



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# Board Report

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

### Summary

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

### Monthly Activities

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#### Key Activities

- Started visits to local Member Agency Board during their monthly meetings with General Manager Adel Hagekhalil and Executive Officer Deven Upadhyay. We made two stops in February: Calleguas Municipal Water District and Inland Empire Utilities Agency. We addressed the inter-relation between CAMP4Water, the Biennial Budget Process, Bay-Delta Issues, and the Colorado River, as well as our collective resiliency in addressing the State Water Project Exclusive Areas challenges. We also answered questions and comments from the member agency directors and, in some instances, members of the public, including municipal local elected officials.



- General Manager Hagekhalil, General Counsel Marcia Scully, and I witnessed the swearing-in of La Habra Heights County Water District General Manager Michael Gualtieri, who was appointed to represent Central Basin Municipal Water District. Gualtieri joined the La Habra Heights County Water District as a service technician in 1982 and held various roles, including superintendent, until becoming general manager in 2002. With nearly 40 years of water industry experience, Gualtieri is president of the Central Basin's Board.



- I met with Evelyn Wendel from WeTap.Org, an organization that is trying to encourage public confidence in tap water. We had a wide-ranging conversation about her organization's efforts, the level of funding required for success, and the stunted progress on this front by water suppliers overall.
- Meeting with Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, Vice Chair Malissa Tayaba, and Krystal Moreno of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians. They expressed absolute opposition to the Delta Conveyance Project as well as to the Voluntary Agreements, but urged continued Metropolitan Water District funding participation notwithstanding the lack of progress. I expressed disappointment that the impasse on both fronts complicates Metropolitan Water District's efforts to prioritize investments in the Bay-Delta overall, and that without a timely and final outcome on Delta Conveyance, investments on in-Delta improvements also face challenges because we lack certainty about what such improvements will actually accomplish for our region.
- Board Secretary Lois Fong-Sakai and I attended the Asian American Employee Organization's Lunar New Year celebration, marking the year of the Dragon. I provided opening remarks and expressed my appreciation for the vibrant cultural diversity within our organization. Secretary Fong-Sakai recounted a story about how the lunar calendar came to be through a race ordered by the Chinese Emperor to see which animals would cross a river first to set their order in the lunar year. The Dragon came in 5<sup>th</sup> place because it stopped along the way to help suffering villages. Metropolitan was born in 1928, a Dragon Year.



## **Other Activities**

### **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.