

**THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

**MINUTES**

**LEGISLATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**May 11, 2026**

Chair Lewitt called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

Members present: Directors Ackerman, Crane, Dennstedt (alternative teleconferencing), Fellow, Gray (teleconference participation), Jay, Jung (entered after rollcall, teleconference participation), Kassakhian (entered after rollcall), Katz, Lewitt, Paule, Ramos (entered after rollcall), and Shepherd Romey.

Members absent: Director Camacho

Other Board Members present: Directors Bryant, Erdman, Kurtz, Miller, Pressman (teleconference participation), Seckel, and Sutley

Director Dennstedt stated she was participating using alternative teleconferencing due to a contagious illness and was alone in the room

Committee Staff present: Deshmukh, Hudson, Novoa, Rubin, Schaffer, Stites, and Zinke

**1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION**

1.) Evelyn Wendel of WeTap.org spoke regarding item 6a.

Director Kassakhian entered the meeting.

**2. COMMITTEE ACTION (ONLY)**

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Legislation and Communications Committee for April 13, 2026

**3. COMMITTEE ITEMS (FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)**

7-4 Approve Metropolitan's extended annual membership in the Center for Energy Advancement through Technological Innovation and annual dues payment of \$68,000 for two additional interest groups, Dam Safety and Asset Management in Generation; the General Manager determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Motion: Approve Metropolitan’s extended annual membership in the Center for Energy Advancement through Technological Innovation (CEATI) and annual dues payment of \$68,000 for two additional interest groups, Dam Safety and Asset Management.

Director Fellow made a motion, seconded by Director Shepherd Romey, to approve the consent calendar items 2A and 7-4.

Ayes: Directors Ackerman, Crane, Dennstedt, Fellow, Gray, Jay, Kassakhian, Katz, Lewitt, Paule and Shepherd Romey  
Noes: None  
Abstentions: Director Jay (item 2A)  
Absent: Directors Camacho, Jung, and Ramos

The motion for item 2A passed by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 noes, 1 abstention, and 3 absent.  
The motion for item 7-4 passed by a vote of 11 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstention, and 3 absent.

Director Dennstedt stated she was alone in the room.

**4. COMMITTEE ITEMS (ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)**

None

**5. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)**

None

**6. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL)**

- a. Subject: Metropolitan’s New Tap Water Campaign  
Presented by: Elisa Mendez – Principal Public Affairs Representative and  
Fernando Ojeda-Rios – Principal Public Affairs Representative

Ms. Mendez and Mr. Ojeda-Rios provided an overview of Metropolitan’s proposed tap water awareness campaign, “Can’t Beat the Tap”.



e. Subject: Report on Activities from Sacramento

Presented by: Jay Jefferson, Executive Legislative Representative

Mr. Jefferson provided an update on activities from Sacramento, including legislative deadlines, advocacy efforts, Metropolitan's position on several state legislative proposals, and other bills related to wildfire response, invasive mussels, tribal community issues, and artificial intelligence in the workplace.

The following directors provided comments or asked questions:

- 1.) Katz
- 2.) Ortega
- 3.) Fellow

Staff responded to the directors' questions and comments.

Director Kassakhian left the meeting.

## 7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

a. Subject: External Affairs Activities

Presented by: Dee Zinke, External Affairs Assistant General Manager

Ms. Zinke provided an update on the new "See Yourself in Water" workforce development campaign, a collaborative effort with DEI targeting veterans and career-changers, as well as ongoing joint efforts with Human Resources to promote open technical recruitment via social media.

The following directors provided comments or asked questions:

- 1.) Ortega
- 2.) Fellow

Staff responded to the directors' questions and comments.

**8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS**

None

**9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Jay Lewitt  
Chair