



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation

- **Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office Group Monthly Activities**

### Summary

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Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office May 2024 Monthly Activities

### Purpose

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To report on Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office May 2024 Monthly Activities

### Detailed Report

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#### SRI Core Activities

This month, the SRI Officer and the Grants and Research Manager participated in panels at the Sustainability Summit hosted by the Hispanic Coalition of Small Business. Topics ranged from the electrification of fleets, climate financing to climate adaptation. The SRI Officer also participated in a Conservation and Efficiency Panel at the LA County Water Plan Summit and a panel discussion on the implications for Metropolitan and the water sector of the Fifth National Climate Assessment. SRI staff also participated in panels on innovation and climate adaptation at the annual Verde Xchange event in Los Angeles. The team also helped prepare and execute a business model discussion at the May CAMP4W Task Force, is negotiating lease terms with AES for solar and battery storage development on Metropolitan land, and is focused on the next steps identified in the CAMP4W Year One Progress Report.

#### Sustainability and Resilience

**Edelman Trust Barometer event with LA Area Chamber:** The Edelman Trust Index is the average percent trust in NGOs, business, government and media. This month the 2024 Trust Barometer was presented by Jonathan Jordan, Edelman California GM, and Jason Levin, Senior Vice President, U.S. Crisis & Risk, with an expert panel, which included SRI staff, with executive perspectives from business, tech, academia, and government. Edelman Trust Barometer's cross-cultural insights are widely cited in The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, The Economist, Fortune, Forbes and other media as the foremost authority on building trusted relationships between businesses and their consumers. The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that while rapid innovation offers the promise of a new era of prosperity, it also risks exacerbating trust issues, leading to further societal instability and political polarization. SRI staff contributed to the discussions on water innovations by sharing progress on Pure Water Southern California; Metropolitan's Employee Guidelines for Generative Artificial Intelligence, and Metropolitan's Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W).



### Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Transition

**Advanced Clean Transportation Expo:** SRI and Fleet staff attended the annual Advanced Clean Transportation (ACT) Expo in Las Vegas from May 19–24, 2024. The Expo provided staff with the opportunity to attend workshops conducted by ZEV industry leaders to learn about the latest advancements in clean vehicle technology including battery electric and hydrogen vehicles, charging infrastructure, and the impacts of regulatory requirements on interstate transportation that will affect California. Staff was also able to test drive some of the newest zero-emission technology available in various vehicle weight classes to determine whether these would fit Metropolitan operational and reliability needs. Staff was able to secure future dates for vehicle and mobile charging trials of this equipment at field sites and network with other agencies who have begun the transition to ZEVs.



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**Low Carbon Fuel Standard Credit Program:** SRI began the enrollment of Metropolitan in the California Air Resources Board’s (CARB’s) Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) Credit Program. The LCFS program will allow Fleet zero emission vehicles and equipment, along with employees who charge their ZEVs at Metropolitan sites, to generate credits from the use of electricity as a fuel. Each credit represents one metric ton (MT) of carbon dioxide reduced, and these credits can be sold on a US Dollar per MT basis to other market participants in the over the counter (off-exchange) market. The revenue generated from EV-based credits will be used by Metropolitan to offset future purchases of ZEV and electric equipment, infrastructure, and program administrative costs.

### Sustainable Procurement

**Sustainable Procurement Operating Policies:** SRI and Administrative Services circulated final drafts for key stakeholder comment on two operating policies that support the General Manager’s strategic priority and Climate Action Plan goals to implement sustainable procurement. The first operating policy, G-05, Procurement of Goods and Services, is an existing policy that includes a revision that ensures that priority will be given to procurement of sustainable goods and services—those that have a lesser impact on human health and the environment when compared with competing goods and services that serve the same purpose. It also includes a new Sustainable Procurement Guide, which provides categories of goods and services that meet the minimum specifications.

The second operating policy, G-06, Sustainable Procurement, is new and designates that The Office of Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation shall coordinate with the Administrative Services Section’s Contracting Services Unit to ensure that Metropolitan’s sustainable procurement procedures and practices support the General Manager’s sustainability priorities and initiatives and promote compliance with state and local environmental laws. Both SRI and Administrative Services will work together to maintain a sustainable procurement program and provide specifications and other resources to effectively implement sustainable purchasing practices and track results.

### Centralized Grants Management Office

Metropolitan was awarded \$99.2 million dollars for the Pure Water Southern California from USBR’s Large Scale Water Recycling Program for planning and design work. A board update is planned to request authorization to accept the funding and confirm the required matching funds. Staff will be working with USBR over the next few months to finalize the agreement. Staff will also assist in developing a sub-agreement with LACSD for planning activities associated with the grant.

Metropolitan also was awarded \$390,000 dollars for the “Interoperable Flow and Temperature Data for Salmonid Restoration Scenarios” from USBR’s WaterSMART Applied Science Grants application, and \$5 million to complete the Foothill Pump Station Intertie to Improve Regional Drought Resilience project. Staff will be

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working with USBR over the next month to refine the scopes of work and budgets for these two projects and execute agreements.

Staff submitted an application in the amount of \$2,054,080 to CAL FIRE's 2024 Urban and Community Forestry Program to support the direct distribution of trees and direct installation of water efficient landscapes in low income and disadvantaged communities (DAC), which reflect the anticipated total costs of the project. The associated costs for the Project are entirely composed of charges for supplies and contractual costs.

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Research and Grants Manager Rosa Castro presented information on grants and programs to assist cities, water agencies, and businesses with Zero Emission Infrastructure and Vehicle costs at the Hispanic Coalition for Small Businesses conference in Claremont.

### Environmental Planning Section

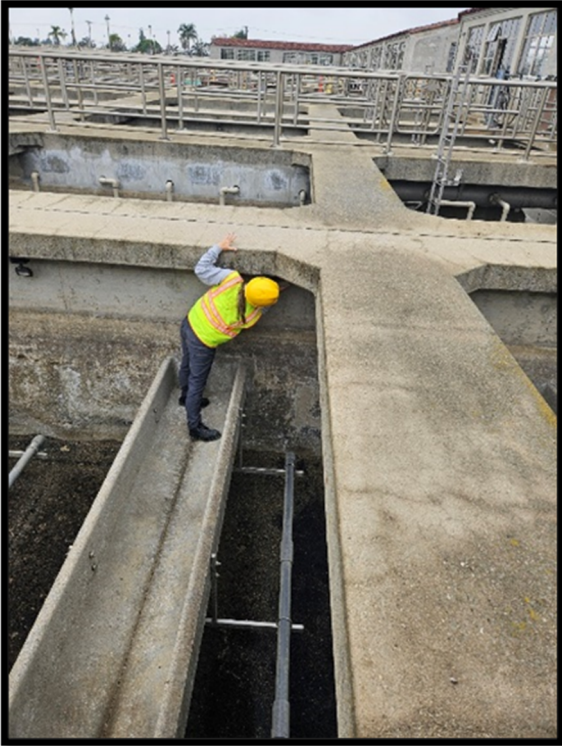
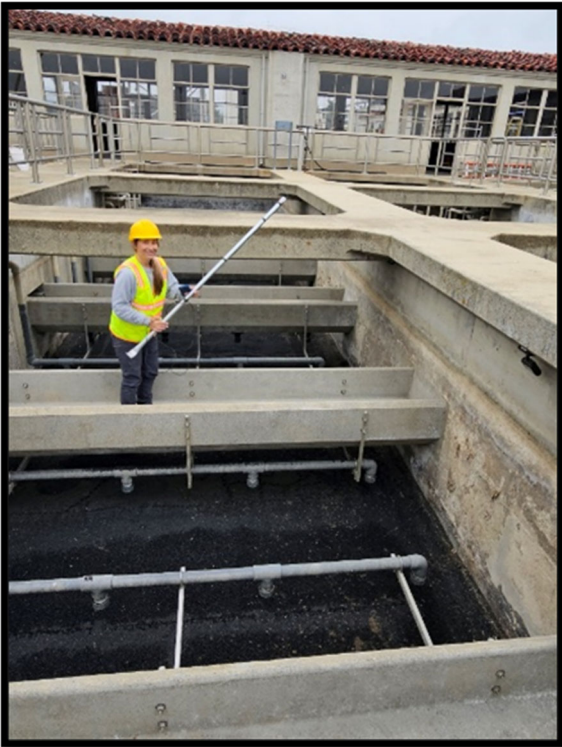
#### Core Business: Environmental Planning and Regulatory Compliance Support

EPS staff continued to prepare California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents for capital projects, including releasing for a 30-day public review period the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Inland Feeder/San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District Foothill Pump Station Intertie Project on May 20. Staff also continued to prepare the draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Pure Water Southern California, including completing draft technical reports for air quality/greenhouse gas/energy, cultural resources, noise, paleontological resources, and transportation; completing the first screencheck review of Program EIR sections for biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, and tribal cultural resources; continuing tribal cultural resource consultation; and initiating biological surveys for backbone pipeline modifications. Preparation of the IS/MND for the West Valley Feeder No. 1 Stage 3 Improvements Project continued, as well as preparation of the Draft EIR for the Garvey Reservoir Rehabilitation Project, both of which are planned for a June 2024 public release. Staff conducted construction monitoring for capital projects, including PCCP Second Lower Feeder Reach 3B Rehabilitation, Perris Valley Pipeline, Lake Mathews Valve Storage Building, LaVerne Shops Upgrades, Weymouth Basins 5 to 8 Rehabilitation, and Weymouth Asphalt Rehabilitation projects, as well as the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) Structural Protection Program. EPS continued to support the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project by continuing to prepare environmental documentation in compliance with CEQA.



**Red-crowned Amazon parrot observed during biological surveys along the Allen-McColloch Pipeline**

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**Biologist performing a nesting bird survey using an endoscope for the Weymouth Basins 5 to 8 Rehabilitation Project**

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EPS staff supported critical Water System Operations activities, including providing CEQA and regulatory clearances, pre-construction surveys, and construction monitoring support for operations and maintenance activities throughout the service area. EPS staff conducted nesting bird surveys in advance of routine road grading for the Yorba Linda Feeder and Lower Feeder and participated in planning efforts for the Holland Road drainage ditch temporary bypass line and Whitewater patrol road repair. Finally, EPS staff completed preparation of the first Annual Report for CRA borrow sites subject to Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) compliance for submittal to the Division of Mine Reclamation.



### **Nesting cactus wrens, a Species of Special Concern, observed during surveys along the Lower Feeder**

EPS staff provided subject matter expert reviews of several legislative bills, including the following:

- AB 1889 (Friedman): conservation element: wildlife and habitat connectivity
- AB 1951 (Fong): California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: roadside wildfire prevention projects
- AB 2038 (Quirk-Silva): State parks: outdoor equity programs
- AB 2144 (Grayson): General plan: annual report
- AB 2330 (Holden): Endangered species: authorized take: routine fuel management activities
- AB 2509 (Kalra): Integrated pest management: invasive species: definitions
- AB 3007 (Hoover): California Environmental Quality Act: record of environmental documents
- AB 3177 (Carrillo): Mitigation Fee Act: land dedications: mitigating vehicular traffic impacts
- AB 3238 (Garcia): Electrical infrastructure projects: endangered species: natural community conservation plans
- SB 1159 (Dodd): California Environmental Quality Act: roadside wildfire risk reduction projects
- SB 3276 (Ramos): Mitigation Fee Act: reports
- SB 396 (Seyarto): Office of Planning and Research: study: road safety projects
- SB 1208 (Padilla): Waste discharge permits: landfills.

EPS staff completed environmental clearances for four real estate agreements, and staff reviewed and analyzed CEQA notices for two external projects to determine the potential impacts on Metropolitan and protect Metropolitan's right-of-way and facilities; comments letters were prepared and submitted for those projects that had the potential to affect Metropolitan.

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EPS continued oversight of reserve management activities to protect valuable natural resources and meet Metropolitan’s mitigation obligations. Comprehensive security patrols were conducted throughout both reserves to prevent trespassing, vandalism, poaching, and theft and to protect the reserves’ natural and cultural resources, facilities, and equipment. Activities at the Lake Mathews Multiple Species Reserve included removal of non-native plants for habitat and fire management purposes, mowing of vegetation to reduce flashy fuel abundance and populations of noxious weeds (i.e., annual grasses, mustard, stinknet), and identification of areas of weed infestation to prioritize treatment during 2024/2025 management season. Activities at the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve included removal of non-native plants for habitat and fire management, coordination with researchers conducting surveys for rare plants and threatened and endangered species (i.e., Quino checkerspot butterfly, coastal California gnatcatcher, and Stephens’ kangaroo rat), and installation of brown-headed cowbird traps for the 2024 season. In addition, the Alamos Schoolhouse interpretive center has been open on Saturdays, and the Reserve interpreter has been at the DVL Wildflower Trail on Saturday mornings to answer questions and share information about the reserve and the trail following its opening in late March; the trail closed for the season in late May. In addition, coordination with CalFire and site preparation for prescribed burns scheduled for both Reserves in June 2024 has begun.



**Researchers conducting surveys on the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve**

### **Land Management**

Caltrans has been granted a permanent easement comprising approximately 22,000 square feet of land within the Colorado River Aqueduct right-of-way near Indio. The easement will allow Caltrans to replace a water line in connection with its Cactus City rest stop rehabilitation project. This action memorializes longstanding improvements and property rights, dating back to 1967, that will now provide the public with constructive notice and expands upon an existing water supply and service connection agreement between Caltrans and Metropolitan.

An entry permit has been issued to Faith Electric LLC (Faith) for parking purposes near the Inland Feeder in the city of Highland. The permit will help facilitate Faith’s electrical upgrade project in Lake Arrowhead.



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San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) and Metropolitan have executed a lease allowing SDCWA to occupy approximately 700 square feet of office space at Metropolitan's headquarters building. SDCWA will be relocating staff from a nearby office building.