



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Information

● Board of Directors

5/13/2025 Board Meeting

Subject

Public Hearing to receive staff and recognized employee organizations presentations on the status of job vacancies and recruitment/retention efforts, as required by Government Code §3502.3 (Assembly Bill 2561), and to receive public comment

Executive Summary

California Assembly Bill 2561 adds Section 3502.3 to Government Code, Chapter 10, Section 3500 more commonly known and cited as the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act. It is intended to address the following items:

- (a) Job vacancies in local government are a widespread and significant problem for the public sector affecting occupations across wage levels and educational requirements.
- (b) High job vacancies impact public service delivery and the workers who are forced to handle heavier workloads, with understaffing leading to burnout and increased turnover that further exacerbate staffing challenges.
- (c) There is a statewide interest in ensuring that public agency operations are appropriately staffed and that high vacancy rates do not undermine public employee labor relations.

To address these, the new section requires Metropolitan to present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts in a public hearing before our Board of Directors. If the Board of Directors will be adopting an annual or multiyear budget during the fiscal year, then the presentation must occur prior to the adoption of the final budget. During this public hearing before the Board of Directors, Metropolitan shall identify any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process. Additionally, our recognized bargaining units shall be entitled to make a presentation at the same public hearing before the Board of Directors, where Metropolitan is presenting this information.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 6207: Positions Authorized. Metropolitan Water District Operating Policy H-10 Recruitment and Selection

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21065, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378) because the proposed action will not cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and involves continuing administrative activities, such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, the proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Details and Background

Background

Assembly Bill 2561 adds Section 3502.3 of the Government Code chapter more commonly cited as the “Meyers-Milias-Brown Act.” This section states:

- (a) (1) A public agency shall present the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts during a public hearing before the governing board at least once per fiscal year.
 - (2) If the governing board will be adopting an annual or multiyear budget during the fiscal year, the presentation shall be made prior to the adoption of the final budget.
 - (3) During the hearing, the public agency shall identify any necessary changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may lead to obstacles in the hiring process.
- (b) The recognized employee organization for a bargaining unit shall be entitled to make a presentation at the public hearing at which the public agency presents the status of vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts for positions within that bargaining unit.
- (c) If the number of job vacancies within a single bargaining unit meets or exceeds 20 percent of the total number of authorized full-time positions, the public agency shall, upon request of the recognized employee organization, include all of the following information during the public hearing:
 - (1) The total number of job vacancies within the bargaining unit.
 - (2) The total number of applicants for vacant positions within the bargaining unit.
 - (3) The average number of days to complete the hiring process from when a position is posted.
 - (4) Opportunities to improve compensation and other working conditions.
- (d) This section shall not prevent the governing board from holding additional public hearings about vacancies.
- (e) The provisions of this section are severable. If any provision of this section or its application is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application.
- (f) For purposes of this section, “recognized employee organization” has the same meaning as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 3501. This is defined as either: (1) Any organization that includes employees of a public agency and represents them in their relations with that public agency, or (2) Any organization that seeks to represent employees of a public agency.

ANALYSIS:

An analysis of vacancies of regular budgeted positions was conducted on March 18, 2025. The following chart shows the results of that analysis.

Barg Unit	No. of Positions	No. Filled	No. Vacant	% Filled	% Vacant
DEPT HEAD – 00	4	4	0	100%	0%
UNREP – 01	43	39	4	91%	9%
AFSCME - 02	1347	1212	135*	90%	10%
SA - 03	99	85	14	86%	14%
MAPA - 04	362	330	32	91%	9%
ACE - 05	147	132	15	90%	10%
Total	2002	1802	200	90%	10%

*15 of these are apprentice positions. Offers have been extended.

Metropolitan is below the 20 percent threshold by bargaining unit and overall. For calendar year 2024, 183 full-time equivalent positions were filled.

Barg Unit	No. of Pos Filled by External Hire	No. of Pos Filled by Internal Job Bid	No. of Pos Filled by Transfer	Total by BU
Unrep - 01	2	3	0	5
AFSCME - 02	78	23	12	113
SA - 03	1	6	1	8
MAPA - 04	5	38	0	43
ACE - 05	10	4	0	14
Total	96	74	13	183

On average, 45 percent of all recruitments completed result in an internal hire. Calendar year 2024 had a slightly higher-than-average internal fill rate of 47.5 percent. This provides internal advancement; however, it does not impact the overall vacancy rate. A vacancy filled by an internal applicant moves the vacancy to a new area. Which, in most cases, initiates another recruitment.

On average, Metropolitan has a 5.19 percent turnover, including both retirements and other separations. Retirements account for 3.94 percent, and other separations account for 1.25 percent. For calendar year 2024, Metropolitan's turnover was 4.29 percent. Retirements accounted for 3.20 percent, and other separations accounted for 1.09 percent. The relatively low turnover rate can be attributed to our meaningful work, pension plan, competitive wages, and stable benefits.

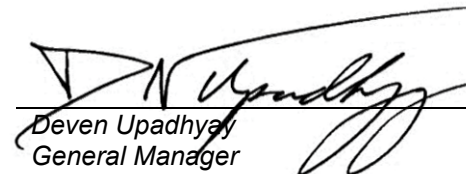
Recruitment has been making changes to fill vacancies in a reduced timeframe. In October 2022, Metropolitan created revised Recruitment and Selection Procedures as well as updated Operating Policy H-10 Recruitment and Selection. In addition, new Memorandum of Understanding language has created the opportunity to use eligibility lists. These lists will shorten the time it takes to fill those positions in which there is a high number of vacancies.

Additional measures are being taken to significantly reduce the vacancies and position ourselves to fill future positions as they become vacant. Human Resources recently conducted a staffing analysis of the recruitment function to determine what resources are needed to achieve this goal. Based on this analysis, Human Resources is in the process of ramping up with surge staffing to increase the number of recruiters and support staff to have a positive impact and bring our vacancy rate down to near zero. There will always be a certain level of vacancies by the nature of turnover. However, the above proactive measures will position Metropolitan to be positively positioned to address vacancies as they occur in a timely manner. As part of the budget process, Human

Resources will also be requesting additional full-time regular positions to stabilize the minimum ongoing staffing needs of the recruitment team. The minimum ongoing staff is currently supplemented with temporary employees. The recent staffing analysis of the recruitment function supports the need for these additional full-time regular employees in addition to the surge staffing referenced earlier.



Mark Brower
Human Resources Group Manager
5/7/2025
Date



Deven Upadhyay
General Manager
5/7/2025
Date

Ref# hr12703935