



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## ● Chair of the Board Adán Ortega Jr.'s Monthly Activity Report – January 2025

### Summary

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This report highlights my activities as Chair of the Board during the month of January 2025 on matters relating to The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's business.

### Monthly Activities

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#### Key Activities

- General Manager Deven Upadhyay and I continue to conduct Metropolitan site visits to meet with the employees, provide district updates, and listen to and address their concerns. This month, we traveled to Lake Mathews in Riverside. We participated in a robust question-and-answer session addressing various topics, including Metropolitan's local and regional planning investments, workforce initiatives, and CAMP4W. We emphasized our commitment to upholding high service standards and transparency. I communicated the Board's strong unity in recent tough decisions and our united concern for their well-being. I was encouraged by the focus the workforce is demonstrating on our mission of providing safe and reliable drinking water to the community. General Manager Deven Upadhyay's comments and answers to questions were received with candor, appreciation, good humor, and with sincere thanks.
- Joined the swearing-in of Director Mel Katz who was appointed to the Metropolitan Board to represent the San Diego County Water Authority. Katz has served on the Water Authority's board of directors since 2018, representing the city of Del Mar, and served as chair from 2022 to 2024. He succeeds Tim Smith, who represented the Water Authority on Metropolitan's 38-member board since January 2018.



- Director Camacho and I, along with representatives from the City of San Fernando and the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, participated in a two-day joint inspection Colorado River Aqueduct trip. The inspection trip program aims to educate officials, business and environmental leaders, and community members about Southern California's water resources and infrastructure. It offers participants a unique opportunity to engage with Metropolitan's directors and staff while touring facilities.



- I joined General Manager Deven Upadhyay and Assistant General Manager of Operations Shane Chapman in an inspection of Eaton Fire Emergency Response Operations and the devastated area. Mr. Chapman provided us an in-depth look at the impacted water facilities, recovery efforts, response strategies, and operational needs. The visit included a review of emergency protocols, equipment readiness, and personnel coordination in handling fire and rescue situations. We had an opportunity to speak with key responders and managers of impacted local water suppliers who offered valuable insights into their needs, capabilities and areas for potential improvement. All were grateful for Metropolitan's readiness to respond to calls for assistance.
- I had the honor of helping with the dedication of Metropolitan's board room in honor of Phillip J. Pace, who represented Central Basin Municipal Water District on Metropolitan's Board of Directors from 1995 to 2008 and chaired Metropolitan's board from 1999 to 2005. Mr. Pace was last in the boardroom in October 2022 when I was elected chair, and he passed away three weeks later, before my swearing-in in January 2023, when I had invited him to speak. More than 150 people, including Mr. Pace's family, friends and former Metropolitan colleagues, attended the dedication, the unveiling of Phil Pace's portrait by acclaimed artist Eloy Torrez, and honored the man who helped shape Metropolitan into the public agency it is today.



- On January 29, after a special joint Board of Directors and Executive Committee meeting, at the Board's direction, I signed a letter exercising Metropolitan's contractual right to release General Manager Adel Hagekhalil from our employment effective immediately. This was a painful chapter of our service and for all involved, and I am proud of the board's methodical evaluation of the matter and action with broad

agreement after 7 months. I was also proud of the unanimous vote by the board appointing Deven Upadhyay as our General Manager.

**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.