

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AG AND TRIBAL PARTNERSHIPS

January 27, 2026

Chair Kurtz called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Members present: Directors Cordero, De Jesus, Erdman, Fellow, Garza, Kurtz, McMillan, Miller, Ramos, and Shepherd Romey.

Members absent: None

Other Board Members present: Directors Ackerman, Alvarez, Bryant, Crane, Denham, Faessel, Fong-Sakai, Jay, McCoy, Lewitt, McCoy, Ortega, Paule, and Pressman.

Committee Staff present: Deshmukh, Hudson, Novoa, Rubin, Schaffer, Hughes, and Zinke

1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE’S JURISDICTION

1. Wigs Mendoza – Volunteer advocate of indigenous people
2. Darcy Burke – Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District

2. COMMITTEE ACTION (ONLY)

None

3. COMMITTEE ITEMS (FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

4. COMMITTEE ITEMS (ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

5. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

6. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL)

- a. Subject: Discuss the purpose of the Special Committee on Ag and Tribal Partnerships

Presented by: Carolyn Schaffer, Group Manager, External Affairs

Ms. Schaffer presented a draft purpose statement for discussion to help guide committee direction and future agenda items.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

- 1) Ortega
- 2) Garza
- 3) Kurtz
- 4) Fellow
- 5) Cordero
- 6) Shepherd Romey
- 7) Lewitt

Staff responded to the Directors' questions and comments.

- b. Subject: The 21st Century (Agricultural) Renaissance

Presented by: AG Kawamura, Solutions from the Land

Mr. Kawamura, founding co-chair of Solutions from the Land and former Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, provided an overview of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in the 21st century.

The following Director provided comments or asked questions:

- 1) De Jesus

Staff responded to the Director's questions and comments.

- c. Subject: Report on the Palo Verde Valley Property Utilization
Committee

This item was deferred.

- d. Subject: Report on the Palo Verde Valley Community Enhancement
Collaborative

This item was deferred.

7. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

None

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Cynthia Kurtz
Chair