



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

## ● Chair of the Board Adán Ortega Jr.'s Monthly Activity Report – September 2024

### Summary

This report highlights my activities as Chair of the Board during the month of September 2024 on matters relating to The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's business.

### Monthly Activities

#### Key Activities

- Joined the City of San Fernando leaders to celebrate the nitrate removal project, allowing the city to return to using local groundwater supplies. Metropolitan and the city worked side by side to deliver reliable alternative water supply during construction. With the impacts of climate change, Metropolitan is empowering member agencies to develop their own local supplies and enhance their water capacity and resiliency. In attendance were Senator Menjivar, Councilmember Victoria Garcia, Councilmember Mary Solorio, Mayor Celeste Rodriguez, Vice Mayor Mary Mendoza, and City Manager Nick Kimball.



- The City of Arcadia's Mayor Dr. Michael Cao and his colleagues at the League of California Cities from Los Angeles County, visited the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to discuss cooperation in addressing climate change. Directors Michael Camacho and Juan Garza joined me in meeting with local leaders such as City of Lomita Councilmember Barry Waite, and City of San Fernando Vice Mayor Mary Mendoza to explore collaboration opportunities. A special thanks to the City of San Fernando Vice Mayor Mary Mendoza for sharing our city's experience with nitrate contamination and treatment solutions.



- Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay and I continue to conduct Metropolitan site meetings to meet with the employees, provide district updates, and listen to and address their concerns. This month we traveled to Soto Street, where we met with employees from Soto Street and Eagle Rock. 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. Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay's comments and answers to questions were received with candor, appreciation, good humor, and with sincere thanks.



- I had the honor of paying tribute to the incomparable Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, my "madrina" at her retirement. She worked tirelessly to ensure plenty and safe drinking water for SoCal and the nation, guiding many, including myself, towards our life's mission. In noting that we named Metropolitan's Pure Water Innovation Center after the Congresswoman, I said that her legacy is more like the creation of an endless river — a river that requires our ingenuity, dedication, and stewardship to keep flowing.





- Attended the Colorado River Symposium, in Santa Fe, New Mexico with Director Gloria Cordero and Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay where we met with various Western tribal and water officials, including the United States Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton. Interim General Manager Deven Upadhyay spoke compellingly and succinctly about the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California’s climate adaptation projects, priorities, & partnerships in the quest for broad collaboration to save the Colorado River.



**Speaking Engagements/Events**

- I provided opening remarks at The CAMP4W Public Forum which was part of our ongoing efforts to engage the community and maximize the benefits of our Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water. The forum attracted over 150 participants from the business, environmental and environmental justice communities. We aimed to describe the planning process while gathering valuable feedback. I was inspired by the diverse voices present and our shared commitment of including vulnerable communities in sustainable water management. Metropolitan’s board had committed to Equity as a key guiding principle of our CAMP4W process, alongside Reliability, Resilience, Affordability, and Financial Sustainability.

- Participated in Metropolitan Community Leader’s Briefing panel discussion, in partnership with Calleguas Municipal Water District featuring Assemblymember Steve Bennett in Ventura County. The event was moderated by Calleguas General Manager Kristine McCaffrey, and emceed by Director Jacque McMillan, while I opened with introductory remarks. In attendance were Board President Scott Quady, General Manager McCaffrey, Director McMillan, Assemblymember Bennett, and Ventura County CEO Dr. Sevet Johnson.

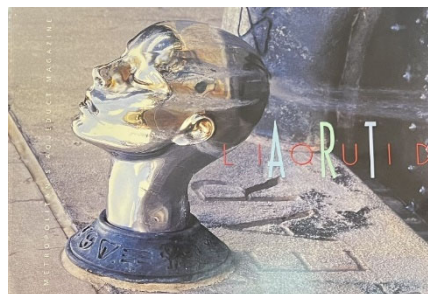


- I was honored to deliver opening remarks for the Hispanic Employees Association to kick off Hispanic Heritage Month. I highlighted the context of our cultural heritage and professional contributions to the future of infrastructure in the region. I also encouraged everyone to engage in the month’s activities, learn from one another, and honor the legacy of those who came before us.



### Interviews & Correspondence

- I was interviewed by a reporter from Civic Publications about Pure Water Southern California and the federal grant awarded to the project, thanks in part to Senator Padilla's support. I discussed the project's progress and the significant effort required to ensure a consistent, reliable supply of clean water without relying on imports. The article will be featured in their upcoming special section on water in the LA Times and other publications.
- The Museum of Latin American Art (MOLAA) requested to record a video of me showcasing how we developed a program twenty years ago called Liquid Art that showcased our generational shared quest for water through public art. MOLAA staff identified several public art locations and chose Metropolitan as the ideal backdrop, specifically in front of the mural by Eloy Torrez depicting our history in the employee dining area. Renowned architectural photographer Tom Bonner, who contributed to the Liquid Art program, was also interviewed to share his insights. Tom and his apprentices captured selected artworks displayed in galleries from East LA to San Francisco between 2002 and 2004.

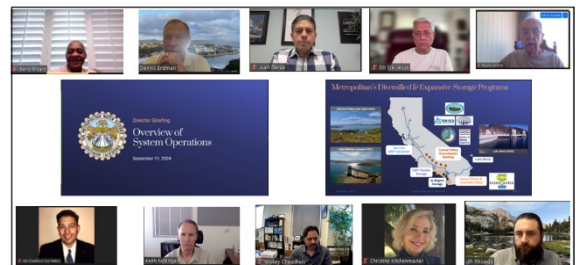


### Issues and Operations Briefings for Directors

- Continued our series of Briefings for Directors with sessions focused on Metropolitan’s Climate Change planning, and Overview of Metropolitan’s System Operations. Such briefings have in the past focused on new directors. The new series of briefings is welcoming to new directors but is a hit with long-standing directors who have used them as “refresher courses.” The briefing on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation was held on September 4, and the Overview of System Operations was held on September 11, 2024. Participating Directors noted that the sessions were very valuable and provided a unique learning opportunity focused on foundational information to better understand Metropolitan’s diverse challenges and programs. The initial sessions include:

- Treatment and Distribution System
- Water Supplies
- Financials
- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
- External Affairs/Outreach
- Workforce
- Emergency Management

Staff is taking input on refining and expanding the sessions offered and will continue scheduling sessions based on the interest of the Directors.



### Special Activities

Staff surprised me with a special cake for my 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday. I’m incredibly thankful for their thoughtfulness and generosity. They made the day memorable, and I am grateful to work with such a supportive team.

### 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.

