



External Affairs Group

● External Affairs Monthly Activities Report for May 2024

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Highlights

Metropolitan honored Asst Group Manager and AWWA President-elect Heather Collins, and ACWA President Cathy Green and Vice President Ernie Avila at a reception co-hosted by several water districts. (May 1)

On Tap Water Day and as part of Water Awareness Month, Metropolitan’s One Water Awards ceremony honored projects in Carson, Perris, El Cajon, and Tarzana funded by the Water Savings Incentive and Turf Replacement Programs. Chair Ortega, Directors Alvarez, Dennstedt, Goldberg, and Luna attended the event. (May 2)



Chair Ortega and Directors Luna, Garza and McCoy participated in Metropolitan’s first-ever Spanish language Sacramento Bay-Delta inspection trip. (May 6–8)

Chair Ortega, Vice Chair Camacho, and Directors Ackerman, Alvarez, De Jesus, Dennstedt, Erdman, Fellow, Garza, McMillan, Morris and Peterson, GM Hagekhalil, General Counsel Scully, and executive staff attended the ACWA Conference. Chair Ortega spoke on climate change impacts in the Delta and GM Hagekhalil shared his perspectives on leadership and workforce development in the water industry. Metropolitan also sponsored a leadership luncheon with the California African American Water Education Foundation and an event with Fellowship Latinos of Water (FLOW) which featured Chair Ortega alongside Sec Crowfoot.. (May 8–10)

Metropolitan signed MOUs with Friant Water Authority and Westlands Water District, and with the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley to seek opportunities to collaborate on surface and groundwater storage, transfers, exchanges and other projects. (May 8)

GM Hagekhalil joined with Marty Adams, Mark Pestrella, and Brian Jordan at the VerdeExchange 2024 Marketmakers Conference. (May 13)



The signing of two MOUs signals a new era of cooperation between Metropolitan and Central Valley agriculture and water agencies for mutually beneficial projects

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A Board Room banner was unveiled, celebrating the years in which Metropolitan has won the best tasting municipal tap water at Berkeley Spring's International Water Tasting competition. (May 14)

Chair Ortega and GM Hagekhalil were honored for their leadership at the Heal the Bay Bring Back the Beach event. Also attending were Vice-Chair Abdo, Directors Alvarez, Erdman, Luna, and McMillan. (May 16)

Directors at the unveiling of new board room banner honoring past water quality awards

GM Hagekhalil spoke about the future of water infrastructure at the United for Infrastructure Week event. (May 17)

Chair Ortega, Directors Cordero and Ackerman, and Metropolitan staff attended a tour with leaders of the Colorado River Indian Tribe that highlighted conservation projects and native habitat recovery. (May 17)



Chair Ortega and Directors Cordero and Ackerman spent the day learning and connecting with the Colorado River Indian Tribe



Officials gather for USBR's Announcement of Large Scale Water Recycling Project Grants

Metropolitan hosted a ceremony at which the US Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Touton announced new federal funding for innovative water reuse projects that strengthen drought resilience across the West including Pure Water Southern California, as well as projects for LADWP, City of Ventura and the Washington County Water Conservation District. Senator Padilla, Reps. Napolitano and Barragan, and State Water Board Chair Esquivel attended the event along with many local officials and water industry leaders. (May 28)

Metropolitan sponsored the "Water Infrastructure Networking Summit: The New Politics of Water," featuring Senator Padilla. Attendees included Chair Ortega, who served as closing keynote, and Dirs. Garza, Dennstedt, McMillan, and McCoy, along with GM Hagekhalil, Chief of Staff Mortada, AGM Zinke, and staff. (May 31)



Federal

GM Hagekhalil testified before the U.S. Senate Budget Committee at a hearing entitled “Droughts, Dollars, and Decisions: Water Scarcity in a Changing Climate” during which he highlighted Metropolitan's achievements, challenges, and future plans, and advocated for sustained federal assistance to ensure the continued delivery of safe and reliable drinking water. (May 22)

State

May Revise Budget Proposal

On May 10, the Governor released his May Revised budget proposal for the 2024–25 fiscal year. This proposal addresses \$8.2 Billion in additional solutions for the 2024–25 budget year, on top of the Early Action Budget Package in April, which provided \$17.3 Billion in solutions. This brings the state to a total of \$25.5 Billion in budget solutions for 2024–25, with a \$19.4 Billion outstanding deficit that needs to be addressed.

Climate Resilient Water Infrastructure

Metropolitan Water District led a coalition of water, labor, business, agricultural, local government, and social justice organizations for a lobby day in Sacramento to advocate for the importance of including significant funding for water infrastructure in the climate resilience bond being considered this legislative session. The coalition met with 12 legislative office and the Governor’s Office, representing a coalition of 15 different regional and statewide organizations. (May 29).



Chair Ortega led a coalition of water, labor, business, and community based organizations in meetings with state legislative leaders and the Newsom Administration officials to advocate for water investments in the Climate Resilience Bond.

Local

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

- Metropolitan staff attended the United Chambers of Commerce 2024 Inspirational Women Awards Ceremony. (May 9)
- Metropolitan sponsored and Chief SRI Officer Crosson attended the LAANE “Women for the New Los Angeles” event. (May 10)
- Chair Ortega and Vice Chair Camacho attended a tour of Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District facilities in Riverside County. (May 15)
- Metropolitan staff attended the Calleguas MWD event celebrating grant funding from the state Drought Relief and Prop 1 programs. Assemblymember Bennett (D-Oxnard) was the keynote speaker. (May 17)
- Director Kassakhian, GM Hagekhalil, Chief of Staff Mortada and staff attended, and Metropolitan sponsored, the Arab American Association of Engineers & Architects - CA “LA28” event. (May 23)

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Metropolitan sponsored the Rancho Los Alamitos Cottonwood Luncheon honoring Director Cordero for her long standing commitment to local community service. (May 30)

Media and Communications



External Affairs' Holmes and Mendez accept the EPIC Award from the California Association of Public Information Officers

Press Releases

- One Water Awards celebrating four innovative, water saving projects
- State's release of new cost estimate and benefit-cost analysis for Delta Conveyance Project
- Award of federal grant to Metropolitan for large-scale recycling program
- Celebrated awards received by the district, including Engineering Services' Dam Safety Award, California Association of Public Information Officers EPIC award for the dedication event of the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center, and four awards from the National Association of Government Communicators

Creative Design

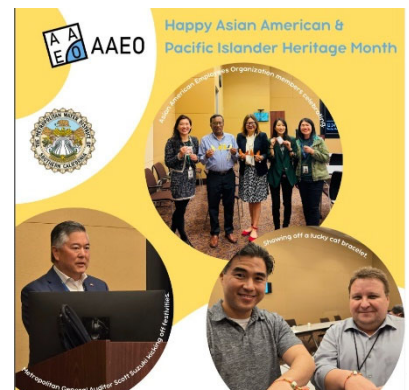
- Created lobby banners for Water Awareness Month, assets for social media, and looping video for rotunda monitors.
- Created PRIDE@Met handouts for Pride Month Activities.
- Shot video and photography in the Delta, focusing on the planned Webb Tract rice cultivation and wetlands restoration activities.
- Scripted and taped influencer spots featuring LGBTQIA+ content creator and designer Dabito and the historic Bob Baker Marionette Theater.



Website

- For Water Awareness Month, updated mwdh2o.com homepage with video loop that showcases staff and activities to highlight Metropolitan's work to ensure reliability and quality of water supplies.
- Garnered more than 63,000 visits to mwdh2o.com, with careers, job postings, and How We Get Our Water pages the most popular; registered over 55,000 visits to bewaterwise.com site.

Social Media



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- Featured Metropolitan staff on posts commemorating Military Appreciation Month and Memorial Day.
- Posted the second in a series of “Why Plant a Tree” rebate assets, in collaboration with Tree People, which received more than 360,000 impressions, the most received across all platforms.
- Celebrated National Environmental Education Week and Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Showcased two mother/child duos at Metropolitan (Alicia and Terral Benbow; Rosa and Vanessa Roth) for Mother’s Day.
- Highlighted Asian American and Pacific Islander Month.

Community Outreach

Chair Ortega, GM Hagekhalil, and AGM Upadhyay discussed water issues and provided an overview of CAMP4W to the MWDOC board. (May 1)

Supported 14 water conservation and education projects and events through the community partnering program:

- Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden—Waterwise Community Festival
- Water Replenishment District—14th Annual Groundwater Festival
- Rowland Water District—What’s in your bottle:Waterwise Refill Station Project
- Olivenhain Municipal Water District—Water Awareness Month Event
- The San Diego River Park Foundation—River Kids Discovery Days
- Walnut Valley Water District—H2O Heroes Fun Fest
- Arlington Garden in Pasadena—Waterwise Garden Field Guide Project
- Nature Collective—Pollinator & Indigenous Plant School Garden
- The UC Irvine Foundation—Collaborating for Change Symposium
- Long Beach Utilities Department—Deforest Park Wetland Exploaration and Education
- Cucamonga Valley Water District—Open House and Water Fair
- Moulton Niguel Water District—Nature Space Waterwise Garden Tour
- Trabuco Canyon Water District—Water Awareness Day
- Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District—Water Fest 2024

Provided outreach to HOAs in Lake Forest and Mission Viejo on AMP Urgent Relining; met with residents to discuss encroachments on Upper Feeder and Palos Verdes Feeder.

Presented updates on CAMP4W to West Basin Water Association and Western Water Drought Task Force.

Led three inspection trips to Hoover Dam and the Colorado River and three trips to the State Water Project.

Pure Water Southern California

- Provided tours for CalCities (May 3), UCLA Nursing students (May 9, 17), Strength Based Community Change (in Spanish, May 13), One Water Nevada (May 16), general public (May 18), and CORO Fellows (May 22).
- Staffed information tables at Upper District MWD Water Fest (May 11) and Water Infrastructure Networking Summit (May 31).
- Presented to Whittier City Council (May 14); met with LA Trade Tech to discuss potential classes in Carson (May 20); met with Union Pacific (May 21), City of Carson (May 22), and Del Amo Plaza Property Owner and Lessee (May 28) regarding project and conveyance system.
- Launched public opinion survey on attitudes and awareness on direct potable reuse.

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Education

Interacted with 2,600 teachers, students, and adults through in-person and online meetings and events.

- Displayed student art exhibit at Jurupa Community Services District; met with the Water Energy Education Alliance Leadership Roundtable, University of La Verne’s Business Council, and WRD’s Water Industry Workforce Development; hosted education booths at the LA County Fair.
- Provided water education and water industry careers information for career days for Sunburst Youth Academy, Roynon Elementary School in La Verne, Haynes Elementary School in La Verne, Hillcrest Elementary School in Monterey Park, and Coldwater Canyon Elementary in Northridge.

