

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

LEGISLATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

November 17, 2025

Vice Chair Shepherd Romey called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

Members present: Directors Ackerman, Camacho, Dennstedt, Fellow, Gray, Jay, Jung (teleconference posted location, entered after roll call), Katz, Lewitt, Ramos, and Shepherd Romey.

Members absent: Kassakhian

Other Board Members present: Directors Bryant, Cordero, Denham, Dick, Erdman, Faessel, Fong-Sakai, Garza, McCoy, McMillan, Miller, Ortega, Pressman (teleconference posted location), and Seckel (AB2449 “just cause”).

Director Seckel indicated he is participating under AB 2449 “just cause” regarding contagious illness.

Director Seckel appeared by audio and on camera.

Committee Staff present: Deshmukh, Hudson, Novoa, Rubin, Schaffer, Stites, Upadhyay, and Zinke

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

None

2. COMMITTEE ACTION (ONLY)

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Legislation and Communications Committee held October 13, 2025.

3. COMMITTEE ITEMS (FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

Director Fellow made a motion, seconded by Director Katz, to approve the consent calendar item 2A.

Ayes: Directors Ackerman, Camacho, Dennstedt, Fellow, Gray, Jay, Katz, Lewitt, Ramos, and Shepherd Romey
Noes: None
Abstentions: None
Absent: Directors Jung and Kassakhian

The motion for item 2A passed by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstain, and 2 absent.

4. COMMITTEE ITEMS (ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

Director Jung entered the meeting.

5. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

9-2. Subject: Legislative Priorities and Principles for 2026

Presented by: Jose Cornejo, Legislative Services Section Manager

Mr. Cornejo presented the proposed 2026 Legislative Priorities and Principles and requested board input.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

- 1) Dennstedt
- 2) Katz
- 3) Ortega
- 4) Shepherd Romey
- 5) Fellow

Staff responded to the Director's questions and comments.

6. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Subject: Update on Conservation Campaign

Presented by: Teresa Gonzalez Robertson, Principal Public Affairs Representative

Ms. Robertson provided an update on the conservation advertising strategy, launch of the new commercial, industrial and institutional campaign, and proposed expenditures for FY 2025/26.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

- 1) Garza
- 2) Ortega
- 3) Fellow
- 4) Dennstedt
- 5) Dick

Staff responded to the Director's questions and comments.

- b. Subject: Report on Focus Group Research with New Millennial/Gen Z Research

Presented by: Carolyn Schaffer, External Affairs Group Manager
Liji Thomas, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer

Ms. Schaffer reported on recent focus groups with a cohort of New Millennial/Gen Z students and young professionals. She presented insights on trust in drinking water and water conservation. Ms. Thomas provided insights on workforce development.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

- 1) Dennstedt
- 2) Ortega
- 3) Garza
- 4) Fellow
- 5) Lewitt

Staff responded to the Director's questions and comments.

- c. Subject: Report on Activities from Washington, D.C.

Presented by: Abby Schneider, Executive Legislative Representative

Ms. Schneider provided an update on the end of the government shutdown and the Water Resources Development Act 2026.

d. Subject: Report on Activities from Sacramento

Presented by: Jay Jefferson II, Executive Legislative Representative

Mr. Jefferson provided an update on the state legislative calendar, legislative leadership, the state's fiscal outlook, and two-year bills to watch – AB 794 (Gabriel) California Safe Drinking Water Act: emergency regulations and SB 601 (Allen) Water: waste discharge.

The following Director provided comments or asked questions:

1) Ortega

Staff responded to the Director's questions and comments.

7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

a. Subject: External Affairs Activities

Presented by: Dee Zinke, External Affairs Assistant General Manager

Ms. Zinke provided an update on the Gregory Taylor Inlet/Outlet Tower facilities naming event at Diamond Valley Lake and the development of community engagement standards as policy implementation of the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water.

8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

None

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

Gretchen Shepherd Romey
Vice Chair