



● Board of Directors

4/14/2026 Board Meeting

8-5

Subject

Adopt Metropolitan's Disruption Policy outlining procedures for recessing and reconvening meetings during telephonic or internet service disruptions; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

The adoption of Metropolitan's Disruption Policy establishes procedures for responding to telephonic or internet service disruptions that occur during Board or Committee meetings conducted with telephonic, internet-based, or hybrid participation. The policy is required to ensure compliance with California Senate Bill 707 (2023) (SB707), which amended the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) to require public agencies to address interruptions to meetings caused by technological disruptions.

The proposed policy outlines procedures for temporarily recessing meetings, restoring connectivity, notifying participants, and reconvening meetings. If service cannot be restored after at least one hour, the Board or Committee, by roll call, shall make a finding that the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access. The Board or committee can adjourn the meeting pursuant to the existing provisions of the Brown Act. Adoption of this policy will ensure Metropolitan complies with state law while maintaining transparency, public participation, and continuity of Board business.

Proposed Action(s)/Recommendation(s) and Options

Staff Recommendation: Option #1

Option #1

Adopt Metropolitan's Disruption Policy outlining procedures for recessing and reconvening meetings during telephonic or internet service disruptions.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Adopting Metropolitan's Disruption Policy establishes clear procedures for managing telephonic or internet service disruptions during Board and Committee meetings, ensuring meetings can be paused, restored, or reconvened in an orderly manner. The policy ensures Metropolitan complies with SB 707 and the Brown Act, while maintaining transparency and public access to meetings.

Option #2

Do not adopt Metropolitan's Disruption Policy at this time and provide direction to staff to revise or further develop the policy for consideration prior to the July 1, 2026, compliance deadline under SB707.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Not adopting the policy at this time would allow the Board to provide additional direction to staff and further refine the proposed procedures before the July 1, 2026, compliance deadline under SB 707. However, delaying adoption may limit the time available to ensure that Metropolitan's meeting procedures fully comply with the Brown Act requirements before the statutory deadline.

Alternatives Considered

Not applicable

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 2140: Duties of the Board Executive Secretary

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

Related Board Action(s)/Future Action(s)

Not applicable

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves organizational, maintenance, or administrative activities; personnel-related actions; and/or general policy and procedure making that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (Public Resources Code Section 21065; State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2) and (5)).

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Details and Background

Background

Metropolitan conducts Board and Committee meetings that allow for participation and observation through in-person, telephonic, and internet-based platforms. These technologies support transparency and public access to Metropolitan's meetings.

Recent amendments to the Brown Act, enacted through SB 707, require certain eligible legislative bodies to provide telephonic or a two-way audiovisual platform for members of the public to access the meetings. With this new requirement it also requires the legislative body to adopt procedures for addressing disruptions that prevent the public from attending or observing the meetings due to a telephonic or internet service disruption. Specifically, the law requires an eligible legislative body to pause for at least one hour to make a good faith attempt to resolve the technological disruption and if the disruption continues and the legislative body wishes to continue the meeting, to make a finding by roll call vote that good faith efforts to restore the telephonic or internet service have been made and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access. Alternatively, the legislative body may adjourn the meeting pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Brown Act.

To comply with these statutory requirements, staff proposes adopting a Disruption Policy that establishes a consistent process for responding to technology interruptions and reconvening meetings when disruptions occur. The policy governs how the Board of Directors, the Board Office, and staff manage technological disruptions while maintaining transparency and continuity of Board business.

Proposed Disruption Procedures

If a telephonic or internet service disruption occurs during a meeting, the following procedures would apply:

- Identification of Disruption
 - A disruption is identified when telephonic or internet service failure prevents members of the public from accessing, observing, or participating in the meeting.

- Announcement and Temporary Recess
 - The Chair or other designee may announce the disruption and temporarily recess the meeting, for at least one hour, to allow staff time to assess the issue and make a good faith attempt to restore service. The legislative body may meet in an agendaized closed session in compliance with the Brown Act during this time.
- Technical Troubleshooting
 - Information Technology and Board Office staff will take reasonable steps to restore telephonic or internet connectivity.
- Public Notification
 - If the disruption affects public access, notice regarding the disruption and instructions for reconvening will be communicated through available channels, such as the Metropolitan's website, livestream platform, or other public communication methods.
- Restoration of Service
 - Once connectivity has been restored and public access is reestablished, staff will confirm that the meeting platform is functioning properly.
- Reconvening the Meeting
 - The Chair or other designee will reconvene the meeting.
- If Service Cannot Be Restored
 - If telephonic or internet service cannot be restored after at least one hour and the legislative body wishes to continue the meeting, it shall adopt a finding by roll call vote that good faith efforts to restore the telephonic or internet service have been made according to this policy and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access.
 - Alternatively, the legislative body may adjourn the meeting pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Brown Act.
- Documentation of the Disruption
 - The meeting minutes will reflect when the disruption occurred, the good faith attempts taken to resolve the disruption, the results of the roll call vote and/or when the meeting was reconvened or adjourned.


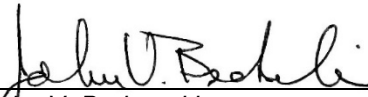
Adoption of the Disruption Policy will ensure Metropolitan complies with the Brown Act, while providing clear operational guidance for managing technological interruptions and maintaining transparency and public participation in Board and Committee meetings.

Project Milestone(s)

The following milestones outline the key steps in the development, adoption, and implementation of Metropolitan's Disruption Policy, in compliance with SB707 and the Brown Act.

- Policy Development
 - Board Office staff, in coordination with the Office of General Counsel and Information Technology staff, developed draft procedures outlining how meetings will be managed in the event of telephonic or internet service disruptions (**Attachment 1**).

- Legal Review
 - The proposed policy was reviewed to ensure compliance with the requirements of SB 707, which requires public agencies to address technological disruptions that interfere with public access to meetings.
- Implementation
 - Upon adoption, the policy will be incorporated into Metropolitan’s meeting procedures and administrative practices, with guidance provided to the Board Office, Information Technology staff, and meeting facilitators regarding the procedures for addressing disruptions. Implementation will occur by the July 1, 2026, compliance deadline established under SB 707, ensuring Metropolitan’s meeting procedures align with the updated requirements of the Brown Act.
- Ongoing Application
 - Following implementation, the policy will be applied to all Board and Committee meetings to ensure compliance with the Brown Act. The Board Office and Information Technology staff will continue to monitor meeting technology and procedures to ensure the policy is consistently applied during disruptions.

 <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> Rickita C. Hudson Board Executive Secretary	4/7/2026 Date
 <hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> John V. Bednarski Assistant General Manager	4/7/2026 Date

Attachment 1 – Metropolitan Water District Disruption Policy Procedures

Ref# bd12709353

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Telephonic or Internet Service Disruption Policy Procedures During Board and Committee Meetings

Purpose

The Disruption Policy is to ensure a consistent process for responding to technology interruptions for recessing and reconvening meetings when disruptions occur, in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act), as amended by California Senate Bill 707 (2023) (SB707), while maintaining transparency and public access to Metropolitan meetings.

Applicability

These procedures apply to all Board of Directors and Committee meetings.

Definitions

Disruption – A technological interruption, including telephonic or internet service failure, that prevents members of the public from accessing, observing, or participating in a meeting.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board Chair or Other Designee

- Announce the disruption once identified during a meeting.
- Temporarily recess the meeting, for at least one hour, to allow staff time to assess the issue and make a good faith attempt to restore the service.
- Conduct any agenda items in compliance with the Brown Act during the disruption.
- Reconvene the meeting.
- If service cannot be restored after at least one hour and the legislative body wishes to continue the meeting, ask for a roll call vote finding that good faith efforts to restore the telephonic or internet service have been made according to this policy, and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access.
- Alternatively, if the legislative body may adjourn the meeting pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Brown Act.

Board Office

- Monitor meeting access and coordinate communication during disruptions.
- Notify Board Chair or Presiding Officer regarding disruption status.

- Direct and draft notices and/or communications regarding the disruption and instructions for reconvening will be communicated through available channels, such as the Metropolitan's website, livestream platform, or other public communication methods.
- Document the disruption and actions taken in the official minutes.

Information Technology Staff

- Assess the issue of the disruption.
- Make a good faith attempt to restore the service.
- Confirm public access two-way telephonic service or a two-way audiovisual platform functionality before the meeting is reconvened.

Office of General Counsel

- Provide guidance as necessary to ensure compliance with the Brown Act.

Disruption Response Procedures

If a telephonic or internet disruption occurs during a meeting, the following procedures shall apply:

1. Identification of Disruption

A disruption is identified when telephonic or internet service failure prevents members of the public from accessing, observing, or participating in the meeting.

2. Announcement and Temporary Recess

The Chair or other designee may announce the disruption and temporarily recess the meeting for at least one hour, to allow staff time to assess the issue and make a good faith attempt to restore service. The legislative body may meet in an agenzized closed session in compliance with the Brown Act during this time.

3. Technical Troubleshooting

Information Technology and Board Office staff will investigate the disruption and take reasonable steps to restore telephonic or internet connectivity.

4. Public Notification

The Board Office will provide notice regarding the disruption and instructions for reconvening through available communication channels, such as:

- Metropolitan's website
- Livestream platform
- Other publicly accessible communication methods

5. Restoration of Service

Once telephonic or internet service has been restored and public access is reestablished, staff will confirm that the meeting platform is functioning properly.

6. Reconvening the Meeting

The Chair or other designee officer will reconvene the meeting.

7. If Service Cannot Be Restored

If telephonic or internet service cannot be restored after at least one hour and the legislative body wishes to continue the meeting, it shall adopt a finding by roll call vote that good faith efforts to restore the telephonic or internet service have been made according to this policy and the public interest in continuing the meeting outweighs the public interest in remote public access.

Alternatively, the legislative body may adjourn the meeting pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Brown Act.

8. Documentation of the Disruption

The Board Office will ensure the meeting minutes will reflect:

- When the disruption occurred
- The good faith efforts taken to resolve the disruption
- The results of the roll call vote and/or
- When the meeting was reconvened or adjourned

Implementation

These procedures will be incorporated into Metropolitan's Board and Committee meeting practices and implemented in coordination with the Board Office, Information Technology staff, and the Office of General Counsel to ensure compliance with the Brown Act.