



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

2/8/2022 Board Meeting

7-6

Subject

Approve Metropolitan's annual memberships in the National Water Research Institute and authorize dues of \$50,000, and the Council for Environmental and Economic Balance's Air Project and the Climate Change Project and authorize dues payments of \$30,500 and \$34,000, respectively; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to

Executive Summary

Metropolitan maintains corporate membership in numerous business and nonprofit organizations. These memberships provide Metropolitan access to various resources and programs to promote the successful performance of Metropolitan's mission. New memberships require board approval if annual dues are greater than \$10,000. The National Water Research Institute (NWRI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that collaborates with water utilities, regulators, and researchers to advance scientific and technical knowledge around drinking water resources and water management best practices. Membership in NWRI helps keep Metropolitan on the leading edge of the field of water and water utilities. Staff recommends approval of membership in the NWRI and authorization of annual dues payment of \$50,000. The California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance (CCEEB) is a coalition of business, labor, and public agency leaders working together to advance strategies to achieve a sound economy and a healthy environment. This action would expand Metropolitan's involvement with CCEEB and provide value to Metropolitan by supporting environmental stewardship efforts and implementation of the proposed Climate Action Plan. Staff recommends Metropolitan join CCEEB's Air Project and Climate Change Project with annual dues payments of \$30,500 and \$34,000, respectively.

Details

Background

Metropolitan maintains corporate membership in numerous organizations which provides access to various resources and enables Metropolitan to stay informed and engage on issues aligned with Metropolitan's mission. Metropolitan's Administrative Code Section 11102 authorizes each department head to join and maintain memberships in organizations whose purposes serve the interests of Metropolitan. New memberships must be brought to the Board for approval if annual dues are greater than \$10,000.

NWRI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that collaborates with water utilities, regulators, and researchers to advance scientific and technical knowledge around drinking water resources, develop recommendations that support investment in water infrastructure and public health, and enable water resource management decisions grounded in science and best practices. By partnering with multiple funders, NWRI is able to leverage resources to develop and independently review the latest information in the field, and its areas of focus have practical applications for Metropolitan, such as water recycling, treatment technologies, water efficiency, and more. As a member of NWRI, Metropolitan is offered a seat on the NWRI Board of Directors and is able to directly access the latest information in NWRI's research. Metropolitan currently participates in technical panels convened by NWRI, and in the event that Metropolitan would co-sponsor specific scientific projects of interest to its projects or objectives, it would benefit from the member rate. While NWRI engages in national projects and accesses expertise internationally, it is well-grounded in Southern California, including through the participation as members of a number of Metropolitan member agencies.

Staff recommends approval of membership in the NWRI and authorization of annual dues payment of \$50,000.

CCEEB is an organization founded by Governor Edmund G. Brown in 1973 to bring together the perspectives of business, labor, and public leaders in pursuit of balanced and effective policy solutions. CCEEB focuses on a wide range of environmental concerns facing California, including air quality, climate change, water quality, hazardous waste management, transportation, energy, and land use. Currently, CCEEB manages three statewide projects, two regional air quality projects, and three statewide task forces to address these various issues. Metropolitan is currently a member of CCEEB's Natural Resources Task Force; South Coast Air Project; and Water, Chemistry, and Waste Project. Total annual dues for these memberships are \$74,000 (\$7,500 – general dues; \$10,000 – Natural Resources Task Force; \$27,500 – South Coast Air Project; and \$29,000 – Water, Chemistry, and Waste Project).

Metropolitan's participation in CCEEB's Air Project and Climate Change Project would help address current and upcoming regulatory and legislative challenges with regards to air quality, climate, and energy-related issues. Most notably, both the Air and Climate Change projects will support implementation of Metropolitan's proposed Climate Action Plan. CCEEB's Air and Climate Change projects are heavily involved in shaping Governor Newsom's policy objectives for electrification and the California Air Resources Board's (CARB's) upcoming 2022 Assembly Bill 32 Scoping Plan Update. The Air Project engages in issues surrounding CARB's Advanced Clean Truck Rule, 2020 Mobile Source Strategy, and funding and incentives for vehicle transition to zero-emission vehicles. The Climate Change Project addresses water-energy nexus issues, short-lived climate pollutants, permit streamlining for renewable energy resources, and regulatory consistency for CARB's Cap and Trade Program. Initiatives associated with both projects are interlinked and directly impact Metropolitan's daily operations, future initiatives, and environmental stewardship efforts.

Staff recommends approval of membership with CCEEB's Air Project and Climate Change Project and authorization of annual dues payments of \$30,500 and \$34,000, respectively.

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11102: Payment of Dues

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

Funding of the proposed memberships is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves government fiscal activities that do not involve any commitment to a specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Public Resources Code Section 21065 and Section 15378 (b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed action in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the proposed action is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061 (b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines). For future, and not yet known, proposed projects associated with this membership, the appropriate lead agencies will be responsible for complying with all applicable federal and state environmental laws and regulations.

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Board Options

Option #1

Approve Metropolitan's annual membership in the NWRI and authorize annual dues of \$50,000, and approve Metropolitan's annual membership in CCEEB's Air Project and Climate Change Project and authorize annual dues payments of \$30,500 and \$34,000, respectively.

Fiscal Impact: Funds for the Climate Change Project in the amount of \$34,000 would be paid from funds budgeted in the FY 2021/22 board-approved budget. Funds for the Air Project in the amount of \$30,500 are budgeted in the upcoming FY 2022/23 budget.

Business Analysis: Membership in NWRI helps keep Metropolitan on the leading edge of scientific and technical developments and best practices in the field of water and water utilities. Membership in CCEEB advances Metropolitan's purposes and interests by supporting Metropolitan's environmental stewardship efforts and the proposed Climate Action Plan.

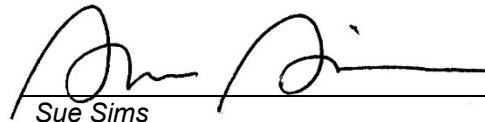
Option #2

Do not approve Metropolitan's membership in the NWRI and CCEEB's Air Project and Climate Change Project.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: This option would forego member-level participation in research programs of, and a board seat on, the National Water Research Institute; and would forego the opportunity to participate in a leading organization that would provide support for Metropolitan's environmental stewardship efforts and the proposed Climate Action Plan.

Staff Recommendation

Option #1

Sue Sims
External Affairs Manager

2/1/2022

Date



Adel Hagekhalil
General Manager

2/2/2022

Date