



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs

- **Monthly Activity Report for June 2026**

Summary

This report provides a summary of External Affairs activities for May 16, 2026, through June 15, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Attachments

Detailed Report – External Affairs Group’s Monthly Activities for May 16, 2026, through June 15, 2026

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Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements

- **Educate legislators so they will champion Metropolitan's interests**

Bill Hasencamp testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee at an oversight hearing on post 2026 River Operations on June 10. He was one of the three witnesses invited by Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) and the only witness representing the Lower Basin. He reiterated Metropolitan's preference for a seven-state deal and offered lessons learned from California's development of the Quantification Settlement Agreement that the states and federal government should draw on to develop a path forward. Prior to the hearing, Mr. Hasencamp and Federal Legislative staff met with key Senators to preview his testimony and answer questions.

The Press Office coordinated interviews between Bill Hasencamp and Fox News national correspondent William La Jeunesse regarding the Colorado River, including negotiations, potential reductions, and snowpack; and between Mr. Hasencamp and Politico reporter Annie Snider regarding federal funding for short and long-term conservation projects in the Colorado River Basin.

The Press Office coordinated General Manager Deshmukh's appearance on KPCC/LAist's AirTalk with Larry Mantle to discuss potential solutions on the Colorado River.

The Press Office collaborated on a joint press release with other Lower Colorado River Basin agencies about a Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies to advance discussions on developing a framework that could allow for interstate water exchanges.

Palo Verde Valley Community Relations staff coordinated with Metropolitan and Palo Verde Irrigation District representatives on the Community Enhancement Collaborative as the CEC issued \$315,167 in grants for a community improvement program. The program is funded by USBR through the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act and a System Conservation Implementation Agreement. The Press Office issued a press release noting this important milestone.



Chair Ortega, Director Kurtz, and General Manager Deshmukh with Central Arizona Project board members and executives during a State Water Project inspection trip.

The Inspection Trips Team led a State Water Project tour for the Central Arizona Project board and executive leadership that was attended by Chair Ortega, Director Kurtz, and General Manager Deshmukh. The trip helped build understanding of how the State Water Project operates and the challenges it faces, and how Metropolitan maintains reliability through careful management of Colorado River and State Water Project resources.

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Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect our Bay-Delta Interests

- **Maintain and advocate for Metropolitan's interests in Regional Water Supply Reliability**

In support of Bay-Delta Initiatives, the Legislative Services Section and State Legislative staff coordinated preparation of a coalition letter with the member agencies to the State Water Resources Control Board in support of the Sites Reservoir Project's water right application currently before the Board's Administrative Hearings Office.

In collaboration with State Legislative staff and Bay-Delta Initiatives, the Inspection Trips Team led an inspection trip to the State Water Project for staff of key legislative offices. Subject matter experts from the Department of Water Resources participated as well. The group visited the Delta and the California Aqueduct to learn about subsidence impacts, invasive mussel control, and the potential solutions and costs to maintain reliability of the State Water Project.



Assistant General Manager Zinke, Executive Legislative Representative Jefferson, and Bay-Delta Initiatives staff with state legislative staff during an inspection trip of the State Water Project.

Complete EIR and Planning, for Board to Consider Pure Water Southern California

- **Complete EIR analyses and public process, and continued outreach**

Community Relations staff continued engagement and coordination efforts supporting the Pure Water Southern California program. Staff hosted several tours at the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center, including visits from the Coro Fellows in Public Affairs, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, International Facility Management Association Los Angeles Chapter, Arvin-Edison Water Storage District, and Carson High School students participating in Metropolitan's workforce development internship program. Staff also supported an inspection visit for Metropolitan directors and guests.

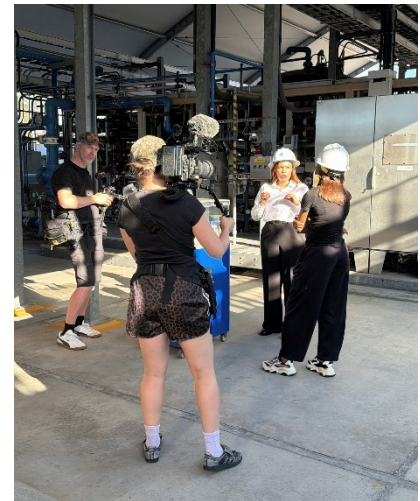
Staff conducted a public tour that reached registration capacity. Former Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano and members of her family attended the tour, reflecting continued interest in the program. Community Relations staff also participated in community events and industry forums, including the Strength Based Communities for Change annual conference, the Pure Water Los Angeles stakeholder engagement workshop, and a regional water reuse collaborative meeting focused on community benefits.

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Staff continued collaboration with water agencies throughout Southern California, sharing lessons learned and engagement strategies for reaching Spanish-speaking communities. Following a presentation at the California Association of Public Information Officials annual conference, staff met with representatives from regional water agencies seeking additional information on Metropolitan's outreach and translation practices. Staff also toured the East County Advanced Water Purification Program visitor center to exchange information and best practices related to public engagement and water reuse education.

The Press Office coordinated interviews with GM Deshmukh and Elisa Mendez for the PBS series "Weathered" regarding two topics: Metropolitan's past and future investments in seismic resilience, including how projects like Pure Water can provide critical supplies in the event of an earthquake, and what Southern California is doing to build resilience to climate change and diminishing water from the Colorado River, including the potential role of Pure Water. PBS filmed the Pure Water interview and a facility tour at the Innovation Center.



Improve the Workplace and Promote START Values

- Promote START values (Safety, Trust, Accountability, Respect, Teamwork)**



Media Services released the third edition of Inside Met, our new employee magazine, which was sent out digitally to all employees via email and posted on the IntraMet, with hard copies delivered to each site. The latest edition can be viewed here: [INSIDE MET - Apr May 2026](#).

In collaboration with the Office of Safety, Security and Protection, the Creative Design Team produced a "Safety Vision" video featuring GM Deshmukh as part of Safety Month awareness activities that also included design/editing of the Safety at Headquarters newsletter.

Media Services and Community Relations staff attended the Lake Mathews Safety Fair to build relationships, share ways employees can get support with inquiries or complaints from the community, and promote engagement for Metropolitan's social media efforts and the Inside Met employee newsletter.

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Media Services staff created a social media video for Safety Month, highlighting Metropolitan's safety culture and priority to ensure every employee returns home safely to their loved ones, every day.

Graphic Services supported Human Resources with the creation of all designs and collateral needed for the spring service awards luncheon, including invites, signage, slides, thank you cards and more.

In honor of Water Awareness Month in May, the Media Services team posted a social media video in partnership with environmental influencer Leah Thomas to promote crafts using beautiful California native plants.



Achieve Equitable Supply Reliability for State Water Project-Dependent Areas

- Execute board-approved supply reliability projects**

Legislative Services and State Legislative staff coordinated preparation of a member agency coalition letter to the Governor and legislative leadership requesting consideration of \$25 million of Proposition 4 climate bond funding to support the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project.

Provide Organizational Stability and Deliver Operational Excellence

- Support a smooth and efficient transition to the next GM**

Media Services assisted in the planning, execution, and recording of the Conversation with the GM, GM Deshmukh's first all-employee town hall. The meeting was held in person in the boardroom and broadcast online to all employees. Employees were invited to submit questions. Over 800 employees participated, and the recording is available on the IntraMet.



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Other Activities Supporting the General Manager's Strategic Priorities

Empower the workforce and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

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Water Champions
Improving Business and
Financial Practices



In the Water Champions series, Media Services recognized staff from the General Auditor's Office who evaluate workflows and recommend process improvements.

The Creative Design Team is working with Real Property and Human Resources to create new bulletins that promote living and working at desert facilities – featuring the amenities and benefits of desert communities and housing opportunities—to help recruit pump station staff.

Protect public health, the regional economy, and Metropolitan's assets

GM Deshmukh testified at a House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries hearing on May 20. He was invited by Ranking Member Jared Huffman (CA-D) to be the minority witness. His testimony focused on our Pure Water Southern California project and the benefit of the grant we received from Reclamation's Large-Scale Recycled Water Program.

The Washington, DC Legislative staff are closely monitoring the FY 2027 appropriations process. The House appropriations bills were released this month, and lawmakers rejected President Trump's proposed reductions to water infrastructure funding. The House bills primarily provide level funding for most water programs. Metropolitan staff will continue to advocate for increased federal funding.

In Sacramento, the month of June included a major focus on budget and policy priorities, with June 15 serving as the deadline for the Legislature to pass a budget framework and July 3 serving as the last day to move bills out of the policy committee.

The Legislature passed a budget deal this month, which included a total spending plan of \$351 billion. This deal presents a balanced budget for the next two fiscal years (2026/27 and 2027/28) and significantly reduces the structural deficit in future out years. The budget package included \$25 million for Healthy Rivers and Landscapes implementation and \$356 million for new and used clean vehicle purchases. The spending plan for the climate bond and greenhouse gas reduction fund allocations have

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been delayed until the Legislature returns in August. The budget package also includes several new revenue generation measures, including a sales tax on digital software.

Metropolitan's policy priorities saw mixed results this month. Priority support proposals regarding subsidence and delta levee funding (SB 872), renewable energy procurement for the State Water Project (SB 952), and a framework for low-income ratepayer assistance (AB 2739 and SB 1152) are continuing to successfully advance through the legislative process. However, several tribal proposals that have raised concerns for water agencies (AB 1881, AB 2218, and SB 1326) are continuing to move despite objections from local government, business and labor organizations. These proposals seek to expand tribal protections for cultural resources and historic practices, but present serious risks to the State Water Project and other key operations. Metropolitan staff are working with the tribes to try to address concerns. The most disappointing news comes in regard to AB 2215, which seeks to extend the time for DWR to maximize use of its existing water rights. This bill did not pass out in time to meet the policy committee deadline. The need to give DWR more time to exercise its water right remains a critical issue of importance, and we will continue to explore other options.

In other news, Metropolitan staff will be bringing an action item to the Board of Directors in July, recommending support for AB 1894. This bill would prohibit local agencies from blocking deliveries of imported water due to the presence of invasive mussels, as long as the agency is operating under a state-approved control plan. AB 1894 is currently on the Senate Floor.

Media Services published a news story on the mwdh2o.com homepage highlighting the shutdown season and the critical work involved in maintaining Metropolitan's infrastructure to ensure safe, reliable water deliveries now and into the future.

The Creative Design team collaborated with Treatment and Water Quality to complete the review and design of the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report, which will be translated into Spanish and posted on mwdh2o.com by July 1. The report includes some new features to highlight the awareness of tap water protection and oversight.

Member Services and Public Outreach hosted three focus groups to better understand public confidence in tap water and their understanding of public water systems. Two of the discussions were held in person and one was online, and one of the in-person groups was conducted in Spanish. The results are helping to inform a new tap water campaign, "Can't Beat the Tap."

Partner with interested parties and the communities we serve

Legislative Services

Legislative Services staff participated in over 150 meetings and activities across over 60 governmental, business, and regional organizations. This included city council, utilities commission, and public agency

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meetings as well as water district board and committee meetings for timely updates on regional policy discussions, emergency response activities, and state legislative proposals. Staff represented Metropolitan at the City of Torrance and Water Replenishment District's Goldsworthy Desalter Expansion groundbreaking.

Staff also maintained a strong presence within the business community through participation in more than 35 legislative affairs meetings hosted by chambers of commerce and business associations across Metropolitan's service area. Engagement with regional advocacy coalitions—including BIZFED, Valley Industry and Commerce Association, Inland Empire Economic Partnership, and Association of Water Agencies—further strengthened alignment around Metropolitan's priorities. Legislative Services sponsored and attended the VICA LA County Officeholders Breakfast on June 11, featuring Supervisor Kathryn Barger as the keynote speaker.

Staff engaged directly with legislative offices, providing a briefing with representatives of Senator Susan Rubio's office to discuss Metropolitan's legislative priorities and support for local resources.

Legislative Services staff helped coordinate and support leadership at several events. On May 18, General Manager Deshmukh addressed the Pasadena City Council where he provided updates on the approved biennium budget, Pure Water Southern California, Colorado River negotiations, and future Metropolitan initiatives.

On June 4, General Manager Deshmukh delivered the keynote address at the League of California Cities Los Angeles County Division's General Membership Meeting, speaking to local government and regional water agency representatives about the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water, operational challenges on the Colorado River, and continued investment in capital projects such as Pure Water Southern California.



On June 25, Chair Ortega spoke at the United Contractors' annual Public Works Summit, addressing nearly 200 Southern California union contractors and industry professionals on California's water future and funding.

Member Services and Public Outreach

Member Services and Public Outreach staff coordinated with DEI's Workforce Development staff to host students from Los Angeles Valley College for an educational tour of the Jensen Water Treatment Plant, providing participants with exposure to water industry operations and career opportunities.

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Education Programs

The Education Team delivered hands-on learning through leading Scout Merit Badge workshops for multiple troops and participating in the Tree People Environmental Equity program for middle schools, Summer Nature Fest at Lake Skinner for families, the Magenta House Sustainability Competition for middle school students, and the “Fall in the Farm” event at the Pomona Fairplex.



Education staff partnered with Community Relations, Workforce Development, and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts to provide a field trip to Pure Water Southern California for Carson High School students. The

Education Team hosted resource tables at the Compton Unified STEAM Fest at Compton College and Career Day at Partnerships to Uplift Communities Community Charter School to introduce students to careers in STEM and public service. Additionally, staff led bilingual, Next Generation Science Standards-aligned conservation and water-cycle activities at the Dominguez Channel Environmental Stewardship Event.



The Education Team hosted the annual meeting with member agency Water Education Coordinators. The theme, *Water Around the World*, celebrated the cultural significance of water while fostering collaboration among water educators. The team also expanded public engagement through traveling art exhibits at the Western Municipal Water District and the Jurupa Community Services District.



Metropolitan and Three Valleys Municipal Water District were recognized by the University of La Verne’s REACH program for 20 years of supporting first-generation college students.

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Community Partnering Program

The Community Partnering Program sponsored a water education partnership with the Parker Regional Chamber of Commerce & Tourism's 48th Annual Parker Colorado River Tube Float that draws approximately 4,000 registered participants. The funding will allow for a permanent designated space in the visitor center that focuses on water supply and resource management and provides attendees with an opportunity to learn more about their local water resources and the best ways to conserve water. Metropolitan's DEI office hosted a resource booth at the event.



Inspection Trips Program

In addition to the State Water Project trips noted above, the Inspection Trips Team organized four director-sponsored trips this month, including a trip to Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Aqueduct for Directors Douglas and McCoy; a trip to Diamond Valley Lake and F.E. Weymouth Water Treatment Plant for Directors Bryant and Douglas; a trip to the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center and the Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility for Directors McCoy and McMillan; and a trip to the State Water Project and Central Valley for Directors Fellow and Gray.

Director requests for FY 2026/27 inspection trips have been received, and staff is preparing the schedule. Educational objectives for each type of trip will be developed to improve the educational quality of the program.

Construction Outreach

The Community Relations team continued proactive communications and coordination to support operational activities, system maintenance, and upcoming construction projects. Staff worked with local agencies, partner organizations, and internal project teams regarding planned activities at Live Oak Reservoir, along the Rialto Feeder corridor, within Chino Hills State Park, and for upcoming rehabilitation and reservoir improvement projects throughout the region.

Staff also supported the development of outreach materials and stakeholder engagement strategies, including project fact sheets, frequently asked questions, notification materials, and initial construction outreach plans. These efforts help ensure communities and stakeholders receive timely information and remain informed as projects advance toward construction.