



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs

• External Affairs Monthly Activities Report for February 2024

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Highlights

GM Hagekhalil, COO Upadhyay, and staff hosted a tour of CRA facilities for member agency managers. (February 1)

Chair Ortega, GM Hagekhalil, and EO/AGM Upadhyay provided an update to the Calleguas board of directors on water supply reliability and how CAMP4W will inform future investments to serve Ventura County and the region. (February 7)



L: Member Agency Managers tour CRA Facilities; R: GM Hagekhalil, Chair Ortega, and Director McMillan at Calleguas board meeting



GM Hagekhalil and Chief DE&I Officer Thomas, met with Rep. Napolitano and Sunburst Youth Academy staff to discuss workforce development and training.

GM Hagekhalil was a panelist at the NACWA Winter Conference and spoke about the ways that Metropolitan's regional cooperative brings together many interests to collectively address the water needs and challenges of Southern California. (February 13–16)

Metropolitan leadership, including General Manager Hagekhalil and Chief DE&I Officer Thomas, met with Representative Grace Napolitano and Sunburst Youth

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Academy to discuss workforce development and training opportunities. (February 20)

As the featured speaker at Western MWD's 2024 retail agency roundtable event, GM Hagekhalil provided an overview on CAMP4W and other initiatives, regional economic pressures, and the proposed biennial budget. (February 21)

Chair Ortega and GM Hagekhalil provided an update to the Inland Empire Utilities Agency board of directors on water supply conditions, CAMP4W, and planned investments to ensure continued reliability in the region. (February 21)

GM Hagekhalil spoke at the Los Angeles City Council's Energy & Environment Committee about Metropolitan's efforts to develop regional water supplies in collaboration with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Los Angeles County Sanitation District. (February 23)



GM Hagekhalil testifying at LA City Council Energy and Environment Committee meeting

Legislative Services

Federal

Congress provided \$1.1 billion through the American Rescue Plan and Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 to help low-income households pay their water and wastewater bills, prevent shutoffs, and restore services. Senator Padilla plans to introduce a bill to make the program permanent, and Metropolitan provided a support letter to advance the legislation.



Community Outreach Manager Soni and Rep. Barragan at Pure Water Southern California

Chair Ortega, Director Erdman, and staff met with Congresswoman Barragan and her staff for a presentation and tour of the Pure Water Southern California demonstration facility. (February 21)

State

The Legislative Analyst Office released an update on the state's budget deficit, reporting that it has grown from \$58 Billion to \$73 Billion based on low revenue receipts for this fiscal year. This report recommended cuts to one-time and temporary spending programs totaling \$16 billion, with \$3.4 billion of those cuts proposed from water and environmental programs.

Metropolitan is continuing to advocate for the passage of a climate bond in this year's session. Stakeholders are watching the behavioral health bond on the March ballot to gauge voter appetite for the state taking on

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more bond debt. The Legislature will have until June 27 to pass a bill on the climate bond that qualifies for the November 2024 ballot.

The State Legislature's bill introduction deadline passed on February 16. In total, 2,226 bills were introduced this year, with 78 actives from last year. Bills that are currently active from 2023 will have until May 28 before any further action is taken.

Local

This month, Metropolitan staff presented, monitored, and/or participated in 64 webinars, virtual meetings, and events with community organizations, trade associations, and local officials on Metropolitan activities and other water-specific topics.

Director Dick attended and Metropolitan sponsored the Orange County Taxpayer's Association's luncheon featuring OC Board of Supervisors Chairman Wagner. (February 2)

Metropolitan staff participated in a tour of the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center with members of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, which included staff from Upper Municipal Water District and San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District. (February 7)

Vice Chairs Camacho and Goldberg attended and Metropolitan sponsored the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce's annual event. (February 8)

Chief SRI Officer Crosson presented on CAMP4W to the Los Angeles Business Council's Energy & Environment Committee. (February 14)

Metropolitan sponsored the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce 2024 Inaugural, which recognized business and civic leaders and the 2024 Santa Ana River Science and Conservation Symposium. (February 15)

Media and Communications

Coordinated interview between Vogue writer Tamar Adler and GM Hagekhalil and External Affairs' Soni about Pure Water Southern California for a story on DPR in California.

Responded to inquiries from CNN, Los Angeles Times, and 89.3 FM KPCC regarding stormwater capture and Metropolitan pilot programs.

Provided a tour of Pure Water Southern California to New York Times reporter Michael Kimmelman for a long-term piece on Southern California water to be published later this year.

Provided a tour of High Desert Water Bank to Dutch reporter Mari Myers and an interview with Water Resource Management's Manager Alonzo for a story on water storage opportunities.

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Provided a quote and photos for the American Water Works Association newsletter on the Water Savings Incentives Program and 2023 One Water Awards winners.

Press Releases

- Opening of the Wildflower Trail at Diamond Valley Lake
- New Central Basin Municipal Water District representative Michael Gualtieri on the Metropolitan Board

Creative Design

Finalized Water System Operations' Annual Operating Plan and 2024 Leadership Today, Water Tomorrow brochure.

Designed and produced new first responder signs for all Colorado River Aqueduct pump plants.

Website

Posted new homepage features spotlighting Water Quality Lab staff, the 2023 Annual Achievement Report, and the proposed biennial budget.

Added to bewaterwise.com a listing of newly certified landscape professionals who have completed Metropolitan's Water Efficient Landscape Dual Certification Program; the webpage hosts nearly 100 EPA WaterSense-certified professionals with industry-leading water efficiency training.

Registered more than 62,000 visits to mwdh2o.com, with careers, job postings, and the Board of Directors webpages receiving the most traffic. Received over 20,000 views on bewaterwise.com site, with turf replacement, California Friendly/native plants profiles, and rebates the most visited pages.

Social Media

Shared postings of videos from actor Kyle MacLachlan, which outperformed all posts in terms of reach, impressions, and engagement from his 550,000 followers on social media.

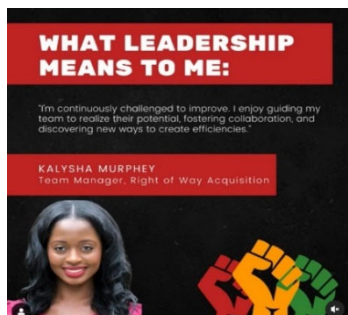
Highlighted Inland Empire Construction Career, Apprenticeship Resource Fair.

Posted public comments made during the One Water & Stewardship Committee public hearing for the Annual Achievement Report.



GM Hagekhalil, Chair Ortega, newly installed Central Basin Director Gualtieri and Director Garza

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February social media posts

Featured posts to celebrate the Super Bowl, Black History month, Lunar New Year, and Valentines Day.

Community Outreach

- Notified residents and businesses on upcoming work and urgent repair on the Sepulveda Feeder and notified residents about San Diego Canal repair and shutdown.
- Presentation to Willow Glen and Portola Springs HOAs and city of Mission Viejo on upcoming Allen-McColloch Pipeline urgent repair.
- Tour of Weymouth and Water Quality Lab for AWWA CA-NV Young Professionals Committee. (February 22)
- Led State Water Project inspection trip for Vice Chair Goldberg and Director Alvarez.

Pure Water Southern California

Participation at Del Amo Action Committee's Stormwater Symposium (February 24) and focus groups on public attitudes on potable reuse. (February 28–29)

Made presentations and tours to the Los Angeles Faith and Ecology Network (February 14), staff of Assemblymember Zbur (D-Hollywood) (February 14), Association of Water Agencies of Ventura County (February 20), Metropolitan Administrative Services Section (February 21), International Facility Management Association (February 22), Mark Gold and UCLA students (February 23), and a general public tour (February 24).



Metropolitan's Pure Water Southern California tours provide the public with a greater understanding of how recycled water will help meet our region's future water needs

Education

- Interacted with more than 2,600 teachers, students, and adults through in-person and online meetings and events; distributed the quarterly education newsletter to 2,100 educators.
- Participated in California Environmental Education Foundation's Teacher Institute, MWDOC's Water Energy Education Alliance Leadership Roundtable, University of La Verne Business Council, and Water Replenishment District's Water Industry Workforce Development Group.
- Water Engineering 4 Good (WE4G) teams submitted social media video descriptions and social media posts of their water conservation projects.