



## ● Chair of the Board Monthly Activity Report – April 2023

### Summary

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This report highlights the activities of the Chair of the Board during the month of April 2023 on matters relating to The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's business.

### Monthly Activities

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#### Key Activities

Attended meeting with General Manager Adel Hagekhalil and Los Angeles Mayor Bass' Chief of Staff Chris Thompson and Deputy Mayor Nancy Sutley to provide updates on Metropolitan's strategic priorities, the Colorado River, and matters of common interest. We also discussed climate adaptation master planning efforts.

Attended a Fish Out Event at Copper Basin in the desert with General Manager Adel Hagekhalil, where we joined over 80 Metropolitan field employees and their families on this once-per-year activity through the Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Participated in a demonstration of aerial firefighting methods by CalFire near Metropolitan's Diemer Treatment Plant with General Manager Adel Hagekhalil, Group Manager, Engineering Services John Bednarski, Brett Barbre, Board President of Yorba Linda Water District, and General Manager Major Mark Toy to tour the district's Marc Marcantonio permanent Heli-Hydrant, an innovative 12-foot wide, 2400-gallon water tank for firefighting helicopters. This was a preview to a similar facility planned near the Diemer Treatment Plant. The Heli-Hydrant allows first responders from CalFire to save critical time and effectively fight fires by offering a strategically placed, quick-fill, pilot-operated water source. The remote operation allows for greater safety of ground firefighters and water sources. This Heli-Hydrant enables the ability to safeguard life, property, and the environment for the benefit of the community.



**Speaking Engagements/Events**

- Served as the opening keynote speaker at the American Water Works Association California-Nevada Spring Conference addressing efforts to adapt to climate change and answering questions from the audience of 1,000 conference participants. I emphasized that climate change is having a significant impact on the operations of water systems by affecting water availability, quality, infrastructure, and resilience, among other factors. I discussed Metropolitan’s Climate Adaptation Plan, which will inform Metropolitan’s Capital Investment Plan, regional and local water project development, and long-term financial planning. This plan looks at everything through a climate lens to ensure we are developing the best possible future for the communities we serve.



- Served as a speaker at the Orange County Water Infrastructure Networking Summit (WINS). I was joined by One Water and Stewardship Committee Chair Tracy Quinn, who served as a panelist, as well as Vice Chair Michael Camacho, Directors Karl Seckel, Larry Dick, Linda Ackerman, and Engineering Operations and Technology Committee Chair Dennis Erdman. I focused my remarks on the importance of “cutting the blue tape,” stifling the reliability of water supply resources, and access to safe drinking water for many communities in California. I spoke about the outlook for Metropolitan’s critical water planning objectives, including the ongoing Climate Adaptation Master Planning process and the bold stand taken by Metropolitan’s Board that potable water should not be used on decorative turf in commercial sectors.



- Served as the keynote speaker at Western Riverside County Reception, sponsored by both Eastern Municipal Water District and Western Municipal Water District, reflecting on the leaders and key initiatives of the past. I emphasized the need for continued efforts to develop solutions for the future to address climate change impacts and vulnerabilities facing the region’s water system and the communities’ Metropolitan serves to advance strategies for an equitable and resilient water future, as well as answered questions from the audience.



- Addressed the Metropolitan’s Employee Service Award Luncheon, sharing brief reflections on my own career at Metropolitan, the talent our staff brings to our challenges, and vision for Metropolitan as a reliable and equitable water provider and as a diverse, inclusive workforce.



- Provided welcoming remarks at Groundswell’s Day of Action event on Earth Day, ensuring every Californian can access clean and affordable water. I was joined by Director Juan Garza, who testified at the hearing, and General Manager Adel Hagekhalil, Ethics Officer Abel Salinas, and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer Liji Thomas. National civil rights, social justice, labor, business, water policy leaders, and community activists attended this unprecedented Water Justice Hearing and press conference held at Metropolitan’s Headquarters building. Following the hearing, I met with a small group of community leaders to discuss the crisis facing California water needs and social justice. I had the privilege of greeting Labor and Civil Rights Leader Dolores Huerta and State Senator Steven Bradford in the Chair’s office.



- Served as the keynote speaker at the Hispanic Coalition of Small Business Association’s Spheres of Sustainability Summit, noting that Metropolitan has made a holistic, 360 degrees commitment to equity and inclusion in our workforce, supplier base, and the diverse communities in which we serve. I participated in a robust question-and-answer session addressing the needs of the small, diverse, owned business community and the need to cut the blue tape that has slowed progress in building the new class of infrastructure needed by utilizing the talent pool and services of all Southern California.



- Joined General Manager Adel Hagekhalil in kicking off Metropolitan’s Sustainability Resilience and Innovation Expo and Earth Day celebration, emphasizing Metropolitan’s long history of environmental stewardship. In the area of Sustainability, as we develop a climate lens for which all Metropolitan will subscribe to the new Climate Adaptation Master Plan, future people, and financial resources will be rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion. This approach will also help Metropolitan deliver on our commitment to finding solutions that benefit people, communities, and the environment.



Joined Board Vice Chair Heather Repenning in paying tribute to General Manager Adel Hagekhalil at an event sponsored by Cedars Rotary Club, honoring him for his leadership in the Arab-American community highlighting efforts to increase access to drinking water.



### **Conference Attendance and Participation**

I approved travel requests for Directors wishing to attend the Association of California Water Agencies Spring Conference in Monterey, California, as well as those wishing to attend the upcoming “Law of the River” seminar in Scottsdale, Arizona.

### **Approvals to Represent Metropolitan**

Given unforeseen circumstances I asked Director Anthony Fellow to preside during the meeting of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability Committee on April 8. The committee’s business included a panel of member agency managers to discuss the proposal to provide a connection for the Rubidoux Community Services District.

Director John Morris, Vice Chair of the Sub-Committee on Pure Water SoCal and Regional Conveyance was asked to participate at a meeting in Hemet with Congressman Raul Ruiz and White House Infrastructure Czar Mitch Landrieu. Vice Chair Morris provided testimony about Metropolitan’s funding priorities.

**Regularly Scheduled/Ongoing Meetings**

I received no additional comments from Directors about the new board room seating arrangement and participation of individual member agency managers who will be invited to sit with the board in alphabetical order of member agencies beginning in May 2023. The vendor has made the necessary changes to the electronics in the room for each director, and staff is reaching out to member agency managers for scheduling.

Committee and board meetings are now running mostly on time. In March, only one standing committee started late following the longer-than-expected board meeting. On March 25, all of the subcommittees and the Executive Committee meeting started on time. We have held two sets of concurrent meetings without complaint as well. Thank you to all the Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs for providing the Board Vice Chairs and myself with helpful feedback during the board agenda planning process. Also, thank you to members of the public I will continue to solicit feedback from the board during the Executive Committee meetings.

I continue to meet regularly to review issues and coordinate activities with the Board Vice Chairs, Department Heads, and Directors.