



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Group

### • Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation GM Monthly Report

#### Summary

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Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office August 2024 Monthly Activities

#### Purpose

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Informational

#### Detailed Report

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##### SRI Core Activities

To support the development of CAMP4W, SRI participated in several outreach and engagement activities with different constituencies. This included giving presentations, moderating, and participating in panel discussions for the following:

- San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments Water Working Group
- BIA Southern California Water Conference
- MWD GM Listening Session on Equity and Environmental Co-Benefits (in collaboration with External Affairs)
- California Data Collaborative Annual Water Data Summit
- Sustain SoCal Water Solutions Conference
- Listening Session with Eastern Municipal Water District's Agricultural Water Users

With the CAMP4W Planning Team, SRI organized a workshop with the Member Agency Managers on the Evaluative Criteria and continued to receive input through follow-up meetings. SRI also introduced the Policies and Initiatives element to the One Water and Stewardship Committee. It helped facilitate discussion with the CAMP4W Taskforce on a refined approach to the Evaluative Criteria, service area population data, and an update by the Member Agency Ad Hoc Working Group on business model discussions. The CSRIO also participated in the second National Advisory Committee on Climate Adaptation Science meeting, providing recommendations to the Department of Interior and U.S. Geological Services on climate adaptation science needs and priorities.

##### Sustainability and Resilience

**Zero Emission Vehicle Transition:** On August 21, 2024, SRI conducted the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Executive Task Force meeting with the Fleet Services Unit, the Safety, Regulatory, and Training Section, and the Finance, ESG, and External Affairs Groups to continue Metropolitan's efforts to transition to ZEVs from fossil-fueled vehicles. At this meeting, the Task Force debriefed attendees on the August EO&T Committee presentation on ZEV replacement strategy and financing options; this item will be followed by an October action item to the Committee. Other agenda items included ZEV and charging equipment procurement, infrastructure buildout, and funding opportunities. CARB's Advanced Clean Fleets Rule requires the transition to ZEVs to replace 50% of its medium and heavy-duty vehicles with ZEVs.

**Sustainable Procurement:** SRI and the Contracting Services Unit met with the Legal Department to discuss the new operating policies and sustainable procurement handbook. Legal is reviewing these documents and will provide input in September.

Date of Report: September 9, 2024

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### Centralized Grants Management Office

Metropolitan staff applied for an unprecedented \$212 million in grant funds during FY 2023/2024. As of August 2024, we have been awarded \$127 million, and \$29 million in applications is still pending award notifications. The Centralized Grants Management Office (CGMO) has begun outreach to all Metropolitan groups to provide a brief overview of the grant services available to staff. Through these outreach efforts, the CGMO will establish grant administrators within each group and gather project information for a Metropolitan grants three-year strategic priorities plan.

On August 29, the CGMO held the second SoCal Water Utilities Grants Network meeting. Attendees learned how to develop and leverage partnerships with non-profits and Community-Based organizations from the Council for Watershed Health and Metropolitan's DE&I office. They also received information on SMART goals. This meeting set the SoCal Grants Network up to develop a regional strategic plan for grants and research.

### Innovation, Pilots, and Emerging Technologies

SRI staff worked with Water Supply Operations to facilitate an information exchange with the City of Chicago through our Innovation Partner, Booky Oren Global Water Technologies. The teams discussed their common challenges and strategies related to the transition to zero-emission vehicles. The discussion yielded some important lessons learned on the build-out of charging infrastructure and will continue in the coming months.

The CSRIO participated in a Technology Spotlight session at the Water Data Summit focused on evaluating emerging technologies for their climate resilience potential and value.

### Environmental Planning Services

#### Core Business: Environmental Planning and Regulatory Compliance Support

Environmental Planning Section staff continued to prepare California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation for capital projects, including an addendum to the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the PCCP Rehabilitation Program for the relining of Sepulveda Feeder South Reach. Staff filed Notices of Determination with the San Bernardino County Clerk and State Clearinghouse for the Inland Feeder/Foothill Pump Station Intertie Project Mitigated Negative Declaration following the August Board action to adopt the document. Staff continued to prepare the draft Program EIR for the Pure Water Southern California program, including reviewing draft technical reports, preparing draft resource sections of EIR, and completing biological resource surveys. For the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project, staff completed archaeological surveys, contacted Native American tribes regarding tribal resources, and continued preparing documents to support the determination that the project is exempt from CEQA under the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects.

Critical operations and maintenance activities were supported by Environmental Planning Section staff, including providing CEQA and regulatory clearances, conducting pre-construction surveys, and construction monitoring for operations and maintenance activities throughout the service area. Staff continued to participate in planning meetings for the Foothill Feeder shutdown and gave a presentation on environmental planning coordination for shutdowns at the annual shutdown planning meeting. Staff provided legislative analysis for a discussion draft of proposed amendments to the federal Endangered Species Act and for SB 868 (Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024). Staff reviewed 24 CEQA notices for external projects and prepared comment letters for those that may affect Metropolitan facilities and/or operations.

Environmental Planning Section continued oversight of reserve management activities to protect valuable natural resources and meet Metropolitan's mitigation obligations. Security patrols were conducted throughout both reserves to prevent trespassing, vandalism, poaching, and theft and to protect the reserves' natural and cultural resources, facilities, and equipment. Activities at the Lake Mathews Multiple Species Reserve included establishing sites for a rare plant enhancement project to study how vegetation maintenance impacts rare plant recruitment and conducting Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) monitoring as part of the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency's range-wide monitoring efforts. Activities at the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve included the removal of non-native plants for fire and habitat management and coordination with researchers conducting burrowing owl and SKR surveys.



Stephens' Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*)

### Land Management

A film permit has been issued for a one-day film shoot at Diamond Valley Lake. The film shoot entailed a television commercial advertisement for Volvo cars.

Metropolitan recorded a permanent easement for public road purposes involving Wilson Street. The City of Rancho Cucamonga requires the developer of tract homes to extend the improvement of Wilson Street and facilitate the easement transaction as a condition of approving the development project.