



● Chair of the Board Monthly Activity Report – March 2023

Summary

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

Monthly Activities

Key Activities

Sacramento Legislative Days

- Attended Metropolitan's Sacramento Legislative Day and met with State Water Resources Control Board Chairman Joaquin Esquivel; California Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth; California State Senators Dave Min, Kelly Seyarto, and Josh Becker; California State Assemblymembers Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, Lisa Calderon, Luz Rivas, and Devon Mathis. The main objective of the session was to convey Metropolitan's priorities and water supply challenges. We also discussed critical issues at the State Capitol, including water rights, infrastructure, climate resiliency, conservation, and the state budget.
- Board members participating included Board Vice Chair Michael Camacho, Directors Brenda Dennstedt, Dennis Erdman, Fred Jung, Miguel Luna, Tana McCoy, Jacque McMillan, and Tracy Quinn. In addition, General Manager Hagekhalil and Assistant General Manager Dee Zinke were active participants in the discussions.



Speaking Engagements/Events

- Served as the keynote speaker for Metropolitan's Hispanic Employees Association's General Members meeting to discuss their top priorities. I shared my career path and vision for Metropolitan as a reliable and equitable water provider and as a diverse, inclusive workforce. I answered questions from employees regarding equal opportunity at all levels of the workforce. We discussed the outlook for Metropolitan's critical water planning objectives that include the new climate adaptation master plan, workforce development initiatives, and the valuable role that the Employee Resource Groups play in helping Metropolitan broaden networks to advance goals.



- Served as a panelist at the Sustainable Water Investment Summit, bringing state and municipal officials, farmers, environmentalists, and utility managers together to discuss water finance and the critical issues affecting water reallocation and supply management.
- Served as the keynote speaker at the Elsinore Valley MWD's evening reception in Canyon Lake. I emphasized the need for continued efforts to develop solutions for the future to address climate impacts and vulnerabilities facing the region's water system and the communities Metropolitan serves to advance strategies for an equitable and resilient water future.
- Served on a virtual panel discussion hosted by the TreePeople and The California Water Environment Association with nearly 300 attendees to discuss how Southern California's water supplies face long-term threats brought on by extreme weather from record dry periods to intense storms, emerging contaminants, and evolving ecological needs. I emphasized the extraordinary efforts Metropolitan and local water agencies are taking to prepare for climate change impacts to ensure our communities have the water they need for generations to come.



Meeting with Member Agencies

- Attended a special meeting of the Western Municipal Water District's Board of Directors providing an opportunity for personal introductions and discussion of Metropolitan's strategic priorities and matters of common interest. We also discussed ensuring imported water supply reliability, protecting water quality, local water supply development, maintaining incentives for conservation, climate change adaptation, agricultural water concerns, and the protection of Colorado River supplies.
- Met with Foothill Municipal Water District General Manager Nina Jazmadarian, Metropolitan Water District Director and Foothill Representative Richard Atwater and Foothill Director Gary Bryant to discuss Metropolitan planning activities, Foothill priorities, and intra-member agency relations.
- Hosted a meeting at Metropolitan with Member Agency Executives of the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, Calleguas Municipal Water District, and Las Virgenes Municipal Water District to discuss planning Metropolitan's actions to prevent future shortages to the State Water Project Exclusive Areas. I was joined by Board Vice Chair Heather Repenning; Engineering, Operations and Technology Committee Chair Dennis Erdman; and Subcommittee on Pure Water SoCal and Regional Conveyance Vice Chair John Morris. Among other steps, I invited the Executives to participate in Subcommittee on Pure Water SoCal and Regional Conveyance meetings on an on-going basis as a way of reassuring them that their concerns are being addressed.

Correspondence

- Worked with staff to craft a reply to a letter from the Mayor of the City of Camarillo, Susan Santangelo, requesting immediate steps to prevent future shortage conditions in the State Water Project Exclusive Areas. I conveyed that since January, the Board’s leadership structure was organized to assure that we remained focused on meeting expectations as articulated in the Board’s August 2022 Resolution. I also stressed the need to find funding sources to build identified infrastructure and how the Climate Adaptation Master Plan process is running in parallel towards this goal.
- Followed up with a letter to a January 2023 visit with LAFCO-San Diego Executive Officer Keene Simonds bringing to his attention Metropolitan’s Climate Adaptation Master Planning process and other factors critical to financing water resources planning. LAFCO-San Diego is processing a request by two member agencies of the San Diego County Water Authority to detach so they can join the Eastern Municipal Water District in Riverside County to secure lower rates for imported water. I noted that LAFCO-San Diego recently issued a report to an advisory committee citing a 2020 letter from Metropolitan’s former General Manager Jeff Kightlinger, stating that the impacts of such a change would be “de minimis.” I noted to Mr. Simmonds that much has changed since that letter was written including a significant drought and shortage conditions that may be considered. The letter also notes disadvantaged communities with affordability challenges and other potential solutions that may be considered in Metropolitan’s Climate Adaptation Master Planning process.

Approvals to Represent Metropolitan

I asked Board Vice Chair Heather Repenning to fill-in for me during last month’s press conference at Diamond Valley Lake to announce the re-filling of the reservoir for the first time since 2019. The Vice Chair’s quotes were prominently featured in the Los Angeles Times and other news outlets and social media.

I approved travel for General Manager to attend the Leading Utilities of the World” (LUOW) 2023 Global Water Summit, which is being held from May 8, 2023, through May 10, 2023, in Berlin, Germany. The General Manager has been invited to the summit and asked to participate in a session they are holding on May 9 called Utility Game Changers. Given Metropolitan’s procurement of large infrastructure parts abroad, and the presence of suppliers at such a conference, I feel it is also of value for the General Manager to also keep abreast of supply chain issues that networking at such an event will facilitate.

Regularly Scheduled/Ongoing Meetings

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