



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs

- **Monthly Activity Report for February 2026**

Summary

This report provides a summary of External Affairs activities for January 16, 2026, through February 12, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Attachments

Detailed Report – External Affairs Group’s Monthly Activities for January 16, 2026, through February 12, 2026

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Activities Supporting the General Manager’s Business Plan Goals

Develop a Biennial Budget that Meets Metropolitan’s Needs

- Provide transparency and broad engagement to support informed policy making**
 External Affairs is supporting transparency and public engagement in the budget workshops. Media Services produced a postcard with information on the budget workshop series and published information on the website with all workshop dates and how to participate. The Government Affairs Representatives shared the information with civic and business organizations, and the Community Relations Team shared information with the community-based and environmental organizations they work with. In addition, the Creative Design Team worked with the Budget Office to create the budget document cover, and the Press Office drafted talking points for any media inquiries.

2026/27 | 2027/28 Biennial Budget Workshops

Investing in Reliability
The budget the board ultimately adopts will show how Metropolitan plans to invest in maintaining Southern California's regional water system and continue delivering high-quality water to the communities we serve for generations to come.

This spring, we're holding a series of workshops where the public is invited to hear presentations and board discussions on drafts of the budget. These workshops also offer the public an opportunity to share his comments on the draft budget with the board.

All meetings are open to the public
Budget workshops will take place at our Finance, Affordability, Asset Management and Efficiency Committee and Board of Director meetings.

Budget Workshops	Budget Adoption
1. Feb. 10 - 8:00 a.m.	April 14*
2. Feb. 24 - 12 p.m.	
3. March 10*	
4. March 24*	

*Time TBD

Learn more
Find agendas, meeting times, and participation details at the following link or scan the QR code: metro.legistar.com/calendar

How to Participate

Members of the public may provide public comments to the Board:

- In Person: 700 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
- Teleconference: instructions are on each Committee and Board agenda.
- In Writing: Email to BoardExecutiveSecretary@metro2a.com by 3 p.m. the business day before the meeting.

Metropolitan's requirements for lobbying registration and reporting can be found on our Ethics Office page: metro2a.com/government/ethics-office

Execute CAMP4W Implementation Strategy to Integrate Climate Adaptation Districtwide

- Monitor and report progress**
 As part of the CAMP4W Implementation Plan, the Community Relations Team hosted a public workshop on developing community engagement standards. Approximately 75 people participated in the hybrid event and discussed best practices for engaging communities on drinking water issues. The workshop created space for meaningful dialogue, allowing a diverse group of external participants to share perspectives, lessons learned, and recommendations that will help inform and strengthen Metropolitan’s approach to engagement as CAMP4W advances.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Staff hosted a meeting and tour with the Council for Watershed Health and their ReDesign LA community-based organizations, ending an 18-month tour series to build understanding of CAMP4W, water challenges in communities, and strengthen relationships.

Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements

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

Chair Ortega, Vice Chair Sutley, Legislation and Communications Chair Lewitt, Colorado River Board Member and MWD Director Cordero, MWD Director Denham, General Manager Deshmukh, and Assistant General Manager Zinke traveled to Washington, D.C. (Feb. 2-5) to meet with California's delegation and Bureau of Reclamation officials. Discussions focused on Colorado River issues, including the need for a seven-state consensus agreement for the Colorado River; interstate water transfers; protecting hydropower generation at Hoover Dam; and allowing interest to be collected on non-federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.

Federal Legislative staff provided updates to congressional staff on the status of discussions on post-2026 Colorado River operations, the importance of a seven-state consensus to Metropolitan, and Metropolitan's priorities for future River operations.



The Press Office coordinated an interview between Bill Hasencamp and Politico reporter Annie Snider regarding Colorado River negotiations and potential funding for conservation.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect our Bay Delta Interests

- Maintain and advocate for Metropolitan’s interests in Regional Water Supply Reliability**
 Media Services worked with the Bay Delta Initiatives Team to update a fact sheet on Metropolitan’s landscape restoration efforts on Webb Tract.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Complete Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Planning for Board to Consider Pure Water Southern California

- **Complete EIR analyses and public process**

Over the past month, a major milestone was achieved for the Pure Water Southern California program with the Metropolitan Board of Directors' unanimous certification of the Final EIR, formally completing more than five years of environmental analysis, outreach, and public input. This action marks a significant step forward in the potential development of one of the world's largest water recycling programs and clears the way for future board consideration related to phasing, funding, design, and construction.

Throughout the environmental review process, the outreach team supported extensive stakeholder coordination and community engagement efforts to ensure an inclusive and transparent process. The Final EIR includes responses to all public comments received during the public comment period and reflects the collaborative work conducted with partner agencies, regulatory stakeholders, and communities surrounding the project. The Press Office issued a press release on the completed EIR to commemorate this important board action.

In addition, staff continued program coordination activities, including conducting multiple tours at the Grace F. Napolitano Innovation Center with the San Diego County Water Authority, City of Burbank, UCLA Nursing students, and the American Society of Civil Engineers Life Member Forum. Staff also participated in a regulatory meeting and provided a program update to the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District board.



Touring the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Achieve Equitable Supply Reliability for State Water Project-Dependent Areas

- Execute board-approved supply reliability projects.**
 External Affairs coordinated with Engineering Services to organize the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations project groundbreaking event on January 21, 2026, a significant milestone for the project that brought together board members, elected officials, stakeholders, and project partners to commemorate the start of construction. Vice Chair Sutley and Directors Erdman, Lewitt and McMillan spoke on the importance of the project for water supply reliability for communities dependent on State Water Project supplies. Board members and leadership from Calleguas Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power attended along with Director Jay of Torrance. The event received strong media coverage, with the Press Office coordinating several media interviews.

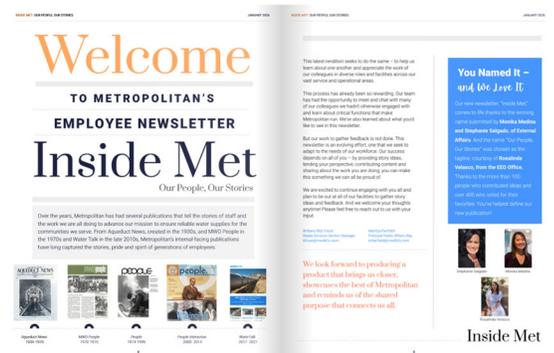


Improve the Workplace and Promote START Values

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

Media Services distributed the first edition of the “Inside Met” newsletter, including a digital version emailed to all employees as well as print publications provided to every Metropolitan facility. A postcard was created to advertise the newsletter to employees and promote ways for staff to get involved.

Media Services held a “Media Pop-Up” at Metropolitan’s La Verne facility to connect with employees, gather feedback on the “Inside Met” newsletter and collect story ideas for future editions.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Media Services created an engineering social media reel featuring a current engineering intern at Weymouth. The reel was developed to promote the Engineering Co-Op Summer program, and it showed the teamwork dynamic on the construction management team.

Other Activities Supporting the General Manager’s Strategic Priorities

Empower the workforce and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

Media Services collaborated with the Black Employees’ Association on a Martin Luther King, Jr. social media post celebrating the diversity of our workforce. Engineer Doaa Aboul-Hosn was featured as a Water Champion for her work on the Project Labor Agreement.



Water Champions
Project Labor Agreement:
Investing in the Workforce



Adapt to changing climate and water resources

The Press Office issued a statement on the increase of the State Water Project allocation to 30 percent and coordinated an interview between General Manager Deshmukh and Politico reporter Camille von Kaenel to introduce him to Politico’s California Climate readers, covering, among other things, his thoughts on climate adaptation.

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

Senator Padilla introduced S.3738, the Making Our communities Resilient through Enhancing Water for Agriculture, Technology, the Environment, and Residences Act or MORE WATER Act on January 29, 2026. This bill advances several key Metropolitan priorities for the Bureau of Reclamation. It extends the large-scale recycled water program, increases the cap on federal funding for local water recycling projects from \$40 million to \$50 million, and establishes a new grant program to help fund repairs to California’s water conveyance system.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

The State Legislature passed a key step in the legislative process with the February 20, 2026, bill introduction deadline. For this year, a total of 1,918 bills were introduced, and policy committees will begin hearing bills in March.

Metropolitan adopted a support position on SB 872 (McNerney) which seeks to increase state investment in subsidence and Delta levee repairs. The proposal calls for \$300 million annually from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and would ensure California has access to stable water supplies, while also preserving the affordability of drinking water.

Metropolitan staff are currently reviewing bills for positions and will provide an update to the Board on key bills of interest at the next Legislative and Communications committee meeting.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Partner with interested parties and the communities we serve

Legislative Services

Metropolitan sponsored the Municipal Water District of Orange County's Water Policy Forum and Dinner, featuring Metropolitan General Manager Deshmukh as the keynote speaker. Chair Ortega, Vice Chair Camacho, and Directors Ackerman, Alvarez, Dennstedt, Erdman, Faessel, Fong-Sakai, Kurtz, Lewitt, McCoy, McMillan, and Miller, along with Assistant General Managers Zinke, Bednarski, and General Counsel Scully attended.

Legislative Services staff attended the Ventura Council of Governments board meeting and provided a report on the Colorado River negotiations and the Pure Water environmental planning process.

Legislative Services staff participated in government affairs and policy committee meetings for the following organizations:

- Association of Water Agencies – Water Issues Committee
- Carson Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Committee
- Construction Industry Coalition on Water Quality – Board/Regulatory Committee
- Corona Chamber of Commerce – Good Morning Corona
- El Segundo Chamber of Commerce – Government and Military Affairs Committee
- Gateway Chambers Alliance – Government Affairs Committee
- Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce – Legislative Roundtable
- Inland Action – General Member Meeting
- Inland Empire Economic Partnership – Advocacy & Government Affairs Committee
- League of California Cities, LA County Division – Legislative Committee & Board of Directors
- Los Angeles County Business Federation – Water and Advocacy Committees and Board Meeting
- Moreno Valley Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Committee and Board Installation
- Orange County Business Council – Government Affairs Committee
- San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce – Sustainability and Infrastructure Committee
- San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership – Legislative Action Committee
- Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Committee
- Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce – Legislative Affairs Committee
- South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce – Board meeting
- Southern California Water Coalition – Legislative Affairs Committee
- Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Policy Meeting
- Upland Chamber of Commerce – Advocacy in Action Committee

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Member Services and Public Outreach

Member Services and Public Outreach staff hosted Western Municipal Water District’s Education Coordinators on a tour of Metropolitan’s Lake Mathews facility. The visit highlighted how Metropolitan and its member agencies work together to strengthen system reliability and operational redundancy.

Staff hosted a Coro Fellow for their government placement in the fellowship. During their time at Metropolitan, the fellow learned about the agency and completed a project on furthering trust in tap water.

Education Program

Education staff continued to engage students and educators with ongoing field trips to Diamond Valley Lake, the launch of Water Engineering for Good – a middle and high school STEM program, and several educational events.

In collaboration with the Inspection Trips Team, Education staff hosted a Colorado River Aqueduct inspection trip for educators, provided professional development focused on infrastructure, with hands-on activities addressing water quality, groundwater, watershed restoration, and the interconnected systems of water conveyance and distribution, as teachers used colorful building blocks to construct and test a “gravity flow” conveyance system.



In partnership with Pando Populus, staff took part in a two-day Pando Days summit alongside industry partners, community college and university faculty members to strengthen cross-sector collaborations supporting innovative sustainability and learning projects.

The student calendar art was displayed at the Padre Dam and Helix Water Agencies in San Diego.



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Career awareness efforts continued through participation in “Evening with Industry” for Hemet Unified School District, and the Water Energy Education Alliance Career Day, which connected high school students across Orange County to benefit regional partners, including Eastern Municipal Water District and the Municipal Water District of Orange County.



Community Partnering Program

The Community Partnering Program sponsored four water education and conservation partnerships this month:

- Municipal Water District of Orange County will procure hands-on watershed models to share how water is treated and flows in communities during the 2026 Orange County Children’s Water Festival and other events.
- Sustainable Claremont’s Earth Day Celebration will provide approximately 300 guests the opportunity to participate in a water-wise garden workshop and receive a California native plant.
- Walnut Valley Water District’s Community Water Wise Garden Elementary Project will create an outdoor water learning experience through a school landscape transformation at Vejar Elementary School.
- Steam100’s 3rd Annual Veterans’ Contributions to Careers in Water will provide veterans with an opportunity to highlight water careers, pathways, and workforce development in the water sector to K-12 students.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Monthly Activity Report

Inspection Trips Program

The Inspection Trips Team organized and led trips to Pure Water Southern California for Directors Fong-Sakai and Ramos and to the Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Aqueduct for Directors Garza and Pressman. The team also led a trip to Diamond Valley Lake for Metropolitan’s Information Technology Mentorship Program.



Guests of Pure Water Southern California Inspection Trip with Directors Fong-Sakai and Ramos



Guests of Hoover-Colorado River Aqueduct Inspection Trip with Directors Garza and Pressman

Construction Outreach

Over the past month, the Construction Outreach Team continued proactive communications and coordination to support major milestones and operational activities across the system.

The West Valley Feeder shutdown was successfully completed, with outreach efforts ensuring stakeholders remained informed throughout the duration of the work. In preparation for upcoming activities, staff mailed notifications and coordinated communications regarding scheduled drainage line repairs to minimize community impacts and maintain transparency.

