



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

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

Summary

This report highlights my activities as Chair of the Board, as well as Board Member highlights during the month of January 2026 on matters relating to The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's business.

Monthly Activities

Key Activities

- Attended my first public event of 2026, on behalf of the Metropolitan Water District at the San Fernando City Council January meeting, where I delivered my quarterly update on Metropolitan's key initiatives and provided an overview of the official start of our new General Manager, Shivaji Deshmukh. I also had the honor of attending the declaration of the first-ever *Cindy Montañez Day*. This recognition was especially meaningful to me, as Ms. Montañez's leadership and support were instrumental for my membership on the Board of the Metropolitan Water District.



- Joined the swearing-in of Director Philip Paule, who was appointed to the Metropolitan Board to represent the Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD). Director Paule is currently chief of staff for a Riverside County supervisor and has worked at various levels of government, including leading the offices of both congressional and county representatives. He has represented Division I on EMWD's Board since 2007, during which time he has served multiple terms as board president. He succeeds Jeff Armstrong, who served on Metropolitan's Board since 2023. Director Paule's lengthy service with EMWD, as well as his experience working with local, state, and federal legislators, make him a welcome addition to Metropolitan's Board



- General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh and I participated in the Southern California Water Coalition Quarterly luncheon, convening at Santa Anita Park, where we had a moderated conversation about Metropolitan's future, including the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W) and the importance of long-term planning horizon to guide infrastructure investments while maintaining affordability. During the Q&A discussion, we addressed critical issues facing the region, including rising service costs, the need for active board members, public confidence in tap water, and the need for greater interdependence. This event marked a rare opportunity for Metropolitan's General Manager and Board Chair to share a public platform outside the boardroom. I extended my appreciation to Charles Wilson, M.A., and the Southern California Water Coalition for their leadership in framing and elevating the region's most pressing water challenges, opportunities, and solutions. In attendance were Directors Lewitt, Kurtz, Ramos, Fellow, and Seckel.



- I attended the Metropolitan Water District of Orange County's (MWDOC) Water Policy Forum & Dinner, featuring keynote speaker General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh. Director Seckel joined me in presenting our Board's commendation recognizing MWDOC's long-standing director, Larry Dick, for his commitment and many years of leadership to the Metropolitan Board.



- Central Arizona Project (CAP) board members and senior staff, including President Terry Goddard and General Manager Brenda Burman, visited Metropolitan. The group toured the Weymouth Water Quality laboratory in La Verne, attended the Subcommittee on Imported Water board meeting, and concluded the day with a visit to Pure Water Southern California in Carson.



- Served as the featured speaker at the League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County community forum, participating in the Zoom segment "Where Does Our Water Come From?" The 90-minute session drew approximately 70 participants and included a robust Q&A focused on Metropolitan's water supply reliability planning for Southern California. The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to promoting informed civic engagement and public policy education.



Delegation of Activities:

- Board Vice Chair Sutley represented the Board at the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project groundbreaking in Culver City, where she delivered closing remarks on behalf of the Board, highlighting Metropolitan's commitment to long-term water reliability. The project will enable the district to reverse system flows during severe California droughts, allowing water from the Colorado River and Diamond Valley Lake to reach communities that currently have limited access to these supplies. These areas typically rely almost exclusively on northern Sierra water delivered through the State Water Project. Directors Jay, McMillan, Erdman, and Lewitt, along with General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh, were also in attendance.



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.

Activities and Reports by Board Representatives Appointed by the Chair:Palo Verde Valley Community Enhancement Collaborative (CEC) Representative Cynthia Kurtz and the Palo Verde Valley Prop Utilization Committee (PUC) Representative David De Jesus:

At the Special Committee on Ag & Tribal Partnerships, Director updates from Dir. Kurtz on the Palo Verde Valley Community Enhancement Collaborative (CEC) and De Jesus on the Palo Verde Valley Prop Utilization Committee (PUC) were deferred. Chair Kurtz requested that Directors reach out to Director Alvarez for any questions or updates.

Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) Representative Jacque McMillan:

At the January 27, 2026, Metropolitan Subcommittee on Imported Water meeting, Director Jacque McMillan reported on the meeting of the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) Board of Directors' meeting held on December 18, 2025. The DCA Board was introduced to Gwen Buckholz, the DCA Environmental Division Manager, highlighting an overview of her extensive professional background. The DCA Board adopted a resolution amending the Conflict of Interest Code, last updated in May 2022. The amendments reflect organizational changes and direction from the Fair Political Practices Commission, including adding newly designated positions, updating position titles, and revising disclosure categories. During the sustainability manager's report, staff recommended using the Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Rating System to benchmark and self-assess the DCP. At this early stage, Envision would be used as a self-assessment tool rather than pursuing third-party verification. Staff will prepare the first Programmatic Sustainability Plan by the end of this fiscal year. Standard manager reporting items were provided by the DCA executive director, treasurer, communications manager, environmental manager, and general counsel.

Colorado River Resources Representative Gloria Cordero:

At the January 27, 2026, Metropolitan Subcommittee on Imported Water meeting, Director Gloria Cordero reported on two Colorado River Board (Board) meetings: the meeting held at the Colorado River Water Users Association (CRWUA) Conference in Las Vegas on December 16, 2025, and the one held in Palm Desert on January 9, 2026. Regarding the December meeting at CRWUA, many Metropolitan Board members and staff attended. Andrea Travnicek, the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, expressed her appreciation for the work California has put in to bringing about a consensus. Wade Crowfoot, California's Secretary for Natural Resources, also attended the Board meeting. He noted that California has successfully implemented the largest ag-to-urban water transfer in the nation's history. And he recommitted the state of California to work for a solution to the issues raised by the ongoing negotiations. The meeting was followed by a press conference. Many of our water agencies had the opportunity to provide an overview of their water conservation measures that have been implemented to reduce Colorado River demands. Chair Adan Ortega spoke for Metropolitan. At the January meeting, Thomas Gibson was sworn in as the new Board member representing the California Department of Water Resources, replacing Jeanine Jones. Gibson is currently a deputy director there and previously served as General Counsel for the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Natural Resources Agency. He is expected to strengthen support for Colorado River matters at the state level. The meeting focused on the

deteriorating water supply conditions and the lack of progress on the operating guidelines for the Colorado River.