

# The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

# Agenda

The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

## **EI&A Committee**

T. McCoy, Chair  
G. Cordero, Vice Chair  
D. De Jesus  
B. Dennstedt  
L. Dick  
A. Fellow  
L. Fong-Sakai  
J. Garza  
G. Gray  
M. Luna  
N. Sutley

## **Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability Committee**

Meeting with Board of Directors \*

**April 23, 2024**

**11:30 a.m.**

Agendas, live streaming, meeting schedules, and other board materials are available here: <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. If you have technical difficulties with the live streaming page, a listen-only phone line is available at 1-877-853-5257; enter meeting ID: 891 1613 4145. Members of the public may present their comments to the Board on matters within their jurisdiction as listed on the agenda via in-person or teleconference. To participate via teleconference 1-833-548-0276 and enter meeting ID: 815 2066 4276 or click <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81520664276pwd=a1RTQWh6V3h3ckFhNmdsUWpKR1c2Zz09>

**Tuesday, April 23, 2024  
Meeting Schedule**

**09:30 a.m. Audit  
11:30 a.m. EIA  
01:00 p.m. Break  
01:30 p.m. Exec**

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MWD Headquarters Building • 700 N. Alameda Street • Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Teleconference Locations:  
3024 Fairview Drive • Vista, CA 92084  
525 Via La Selva • Redondo Beach, CA 90277  
Cedars Sinai Medical Center • 8700 Beverly Blvd • Los Angeles, CA 90048  
3008 W. 82nd Place • Inglewood, CA 90305

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\* The Metropolitan Water District's meeting of this Committee is noticed as a joint committee meeting with the Board of Directors for the purpose of compliance with the Brown Act. Members of the Board who are not assigned to this Committee may participate as members of the Board, whether or not a quorum of the Board is present. In order to preserve the function of the committee as advisory to the Board, members of the Board who are not assigned to this Committee will not vote on matters before this Committee.

- 1. Opportunity for members of the public to address the committee on matters within the committee's jurisdiction (As required by Gov. Code Section 54954.3(a))**

**\*\* CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS -- ACTION \*\***

- 2. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS - ACTION**

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability Committee for February 12, 2024 (Copies have been submitted to each Director, Any additions, corrections, or omissions) [21-3220](#)

**Attachments:** [04232024 EIA 2A \(02122024\) Minutes](#)

### 3. CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS - ACTION

NONE

**\*\* END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS \*\***

### 4. OTHER BOARD ITEMS - ACTION

NONE

### 5. BOARD INFORMATION ITEMS

NONE

### 6. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a. Report on Water Affordability Panels and Recommended Actions [21-3221](#)

**Attachments:** [04232024 EIA 6a C-L](#)  
[04232024 EIA 6a Presentation](#)

### 7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

- a. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities [21-3222](#)

**Attachments:** [04232024 EIA 7a DEI Monthly Activities](#)

### 8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

NONE

### 9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

### 10. ADJOURNMENT

**NOTE:** This committee reviews items and makes a recommendation for final action to the full Board of Directors. Final action will be taken by the Board of Directors. Committee agendas may be obtained on Metropolitan's Web site <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. This committee will not take any final action that is binding on the Board, even when a quorum of the Board is present.

Writings relating to open session agenda items distributed to Directors less than 72 hours prior to a regular meeting are available for public inspection at Metropolitan's Headquarters Building and on Metropolitan's Web site <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Requests for a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to attend or participate in a meeting should be made to the Board Executive Secretary in advance of the meeting to ensure availability of the requested service or accommodation.

**THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**MINUTES**

**EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND AFFORDABILITY COMMITTEE**

**February 12, 2024**

Chair McCoy called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

Members present: Directors Cordero (entered after rollcall), De Jesus (AB 2449 Just Cause), Dennstedt, Dick, Fellow, Fong-Sakai, Garza (entered after rollcall), Luna (entered after rollcall), and McCoy.

Members absent: Directors Gray and Sutley.

Other Members present: Abdo, Ackerman, Bryant, Erdman, Faessel, Goldberg, Kurtz, Miller, Morris, Ortega, Peterson, Pressman (teleconference location posted), Seckel, and Smith.

Director De Jesus indicated he is participating under AB 2449 “just cause” for an illness that prevents him from attending in person. Director De Jesus appeared by audio and on camera.

Director De Jesus announced during roll call that no one was in the room with them 18 years of age or older.

Committee Staff present: Hagekhalil, Kasaine, Redin, Ros, and Thomas.

**1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE’S JURISDICTION**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS — ACTION**

**2. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS – ACTION**

- a. Subject: Approval of the Minutes of the Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability Committee for January 8, 2024 (Copies have been submitted to each Director, Any additions, corrections, or omissions)

**3. CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS – ACTION**

None

Director Fellow made a motion, seconded by Director Fong-Sakai, to approve the consent calendar consisting of item 2a.

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors De Jesus, Dennstedt, Dick, Fellow, Fong-Sakai, and McCoy.

Noes: None

Abstentions: None

Absent: Directors Cordero, Garza, Gray, Luna, and Sutley.

The motion for item 2a passed by a vote of 6 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstain, and 5 absent.

### **END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS**

#### **4. OTHER BOARD ITEMS – ACTION**

None

#### **5. BOARD INFORMATION ITEMS**

None

Director Cordero entered the meeting.

Director Garza entered the meeting.

Director Luna entered the meeting.

#### **6. COMMITTEE ITEMS**

Chair McCoy announced that item 6a, 6b, and 6c would be presented together.

a. Subject: Update on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic plan

b. Subject: Workforce Development Update

c. Subject: Equity In Infrastructure Pledge Update

Presented by: Liji Thomas, Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office

Ms. Kasaine introduced the items and Ms. Thomas provided the committee with an update on the DEI Strategic Plan, workforce development, and an EIP update. Her presentation included the

progress made on DEI commitments, updates on workforce development efforts, and advancing Metropolitan's Equity in Infrastructure Pledge. She also highlighted the Engineering Services Group recruitment video.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Dick
2. Fellow
3. Garza
4. Bryant
5. Ortega
6. Abdo
7. Armstrong
8. Cordero

Staff responded to the Directors' comments and questions.

Announcement was made that teleconference location Long Beach Water Department • 1800 E Wardlow Road • Long Beach, CA 90807 was not available as previously noted on agenda.

- e.           Subject:           Federal Low Income Household Water Assistance Program [Added 2/9/2024]  
              Presented by:   Dee Zinke, Assistant General Manager/Chief External Affairs Officer

Ms. Zinke introduced the item and provided an overview of Metropolitan's cost pressures and the importance of advocating for our most vulnerable communities.

She then introduced a video message from United States Senator, Alex Padilla who is introducing legislation to create a permanent federal Low Income Household Water Assistance Program to help families in need to afford their water bills.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega
2. McCoy

**7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS**

- a. Subject: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion activities

Ms. Thomas announced the upcoming MetWorks event in Carson on March 7, 2024.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega

**8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS**

None

**9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Tana McCoy  
Chair



### • **Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability Committee**

4/23/2024 Committee Meeting

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6a

#### **Subject**

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Report on Water Affordability Panels and Recommended Actions

#### **Executive Summary**

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Based on a request from Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's (Metropolitan) Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability (EIA) Board Committee, four panels on affordability were conducted during EIA Board Committee meetings. Recognizing that increasing affordability at the household level enables Metropolitan's Member Agencies to make necessary investments in reliability through local and Metropolitan supplies, EIA Board Members sought recommendations to address affordability to strengthen regional resilience throughout Metropolitan's service area. These affordability discussions were designed to inform the Board's Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W) process and expand on initial CAMP4W thematic statements on affordability and equity, which serve as guideposts in the development of the Climate Decision-Making Framework and evaluative criteria that will help guide future Metropolitan investments. Each panel was comprised of representatives from different sectors, including but not limited to non-governmental organizations, member agencies, utilities, and researchers. Based on discussions during the four water affordability panels and ongoing discussions at the CAMP4W Task Force, staff is seeking input from the EIA Committee on the next steps to develop affordability goals and measures in the CAMP4W process.

Proposed next steps include policy and legislation initiatives, program development, and identifying key performance indicators, which are separated by near-term (2024) and mid-term (2025+) actions.

#### **Fiscal Impact**

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Unknown at this time.

#### **Applicable Policy**

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Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities;

Metropolitan Water District Board adopted Legislative Priorities and Principles for 2024

#### **Related Board Action(s)/Future Action(s)**

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The summary and recommendations are based on discussions from four water affordability panels in previous EIA Board Committee meetings and ongoing discussions at the CAMP4W Task Force.

#### **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves policy proposals that do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21065 and Section 15378(b)(1) of the State CEQA Guidelines). The proposed action is also not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves continuing administrative activities, such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed action in question may



have a significant effect on the environment, the proposed action is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

## Details and Background

### Background

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's (Metropolitan) role as a wholesale water provider naturally focuses its affordability strategies on the rates charged to its member agencies, not to retail customers. However, Metropolitan efforts to provide tools, direct programs, and support funding mechanisms can directly affect member agencies and the customers they serve.

State and federal water assistance funding lags behind other basic services, including food, energy, and telecommunications (Figure 1). The only federal assistance program for water was a temporary program created during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provided one-time emergency assistance to reduce arrearages, reconnect services and cover late fees, or reduce payments for households with income less than 60% of state median income for U.S. or qualified citizens. The LIHWAP ended in March 2024, and it is now up to Congress to reauthorize the program and provide funding. The 2024 LIHWAP Water Utility Affordability Survey [Report](#) found households at 75% of the federal poverty level spent up to 40% of their monthly income on water and sewer bills. Metropolitan is motivated to promote policies and programs that address household water affordability as they can beneficially influence the financial health of its member agencies and thus increase water supply reliability across Metropolitan's six-county service area.

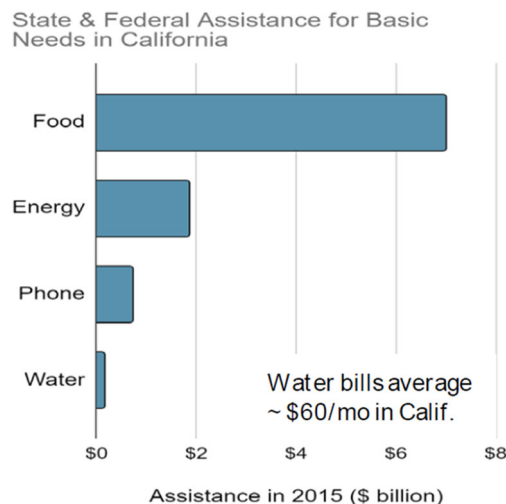


Figure 1. Water assistance funding generally lags behind other basic services, Pierce et al., *Utilities Policy*, (2020)

Metropolitan and its member agencies are also informed by California's Human Right to Water (HR2W) Policy, AB 685 (2012), which states that "...every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes." Although not applicable to Metropolitan or other local agencies, this policy broadly applies to state agencies when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, or criteria. Currently domestic minimum indoor water use during curtailment is recognized as 55 gal./person/day (GPCD), pursuant to Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 23, § 878.1, which may serve as a guide for HR2W policies.

### Background on Metropolitan Water Affordability Panels

Based on a request from Metropolitan's Board, four panels on affordability were conducted during EIA Board Committee meetings in 2023 and early 2024. Metropolitan's panel discussions brought together experts and stakeholders to provide insights and recommendations for specific policies and programs aimed at making water more affordable for communities and water agencies within Metropolitan's service area. Metropolitan's panel

discussions addressing water affordability challenges within the district's service area underscored the complexity of water affordability issues, highlighted the diversity of federal, state, and member agencies' water affordability programs as well and reviewed the variety of metrics used to measure affordability.

*Panel One – Monday, August 14, 2023– Discussion of Member Agency Programs*

**Ismahan Abdullahi**, National Executive Director at Muslim American Society: Public Affairs and Civic Engagement; San Diego County Water Authority Board Member  
**Maura Allaire**, Assistant Professor, University California Irvine School of Social Ecology  
**Jennifer Capitolo**, Executive Director, California Water Association  
**Dan Denham**, General Manager, San Diego County Water Authority  
**Mauricio Guardado**, General Manager, United Water Conservation District  
**Mary Matava**, President and Agronomist, Agri Service, Inc.

*Panel Two – Tuesday, October 24, 2023– Metropolitan's Role in Household Water Affordability*

**Jennifer Capitolo**, Executive Director, California Water Association  
**Jennifer Clary**, California Director, Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund  
**Joe Mouawad**, General Manager, Eastern Municipal Water District  
**George Rofail**, Chief Customer Officer, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

*Panel Three – Monday, November 13, 2023 – Regulatory Requirements Impacting Affordability*

**Danielle Blacet-Hyden**, Deputy Executive Director, California Municipal Utilities Association  
**Wendy Broley**, P.E., Executive Director, California Urban Water Agencies  
**Laurel Firestone**, Board Member, State Water Resources Control Board  
**Erik D. Olson**, Senior Strategic Director, Health and Food, People & Communities Program, Natural Resources Defense Council  
**J. Alan Roberson**, P.E., Executive Director, Association of State Drinking Water Administrators  
**Alex Rojas**, General Manager, Central Basin Municipal Water District

*Panel Four – Monday, January 8, 2024– Metropolitan's Efforts to Contain and Offset Costs*

**Janet Clements**, President, One Water Econ  
**Erin Corvinova**, Financial Planning Director, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
**Greg Pierce**, Director, UCLA Human Right to Water Lab; Water Resources Group

***Major Themes of Panel Discussions***

***Leveraging Non-Rate Revenues:*** Metropolitan could explore utilizing non-rate revenues to fund affordability programs. This approach could involve leveraging assets, partnerships, and grants to support direct bill assistance and conservation programs targeting disadvantaged communities. As an example, SFPUC uses approximately \$12 million in annual real property lease revenue to fund its low-income assistance program.

***Collaboration and Information Sharing:*** Increased collaboration and information sharing among member agencies on successful affordability and conservation programs would allow agencies to learn from each other and adopt best practices suited to their unique circumstances.

***Investment in Education and Outreach:*** Discussions stressed the need for Metropolitan to invest in educational initiatives to ensure that affordability programs reach and are utilized by those most in need. This could involve targeted outreach efforts and partnerships with community organizations to raise awareness about available assistance programs.

***Statewide and Federal Advocacy:*** There was consensus among many panelists for Metropolitan to take an active role in advocating for statewide and federal policies that support water affordability. This includes supporting legislation for statewide low-income rate assistance programs and seeking federal funding opportunities to offset the costs of essential water infrastructure projects.

***Policy and Program Innovation:*** Metropolitan was encouraged to continue exploring innovative policies and programs that address both system-level and household-level affordability challenges. This might involve working with Member Agencies on exploring new billing structures, subsidies for low-income households, and programs that reduce the water bill impact on vulnerable populations.

## Staff Policy Recommendations

A wide variety of recommendations to maintain water affordability and achieve equity more broadly within the context of public utilities were shared throughout the four affordability panels. Not all these recommended approaches can be immediately pursued by Metropolitan due to its status as a special district water wholesaler. Thus, staff distilled these ideas into applicable near-term and mid-term policy recommendations for consideration.

### Proposed Near-term Actions (2024)

1. Work with legislative sponsors to seek continuous funding for a statewide low-income rate assistance program (LIRA) and support federal legislation to seek continuous funding for the expansion of the existing LIHWAP.

Panel discussions underscored the critical need and widespread support for Metropolitan to engage in legislative efforts to develop a statewide LIRA program. Panelists noted that disparities in affordability programs across different water utilities could be supported by a uniform statewide approach to assist low-income households. The LIHWAP is a federal initiative aimed at supporting low-income households to manage their residential water and wastewater bills. It provides temporary relief for households facing immediate water service disconnection, to restore services that have been disconnected due to non-payment, and to prevent future disconnection. Senator Alex Padilla recently introduced legislation to establish a permanent, nationwide water assistance program.

2. Study the costs, benefits, and legal requirements of addressing water affordability challenges through a refined Business Model that values conservation and efficiency and deters waste.

As the Board explores options for adapting Metropolitan's business model, staff recommends prioritizing measures that also help address the affordability challenges of our Member Agencies and their customers. This could include accounting for the value of conservation and efficiency, cost-sharing and surplus water management, as well as adjustments to rates and charges.

3. Collaborate broadly to develop a time-bound target for community equity based on water affordability research to inform CAMP4W.

The CAMP4W Task Force has expressed interest in developing a time-bound target for community equity that tracks investments in underserved communities and affordability challenges and ensures meaningful community engagement in Metropolitan projects and process as appropriate.

4. Develop and promote water conservation programs, rebates, and incentives informed through research and analysis for low-income and disadvantaged communities (DAC), as defined in Water Code 79505.5, to increase program participation and regional water conservation.

Water conservation programs could include, but are not limited to, support for water-efficient devices and fixtures, leak detection and repair programs, landscape transformation and irrigation efficiency, storm water capture, community-based water conservation projects, and assistance to communities in applying for grants and funding dedicated to water conservation. Expanding participation in these programs by low-income communities would further Metropolitan's expanding participation in conservation programs and could help reduce water bills for those customers.

### Proposed Mid-term Actions (2025+)

1. Develop a Metropolitan Water Affordability and Environmental Justice Policy (EJ Policy) as the next step in CAMP4W, consistent with California state and federal Environmental Justice policies to inform community investment associated with Metropolitan projects and programs, workforce development, multiple benefits in infrastructure design, and public engagement.

A (EJ Policy) could inform Metropolitan's approach to addressing inequities identified in the communities and watersheds impacted by Metropolitan's operations and investments. Elements of an EJ Policy could include direction on local workforce and economic development, community engagement, infrastructure design, affordability and community benefits.

- 2. Consider Metropolitan’s role in facilitating technical assistance to Member Agencies and sub-agencies on affordability measures and mechanisms to incentivize conservation and reduce waste.

Increased collaboration and information sharing among member agencies on successful affordability and conservation programs allows agencies to learn from each other and adopt best practices suited to their unique circumstances. Metropolitan can play a facilitation role in bringing technical assistance, panel discussions, and information sharing to assist Member Agencies in developing affordability and conservation-focused programs, including budget-based billing.

- 3. Conduct community equity analyses on Metropolitan infrastructure investments, operations, and conservation programs.

Metropolitan can develop methodologies to identify, assess, and address, as appropriate, disparities in water access, affordability, and environmental impact across different communities in its service area, especially in historically marginalized and underserved populations. Geospatial and socioeconomic analyses can shed light on how water rates, infrastructure investments, and conservation programs benefit groups differently.

- 4. Explore legislative action to amend Propositions 218 and 26 to address the restrictions on water agencies’ ability to fund LIRA programs for qualified ratepayers.

Propositions 218 and 26 amended the California Constitution to limit the mechanisms by which local governments can create or increase taxes, fees, and charges without voter approval. Metropolitan’s Member Agencies are particularly vulnerable to Propositions 218 and 26 and could face legal challenges. Reforming Proposition 218 could allow for more equitable fee structures that enable cross-subsidization or direct assistance, ensuring that all community members have access to essential services regardless of their ability to pay. Reform could facilitate programs aimed at improving water quality and access in underserved communities, thereby enhancing overall public health outcomes.

**Conclusion**

Staff looks forward to input from the EIA Committee on the Staff Policy Recommendations as well as any reflections from the panel discussions. Next steps will be further discussed through the CAMP4W process.




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*Elizabeth Crosson* *Date*  
 Chief Sustainability, Resilience and  
 Innovation Officer




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*Adel Hagekhalil* *Date*  
 General Manager

Ref# sri12697415



Equity, Inclusion, and Affordability Committee

# Report on Water Affordability Panels and Recommended Actions

Item 6a

April 23, 2024

# Item 6a

## Report on Water Affordability Panels

### Subject

Report on Water Affordability Panels and Recommended Actions

### Purpose

To seek input from the EIA committee on proposed near-term and mid-term actions and discuss observations from the series of water affordability panels. Input will be incorporated into future CAMP4W discussions on affordability measures.

# Summary Observations from EIA Panels on Affordability

## August 2023

Panel 1: Discussion of member agency programs

## October 2023

Panel 2: Metropolitan's role in household water affordability

## November 2023

Panel 3: Regulatory requirements impacting costs

## January 2024

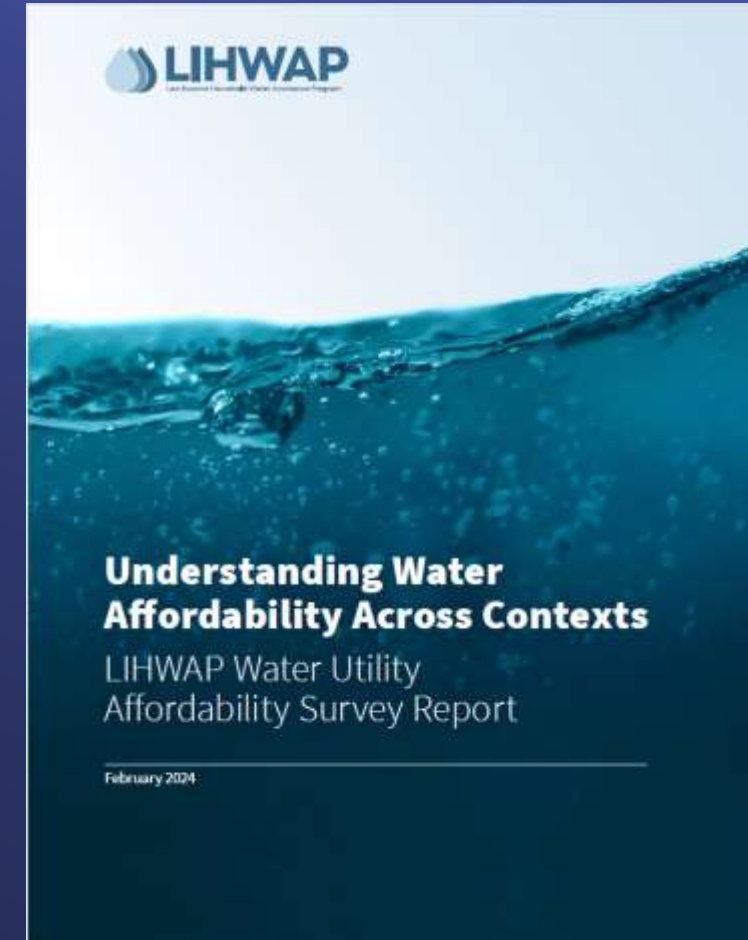
Panel 4: Metropolitan's efforts to contain/offset costs

This series of panels will inform the CAMP4W **first year progress report** for the Board, specifically regarding **the next steps for the coming year**



# Proposed Near-term Actions (2024)

1. Work with legislative sponsors to seek continuous funding for a statewide low-income rate assistance program (**LIRA**) and support federal legislation to seek continuous funding for the expansion of the existing Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (**LIHWAP**)





# Proposed Near-term Actions (2024)

2. Study the costs, benefits, and legal requirements of addressing water affordability challenges through a refined **Business Model** that values conservation and efficiency and deters waste.

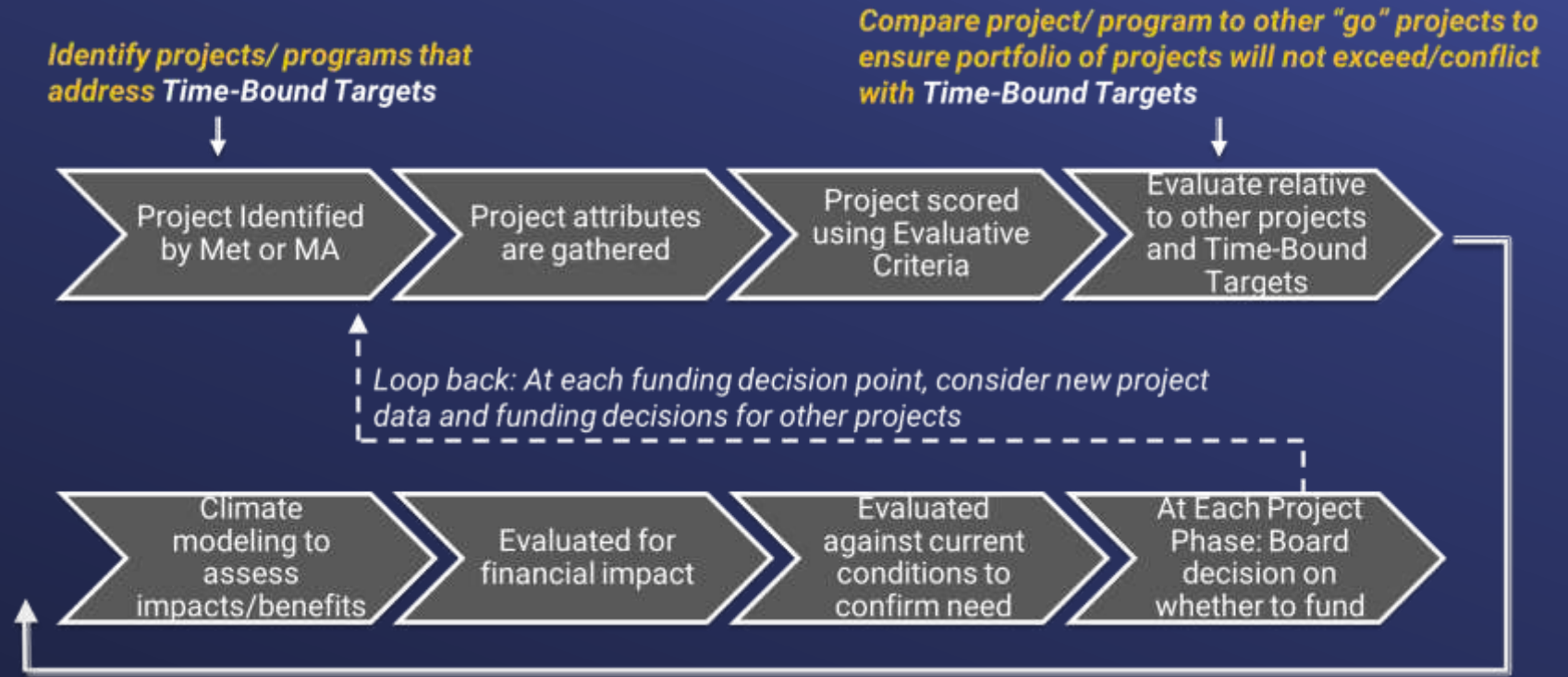
## Explore

- Accounting the value of conservation & efficiency
- Cost-sharing and surplus water management
- Exchange of water resources and asset sharing
- Adjustments to rates and charges



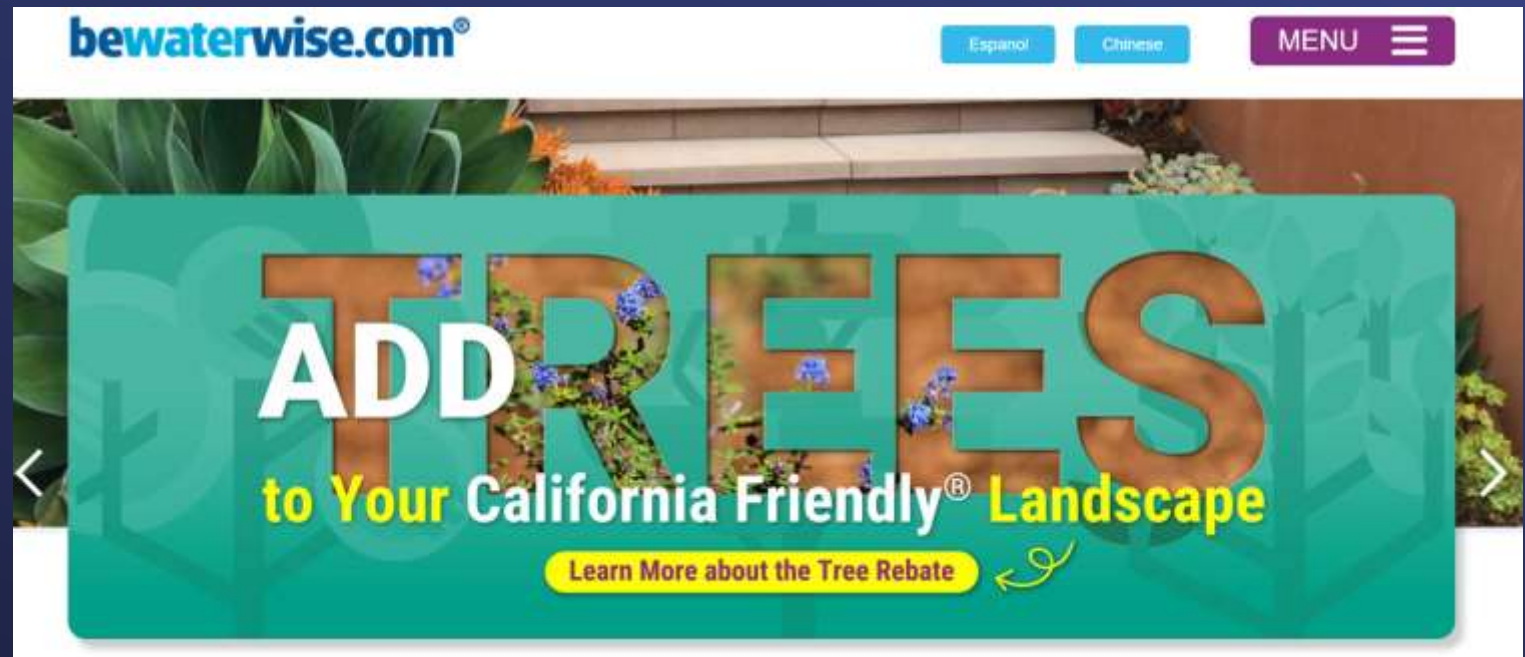
# Proposed Near-term Actions (2024)

3. Collaborate broadly to develop a time-bound target for **community equity** based on water affordability research to inform CAMP4W.



# Proposed Near-term Actions (2024)

4. Develop and promote water **conservation programs, rebates, and incentives** informed through research and analysis for low-income and disadvantaged communities (DAC), as defined in Water Code 79505.5, to increase program participation and regional water conservation.



# Proposed Mid-term Actions (2025+)

1. Develop a Metropolitan **Water Affordability & Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy** as a next step in CAMP4W, consistent with California state and federal EJ policies to inform community investment associated Metropolitan's projects and programs, workforce development, multiple benefits in infrastructure design, and public engagement.



30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Clinton signing the Executive Order 12898 - *Federal Actions to Address **Environmental Justice** in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations* in 1994.

# Proposed Mid-term Actions (2025+)

2. Consider Metropolitan's role in facilitating **technical assistance** to Member Agencies and sub-agencies on **affordability measures** and **mechanisms** to incentivize conservation and reduce waste.



# Proposed Mid-term Actions (2025+)

3. Conduct community **equity analyses** on Metropolitan infrastructure investments, operations, and conservation programs.



Strategic Initiatives

## Equity Metrics Data Initiative

[Find out more](#)



# Proposed Mid-term Actions (2025+)

4. Explore legislative action to amend Propositions 218 and 26 to address the restrictions on water agencies' ability to **fund low-income rate assistance programs** for qualified ratepayers.









THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities for March 2024**

### Summary

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This report provides a summary of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group activities for March 2024.

### Purpose

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Informational

### Attachments

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Attachment 1 – Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group activities for March 2024.

# Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Activities for January 2024

## Business Outreach & Community Engagement

On March 7, 2024, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) presented MetWorks Pure Water Southern California (Pure Water) Networking in an in-person event at the Carson Event Center. Over 520+ attendees, including exhibitors like Metropolitan’s Business Outreach Program, Pure Water Southern California Program, Metropolitan’s Construction Management and Metropolitan’s Project Labor Agreement, West Basin Municipal Water District, Los Angeles County Sanitation District, and various construction and contractor companies participated in making the event a success. The event focused on a morning agenda to provide the construction and consulting community an opportunity to foster partnerships and business networking while learning about the status, scope, and schedule for a Progressive Design-Build contract opportunity for the Pure Water Program's Advanced Water Purification Facility RFQ. The total value of the new treatment facility is approximately \$2 billion, with multiple contract awards expected. Presenters included Mayor Lula Davis-Holmes - City of Carson, E.J. Caldwell – General Manager, West Basin Municipal Water District, Sam Espinoza - Engineering Department Head, Los Angeles County Sanitation District, Dennis Erdman – Metropolitan Director, Adel Hagekhalil – General Manager, Metropolitan, Bruce Chalmers – Pure Water Southern California Program Manager, and John Vrsalovich – Construction Contracts, Unit Manager.





On March 14, Business Outreach Staff attended the National Association Women Business Owners "Elected Voices, Empowered Women: An Awards Dinner of Distinction." The events showcase featured a panel of Orange County legislators addressing the critical issues faced by women business owners today. Panelists included Assemblywoman Laurie Davies and Mayor of Irvine Farrah Khan.

On March 14, 2024, Business Outreach staff attended Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) Certification Workshop and spoke on Metropolitan's Business Outreach Program. Additionally, Metro provided an overview of the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program and Metro's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program, including general eligibility requirements, benefits of certification, selecting the correct NAICS codes for your business, and calculating your Personal Net Worth. Metro provided a B2G Online Application Overview and is available for technical assistance with the DBE/SBE B2G Online Application. High-Speed Rail and the County of Los Angeles attended and spoke briefly about upcoming projects, additional certifications, and doing business with their agencies as a small business.



March 20, Business Outreach Staff participated in a panel presentation with the Construction Management Association of America – Los Angeles Chapter. The presentation discussion focused on construction opportunities for Small/Disadvantaged/Women/Minority/Disabled Veteran Businesses.

The panel participants included the Metropolitan Water District, the Port of Los Angeles, METRO, The Los Angeles World Airport and the Los Angeles Community College District; about 200 businesses attended the event.



On March 21, Business Staff, along with the Government and Legislative Staff, attended the United Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley State of the County Luncheon & Board Installation. County Board of Supervisors Horvath and Barger spoke at the event.



On March 27, Business Outreach staff attended as an exhibitor at the Asian Business Association of Orange County Small Business Development Day (SBDD) in Irvine, CA. The SBDD allows small businesses to network and learn how to work with alternative funding services to support their business needs.

**Tribal Engagement and Workforce Development**

On March 14, a team of the Metropolitan Lake Skinner managers and technicians toured the Pechanga Nation’s water treatment plant, distribution system infrastructure, and storage facilities. This is a continuing effort to assist tribal communities in improving their water systems. The inspection identified potential areas for improvement in maintenance protocols, leak detection, and system efficiency. Tribal water system operators and Lake Skinner personnel engaged in open discussions concerning best practices for system operation, data analysis, and preventative maintenance. District personnel also shared potential grant opportunities, technical training programs through organizations like the American Water Works Association. Metropolitan’s apprenticeship program was also shared as an option for the Pechanga youth to enhance water system management knowledge and skills.