Group agreement to

increase the maximum compensation for on-call executive strategic support services. The consultant provides key support for project implementation preparation. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) Environmental Manager reported that on April 23, 2026, the Delta Stewardship Council voted 6–1 to send DWR's consistency certification for the Delta Conveyance Project back for revisions on two specific issues, while rejecting the rest of the appeals filed by the ten appellant groups. DWR now needs to address concerns related to invasive golden mussel habitat impacts and potential conflicts between the Twin Cities Complex and Sacramento Area Sewer District's Harvest Water project, including effects on agriculture, groundwater recharge, ecosystem protection, and sandhill crane habitat.

Director McMillan also reported that at the DCFA Board of Directors' meeting held on May 21, 2026, two new DCFA Board members were introduced: Jennifer Ustation, representing the San Geronio Pass Water Agency, and Matt Knudson, representing the Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency. The DCFA's activities remain primarily informational and administrative. The Board approved the fiscal year 2026/27 budget of \$83,250, covering at least two board meetings and routine administrative and accounting functions. The DCFA Board also directed staff to return next year with a proposal to potentially wind down the DCFA. The Department of Water Resources provided a high-level update on its validation actions.

- Director Gloria Cordero reported on the Colorado River Board (CRB) and the Six Agency Committee meetings held on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, highlighting two items: First, Director Cordero noted that Dan Denham provided a report to the Colorado River Board regarding the San Diego County Water Authority's efforts to expand the opportunities for sharing water supplies. He described recent agreements to share water with Eastern and Western Municipal Water Districts and efforts to have agreements include interstate water transfers. Denham announced that a Memorandum of Understanding to explore this possibility will be signed next month with the Bureau of Reclamation and interested parties across the Lower Basin.

Director Cordero also discussed efforts to reach an agreement on the Six Agency Committee funding. She explained that the Six Agency Committee was formed in 1950 to provide funding for the CRB and other activities related to the Colorado River. The Committee shares the cost using percentages that were agreed to in 2005. Recently, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) has requested that its share be reduced from 8 percent to 4 percent. However, the other parties could not reach agreement on how to cover the shortfall.

With the CRB's new fiscal year beginning on July 1, there is an urgent need to approve a funding agreement. The Committee proposed to accept LADWP's payment of 4 percent of the budget with the unpaid 4 percent to be covered by reserve funds for fiscal year 2026/27. If acceptable, a one-year agreement would be pursued, while discussions to develop a longer-term agreement resume.

Regularly Scheduled/Ongoing Meetings

- Continued to meet regularly with the Board leadership, the General Manager, the General Counsel, the Ethics Officer, and the General Auditor to discuss policy and organizational issues.