



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## External Affairs

### • External Affairs Monthly Activities Report for March 2024

#### Summary

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This report provides a summary of External Affairs' group activities for March 2024.

#### Purpose

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Informational

#### Detailed Report

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#### Highlights

GM Hagekhalil was a featured speaker on the CEO Panel at the Western Winter Workshop, which was also attended by Vice Chair Camacho and Metropolitan staff. The GM spoke on strategies for successful leadership in the water industry. (March 1)

Staff hosted a news conference with board Chair Ortega, GM Hagekhalil, and TreePeople to announce the launch of the new tree rebate, in memory of Cindy Montanez, as part of the district's turf replacement incentive. (March 5)

GM Hagekhalil attended the MetWorks networking event in Carson, which highlighted future contract opportunities for Pure Water Southern California and other projects. (March 7)

Chair Ortega spoke to Three Valleys MWD (March 6), and GM Hagekhalil spoke to the Fullerton City Council and the Pasadena City Council (March 5 and 11), to discuss regional priorities, Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water, and water supply conditions.



*Top left: GM Hagekhalil and Director Kurtz at the Pasadena city council meeting, Top Right: GM Hagekhalil at the MetWorks networking event. Bottom left: Press conference to announce new tree rebate in memory of Cindy Montanez, Bottom right: Team Manager Lehman, EO Upadhyay and Asst Group Manager Collins at the WaterReuse Symposium*

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*GM Hagekhalil introduced Senator Padilla at the AMWA Conference in Washington DC.*

AGM Upadhyay and staff attended the WaterReuse association 2024 Symposium to talk about Pure Water Southern California and the future of water reuse. (March 12)

Directors Luna and Quinn and GM Hagekhalil attended and Metropolitan-sponsored Climate Resolve's Coolest in LA event. (March 14)

Chair Ortega was the keynote speaker, and Colorado River Manager Hasencamp presented at the American Society of Civil Engineers symposium. (March 28)

### **Legislative Services**

#### Federal

GM Hagekhalil attended the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) Water Policy Conference in Washington DC and introduced Senator Padilla.

Additionally, GM Hagekhalil and J.B. Hamby, Chair of the Colorado River Board of California, addressed the House caucus of California Democrats and met with House Republicans, Senator Padilla, Bureau of Reclamation staff, and White House officials to discuss the lower basin alternative for post-2026 Colorado River operations. (March 19–21)

#### State

Governor Newsom and legislative leaders announced an agreement to take immediate action with a first round of budget solutions to reduce the deficit by \$12–18 billion.

Stakeholder interest in the climate bonds continues to build as the state's fiscal situation shows a projected need for additional resources. Stakeholders in the water community will compete with other bonds of interest, which include housing, education, and addressing the fentanyl crisis. Metropolitan has joined coalition partners in advocating for the climate bond and will continue to push for these much-needed resources.

#### Local

This month, Metropolitan staff presented, monitored, and/or participated in 73 webinars, meetings, and events with community organizations and trade associations on Metropolitan activities and other water-specific topics.

- Prepared local background information for GM presentations to cities and water agencies.
- Director Quinn attended, and Metropolitan sponsored the VICA State Officeholders dinner. (March 8)
- Metropolitan staff gave a CAMP4Water update to the California Environmental Education Foundation Summit. (March 23)

### **Media and Communications**

- Helped coordinate media briefing and contributed quotes for joint news release between Arizona, California, and Nevada on the Lower Basin Alternative for post-2026 Colorado River operations.
- Arranged various interviews regarding tree rebate with Los Angeles Times, Smart Cities Dive, and Vision Latina with Chair Ortega.
- Arranged an interview with KBLA-AM 1580's Dominique DiPrima and WRM's Guerrero on tree rebates and conservation, as part of Metropolitan's sponsorship of the station's climate justice initiative.
- Set up an interview between Luke Bratt, North America editor of Global Water Intelligence, and Executive Officer/AGM Upadhyay regarding direct potable reuse.
- Coordinated an interview between ABC-10 Sacramento climate reporter Brenden Mincheff and Colorado River Resources Manager Hasencamp regarding the Lower Basin alternative.
- Set up interview with Los Angeles Times reporter Ian James and GM Hagekhalil regarding proposed biennial budget and rate increases.

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- Coordinated an interview between Verde Exchange's David Abel and GM Hagekhalil regarding the Board's vision for Metropolitan, staffing issues, water resiliency, and climate adaptation.

### Press Releases

- Opening of DVL Wildflower Trail.
- Statement on final revised interim operation of Colorado River through 2026.
- New tree rebate program.
- Public survey showing that Southern Californians are committed to conservation.



*Spring wildflowers in bloom at Diamond Valley Lake*

### Creative Design

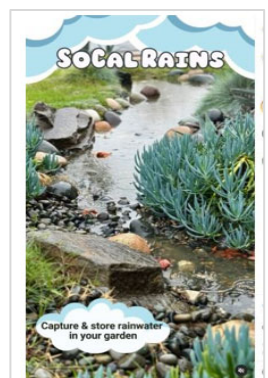
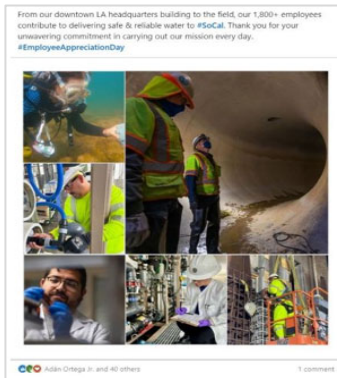
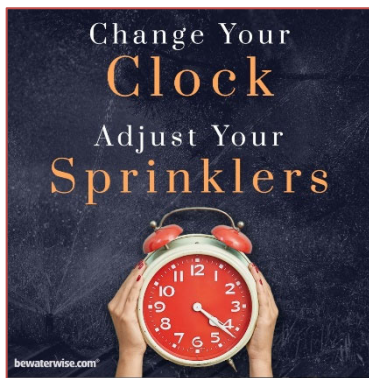
- Designed, fabricated, and began installation of a new commemorative gallery display at the Water Quality Laboratory for the facility's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration; created new local inspection trip book; designed new fact sheet for legislative briefing of Lower Basin States Alternative for post-2026 Colorado River operations.

### Website

- Generated 62,000 visits to mwdh2o.com with careers, job postings, and Pure Water Southern California being the most popular pages. Registered 21,000 views on bewaterwise.com with turf replacement, the new tree rebate page, and California Friendly/native plants profiles generating the most traffic.

### Social Media

- Capitalized on wet February conditions to produce a "SoCal Rains" series consisting of Instagram reels which generated good engagement by reaching nearly 100,000 views.
- Highlighted the media event launching new tree rebates as part of our turf replacement rebate through live streaming and photos.
- Collaborated with the Persian American Employee's Organization on a Nowruz post in celebration of the first day of spring and to recognize Persian Heritage Month.
- Led by US EPA's WaterSense, participated in an X party with agencies across the nation for Fix a Leak Week, promoting the district's flow monitor device rebate.
- Created a collage of photos of employees working in recognition of Employee Appreciation Day. Highlighted a team of water quality staff who belong to a select group of only nine Flavor Profile Analysis certified trainers worldwide for Women's International Day and Women's History Month.





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### Community Outreach

Provided an inspection trip of the Grace F. Napolitano Innovation Center, Weymouth, and Water Quality Lab for Directors Phan and Seckel. (March 1)

Provided an overview of Colorado River issues for the Water Education Foundation's Colorado River Inspection trip. (March 14)

Hosted an Environmental Listening Session on CAMP4W. (March 25)

Notified residents and businesses about the Allen-McColloch Pipeline urgent repair, Sepulveda Feeder urgent repair, and Orange County Feeder shutdown.

### Pure Water Southern California

- Provided presentations, workshops, and tours of the Napolitano Innovation Center for the Downey Rotary Club, Nature for All, outreach team for East County Advanced Purification Program, Warren Facility Citizens Advisory Committee, Water Services of Australia, Dreamers and Visionaries of South Bay, and the Association of Advancement of Cost Engineering.
- Discussed the Pure Water Program with the cities of Irwindale, Bellflower and Whittier, and LA Metro.
- Participated in the Pure Water Southern California networking event at the Carson Community Center, and a career fair for construction jobs and apprenticeships. (March 7)

### Education

- Interacted with 1,800 teachers, students, and adults through in-person and online meetings and events; distributed the quarterly education newsletter to 2,100 educators.
- Student art exhibit was displayed at the city of Anaheim, Municipal Water District of Orange County, and Eastern Municipal Water District.
- Conducted a half-day clinic for advanced scouts ages 14–18, to earn the Soil and Water Conservation merit badge.
- Participated in the California Environmental Education Foundation's Teacher Institute; Provided educational materials for Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District's Splash into Spring event, La Canada High School's Engineering Club, El Camino College's Discover a Career in Water Night, Los Angeles County Office of Education's Girls in STEM career day, and Orange County Water District Children's Water Festival.



- Launched Earth Day Challenge 2024 virtual competition for secondary schools. Other sponsors include the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Edison. During the competition students will learn about conservation, stewardship, climate change, air quality, and sustainability.

- Water Engineering 4 Good (WE4G) teams gave their final presentation on their water conservation devices to a panel of Metropolitan engineers on March 14 and 21.

- Supported water education through Community Partnering grants to Generation STEAM for the San Diego Festival of Science and Engineering; 2024 Los Angeles County Science and Engineering Fair; Paradise Hills Native Garden Educational Signage; Orange County Water District Children's Water Festival; and La Iglesia De Dios De La Profecia Water is Life, California Native Garden Installation.



*Water conservation-themed student art on display in Anaheim*