



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs Group

- External Affairs Monthly Activities Report for August 2024

Summary

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

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Highlights

Metropolitan welcomed water and wastewater industry CEOs from across the country as part of a three-day conference focusing on major challenges facing utilities. Interim GM Upadhyay provided remarks and updates on Metropolitan priorities. (August 7)



Some of the nation's leading water and wastewater CEOs gathered at Metropolitan Headquarters



Heal the Bay Executive Director and Metropolitan Director Quinn (left) and Interim GM Upadhyah (center) at One Water Day event with other panel members

External Affairs Monthly Report August 2024



Interim GM Upadhyay, SDCWA Chair Mel Katz, Chair Ortega, SDCWA Secretary Frank Hilliker, SDCWA GM Dan Denham.

Metropolitan sponsored and Interim GM Upadhyay participated in a panel of water leaders on the future of water infrastructure and management at Heal the Bay's One Water Day. (August 16)

Chair Ortega and Interim GM Upadhyay visited the San Diego County Water Authority board to discuss Colorado River, water supply issues, investments in reliability, and the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water. (August 24)

Federal

Work continues on the Energy and Water FY25 appropriations bills, but it is unlikely the bills will be enacted into law before fiscal year 2024 ends on September 30. Instead, a continuing resolution keeping government funded at FY24 levels until after the Presidential election will likely be enacted.

Both the House and Senate also passed their versions of WRDA and are now working to resolve the differences between their bills to determine what role the Army Corps plays in water supply development.

State

In the final month of the legislative session, Metropolitan supported several bills of interest and worked with a coalition of water agencies to advance priority support for SB 1390 (Caballero). This bill would support Metropolitan's ability to protect water supplies in the Delta as the state moves forward with a new law that authorizes the diversion of water during a flood event for groundwater recharge without standard permits.

Local

This month, Metropolitan staff presented, monitored, and/or participated in 74 webinars, meetings, and events with community organizations and trade associations, board members and federal or state elected officials on Metropolitan activities and other water-specific topics.

- Metropolitan hosted Senator Menjivar (D-Van Nuys) and her staff for a water tour at Jensen Water Treatment Plant. Chair Ortega, Directors McMillan and Ramos, and San Fernando Mayor Rodriguez were in attendance. (August 1)
- Metropolitan staff provided a Met 101 presentation to Assemblymember Luz Rivas' staff. (August 15)



Jensen tour with Senator Menjivar, Chair Ortega, Director Ramos and Metropolitan staff

External Affairs Monthly Report August 2024

Media and Communications

- Coordinated interview between KPPC/LAist reporter Erin Stone and Colorado River Resources Manager Hasencamp regarding whether changing diets can help save the Colorado River.
- Arranged interview for NY Times reporter Michael Kimmelman and SIR Officer Crosson for a long-form piece about the future of water in Los Angeles.
- Set up interviews with Colorado River Resources Manager Hasencamp and External Affairs' Manager Soni at Weymouth Plant for a Spanish documentary about treated water, water scarcity, and its solutions.
- Arranged for DEI Chief Thomas to appear on KBLA-AM 1580's radio show to promote Metropolitan's application period for its apprenticeship program.
- Supported Business Outreach Manager Arena in interview with the Profit Talks podcast to discuss Metropolitan's business outreach program.
- Participated in summer meeting of the Colorado River Water Users Association Public Affairs Committee, which focused on planning for the annual conference in December.
- Coordinated interview between SRI's Castro and Municipal Water Leader regarding Metropolitan's launch of the Southern California Grants Network.
- Supported interview with Bay-Delta Initiatives' Acuna and Robin Meadows of Maven's Notebook regarding floating wetlands and Delta smelt.
- Coordinated responses to LA Times reporter Ian James regarding inquiries into personnel matters as well as Metropolitan's history with Cadiz.
- Arranged interview between Water Resource Management's Guerrero and NHK Japan Public Broadcasting regarding Metropolitan's water efficiency programs.

Press Releases

- Mark Gold's return to Metropolitan's Board to represent the city of Santa Monica.
- Launch of application period for Apprenticeship Program and inclusive testing approach.
- Provided quote on behalf of Interim GM Upadhyay for a news release from WateReuse California highlighting the state's new direct potable use regulations.

Creative Design

- Produced new Human Resources Benefits Guide for upcoming open enrollment.
- Designed new landing page for Visions and Values initiative.
- Videotaped and photographed Perris Valley Pipeline tunnel boring machine's hole-through for recap video for September board meeting.
- Created new signage for the district's partnership with Angel City Football Club.



Metropolitan staff at Perris Valley pipeline hole-through

External Affairs Monthly Report August 2024

Social Media and Website

- Registered 86,921 visits to mwdh2o.com, with careers and apprentice/internship pages generating the most traffic. Logged more than 55,000 views on bewaterwise.com, with turf replacement, rebates, and California Friendly®, native plants the most popular pages.
- In honor of Water Quality Month, posted several reels focused on work in water quality including a “Day in the Life” series that followed a district chemist at the Weymouth plant; recognized several holidays and national days of recognition including Intern Day, National Backflow Prevention Day, National Disabilities Independence Day, and International Day of the World’s Indigenous People.



- Launched the “Water Conservation is a Team Sport” campaign on digital markets and social media during the Olympic games, which generated more than 4 million impressions and more than 200,000 clicks to bewaterwise.com.
- Jumped on the social media “demure” trend to post a video reel featuring an External Affairs’ staffer’s toddler encouraging people to keep water-saving “cutesy” in their garden.

Part of a series of Olympics-themed summer social media digital campaign to promote sustainable water practices

Community Outreach

Hosted two Listening Sessions for CAMP4W outreach: one for environmental and community organizations (August 13) and a second session with Eastern MWD and agricultural community representatives. (August 29)

Convened annual planning meeting with member agency inspection trip coordinators. (August 22)

One Day Infrastructure Trip with Orange County Grand Jury with Directors Dick and Seckel. (August 26)

Notified homes and businesses in the city of Mission Viejo of upcoming construction on the Allen McColloch Pipeline. (August 29)

The Community Partnering Program supported the following conservation and education events this month:

- Southern California Chinese American EPA Youth Summer Camp
- Friends of the Los Angeles River–River Fest 2024
- San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum Science and Engineering Night



Pure Water Southern California

Hosted booths at Lakewood Summer Concert in the Park and Norwalk Summer Concert in the Park events.

Made presentations to LACSD’s annual public tour participants, West Basin/Central Basin Water Association, San Gabriel MWD Board, Carson-Gardena-Dominguez Rotary Club, and Orange County Water Association.

Provided presentations to John Watts, USBR Senior Counselor, representatives from United Arab Emirates, Infrastructure LA executive team, USC faculty and students, and Water Reuse Consortium.

External Affairs Monthly Report August 2024

Education

Chair Ortega delivered welcoming remarks at the Learning Luau to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Metropolitan's education programs. Attendees included member agency education coordinators, current and former education staff, and other Metropolitan employees. (August 28)

Metropolitan interacted with over 460 teachers, students and adults through in-person and online field trips, community events, and meetings including the following:

- In partnership with Pando Populus, staff provided outreach on water issues to students at CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Los Angeles, and El Camino Community College for a sustainability competition
- Hosted an information table at the Rancho Cucamonga Energy Champions Expo
- Attended Coro Youth Fellows graduation

Displayed student art show at Upper San Gabriel Municipal Water District and Las Virgenes Municipal Water District.