



## External Affairs

- **Monthly Activity Report for September 2025**

### Summary

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This report provides a summary of External Affairs activities for August 19, 2025 through September 19, 2025.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Attachments

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Detailed Report – External Affairs Group’s Monthly Activities for August 19, 2025 through September 19, 2025

# EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## Monthly Activity Report

### Activities Supporting the General Manager's Business Plan Goals

#### Execute CAMP4W Implementation Strategy to Integrate Climate Adaptation District-Wide

- **Monitor and report progress**

The Press Office issued a press release about Metropolitan Board approval of the Local Supply Exchange Framework, which allows member agencies to now exchange locally produced water supplies, enhancing regional resilience amid climate challenges.

#### 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 status of discussions on post-2026 Colorado River operations and what is at risk for Metropolitan.

The Press Office coordinated an interview with Water Education Foundation writer Matt Jenkins and supply acquisition team manager Laura Lamdin regarding Reclamation's use of "Decision Making Under Deep Uncertainty" on the Colorado River for an in-depth article he is writing for Western Water.

Media Services revamped the Colorado River Aqueduct webpage on mwdh2o.com by updating the narrative, refreshing images and adding graphics to better tell the story. The Colorado River narrative on Securing Our Imported Supplies webpage was also updated.

#### Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect our Bay-Delta Interests

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

After extensive advocacy and engagement in support of the Governor's Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) Streamlining proposal, the measure did not move forward this past session. However, Metropolitan's advocacy in combination with the member agencies showed the substantial impact this can have on bringing momentum to key water policy issues. New champions have been cultivated in the Legislature, and Metropolitan succeeded in educating its delegation about the critical importance of water supply reliability.

The Press Office issued a media statement from GM Upadhyay about the Department of Water Resources' release of its first-ever State Water Project Adaptation Strategy, ensuring Metropolitan's view was part of the conversation about the report.

The Press Office also issued a media release to raise awareness about the Board's action to secure agricultural partners to cultivate rice on two district-owned islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin

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Delta—helping improve sustainability in the Delta by addressing land subsidence, improving carbon sequestration, and supporting habitat for migratory birds and other Delta species.

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

- **Complete EIR analyses and public process**

Over the past month, the Pure Water outreach team advanced several key efforts, including a regulatory meeting with the Division of Drinking Water, a meeting with UCLA School of Nursing professors to explore a potential partnership, and public engagement through tabling at the “Making Water Work” event hosted by LA Waterkeeper, Pacoima Beautiful, and the Council for Watershed Health. The team also provided a tour to Golden State Water Company and exchanged outreach ideas and best practices with the Pure Water LA team.



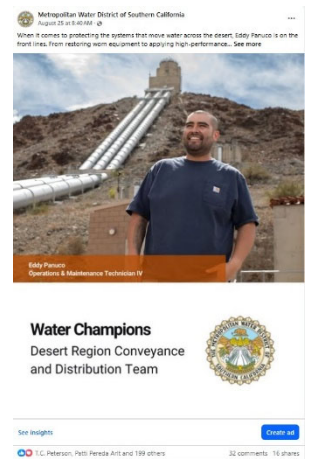
### Improve the Workplace and Promote START Values

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

Media Services highlighted two Metropolitan employees from our desert facilities for the Water Champions series. One of the posts, featuring Eddy Panuco, received the highest engagement to date on Facebook.

Media Services created a Labor Day video message from General Manager Upadhyay featuring photos and videos of employees from across the district to recognize their dedication and commitment to Metropolitan’s mission.

At an all-hands meeting, External Affairs recognized the important contributions of the Imaging Services Team to the group’s outreach efforts. EA staff shared their



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appreciation and personal experiences working with Imaging Services. Tuannee Holmes, EA Admin Analyst, shared, “We celebrate you, not because you do your job, but rather how you do your job - how efficient, how innovative, and how professional you all are.” And Debra Sass, Creative Design Team Manager, shared, “I hope the team knows how much I appreciate them. I have worked with them for years and years, and if a team could teach a master class in customer service, it would be them. They always say yes, meet crazy deadlines and situations, and even worked when many of us were home during COVID—printing social distancing signage and health information for all our facilities. They have produced all of our important reports and documents and continue to expand their capabilities. Thank you so much for all you do for us.”

## Other Activities Supporting the General Manager’s Strategic Priorities

### Empower the workforce and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

The Graphic Design Team designed an updated logo for the Hispanic Employee Association’s 50th anniversary.



### Adapt to changing climate and water resources

The Press Office held a press conference on August 28th at the Hollywood American Legion to announce the increase of Metropolitan’s turf rebate to \$7 per square foot for businesses and institutions that replace grass with sustainable landscaping. The event also helped build awareness about the new state law banning the use of potable water on non-functional turf on non-residential properties. The event, and accompanying press release, was well covered by various television, radio and print news outlets and supported by Metropolitan’s Creative Design Team Videographers.

The Press Office coordinated a follow-up interview between Krista Guerrero, part of the water efficiency team, and LA Times reporter Jeanette Marantos, regarding the increased turf rebate and new state law on non-functional turf.

Media Services highlighted Northrup Grumman’s participation in the turf replacement rebate program for non-residential property owners through a series of posts advertised on LinkedIn,



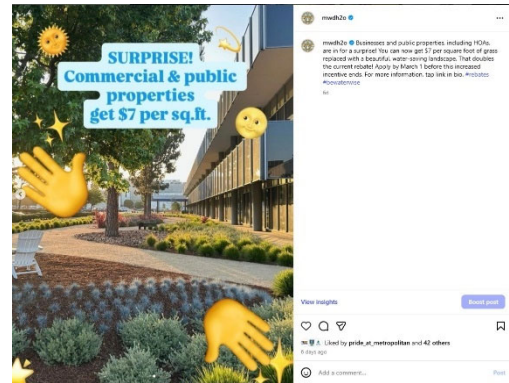
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targeting the commercial sector. A fun, engaging post also promoted the \$7 per square foot rebate on Instagram.

The Press Office coordinated an interview with the California Native Plant Society's Flora magazine and Krista Guerrero regarding her role at Metropolitan and her thoughts on urban biodiversity and native plants.

The Press Office issued a press release announcing the Innovation Conservation Program grant funding for six research projects exploring innovative water-saving ideas.



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

Metropolitan, joined by a coalition of nearly 60 agencies, successfully secured amendments through AB 149 that update current law to ensure California is able to effectively control the spread of invasive golden mussels. Since their initial discovery in October 2024, they have spread rapidly throughout the Bay-Delta, creating an urgent need to move forward with policy solutions. The amendments include provisions that provide a pathway for liability protection from regulatory enforcement when operating under an approved mussel control plan and \$20 million in funding from the Climate Bond to support invasive mussel control by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

AB 580 (Wallis) to extend Metropolitan's alternate authority under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act is currently on the Governor's desk waiting for action. The last day for the Governor to sign bills is October 13.

Now that the California legislative session has ended, here are some of the key outcomes on bills on which Metropolitan took a position. Metropolitan is in support of the following bills on the Governor's desk: 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 is opposed to AB 1319 (Schultz), on the Governor's desk, which would amend the California Endangered Species Act to authorize the Department of Fish and Wildlife to adopt an emergency regulation that adds a federally listed species that is native to California to the list of endangered or threatened species on an emergency basis under certain conditions.

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Metropolitan supported AB 259 (Rubio) to extend the sunset on existing law authorizing public agency boards to participate in board meetings via teleconference. This bill did not move out of the legislature, but the sunset extension provisions were added into SB 707 (Durazo), which is on the Governor's desk waiting for action.

Metropolitan had an oppose unless amended position on AB 794 (Gabriel), which did not pass out of the legislature. It would have allowed for an emergency regulatory process for the State Water Board's PFAS regulations on drinking water standards. Metropolitan had an oppose position on SB 601 (Allen), which also did not move forward. It would have increased the State Water Board's authority to regulate wastewater discharges.

Metropolitan concluded its celebration of National Water Quality Month with a behind-the-scenes look at how our team regularly monitors water quality at Lake Mathews, and a video highlight of Heather Collins presenting on ways to build public trust in drinking water.



## Partner with interested parties and the communities we serve

### Legislative Services

Metropolitan sponsored and Director Faessel moderated a panel on Bay-Delta issues at the OC Water Summit. Manager of Bay-Delta Programs, Randall Neudeck, served as a panelist. Directors Ackerman, Dick, Erdman, McMillan, and Seckel attended the event.

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Metropolitan sponsored the BizFed Institute Water Resiliency Forum, and Chair Ortega and Assistant General Manager Bednarski spoke on Metropolitan's leadership on water issues and Pure Water Southern California.

Director McMillan and Assistant General Manager Zinke met with Ventura County Supervisor Janice Parvin at her district office to discuss regional water supply issues.

Legislative Services provided briefings on Metropolitan's legislative priorities and local programs to district office staff for Representative Mark Takano and Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh.

The Government Affairs Representatives presented, monitored, and/or participated in 60 webinars, meetings, and events with community groups, business organizations, and trade associations on Metropolitan activities and other related topics.

### **Member Services and Public Outreach**

Member Services and Public Outreach staff coordinated a four-day Advanced Water Treatment workshop in partnership with the American Water Works Association, which included a tour of the Mills Treatment Plant.

Staff collaborated with Water Treatment and Water Quality to welcome a delegation from Daegu Metropolitan City Waterworks (South Korea) at the Weymouth Treatment Plant, where the visitors learned about Metropolitan's financial practices, water conservation programs, and resource management strategies.

The Inspection Trips Team organized and led inspection trips to Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Aqueduct for Directors Ackerman and Erdman, and Directors Lewitt and Katz.





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### Education Program

The Education Team supported a visit from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation K–16 Collaborative at the Weymouth Treatment Plant for a facility tour and discussions on careers in the water sector and workforce development opportunities.

In coordination with LADWP and the California Environmental Education Foundation, the Education Team hosted 40 K–12 teachers at a teacher institute at Metropolitan’s Headquarters. After using Metropolitan’s ‘Conservation Connection’ curriculum, teachers created a water filter and then tested their water using digital microscopes and professional equipment from our Water Quality Lab, including turbidimeters and spectrophotometers. Afterwards, teachers planted a drought-tolerant manzanita tree in Metropolitan’s courtyard as a symbol of their commitment to sustainability and environmental literacy.



### Community Partnering Program

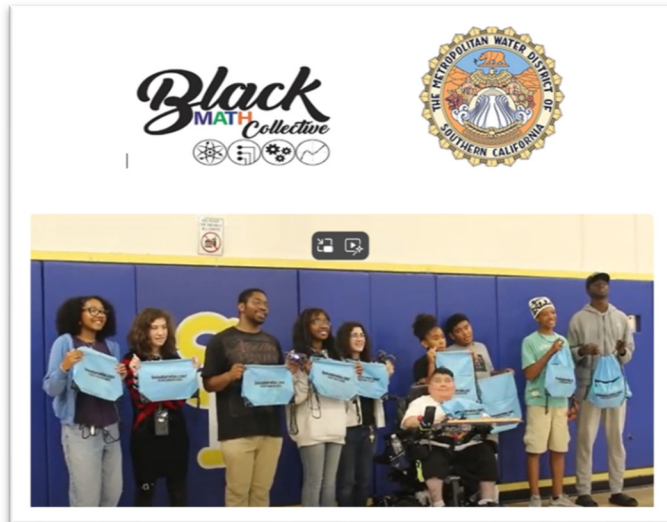
The Community Partnering Program sponsored three water education and conservation partnerships this month. Mrs. B’s Table, a woman and veteran-owned nonprofit organization, launched “BeeRooted: Growing Native Roots in Our Community” in partnership with the Meniffee Public Library to promote water conservation through a California native plant seed bank. Metropolitan also supported the Black Math Collective, who hosted underrepresented students in the Los Angeles area in their “Splash into



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STEM” program. The City of Rosemead’s project, “Collaborative Water Wise Rain Garden Events,” provided residents the opportunity to plant rain gardens in City parks and promote stormwater capture.



### Media Services

The Creative Design Team completed the design of this year’s Annual Shutdown Report, the HR Benefits Guide, as well as a cover design for the Urban Water Management Plan and Water Shortage Contingency Plan. The Project Labor Agreement Annual Report, designed by the team, was presented to the Board along with a recap video, created by the team’s videographers, spotlighting three transitional worker stories.

