



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

External Affairs

- **Monthly Activity Report for January 2026**

Summary

This report provides a summary of External Affairs activities for December 19, 2025, through January 15, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Attachments

Detailed Report – External Affairs Group’s Monthly Activities for December 19, 2025, through January 15, 2026

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Activities Supporting the General Manager's Business Plan Goals

Develop Post-2026 Guidelines and Negotiate Implementation Agreements

- **Educate legislators so they will champion the District's interests**

Federal Legislative staff provided updates to congressional staff on the status of discussions on post-2026 Colorado River operations and what is at risk for Metropolitan.

The Press Office issued a media statement on the federal release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Colorado River operations and supported the following media activities:

- Coordinated an interview with CNN reporter Ella Nilsen and Bill Hasencamp regarding Colorado River negotiations.
- Arranged an interview with Colorado Sun reporter Shannon Mullane and Bill Hasencamp regarding the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Colorado River operations.
- Supported an appearance by Bill Hasencamp on Air Talk with Larry Mantle on KPCC/LAist regarding Colorado River negotiations and the Draft EIS.

Media Services continued to highlight the Colorado River on social media to raise awareness of the importance of this resource and the Colorado River Aqueduct to Southern California.



Complete Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Planning for the Board to Consider Pure Water Southern California

- **Complete EIR analyses and public process**

The Pure Water Southern California outreach team continued supporting program coordination and engagement efforts. Staff provided a tour of the Grace F. Napolitano Pure Water Southern California Innovation Center to the City and County of Honolulu.

In addition, the team met with the City of Duarte to provide an update on the status of the program and discuss anticipated impacts to the city. As a result of that coordination, a follow-up presentation to the City Council has been scheduled to continue engagement and provide additional information as the program advances.

The Press Office issued a joint press release with the LA County Sanitation Districts on the State authorizing the expedited judicial review for the Pure Water Southern California environmental process under SB149.

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Improve the Workplace and Promote START Values

- **Promote START values (Safety, Trust, Accountability, Respect, Teamwork)**

Media Services produced the inaugural edition of Metropolitan’s new internal newsletter “Inside Met” to tell the stories of employees and provide important updates from throughout the District. The newsletter, which included GM Deshmukh’s introductory video to the workforce, was distributed digitally via email and provided in print format at all Metropolitan facilities.

Media Services collaborated with Human Resources to promote current recruitments on LinkedIn, expanding the pool of potential applicants.



Provide Organizational Stability and Deliver Operational Excellence

- **Support a smooth and efficient transition to the next GM**

Media Services updated mwdh2o.com at the start of the year to reflect new General Manager Deshmukh. The start of his tenure was recognized on social media and through communications to the board, member agencies, and staff.



The Creative Design team collaborated with Conveyance and Distribution, Treatment and Water Quality, and Integrated Operations Planning and Support Services to create a series of 10 facility fact sheets to provide site information for GM Deshmukh’s field visits.

The Creative Design team conceived and produced an introductory video for GM Deshmukh to present his priorities, background and aspirations for Metropolitan’s many communities. At the same time, a new video welcome was produced to feature the GM on the first day of new employee orientation.

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Activities: Empower the workforce and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

Media Services staff visited Gene Camp and Hinds Pump Plant during their holiday parties to build relationships and gather content for the following:

- New Year’s social media video featuring Hinds Pump Plant staff.
- Holiday “Grinch” video featuring an employee from Gene Camp.
- Photos of Hinds and Gene staff for the “Inside Met” newsletter.



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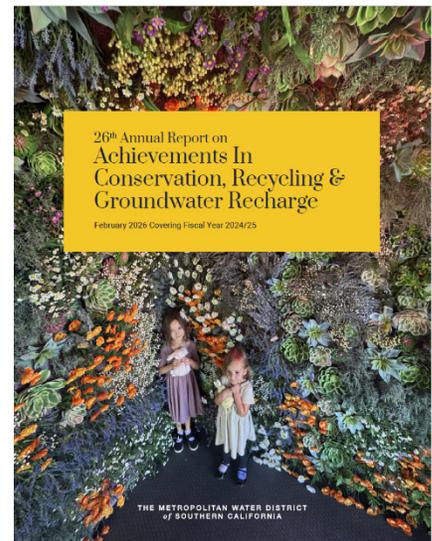
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Adapt to changing climate and water resources

The Creative Design team completed the 2026 Annual Report for submission to the state legislature highlighting achievements in conservation, local resource development and watershed improvements. Prepared in collaboration with Water Resource Management, the report highlights Metropolitan's cumulative investment of \$1.7 billion and over 8.8-million-acre feet of water conserved, recycled and groundwater recovered.

Member Services and Public Outreach supported the public hearing on the 2026 Annual Report, coordinating with Water Resource Management and member agencies on public engagement.

The Press Office provided background materials and coordinated an interview with OC Register reporter Erika Ritchie and Noosha Razavian regarding the water supply outlook.



Protect public health, the regional economy, and Metropolitan's assets

Metropolitan's Sacramento Legislative staff closely monitored the start of legislative activity. The state legislature officially reconvened on January 5, marking the beginning of the second year of this two-year session. The Department of Finance presented the Governor's January budget proposal on January 9, presenting a budget that projects a \$2.9 billion deficit. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) provided its own budget projection in late November projecting a \$17.6 billion deficit, reflecting a significant gap between the Governor's Office and LAO. The LAO projection assumes significant market volatility and corresponding reductions in capital gains taxes caused by market declines, whereas the Governor's office assumes a more stable market while still having to wrestle with the state's structural deficit.

The Governor's budget also proposes additional allocations from the climate bond. Proposed allocations include \$78 million for recycled water, \$69 million for regional conveyance and \$60 million for Delta levees, among other key investments.

Metropolitan adopted a support position on AB 35 (Alvarez), which seeks to streamline the climate bond allocations by exempting them from having to go through the state's rulemaking process. This will reduce the time needed to get funding out the door and into the hands of agencies working on critical water and climate resilience projects.

Member Services and Public Outreach staff organized a public webinar on Metropolitan's Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan with 69 participants representing local jurisdictions, public agencies,

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nonprofit entities, and the public. A copy of the draft plan was posted on Metropolitan’s website for review with a public comment period ending on January 27.

Partner with interested parties and the communities we serve

Legislative Services

Legislative Services staff attended the Ventura Council of Governments board meeting and provided an update on Colorado River negotiations and potential implications for Southern California water reliability and the Pure Water Southern California program’s environmental planning process. These updates supported ongoing education and coordination with regional partners on critical water supply and infrastructure matters.

Legislative Services staff continued regular outreach and participation in government affairs and policy discussions with a broad range of business, civic, community, and trade organizations. Staff participated in board, committee, and member meetings for the following organizations:

- South Bay Association of Chambers of Commerce – Board Meeting
- Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Policy Meeting
- Los Angeles County Business Federation – Advocacy Committee
- Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Committee
- Southern California Water Coalition – Legislative Affairs Committee
- Orange County Business Council – Government Affairs Committee
- San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce – Sustainability and Infrastructure Committee
- Upland Chamber of Commerce – Advocacy in Action Committee
- Inland Action – General Member Weekly Meeting
- Palos Verdes Peninsula Chamber of Commerce – Legislative Action Committee
- Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce – Government Affairs Committee

Through these engagements, staff provided updates on Metropolitan-related legislative and policy issues, monitored stakeholder perspectives, and reinforced ongoing coordination with regional business and civic leaders on water, infrastructure, and sustainability priorities.

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Media Services

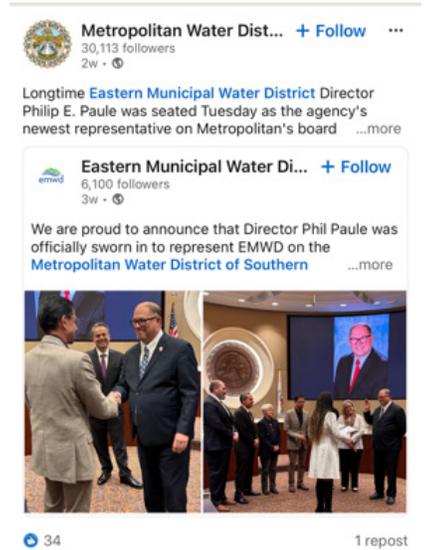
The Press Office issued a press release on the swearing in of new director Phil Paule representing Eastern Municipal Water District on Metropolitan's Board of Directors. The new director was recognized on social media.

Media Services and the Graphic Services team prepared a resolution for MWDOC Director Larry Dick upon his leaving the Metropolitan Board and a commendation for MWDOC's 75th anniversary.

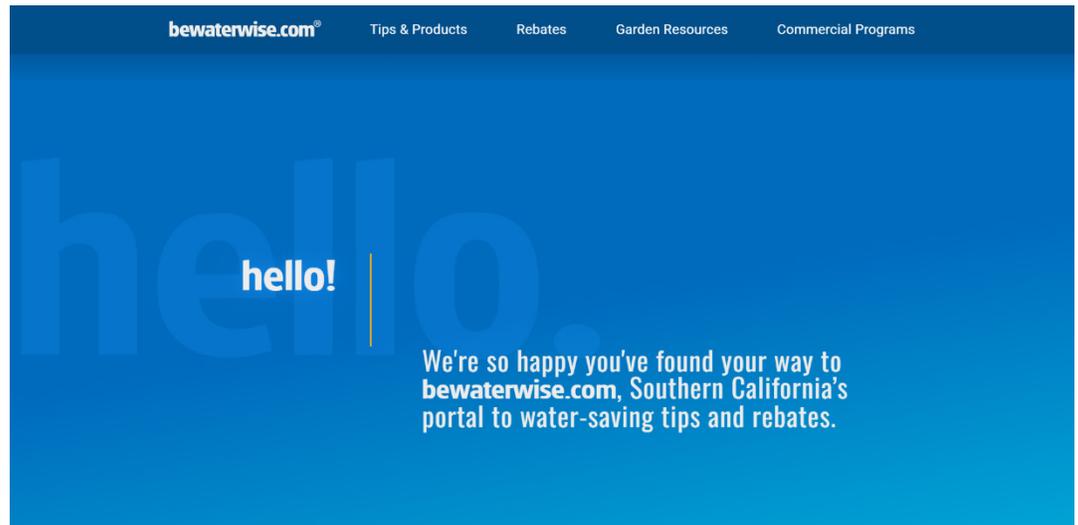


Media Services created a Year in Review to highlight Metropolitan's accomplishments in 2025 on social media.

The Creative Design team supported the creation of several collateral pieces on a variety of topics, including safety at headquarters, updated Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Turf Replacement Rebate handouts for use by member agencies and online, and an updated Branding/Style Guide for Metropolitan, Pure Water Program and bewaterwise.com.



Culminating a nearly two-year planning and design process, Media Services, led by graphic designer Andrew Au, redesigned the bewaterwise.com website based on market design trends, our own analytics and member agency input



to become a more vibrant, interactive and streamlined portal for conservation information region wide. The redesign presents information in more accessible terms and tone, inviting exploration and helping users get to the experts they need. A redesign of this scope saved the District hundreds of thousands of dollars in consultant fees, proving the value of having an in-house production team.

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Member Services and Public Outreach

Member Services and Public Outreach staff coordinated a tour of the Robert B. Diemer Water Treatment Plant for the City of Anaheim.

Construction Outreach

Over the past month, the construction outreach team continued proactive communications and coordination to support urgent work, planned shutdowns, and operational activities across the system. Staff mailed notifications to residents in Glendora regarding emergency work on the Upper Feeder and prepared multiple rounds of outreach for upcoming activities, including hand-delivered notices to residents near the West Valley Feeder shutdown, as well as mailed notifications for tree trimming and removal near Eagle Rock.

The team also coordinated advance notifications in the Diemer area to inform nearby communities of upcoming heli-hydrant training activities. In addition, staff conducted outreach in advance of the West Valley Feeder shutdown to ensure stakeholders were informed of the schedule, scope, and anticipated impacts of the work.

Education

During the winter holiday season, in partnership with the California Department of Water Resources, the Education Team installed the student art traveling gallery at the Vista Del Lago Visitor Center. More than 10,000 visitors viewed the gallery with guests praising the creativity of the student artwork and the thoughtful water-wise messages conveyed through the pieces. Additionally, the Education Team provided 10,000 calendars to member and retail agencies and participating schools.

The Education Team led Diamond Valley Lake field trips for several schools, providing hands-on learning experiences focused on water and environmental science.

The Education Team promoted Water Engineering 4 Good (WE4G), a STEM competition for middle and high school students. Staff contacted 2,000 teachers with a targeted email campaign, encouraging teachers to participate in the third cohort of the program.

Community Partnering Program

Metropolitan sponsored four water education and conservation partnerships through the Community Partnering Program this month:

The Water-Wise Pollinator Program by Southern California nonprofit Wings of Change will develop a California native plant education program as an opportunity to teach schools and the community how to create water-wise pollinator habitats in their gardens.

Burbank Adult School's *Green Horizons: Be Water-Wise Garden* will transform an unused outdoor space into a California native welcoming garden. Adult students and teachers will have a restorative area that also serves as an educational space to learn about water-efficient landscaping.

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Wegeforth Elementary School's *Water-Wise Garden Party!* will provide hundreds of low-income students with an outdoor gardening experience with California-friendly plants. Funds will be used to develop and maintain ten water-wise gardens and outdoor classrooms.

Niguel Botanical Preserve's *Earth Day 2026* draws 200 volunteers who gather to plant drought-tolerant plants throughout the preserve. A new indigenous native garden area is in development, providing communities with the opportunity to learn about indigenous use and knowledge of native plants and sustainable water practices.



Niguel Botanical Preserve