



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## ● Chair of the Board Adán Ortega Jr.'s Monthly Activity Report – October 2024

### Summary

This report highlights my activities as Chair of the Board during the month of October 2024 on matters relating to The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's business.

### Monthly Activities

#### Key Activities

- I would like to thank my colleagues on the Board for reelecting me for a second term. I was honored by the strong vote of confidence by those present, and by the Board Support staff and our executive management team who work so hard to facilitate our work. As I stated in my brief address to the Board and the public, I am committed to advancing climate adaptation in water planning decisions and investments, and to continue securing the strong unity of our board through free discussion and thoughtful deliberation.



- Director Dennstedt and I attended the Hispanic Coalition of Small Business (HCSB) Latinicima Event, celebrating ten outstanding women. Among the honorees, Johanna Clemens, Metropolitan's Engineer and Team Manager of the Infrastructure Reliability Section, received the Latinicima Rumbo a La Cima Award. From intern to team manager, Johanna continues to inspire us all.



- I along with Metropolitan Directors Tana McCoy, Jacque McMillan, Miguel Luna, and John Morris, toured Diamond Valley Lake’s Apprenticeship Center with members of the Southern California Pipe Trades. We learned about Metropolitan’s Project Labor Agreement, construction career pipeline, and apprenticeship program, highlighting our commitment to building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Southern California communities we serve.



- The Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) hosted its gala to recognize the water industry's efforts to highlight the importance of water in Southern California through art. I was honored to receive the “Legado Award” alongside Senator Alex Padilla and the Zapanta family, and I thanked artist Judith Baca for her introduction and acknowledgment of my contributions through the “Liquid Art” program twenty years ago. It was great sharing the moment with Director Tana McCoy, David W. Pedersen, Joe Mouawad, David Armstrong, David Dutchover, Mickey Valdivia, Elaine Jeng, Joone Kim-Lopez, Yvette Martinez, Rickita Hudson, Liquid Art Photographer Tom Bonner, Painter Eloy Torrez, and my wife Susan Allen Ed.D.



- Addressed the City of Torrance Water Commission Board Meeting with Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay and Sustainability Officer Liz Crosson. We addressed the interrelation between CAMP4Water, the Biennial Budget Process, Bay-Delta Issues, and the Colorado River, as well as our collective resiliency in addressing the State Water Project Exclusive Areas challenges. We thanked the Commission Members and City Staff, including Torrance's representative on Metropolitan's board, Director Russell Lefevre for his leadership through his long years of service to Metropolitan.



- Provided opening remarks in the ceremony commemorating the creation of Metropolitan Water District's Water Quality Section focused on monitoring the district's source and treated supplies. I announced the Board's decision to name our water quality lab after Dr. Michael McGuire who has a storied history with Metropolitan and the water industry where he has been an innovator of new treatment methods and mentor to many. Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act in December, the event at Metropolitan's La Verne-based Water Quality Laboratory, where the agency conducts water sample testing and applied research, drew over 100 attendees, including local and state officials, as well as current and retired water quality staff. Speakers included State Water Resources Control Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel, Interim GM Deven Upadhyay, Treatment & Water Quality Group Manager Mickey Chaudhuri, WQ Section Manager Paul Rochelle, and former director of WQ Mike McGuire.



- I recorded a video celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act which will be featured on the State Water Resources Control Board’s website in December. This landmark law has underscored the government’s commitment to safeguarding our most essential resource and highlights the ongoing need for vigilance and innovation in water quality.

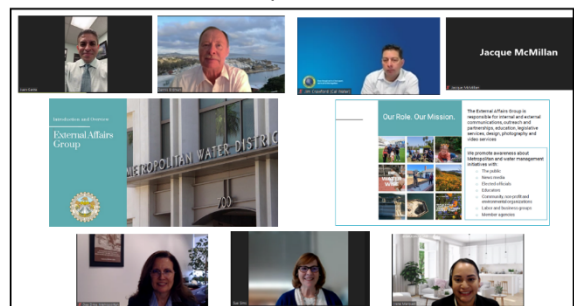


- Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay and I continue to conduct Metropolitan site meetings to meet with the employees, provide district updates, and listen to and address their concerns. This month we traveled to Colorado River pumping facilities, Gene, Iron Mountain, Eagle Mountain, and Hinds as well as the Mills Treatment facility where we met with employees. We participated in a robust question-and-answer session addressing various topics, including Metropolitan's local and regional planning investments, workforce initiatives, and CAMP4W. We emphasized our commitment to upholding high service standards and transparency. I communicated the Board's strong unity in recent tough decisions and our united concern for their well-being. I was encouraged by the focus the workforce is demonstrating on our mission of providing safe and reliable drinking water to the community. Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay's comments and answers to questions were received with candor, appreciation, good humor, and with sincere thanks.



**Issues and Operations Briefings for Directors**

- Continued our series of Briefings for Directors with sessions focused on Metropolitan’s External Affairs Group. Such briefings have in the past focused on new directors. The new series of briefings is welcoming to new directors but is a hit with long-standing directors who have used them as “refresher courses.” The briefing on the External Affairs Group was held on October 16, 2024. Participating Directors noted that the sessions were very valuable and provided a unique learning opportunity focused on



foundational information to better understand Metropolitan’s diverse challenges and programs. The initial sessions include:

- Treatment and Distribution System
- Water Supplies
- Financials
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- External Affairs/Outreach
- Workforce
- Emergency Management

Staff is taking input on refining and expanding the sessions offered and will continue scheduling sessions based on the interest of the Directors.

**Delegation of Activities:**

- Directors Erdman and Dennstedt attended the Water Environment Federation TEC conference in New Orleans, where they accepted the “Utility of the Year award” on behalf of Metropolitan.



- I asked Director Erdman to represent the Board at the MetWorks Event in Anaheim, where groups of contractors and professionals gathered to network and learn more about future contract opportunities for various infrastructure projects with Metropolitan. Directors Karl Seckel, Tana McCoy, and Brenda Dennstedt were also in attendance.



**Special Activities**

The Hispanic Employee Association (HEA) held its annual tamale sale fundraiser during Hispanic Heritage Month, raising over \$1,000 for the Henry Lozano Memorial Scholarship fund. This scholarship supports undergrad, graduate, and trade school students for the upcoming academic year.



**Regularly Scheduled/Ongoing Meetings**

I continue to meet regularly to review the Board's organizational issues and coordinate activities with the Board Vice Chairs and Department Heads.