



External Affairs Group

- External Affairs Monthly Activities Report for September 2024

Summary

This report provides a summary of External Affairs’ group activities for September 2024.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Highlights

Chair Ortega spoke at a city of San Fernando event with Senator Menjivar (D-Van Nuys) and city officials to celebrate the nitrate removal project, allowing the city to return to groundwater supplies. (September 5)

Director Quinn participated in a panel discussion about Metropolitan's leadership to remove on nonfunctional turf at the Los Angeles Business Council’s Sustainability Summit, which Metropolitan sponsored. (September 6)

Directors Alvarez, Camacho, Dennstedt and Lewitt, Interim GM Upadhyay, Asst. Group Manager Collins and Metropolitan staff made technical and communications/outreach presentations at the WateReuse Symposium. (September 15-18)

Metropolitan, in partnership with Calleguas MWD, hosted a Community Leaders' Briefing with Assemblymember Bennett (D-Oxnard) to discuss regional and statewide water issues. Chair Ortega and Director McMillan spoke at the event that drew about 80 attendees. (September 16).



Senator Menjivar, Chair Ortega and city of San Fernando officials at an event recognizing the city’s return to local groundwater supplies.



Interim GM Upadhyay and Metropolitan staff at the annual WateReuse Conference



Metropolitan Community Leaders Briefing in partnership with Calleguas Municipal Water District.

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Top: AWA of Ventura County event at Ronald Reagan Presidential Library; Bottom: Chair Ortega, Vice-Chair Camacho and Director Garza with LA County League of Cities representatives

Directors Lewitt and McMillan attended and AGM Zinke spoke at the Association of Water Agencies annual policymaker reception featuring keynote speaker Dr. Jay Lund. (September 19)

Chair Ortega, Vice Chair Camacho and Director Garza met with leaders of the Los Angeles County Division of the League of California Cities to discuss opportunities for collaboration between Metropolitan and local elected officials. (September 23)

AGM Zinke represented Metropolitan at the Public Policy Institute of California's Water Policy Center. (September 25)

Interim GM Upadhyay participated in a signing ceremony for the federal government's final Bucket 1 agreements with Bard Water District and Imperial Irrigation District and the first Bucket 2 agreement with Gila River Indian Community. (September 25)

Directors Erdman, Ackerman, McMillan, Dennstedt and Metropolitan staff attended the Orange County Water Summit. Chief SRI Officer Crosson spoke on a panel "Decarbonizing the Electric Grid." (September 27)

Federal

Senator Padilla and Representatives Calvert and Napolitano introduced the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act to allow Reclamation to hold the non-federal contributions to the program in an interest-bearing account. The interest collected would be reinvested in the program. The Senate Energy Committee has approved the bill.

State

The California Legislature has concluded the 2023–2024 session. Metropolitan priority bills that were signed into law include AB 1827 (Papan), which clarifies local agencies' authority to assign incremental costs to higher water users, AB 2257 (Wilson) which establishes administrative procedures to raise a legal challenge to a water agency rate or fee, and SB 1072 (Padilla) which clarifies that excess charges collected by an agency shall be applied towards future rates. In addition, the Governor signed AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan) which increases fines and fees for violations of State Water Board regulations. SB 366 (Caballero) was vetoed, which would have updated the California Water Plan to include long-term and interim water supply targets.

Local

This month, staff presented, monitored, and/or participated in 66 webinars, meetings, and events with community organizations and trade associations, board members and federal and state elected officials on Metropolitan activities, issues and other topics.

Metropolitan staff provided a Pure Water Tour for capitol and district staff of Senator Stern (D-Los Angeles). (September 9)

Metropolitan staff presented Senator Menjivar's District Representative Teodora Reyes a Met 101 briefing. (September 11)



Pure Water Tour for Senator Stern's chief of staff, climate consultant and district office staff

Media and Communications

Coordinated PRA responses to LA Times regarding the Cadiz Water Project.

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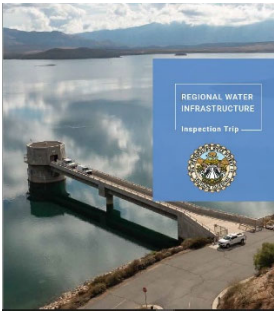
Arranged interview between Civic Publications writer Kathleen Lund and Chair Ortega on Pure Water Southern California and the federal grant awarded to the regional recycled water program.

Set up interview with Vegas Sun reporter Ilana Williams and Colorado River Resources Manager Hasencamp regarding Pure Water Southern California and how it will help the Colorado River Basin and Nevada.

Provided water demand data to New York Times' Michael Kimmelman.

Press Releases

- Funding for three forest restoration projects in the northern Sierra, through new Forest Resilience Bonds.
- Board support of Proposition 4, the \$10 billion climate bond.
- Board decision to extend administrative leave of GM Hagekhalil.
- Provided quote to city of San Fernando from Chair Ortega for news release on city's new independence from Metropolitan water and staffed a water conservation table at press event for the achievement.
- Provided quote from WRM's Guerrero for U.S. EPA press release on Metropolitan winning WaterSense Award for Excellence in Certification Program.



Three new Inspection Trip guides have been produced

Creative Design

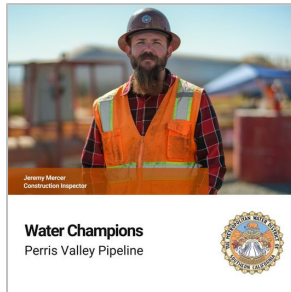
- Created a video recap of a tunnel boring machine's hole-through as part of the Perris Valley Pipeline project that was shown at the September board meeting.
- Created and posted a new landing page on mwdh2o.com for the district's Vision and Values initiative.
- Updated three inspection trip guides for the Colorado River Aqueduct, State Water Project and regional tour program and created a pocket reference guide to explain commonly used measurements in water.

Social Media

- Concluded "Water Conservation is a Team Sport" campaign on digital markets and social media which generated more than 8 million impressions and 40,000 clicks to bewaterwise.com. Transitioned the campaign to artistic Matisse-like creative assets, including Spanish-language elements; campaign has received 500,000 impressions and more than 2,500 clicks to bewaterwise.com.
- Launched Water Champions social media series that will run until the end of the year, highlighting many of Metropolitan's hard-working employees.

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- Continued postings in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Water Quality Section; Hispanic Heritage Month; and recognized employee activities including annual summer blood drive, education program's 40th anniversary, and the district's participation at the WaterReuse Association conference.



September social media posts

Website

- Continued to remediate more than 2,000 electronic documents to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
- Migrated all IntraMet content to a newer server, which included quality checks of all pages to ensure links remained secure.
- Recorded 56,000 visits to mwdh2o.com with careers, job listing and board pages the most popular.
- Generated nearly 40,000 views on bewaterwise.com, with turf replacement, rebates and California Friendly®, native plants pages driving the most visits.

Community Outreach

Community Partnering Program sponsorships for Whittier Historical Society Flume Water Education exhibit; Weaving Earth Walks of Resilience and Accountability; City of Pomona Wyland Mobile Water Education Experience; Rivers and Lands Conservancy California Native Plant Community event; and the Environmental Nature Center Water Education program.

The following events were sponsored by Metropolitan this month: Municipal Water District of Orange County Water Energy Education Alliance; Chemehuevi Indian Tribe Gathering our Mountains; Western Science Center Science Under the Stars, DIY Girls 2024 STEM Gala; and the Orange County Coastkeepers.

Provided tours for Japan Water Works Association and American Water Works Association at Metropolitan Headquarters and Diemer Treatment Plant. (September 3-4)

Presentation to the Los Alisos HOA Board on the Allen-McColloch urgent relining project. (September 4)

Distributed material to residents regarding the Etiwanda Pipeline shutdown. (September 11)

CAMP4W Public Forum (September 12)

Tour of Diamond Valley Lake with Metropolitan payroll staff (September 16)

Inspection Trip of State Water Project with Directors Erdman and Dick (September 20-21)

Distributed materials to residents in Mission Viejo on the Allen-McColloch relining project.

Singapore Public Utilities Board (PUB) "Water Leaders Program" Delegation – PWSC Discussion at Metropolitan Headquarters. (September 30)

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Pure Water Southern California

- Public Outreach and Research Presentation to the West Basin MWD Caucus. (September 4)
- MOU meeting with City of Carson to discuss workforce development opportunities. (September 4)
- Participation in Water Research Foundation Workshop on Community Engagement for Water Reuse Projects. (September 15)
- Pure Water Southern California Tours with: Valley Industry Commerce Association (September 5); Santa Clara Valley Water District (September 18); Public Tour in English and Spanish (September 21); and Los Angeles Sustainability Executive Roundtable (September 26).



Cal State Long Beach students and professor touring the Pure Water Southern California facility

Education

- Interacted with 1,450 teachers, students, and adults through in-person and online meetings and events.
- Participated in meetings with the Water Energy Education Alliance Leadership Roundtable, University of La Verne's Business Council, and WRD's Water Industry Workforce Development.
- In partnership with Pando Populus, met with students at Cal State Dominguez Hills, Cal State Los Angeles, and El Camino Community College on a water focused sustainability competition.
- Displayed student art in the lobbies of Helix Water District and Padre Dam Municipal Water District.