



Legislation and Communications Committee

11/17/2025 Committee Meeting

6a

Subject

Update on Conservation Campaign

Executive Summary

Metropolitan is implementing a regionwide conservation advertising campaign. The presentation provides the quarterly update on the advertising strategy and proposed expenditures for continuation of residential outreach and launch of the commercial, industrial and institutional campaign.

Fiscal Impact

The campaign is budgeted as part of the Board-approved \$3,453.2 million appropriation for Metropolitan Operations and Maintenance and other expenses in the FY 2024/25 and FY 2025/26 Biennial Budget.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District's Administrative Code Section 4210: Water Conservation. It shall be the policy of Metropolitan to undertake and support water conservation programs. To that end, Metropolitan may develop and implement such programs and enter into agreements with member public agencies and other organizations to make more efficient use of water resources through water conservation programs so long as such agreements serve a beneficial purpose of Metropolitan.

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

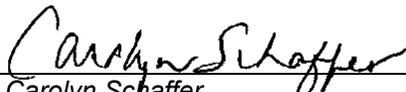
In April 2024, the Board approved the FY 2024/25 and FY 2025/26 Biennial Budget (M.I. 53596).

In early 2026, the Board will consider the FY 2026/27 and FY 2027/28 Biennial Budget.

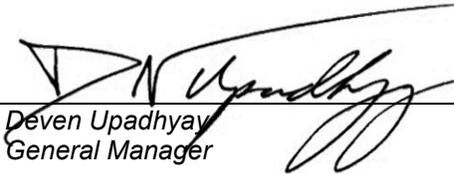
Details and Background

Metropolitan is implementing a regionwide conservation advertising campaign focused on turf replacement. The "Goodbye Grass" campaign and the new campaign for commercial, industrial and institutional (CII) customers are designed in-house with input from the member agencies. The CII campaign is raising awareness of a new state law prohibiting the use of potable water for irrigation of nonfunctional turf located on CII properties. AB1572 (Friedman, 2023) was co-sponsored by Metropolitan.

In June 2024, the Board authorized entering into a three-year contract with We Are RALLY, LLC for media placement services related to drought awareness and water conservation not to exceed \$10.5 million (M.I. 53673). Metropolitan is implementing this with an annual not-to-exceed amount of \$3.5 million that allows flexibility based on water supply conditions, rebates and grant funding, and other factors. In FY 2024/25, Metropolitan spent \$1.7 million under this agreement. In FY 2025/26, expenditures of \$1.3 million are planned.



Carolyn Schaffer
Group Manager,
External Affairs
11/14/2025
Date



Deven Upadhyay
General Manager
11/14/2025
Date

Attachment 1 – Chaptered Assembly Bill No. 1572

Attachment 2 – 6/11/2024 Board Letter 8-3 Authorizing Entering Into a Three-Year Contract with We Are RALLY, LLC

Ref# ea12705584

Assembly Bill No. 1572

CHAPTER 849

An act to amend Sections 10540, 10608.12, and 10608.22 of, to add Section 110 to, and to add Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 10608.14) to Part 2.55 of Division 6 of, the Water Code, relating to water.

[Approved by Governor October 13, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 13, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1572, Friedman. Potable water: nonfunctional turf.

(1) Existing law establishes various state water policies, including the policy that the use of water for domestic purposes is the highest use of water.

This bill would make legislative findings and declarations concerning water use, including that the use of potable water to irrigate nonfunctional turf is wasteful and incompatible with state policy relating to climate change, water conservation, and reduced reliance on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem. The bill would direct all appropriate state agencies to encourage and support the elimination of irrigation of nonfunctional turf with potable water.

(2) Existing law, the Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Act, authorizes a regional water management group to prepare and adopt an integrated regional water management plan in accordance with specified requirements, including, among other things, the identification and consideration of the water-related needs of disadvantaged communities in the area within the boundaries of the plan.

This bill would additionally require an integrated regional water management plan to address the identification and consideration of the water-related needs of owners and occupants of affordable housing, including the removal and replacement of nonfunctional turf.

(3) Existing law provides various findings and declarations of the Legislature related to sustainable water use and demand reduction. Existing law imposes various water use reduction requirements that apply to urban retail water suppliers, including a requirement that the state achieve a 20% reduction in urban per capita water use by December 31, 2020.

This bill would prohibit the use of potable water, as defined, for the irrigation of nonfunctional turf located on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, other than a cemetery, and on properties of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities, as specified. The bill would authorize the State Water Resources Control Board to create a form for compliance certification and would require owners of covered properties to certify their compliance, as specified. The bill would authorize a public

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water system, city, county, or city and county to enforce these provisions, as specified. The bill would require the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to support small and minority-owned businesses that provide services that advance compliance with these provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 110 is added to the Water Code, to read:

110. (a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares all of the following:

(1) The use of potable water to irrigate nonfunctional turf is wasteful and incompatible with state policy relating to climate change, water conservation, and reduced reliance on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta ecosystem.

(2) The Governor reported in August 2022 that climate change will bring significant enduring reductions in California's water supply and that the state must take steps to respond to this reality.

(3) The State of Nevada enacted AB 356 in 2021 to prohibit the use of Colorado River water to irrigate nonfunctional turf on all properties except single-family residences by January 1, 2027.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the irrigation of grasses for agricultural production shall not be limited by requirements to eliminate the use of potable water to irrigate nonfunctional turf.

(c) The Legislature hereby directs all appropriate state agencies to encourage and support the elimination of irrigation of nonfunctional turf with potable water.

SEC. 2. Section 10540 of the Water Code is amended to read:

10540. (a) A regional water management group may prepare and adopt an integrated regional water management plan in accordance with this part.

(b) A regional water management group may coordinate its planning activities to address or incorporate all or part of any of the following actions of its members into its plan:

(1) Groundwater management planning pursuant to Part 2.75 (commencing with Section 10750), groundwater sustainability planning pursuant to Part 2.74 (commencing with Section 10720), or other specific groundwater management authority.

(2) Urban water management planning pursuant to Part 2.6 (commencing with Section 10610).

(3) The preparation of a water supply assessment required pursuant to Part 2.10 (commencing with Section 10910).

(4) Agricultural water management planning pursuant to Part 2.8 (commencing with Section 10800).

(5) City and county general planning pursuant to Section 65350 of the Government Code.

(6) Stormwater resource planning that is undertaken pursuant to Part 2.3 (commencing with Section 10560).

(7) Other water resource management planning, including flood protection, watershed management planning, and multipurpose program planning.

(c) At a minimum, all plans shall address all of the following:

(1) Protection and improvement of water supply reliability, including identification of feasible agricultural and urban water use efficiency strategies.

(2) Identification and consideration of the drinking water quality of communities within the area of the plan.

(3) Protection and improvement of water quality within the area of the plan, consistent with the relevant basin plan.

(4) Identification of any significant threats to groundwater resources from overdrafting.

(5) Protection, restoration, and improvement of stewardship of aquatic, riparian, and watershed resources within the region.

(6) Protection of groundwater resources from contamination.

(7) Identification and consideration of the water-related needs of disadvantaged communities and owners and occupants of affordable housing, including the removal and replacement of nonfunctional turf, as defined in Section 10608.12, in the area within the boundaries of the plan.

(d) This section does not obligate a local agency to fund the implementation of any project or program.

SEC. 3. Section 10608.12 of the Water Code is amended to read:

10608.12. Unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions govern the construction of this part:

(a) “Affordable housing” has the same meaning as defined in Section 34191.30 of the Health and Safety Code.

(b) “Agricultural water supplier” means a water supplier, either publicly or privately owned, providing water to 10,000 or more irrigated acres, excluding recycled water. “Agricultural water supplier” includes a supplier or contractor for water, regardless of the basis of right, that distributes or sells water for ultimate resale to customers. “Agricultural water supplier” does not include the department.

(c) “Base daily per capita water use” means any of the following:

(1) The urban retail water supplier’s estimate of its average gross water use, reported in gallons per capita per day and calculated over a continuous 10-year period ending no earlier than December 31, 2004, and no later than December 31, 2010.

(2) For an urban retail water supplier that meets at least 10 percent of its 2008 measured retail water demand through recycled water that is delivered within the service area of an urban retail water supplier or its urban wholesale water supplier, the urban retail water supplier may extend the calculation described in paragraph (1) up to an additional five years to a maximum of a continuous 15-year period ending no earlier than December 31, 2004, and no later than December 31, 2010.

(3) For the purposes of Section 10608.22, the urban retail water supplier’s estimate of its average gross water use, reported in gallons per capita per

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day and calculated over a continuous five-year period ending no earlier than December 31, 2007, and no later than December 31, 2010.

(d) “Baseline commercial, industrial, and institutional water use” means an urban retail water supplier’s base daily per capita water use for commercial, industrial, and institutional users.

(e) “CII water use” means water used by commercial water users, industrial water users, institutional water users, and large landscape water users.

(f) “Commercial water user” means a water user that provides or distributes a product or service.

(g) “Common area” means that portion of a common interest development or of a property owned or managed by a homeowners’ association or a community service organization or similar entity that is not assigned or allocated to the exclusive use of the occupants of an individual dwelling unit within the property.

(h) “Common interest development” has the same meaning as in Section 4100 of the Civil Code.

(i) “Community service organization or similar entity” has the same meaning as in Section 4110 of the Civil Code.

(j) “Community space” means an area designated by a property owner or a governmental agency to accommodate human foot traffic for civic, ceremonial, or other community events or social gatherings.

(k) “Compliance daily per capita water use” means the gross water use during the final year of the reporting period, reported in gallons per capita per day.

(l) “Disadvantaged community” means a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income.

(m) “Functional turf” means a ground cover surface of turf located in a recreational use area or community space. Turf enclosed by fencing or other barriers to permanently preclude human access for recreation or assembly is not functional turf.

(n) “Gross water use” means the total volume of water, whether treated or untreated, entering the distribution system of an urban retail water supplier, excluding all of the following:

(1) Recycled water that is delivered within the service area of an urban retail water supplier or its urban wholesale water supplier.

(2) The net volume of water that the urban retail water supplier places into long-term storage.

(3) The volume of water the urban retail water supplier conveys for use by another urban water supplier.

(4) The volume of water delivered for agricultural use, except as otherwise provided in subdivision (f) of Section 10608.24.

(o) “Homeowners’ association” means an “association” as defined in Section 4080 of the Civil Code.

(p) “Industrial water user” means a water user that is primarily a manufacturer or processor of materials as defined by the North American

Industry Classification System code sectors 31 to 33, inclusive, or an entity that is a water user primarily engaged in research and development.

(q) “Institutional water user” means a water user dedicated to public service. This type of user includes, among other users, higher education institutions, schools, courts, churches, hospitals, government facilities, and nonprofit research institutions.

(r) “Interim urban water use target” means the midpoint between the urban retail water supplier’s base daily per capita water use and the urban retail water supplier’s urban water use target for 2020.

(s) “Large landscape” means a nonresidential landscape as described in the performance measures for CII water use adopted pursuant to Section 10609.10.

(t) “Locally cost effective” means that the present value of the local benefits of implementing an agricultural efficiency water management practice is greater than or equal to the present value of the local cost of implementing that measure.

(u) “Nonfunctional turf” means any turf that is not functional turf, and includes turf located within street rights-of-way and parking lots.

(v) “Performance measures” means actions to be taken by urban retail water suppliers that will result in increased water use efficiency by CII water users. Performance measures may include, but are not limited to, educating CII water users on best management practices, conducting water use audits, and preparing water management plans. Performance measures do not include process water.

(w) “Potable reuse” means direct potable reuse, indirect potable reuse for groundwater recharge, and reservoir water augmentation as those terms are defined in Section 13561.

(x) “Potable water” means water that is suitable for human consumption.

(y) “Process water” means water used by industrial water users for producing a product or product content or water used for research and development. Process water includes, but is not limited to, continuous manufacturing processes, and water used for testing, cleaning, and maintaining equipment. Water used to cool machinery or buildings used in the manufacturing process or necessary to maintain product quality or chemical characteristics for product manufacturing or control rooms, data centers, laboratories, clean rooms, and other industrial facility units that are integral to the manufacturing or research and development process is process water. Water used in the manufacturing process that is necessary for complying with local, state, and federal health and safety laws, and is not incidental water, is process water. Process water does not mean incidental water uses.

(z) “Public water system” has the same meaning as defined in Section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code.

(aa) “Recreational use area” means an area designated by a property owner or a governmental agency to accommodate human foot traffic for recreation, including, but not limited to, sports fields, golf courses,

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playgrounds, picnic grounds, or pet exercise areas. This recreation may be either formal or informal.

(ab) “Recycled water” means recycled water, as defined in subdivision (n) of Section 13050.

(ac) “Regional water resources management” means sources of supply resulting from watershed-based planning for sustainable local water reliability or any of the following alternative sources of water:

(1) The capture and reuse of stormwater or rainwater.

(2) The use of recycled water.

(3) The desalination of brackish groundwater.

(4) The conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater in a manner that is consistent with the safe yield of the groundwater basin.

(ad) “Reporting period” means the years for which an urban retail water supplier reports compliance with the urban water use targets.

(ae) “Turf” has the same meaning as defined in Section 491 of Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations.

(af) “Urban retail water supplier” means a water supplier, either publicly or privately owned, that directly provides potable municipal water to more than 3,000 end users or that supplies more than 3,000 acre-feet of potable water annually at retail for municipal purposes.

(ag) “Urban water supplier” has the same meaning as defined in Section 10617.

(ah) “Urban water use objective” means an estimate of aggregate efficient water use for the previous year based on adopted water use efficiency standards and local service area characteristics for that year, as described in Section 10609.20.

(ai) “Urban water use target” means the urban retail water supplier’s targeted future daily per capita water use.

(aj) “Urban wholesale water supplier” means a water supplier, either publicly or privately owned, that provides more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually at wholesale for potable municipal purposes.

SEC. 4. Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 10608.14) is added to Part 2.55 of Division 6 of the Water Code, to read:

CHAPTER 2.5. NONFUNCTIONAL TURF

10608.14. (a) The use of potable water for the irrigation of nonfunctional turf located on commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, other than a cemetery, and on properties of homeowners’ associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities is prohibited as of the following dates:

(1) All properties owned by the Department of General Services, beginning January 1, 2027.

(2) All properties owned by local governments, local or regional public agencies, and public water systems, except those specified in paragraph (5), beginning January 1, 2027.

(3) All other institutional properties and all commercial and industrial properties, beginning January 1, 2028.

(4) All common areas of properties of homeowners' associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities, beginning January 1, 2029.

(5) All properties owned by local governments, local public agencies, and public water systems in a disadvantaged community, beginning January 1, 2031, or the date upon which a state funding source is made available to fund conversion of nonfunctional turf on these properties to climate-appropriate landscapes, whichever is later.

(b) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), the use of potable water is not prohibited by this section to the extent necessary to ensure the health of trees and other perennial nonturf plantings, or to the extent necessary to address an immediate health and safety need.

(c) The board may, upon a showing of good cause for reasons including economic hardship, critical business need, and potential impacts to human health or safety, postpone a compliance deadline in subdivision (a) by up to three years for certain persons, institutions, and businesses, and may create a form to be used for compliance certification to the board by property owners.

(d) Public water systems shall, by no later than January 1, 2027, revise their regulations, ordinances, or policies governing water service to include the requirements of subdivisions (a) and (b), as revised by the board pursuant to subdivision (c), and shall communicate the requirements to their customers on or before that date.

(e) (1) An owner of commercial, industrial, or institutional property with more than 5,000 square feet of irrigated area other than a cemetery shall certify to the board, commencing June 30, 2030, and every three years thereafter through 2039, that their property is in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(2) An owner of a property with more than 5,000 square feet of irrigated common area that is a homeowners' association, common interest development, or community service organization or similar entity shall certify to the board, commencing June 30, 2031, and every three years thereafter through 2040, that their property is in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(f) Noncompliance by a person or entity with this chapter or regulations adopted thereunder shall be subject to civil liability and penalties set forth in Section 1846, or to civil liability and penalties imposed by an urban retail water supplier pursuant to a locally adopted ordinance or policy.

(g) (1) A public water system, city, county, or city and county may enforce the provisions of this chapter.

(2) To avoid duplication of enforcement, any entity identified in paragraph (1) that is not a retail public water system shall notify the retail public water system 30 days prior to enforcement of the provisions of this chapter against a property served by such system.

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(3) Nothing in paragraph (2) shall preclude enforcement by any entity identified in paragraph (1) once adequate notice is given.

(h) The department shall, when using funds appropriated for water conservation for turf replacement, prioritize financial assistance for nonfunctional turf replacement to public water systems serving disadvantaged communities and to owners of affordable housing.

(i) The department shall utilize the saveourwater.com internet website and outreach campaign to provide information and resources on converting nonfunctional turf to native vegetation.

(j) The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development shall support small and minority-owned businesses that provide services that advance compliance with this chapter.

SEC. 5. Section 10608.22 of the Water Code is amended to read:

10608.22. Notwithstanding the method adopted by an urban retail water supplier pursuant to Section 10608.20, an urban retail water supplier's per capita daily water use reduction shall be no less than 5 percent of base daily per capita water use as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (c) of Section 10608.12. This section does not apply to an urban retail water supplier with a base daily per capita water use at or below 100 gallons per capita per day.

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THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Action

- **Board of Directors**
Legislation and Communications Committee

6/11/2024 Board Meeting

8-3

Subject

Authorize entering into a three-year contract with We Are RALLY, LLC for media placement services related to drought awareness and water conservation not to exceed \$10.5 million; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

As Southern California faces increasingly variable weather and climate whiplash, staff proposes to continue paid advertising and outreach efforts that build upon a strong water conservation ethic within the region. In November 2023, staff initiated a request for proposals seeking multimedia and multilingual advertising services for a three-year agreement not to exceed \$10.5 million, resulting in 16 qualified candidate agencies. Staff conducted a competitive consultant selection process. Following the interview and analysis of three finalist agencies, staff recommends the Board authorize the General Manager to enter into a three-year agreement with We Are RALLY, LLC (RALLY) for multimedia advertising placement consulting services not to exceed \$10.5 million.

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

Staff Recommendation: Option #1

Option #1

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a three-year agreement with We Are RALLY, LLC for media placement and advertising consulting services not to exceed \$10.5 million.

Fiscal Impact: Funds not to exceed \$3.5 million per year are contingent on FY 2024/25 and 2025/26 board-approved biennial budget. Contract capacity for FY 2026/27 is \$3.5 million if needed, but expenditures will not exceed the funding provided in the future board-approved biennial budget.

Business Analysis: Sustained water conservation and climate change communication will help the region improve its water supply reliability, increase awareness of regional and local rebate programs, and highlight the value of a Southern California water-saving lifestyle. Media placements, strategic advice and research would focus on public messaging consistent with Metropolitan's strategic objectives to effectively market the region's conservation goals.

Option #2

Do not authorize the General Manager to enter into a three-year agreement with We Are RALLY, LLC.

Fiscal Impact: It is clear that Southern California's imported water supplies face unprecedented challenges due to increasingly extreme and variable weather exacerbated by climate change. Without paid conservation messaging, Metropolitan would miss opportunities to promote water efficiency programs that support the state's Making Conservation a California Way of Life legislation, which plays a critical role in managing available storage supplies.

Business Analysis: A summer campaign will launch during hotter, drier weather when conservation is more top-of-mind. Staff would seek direction from the Board on whether to re-bid for media placement services.

Re-bidding services would take two to four months and would delay a strong media campaign beyond summer months when demands peak.

Alternatives Considered

Not applicable

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

Metropolitan Water District's Administrative Code Section 4210: Water Conservation. It shall be the policy of Metropolitan to undertake and support water conservation programs. To that end, Metropolitan may develop and implement such programs and enter into agreements with member public agencies and other organizations to make more efficient use of water resources through water conservation programs so long as such agreements serve a beneficial purpose of Metropolitan.

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

None

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4).)

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Details and Background

Background

With Southern California experiencing extreme and dynamic weather conditions, Metropolitan continues to expand its outreach to promote water conservation and rebates. Metropolitan is completing the third year of its current \$10.5 million three-year agreement with media agency GP Generate, LLC, which successfully leveraged Metropolitan's investment with highly visible multimedia advertising buys and generated an estimated 2 billion media impressions. This included cost-efficient multilingual media buys across various television, outdoor, digital and radio platforms. External Affairs staff designed assets and scripted messaging unique to non-English speaking communities. Using in-house capacity provided cost efficiency by absorbing all creative design costs and allowing the full \$3.5 million budget to be directed toward media buys, saving an estimated \$6 million over three years. The in-house capabilities also allowed staff to shift messaging quickly in response to evolving drought and supply conditions, which became paramount as the region experienced more unpredictable weather patterns beginning in the winter of 2022.

Media buy strategies reflected nuanced messaging approaches while prioritizing hard-to-reach audiences and underrepresented communities throughout Southern California. Creative assets were developed and made available in seven different languages. Staff coordinated with the agency to place the outdoor advertisements in communities where the languages were predominantly spoken, reaching millions of residents. The campaigns also successfully engaged with hundreds of thousands of new and diverse online audiences through social media influencer partnerships and mobile gaming advertising. A multilingual television commercial produced entirely in-house by External Affairs staff captured the intricacies of climate change's impacts on regional hydrologic conditions and served as a reminder to conserve rain or shine.

In total, the awareness-based campaigns garnered nearly 2 billion impressions and 1 million visits to bewaterwise.com. The final campaign phase focused on digital and social media platforms ended in May 2024.

Recent polling led by External Affairs and Probolsky Research shows a strong public commitment to water efficiency and that conservation remains paramount for Southern Californians amid a changing climate. The survey found that a majority of residents are committed to doing more to conserve water as the region grapples with the intensifying impacts of climate change and growing water reliability concerns. With a hotter, drier future forecasted, communicating about water conservation remains an essential public service and operational necessity. The flexibility afforded by staff's in-house capacities will allow Metropolitan to be flexible in messaging and maximize media buying strategies as water supply conditions continue to evolve. In preparation for future public outreach campaign buys, staff initiated a request for proposals seeking multimedia and multilingual advertising services for a new three-year agreement not to exceed \$10.5 million.

Water Conservation Advertising Budget

Funding for media placement services under this proposed agreement will come from current and future conservation program budgets since the advertising supports and helps facilitate the demand management program goals and objectives. Anticipated media platforms will include, but are not limited to television, radio, outdoor, print, Google search, and strategic advice, including research services. Funding not to exceed \$3.5 million for FY 2024/25 and FY 2025/26 will come from the Board-approved budget, and contract capacity will provide for expenditures not to exceed \$3.5 million for FY 2026/27, if needed and approved by the Board in the next biennium. Actual expenditures for conservation outreach in FY 2024/25 and FY 2025/26 would not exceed the Board's approved biennial budget and will be determined, in part, based on water supply conditions and board direction. A portion of this funding will also be used for strategic input and research related to campaign performance and reaching diverse audiences and underrepresented communities. Staff will continue to carefully manage budget resources and report to the Board on conservation expenditures.

This funding will purchase media to promote Metropolitan's water use efficiency goals and drive traffic to Metropolitan's bewaterwise.com® website, Metropolitan's primary online water-saving portal where consumers can find water-saving tips, education resources, member agency programs and access to Metropolitan's conservation rebates. Research activities include focus groups, surveys, polling, and pre-and post-campaign assessments to determine quantifiable measures of success. Staff will also expand partnership opportunities with other agencies and negotiate for added value to maximize the reach of advertising and outreach.

FISCAL YEAR	CONTRACT CAPACITY Media planning and placement, strategic input, research
FY 24/25 July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025	Up to \$3.5 million
FY 25/26 July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	Up to \$3.5 million
FY 26/27 July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	Up to \$3.5 million
	\$10.5 million

Evaluation Process

Sixteen firms responded to RFP-EA-436884. The proposals were evaluated by a five-member internal selection committee consisting of External Affairs and Water Resource Management. The evaluation criteria included qualifications and staffing; record of past performance, technical approach and methodology; draft media plans; environmental sensitivity; planned outreach to underrepresented communities and audiences; and small business representation. The three firms that received the highest cumulative scores were invited to interview on March 14, 2024. RALLY received the highest cumulative score from the selection committee in the review and interview processes. Based on the comprehensive review, the committee recommends RALLY be awarded the contract.

Introduction to We Are RALLY

RALLY is a Los Angeles-based issue-driven communications firm established in 2013 with offices in San Francisco, Seattle and New York City. With 75 percent women and a predominantly diverse staff, RALLY is also committed to working through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion that influences the types of tactics and creative approaches they employ. The firm has served over 500 clients to date, from large foundations to small community-based organizations and public agencies, all seeking to raise awareness and drive action around important social challenges.

As part of this proposal, RALLY has partnered with three Small Business Enterprise agencies –Wonnacott Strategies, Lunia Blue Graphics and Probolsky Research – to enhance and leverage the media buying capacities for the Metropolitan. Wonnacott Strategies has more than a decade of experience in California’s water industry. Since 2018, Wonnacott has worked with Metropolitan’s External Affairs Group on in-house paid social media campaigns, and in 2021, Wonnacott provided Metropolitan with media buying services for a \$1 million conservation campaign as drought conditions intensified throughout the region. Wonnacott also served as program manager for the state’s multi-million dollar Save Our Water campaign from 2014-2018, which involved close coordination with the Association of California Water Agencies and the California Department of Water Resources. Lunia Blue is a full-service creative agency that served as the lead creative and media buying team for the Save Our Water campaign from 2016-2018. The Lunia team has cultivated strong partnerships within outdoor, radio, television, print, and digital advertising sources across California and specializes in hyper-targeted media buying strategies. Probolsky Research is a woman and Latina-owned firm specializing in multilingual market and opinion research with more than 400 surveys and 60 focus groups conducted for California water agency clients. The Probolsky team has extensive research experience in water, water policy, conservation, advertising, and behavioral change campaigns and has served as strategic advisors to hundreds of local, county, and statewide government agencies.

RALLY’s submission also provides an extremely cost-conscious approach with unparalleled access to essential inventory in Southern California’s in-demand and highly saturated media market through a direct partnership with iHeartMedia’s extensive radio, outdoor and digital network. This includes a first-of-its-kind Black Information News Network and an iHeartLatino division dedicated entirely to the diverse communities they serve. This caliber of access to in-language and culturally relevant media inventory will help Metropolitan reach historically underserved communities where they are. Cost-consciousness is further demonstrated through the agency’s tiered commission structure for this agreement, which is below the industry standard of 15 percent.

External Affairs staff proposes to work with RALLY to negotiate for cost-effective, high-value multicultural paid campaign buys supported by in-house creative design and development. RALLY, along with its agency partners, will provide significant value-added benefits for Metropolitan given its access to the extensive iHeartMedia network and experience in the regional marketplace. The campaigns will continue to be executed in multiple languages with outreach to community-based organizations, collaboration with member agencies on customized campaign-related resources and materials, and high-visibility outreach activities throughout the region. Staff will regularly update the Board on campaign creative activities and media buys and will provide performance reports.

Next Steps

With board authorization, staff will finalize the agreement with We Are RALLY, LLC and begin preparing Metropolitan's summer 2024 campaign media plan.



Sue Sims
External Affairs Group Manager
6/6/2024
Date



Adel Hagekhalil
General Manager
6/6/2024
Date

Ref# 12699233