



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

● Chair of the Board Adán Ortega Jr.'s Monthly Activity Report – January 2024

Summary

This report highlights my activities as Chair of the Board during the month of January 2024 on matters relating to The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's business.

Monthly Activities

Key Activities

- Joined United States Representative Grace Napolitano in welcoming the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, on her arrival at Los Angeles International Airport. It was a unique and inspiring opportunity to also see civically engaged young women and local officials, such as Board Chair Emeritus Gloria Gray, joining the group to welcome the Vice President, who took over an hour to share brief words with everyone present on the airport tarmac.



- Led Metropolitan in hosting a two-day visit to Southern California by the board and staff of the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC). Attendees included DCC Chair Pat Hume, Supervisor-Sacramento County and Chair of Delta Counties Coalition; DCC Director Oscar Villegas, Supervisor-Yolo County; DCC Director Tom Patti, Supervisor-San Joaquin County; DCC Director Steve Ding, Supervisor-San Joaquin County; DCC Director Diane Burgis, Supervisor-Contra Costa County; DCC Director Ken Carlson, Supervisor-Contra Costa County; DCC Director Mitch Mashburn, Supervisor-Solano County. DCC staff was also in attendance. We were also joined by the leadership of the Santa Clara Valley Water District ("Valley Water"), including Nai Hsueh, Board President -Valley Water; Rick Callender, Chief Executive Officer-

Valley Water; and Tony Estremera, Director-Valley Water. Coachella Valley Water District Board Vice President Castulo Estrada joined for an evening roundtable discussion and the second day of visits. Metropolitan Board Members who participated in the two-day visit that included an inspection trip that began in San Diego's Pure Water Project, a Round Table Discussion facilitated by Calleguas Municipal Water District, and ended at City Hall in the City of Compton included Directors Jacque McMillan, Tana McCoy, Jeff Armstrong, Glen Peterson, Miguel Luna, Tracy Quinn, Linda Ackerman, Gail Goldberg, Lois Fong-Sakai were in attendance along with General Manager Adel Hagekhalil; Chief of Staff Mohsen Mortada and other Metropolitan staff members were also present. The tour aimed to reflect on past partnerships and explore potential future collaborations.



The group visited San Diego's PURE Water project.



A second San Diego Stop at FlorAbunda Nursery



On the way to Los Angeles, the group visited Diamond Valley Lake.

On the evening of the first day, a Round Table discussion was facilitated by Calleguas Municipal Water District Assistant General Manager Ian Pritchard, featuring Ventura County Farmers who are 100 percent dependent on water from the Bay-Delta. The discussion aimed to foster dialogue on critical topics such as the Bay-Delta, the long impasse on Delta Conveyance; Metropolitan's CAMP4Water process; needed in-Delta investments; water supply, agricultural practices, and sustainable water management.



On the second day of the tour, the group visited the Grace Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center.



The last stop was at the City of Compton City Hall. We met with city leaders, including Mayor Emma Sharif, Councilmember Lillie Darden, and city staff.



To finish the visit, the Delta Counties Coalition Supervisors and our fellow state water contractors from Santa Clara and Coachella attended the CAMP4Water Task Force meeting to learn more about the Metropolitan and its member agencies climate adaptation efforts. Valley Water President Nai Hsueh addressed the Task Force, sharing lessons learned from Valley Water's climate change planning efforts. County Supervisor Pat Hume, Chair of Delta Counties Coalition, requested support on the climate resilience bond Delta Counties Coalition is pursuing for levee and water quality projects in the Delta, and expressed thanks to Metropolitan and our member agencies for the informative and welcoming spirit of the visit while looking forward to following up with another meeting to continue the dialogue.



- Metropolitan board members, including Directors Tana McCoy, Dennis Erdman, myself, and General Manager Adel Hagekhalil, met with Members of the United States Congress, Bureau of Reclamation, and United States Environmental Protection Agency officials in Washington D.C. to discuss critical key issues, including priorities to support water reliability and adapting to climate change. Congressional Representatives we met with included Rep. Scott Peters, Rep. Grace F. Napolitano, Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove, Rep. Pete Aguilar, Rep. Jared Huffman, Rep. Mike Levin, Rep. Ken Calvert, Rep. Nanette Barragán. We met with U.S. Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler. We also held meetings with United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) Commissioner Camille Touton and John Watts, Senior Counselor to the Commissioner; and out-going U.S. Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox, her Deputy Mae Wu, and Senior Advisor Zach Schafer. Thanks to General Manager Adel Hagekhalil, Dee Zinke, Abby Schneider, and their crew of Washington advocates for facilitating our productive meetings at the nation's capital.



Delegation of Activities

- Director Miguel Luna stood-in for me at the "Groundswell Rally for Water Justice for All," part of the California State Legislature Advocacy Rally. He joined civil rights leaders, social justice advocates, and individuals across California to call for legislative action to tackle the state's water crisis. The primary focus is prioritizing projects that enhance water quality and access for disadvantaged communities. This advocacy underscores the importance of prioritizing people, especially those in crisis-affected communities, where 65 percent of residents are people of color. The overarching goal is to ensure California recognizes everyone's right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water.

**Other Activities****Regularly Scheduled/Ongoing Meetings**

I continue to meet regularly to review the Board's organizational issues and coordinate activities with the Board Vice Chairs and Department Heads.