THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BOARD ACTION

- **Board of Directors**
  Imported Water Committee

10/11/2022 Board Meeting

7-9

Subject

Adopt the Revision and Restatement of Bay-Delta Policies; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

At the April 2021 Bay-Delta Committee meeting, staff was requested to provide a review of Metropolitan's Bay-Delta Policies. Metropolitan's overarching Bay-Delta Policies were last updated in the mid-2000s. Since that time, many significant factors have arisen related to statewide water resources management, including changed conditions in the Bay-Delta region and throughout Metropolitan's service area. Staff went through an extensive internal process to review and consolidate the existing Bay-Delta Policies and develop a draft Bay-Delta Policy Framework (Framework) to facilitate discussion and input from the Board. Staff received board input on the draft Framework through discussions at Water Planning and Stewardship Committee meetings in May, June, and July 2022. Based on this feedback, staff developed a Framework consisting of three policy objectives and nine policy principles that restate existing policy and include key updates based on emerging trends. These policies were presented and discussed at the August 2022 Water Planning and Stewardship Committee meeting and presented for action at the September 2022 Imported Water Committee where the Committee acted to defer the item, per staff's suggestion, so that additional feedback could be addressed. The updated Bay-Delta Policies reflect additional feedback and are now presented for adoption.

Details

Since the adoption of Metropolitan's existing Bay-Delta Policies in the mid-1990s and early- to mid-2000s, many significant factors have arisen related to statewide water resources management, including changed conditions in the Bay-Delta region and throughout Metropolitan's service area. In addition, the current policy structure, while comprehensive, is embodied in several board actions and can be challenging to reference and difficult for the Board, outside decision-makers, and the public to understand. The Board's future oversight and actions could be more effectively supported by the consolidation and updating of the Bay-Delta Policies to align with emerging trends, while clarifying and preserving topics that continue to be relevant to the Board's ongoing direction.

Background

Overview of Existing Bay-Delta Policies

Since the mid-1990s, Metropolitan's Board has taken a number of actions and adopted policy principles that support staff implementation of activities related to the Bay-Delta. These activities include day-to-day tasks, projects, policy and program development, program management, engagement with external parties, long-term planning, and key investments. Collectively, staff refers to this set of board policy actions as the "Bay-Delta Policies."

Pre 2006 – Bay-Delta Board actions and related policies: Key Metropolitan board-approved policies were adopted following the passage of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992, which aimed to solve water conflicts by establishing a balance between requirements for fish and wildlife, agriculture, municipal, industrial, and power interests.

April 2006 – Board adoption of policy principles regarding long-term actions for the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.: In recognition of then-recent events, including Hurricane Katrina, the Jones Tract levee failure, declining fish species in the Delta, and renewed state efforts to protect the Delta, the Board adopted 13 policy principles that reflected the importance of the Delta to Metropolitan. These policy principles included a Delta Mission Statement. Based on the four central themes, 13 specific policy principles were adopted to ensure long-term challenges in the Delta could be successfully met.

June 2007 – Board support, in principle, of the proposed framework for Metropolitan's Delta Action Plan: Following board adoption of the 13 policy principles for the Delta, the development of Metropolitan's Delta Action Plan began. At its April 2007 Board of Directors Retreat, the Board discussed a proposed framework for directing Metropolitan's staff action on Delta-related issues.

September 2007 – Board adoption of criteria for conveyance options in implementation of the Long-Term Delta Action Plan: In September 2007, Metropolitan's Board adopted six key policy criteria for considering the water supply conveyance options being developed by the State of California: (1) provide water supply reliability; (2) improve export water quality; (3) allow flexible pumping operations in a dynamic fishery environment; (4) enhance the Delta ecosystem; (5) reduce seismic risks; and (6) reduce climate change risks.

August 2008 and January 2009 – Board approval of Delta Governance Principles and support of the Final Delta Vision Implementation Report: In August 2008, the Board adopted Delta Governance Principles in response to the governance strategy established by the Governor's Blue-Ribbon Task Force. The Governor's Blue-Ribbon Task Force adopted a Delta Vision Plan to describe an overarching vision for the future of the Delta, followed by a subsequent Delta Vision Strategic Plan.

Current Update Process

Overview of Process to Consolidate, Review, and Update the Bay-Delta Policies

At the April 2021 Bay-Delta Committee meeting, staff was directed to review and propose updates to Metropolitan's Bay-Delta Policies. In November 2021, staff followed up with a presentation to the Bay-Delta Committee that provided a high-level overview of the history of Metropolitan's Bay-Delta Policies and a proposed process to review and consider updates to those policies.

Internal Review and Development Process

During the fall of 2021 and into early 2022, staff went through a process to review and consolidate the existing Bay-Delta actions and policies described above. Staff subject matter experts throughout Metropolitan provided input on key policy areas to identify changed conditions and emerging trends. Staff solicited additional input on draft policy objectives and principles from the Office of the General Manager, External Affairs, Water Resource Management, Real Property, Finance, and Legal leading up to the July 2022 information item.

Board Review of Policy Principles

April 2022 – Water Planning and Stewardship Committee: Staff developed and transmitted background information to the Committee prior to the April 2022 meeting to serve as background and a reference and to promote continued discussion.

May 2022 – Water Planning and Stewardship Committee: Staff provided background on existing board-adopted Bay-Delta Policies and described the key policy areas that were identified in the internal review process. In addition, staff outlined how those key policy areas were used to develop a draft Framework and policy principles and provided examples of how the Framework could be used to support different policy applications.

June 2022 – Water Planning and Stewardship Committee: The Board provided staff with additional feedback on the draft policy framework and policy principles. Staff also received feedback from member agencies through discussions with staff, member agency meetings, and requests for staff to provide updates at member agency board meetings.

August 2022 – Water Planning and Stewardship Committee: In response to board and member agency feedback, staff further refined and consolidated the draft policy framework and policy principles and brought forward a Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework to the Committee as an Information Item.

September 2022 – Imported Water Committee: An action letter was presented to the Imported Water Committee, with a staff-recommended action to "Adopt the revision and restatement of Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework" commensurate with the August 2022 Information Item. During Committee, staff suggested deferment of the item for one month to further refine in response to feedback received from the Board, member agencies, and the public. The Committee acted to defer the item. Staff has refined the Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework **(Attachment 1)** as discussed below. Staff has also attached a Redline Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework **(Attachment 2)** for ease of reference, and a summary of the revisions in the following table:

Feedback Themes	Response
Greater emphasis and/or clarity regarding coequal goals from Delta Reform Act	Language modified and added to Policy Objective 2, respective descriptor, footnote added to attachment 1
Greater emphasis on climate change science and greenhouse gases	Language added to Policy Objective 3 descriptor
Greater emphasis on reduced reliance from Delta Reform Act	Language modified and added to Policy Principle 2A and respective descriptor, footnote added to attachment 1
Greater emphasis on engagement (environmental justice and underserved communities)	Language modified and added to Policy Principle 3B descriptor
"SWP Dependent Areas" references unnecessary	Removed references to "SWP Dependent Areas" in attachment 1

Revised Bay-Delta Policy Framework

Based on board feedback, staff developed a Framework consisting of three policy objectives and nine policy principles, shown in the table below, that restate existing policy and include key updates based on emerging trends. The Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework document provides an overview of how to navigate the policy Framework, key descriptors of each element of the Framework, and examples that illustrate how the policy principles might be applied.

***Revised* Bay-Delta Policy Objectives**
1: Promote a Sustainable Bay-Delta within Metropolitan's One Water Approach
2: Support Statewide and Regional Actions that Further the Coequal Goals Established in the Delta Reform Act
3: Address the Risks Associated with Climate Change
***Revised* Bay-Delta Policy Framework**
Policy Area 1: Science and Watershed Management
1A: Protect and restore aquatic species and habitats based on best available science
1B: Partner in watershed-wide approaches to develop comprehensive solutions
1C: Advance responsible stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta Islands
Policy Area 2: Water Supply Reliability and Resilience
2A: Protect water supply reliability and quality while reducing reliance consistent with the Delta Reform Act
2B: Invest in actions that provide seismic and climate resiliency
2C: Seek flexible operations, water management actions, and infrastructure solutions
Policy Area 3: Partnerships and Cost-Effective Investments
3A: Maintain and pursue cost-effective financial investments
3B: Foster broad and inclusive engagement of Delta interests and beneficiaries
3C: Promote innovative and multi-benefit initiatives

Application of the Revised Bay-Delta Policy Framework

The Framework described above provides direction to staff related to day-to-day Bay-Delta work activities, project management, external engagement, and longer-term planning efforts. In addition, the Framework would support future board deliberation when it considers individual actions. The following examples help illustrate how the Framework would be applied.

Reduced Delta Reliance

Local and regional projects such as Pure Water Southern California that improve regional self-reliance are supportive of all three Bay-Delta Policy Objectives: (1) Promote a sustainable Bay-Delta within Metropolitan's One Water approach, which, among other things, aims to reduce Metropolitan's dependence on imported water and expand local and drought resistant supplies; (2) Support statewide and regional actions that further the coequal goals established in the Delta Reform Act; and (3) Address the risks of climate change by diversifying sources of supply. In alignment with state policy, local and regional projects that increase regional self-reliance, and also provide for reduced reliance on the Delta.

Delta Conveyance

The proposed Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) as described in the draft environmental impact report endeavors to be consistent with all three Bay-Delta Policy Objectives. Under the proposed Framework, staff would review the proposed project through the lens of several applicable Policy Principles, including: (2A) Protect water supply reliability while reducing reliance consistent with the Delta Reform Act; (2B) Invest in actions that provide seismic and climate resiliency; (2C) Seek flexible operations, water management actions, and infrastructure solutions; (3A) Maintain and pursue cost-effective financial investments; and (3B) Foster broad and inclusive engagement of Delta interests and beneficiaries. As described above, these Policy Objectives and Principles guide staff activities related to the DCP and would also provide guidance for any future board actions/recommendations. As an example of how the Framework functions, if the California Department of Water Resources were to propose design modifications that render the DCP inconsistent with any applicable policies, staff would ensure that the issue is either resolved or made known in any future recommendations to the Board.

Recommendation

After accounting for significant board and member agency feedback, staff recommends the Board adopt these revised and restated Bay-Delta Policies. The Bay-Delta Policies account for recent emerging trends and feedback from the Board in recent months regarding adjustments from the previous policies. These Bay-Delta Policies, once adopted, will guide staff engagement on Bay-Delta and other related issues. If the Board chooses to not adopt these revised and restated Bay-Delta Policies, then staff will continue to take guidance from the current Bay-Delta Policies that have been in place for years.

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

By Minute Item 41504, dated July 13, 1995, the Board adopted principles guiding development of an urban position on amendment of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (P.L. 102-575).

By Minute Item 45753, dated May 11, 2004, and Minute Item 46637, dated April 11, 2006, the Board adopted a set of Delta policy principles to ensure a solid foundation for development of future Metropolitan positions and to provide guidance to Metropolitan staff.

By Minute Item 47135, dated May 25, 2007, the Board supported, in principle, the proposed Delta Action Plan, as set forth in the letter signed by the General Manager.

By Minute Item 47232, dated September 11, 2007, the Board adopted criteria for support of conveyance options in implementation of a long-term Delta improvement plan.

By Minute Item 47605, dated August 19, 2008, the Board approved the Ad Hoc Subcommittee recommendations as outlined in the board letter.

By Minute Item 47769, dated January 13, 2009, the Board expressed a support position regarding the Final Delta Vision Implementation Report.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21065, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378) because the proposed action involves continuing administrative activities such as general policy and procedure making, which will not cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (Section 15378(b)(2) of the state CEQA Guidelines). In addition, the proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment (Section 15378(b)(5) of the state CEQA Guidelines).

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Board Options

Option #1

Adopt the revision and restatement of Bay-Delta Policies.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Staff will operate under revised and restated Bay-Delta Policies that consider a number of significant factors including changed conditions in the Bay-Delta region and throughout Metropolitan's service area. In addition, the Board's future oversight and actions would be more effectively supported by updating the Bay-Delta Policies to align with emerging trends, while clarifying and preserving topics that continue to be relevant to the Board's ongoing direction.

Option #2

Do not adopt the revision and restatement of Bay-Delta Policies.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: This board item will serve as a reference document for those interested in seeing trends affecting Metropolitan's Bay-Delta Policies. Staff will continue to operate under the previous Bay-Delta Policies and actions that were adopted in the mid-1990s and early- to mid-2000s which do not have the same policy emphasis on the significantly changed conditions since that time in the Bay-Delta region and throughout Metropolitan's service area.

Staff Recommendation

Option #1

10/5/2022
Stephen N. Arakawa *Date*
Manager, Bay-Delta Initiatives

10/6/2022
Adel Hagekhalil *Date*
General Manager

Attachment 1 – Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework

Attachment 2 – Redline Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework

Ref# eo12684791

Attachment 1: *Revised* Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework

Overview

The *Revised* Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework is a consolidation and restatement of existing Bay-Delta Policies; however, it also takes into consideration recent trends relevant to Metropolitan's interests. This document describes each of the three revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Bay-Delta Framework (nine policy principles) with relevant examples listed under each of the nine policy principles.

The Bay-Delta Policy Objectives define Metropolitan's overarching goals to protect reliable, high quality water supplies in an environmentally sensitive manner, consistent with Metropolitan's Mission Statement. The Bay-Delta Framework includes nine policy principles intended to advance the Bay-Delta policy objectives. Once adopted, the Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework collectively will guide Metropolitan staff and will inform future Board actions.

Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives		
• **Promote a Sustainable Bay-Delta Within Metropolitan's One Water Approach** • **Support Statewide and Regional Actions that Further the Coequal Goals Established in the Delta Reform Act** • **Address the Risks Associated with Climate Change**		
Revised Bay-Delta Policy Framework		
Science and Watershed Management	**Water Supply Reliability and Resilience**	**Partnerships and Cost-Effective Investments**
Protect and restore aquatic species and habitats based on best available science	Protect water supply reliability and quality while reducing reliance consistent with the Delta Reform Act	Maintain and pursue cost-effective financial investments
Partner in watershed-wide approaches to develop comprehensive solutions	Invest in actions that provide seismic and climate resiliency	Foster broad and inclusive engagement of Delta interests and beneficiaries
Advance responsible stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta islands	Seek flexible operations, water management actions, and infrastructure solutions	Promote innovative and multi-benefit initiatives

Bay-Delta Policy Objectives

Objective 1: Promote a Sustainable Bay-Delta Within Metropolitan's One Water Approach

Supplies from the Bay-Delta watershed are integral to implementing Metropolitan's One Water Approach, an integrated planning and implementation approach to managing finite water resources for long-term resilience and reliability, meeting both community and ecosystem needs. Bay-Delta supplies are foundational to the One Water approach as they meet demands in Metropolitan's service area and acts as source water for local supply projects such as water recycling and groundwater basin replenishment.

Objective 2: Support Statewide and Regional Actions that Further the Coequal Goals Established in the Delta Reform Act[1]

Metropolitan supports the coequal goals established in the Delta Reform Act of (1) providing a more reliable water supply for California and (2) protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. Ongoing statewide and regional investments in ecosystem restoration, flood control, water supplies. multi-benefit projects in the Bay-Delta, and upstream watersheds are essential to building and maintaining resilient water supplies from the Bay-Delta. Effective implementation of state policies related to reduced reliance, water use efficiency, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and initiatives such as the governor's Water Resilience Portfolio will be essential. Likewise, additional funding and permitting efficiencies can help expedite regional and local supply development, and projects that supply ecologically beneficial flows in the Bay-Delta or Bay-Delta watershed.

Objective 3: Address the Risks Associated with Climate Change

Climate change is impacting California's water resources: sea levels are rising, snowpack is decreasing, and water temperatures are increasing. Droughts are expected to become more frequent and more severe, and storm intensities are expected to increase. These climate change trends are anticipated to continue, posing a prolonged threat to the Bay-Delta and Metropolitan's water supplies. An integrated federal, state, regional, and local approach to developing and managing water supply programs and projects is critical to managing for the future with climate change impacts that are occurring. As climate conditions and science continue to evolve, Metropolitan supports the use and development of additional analyses, tools, and actions, including actions to reduce emissions consistent with Metropolitan's Climate Action Plan.

[1] As described in Public Resources Code § 29702

Bay-Delta Policy Framework

Policy Area 1: Science and Watershed Management

1A Protect and restore aquatic species and habitats based on best available science

Sustainable and resilient water supplies rely, in part, on the health of the Delta ecosystem. As populations of native aquatic wildlife continue to trend downward, rigorous and peer reviewed science protects the environment and Metropolitan's water supply by supporting informed decision-making.

Examples include: Metropolitan staff authored papers on topics including Delta Smelt Habitat, Salmon Growth, and Delta Stressors, the Lower Yolo Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, and participation in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program and inter-agency consultations on coordinated long term operations of the State Water and Central Valley Projects.

1B Partner in watershed-wide approaches to develop comprehensive solutions

With much of the state's water supply originating in the mountains, the health and management of the upper watersheds are critically important to California's water quality and water supply.

Examples include: potential partnerships and opportunities in the upper watershed focused on the long-term potential for climate change adaptation (including adjustments for loss of snowpack), reduction in the impacts of variable precipitation patterns on runoff, and improvements in water quality and water temperature.

1C Advance responsible stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta islands

The Delta Islands provide a unique opportunity for research, innovation, and collaboration with other stakeholders to develop sustainable strategies for Delta land use and environmental stewardship. Staff is engaged in specific processes and opportunities for responsible long-term stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta islands properties. Further advancements on Metropolitan's Delta Islands would comport with both the Bay-Delta Policy Framework and the Board's adopted Climate Action Plan.

Examples include: levee enhancements that protect the freshwater pathways to the State Water Project south-Delta pumps, pilot projects and scientific investigations to evaluate strategies for carbon sequestration, floating organic marshes that can support sensitive fish species, sustainable agriculture that halts or reverses subsidence, experiments to improve measurement of water diversions and water use, compensatory mitigation, habitat restoration for native aquatic species, native fish species preservation, and reduction in stressors affecting state and federal listed fish species.

Policy Area 2: Water Supply Reliability and Resilience

2A Protect water supply reliability and quality while reducing reliance consistent with the Delta Reform Act[2]

Two of the core tenets of Metropolitan's mission statement are to provide reliable and high-quality water supplies to its service area. The Delta is a major pathway for the source of water for most of the state and the sustainability of Delta water supplies is a critical element of Southern California's water reliability. This reliability is protected through science-based regulatory frameworks, long term water supply planning, collaborative partnerships and pursuing water supply infrastructure solutions while reducing reliance on the Delta.

Delta water quality should be protected for public health and managing salinity. Measures that reduce the salinity of Delta supplies will help meet regional salinity objectives of urban and agricultural agencies throughout California. This includes benefits to Metropolitan's service area to enhance management of Southern California groundwater basins and to develop additional recycled water.

> *Examples include: Water supply and quality initiatives including new Delta conveyance, Voluntary Agreements to implement State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality regulations, Delta Regional Monitoring Program, CV-SALTS, and Delta Nutrient Research Plan*

2B Invest in actions that provide seismic and climate resiliency

Earthquakes in the Delta region, sea level rise and subsidence can result in levee failure and saltwater intrusion into the Delta from the San Francisco Bay and the ocean. Changing weather patterns will result in longer periods of drought and more intense storms and storm periods. Resiliency requires continued participation and investment in actions including flood emergency planning, levee improvements, water storage, and water supply management.

> *Examples include: the DWR/USACE Delta Flood Emergency Integration Plan, the Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio, and new storage and conveyance projects.*

2C Seek flexible operations, water management actions, and infrastructure solutions

Current operations of the State Water Project and Central Valley Project facilities are subject to prescriptive flow and other regulatory standards. Metropolitan staff is working with partners to advance technology and monitoring that could be used to develop more effective water project operations that are protective of aquatic wildlife, with the support of new technological capabilities and better real-time information systems.

> *Examples include: Improved atmospheric river and runoff forecasting, forecast-informed reservoir operations, improved fish monitoring, including steelhead, artificial intelligence, modeling of aquatic wildlife behavior, improved rapid genetic testing of salvaged salmonids, and the use of true adaptive management and structured decision-making processes.*

[2] As described in California Water Code § 85021

Policy Area 3: Partnerships and Cost-Effective Investments

3A Maintain and pursue cost-effective financial investments

Completion and maintenance of large multi-benefit water supply projects require partnership and multiple funding sources to be cost-effective. Advancing partnerships and seeking multiple funding sources can offset or reduce expenditures associated with climate change adaptation for water supply and other public benefits, which are instrumental to future Metropolitan water supply reliability.

Examples include: repair of California Aqueduct subsidence, new Delta conveyance, Sites Reservoir, Pure Water and other local and regional projects.

3B Foster broad and inclusive engagement of Delta interests and beneficiaries

The Bay-Delta is a lifeline to multiple entities with diverse interests including tribes, public water agencies, local, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, underserved communities, environmental justice groups and agricultural interests. Metropolitan embraces a proactive approach to seeking and sustaining engagement with all communities to foster new perspectives on Bay-Delta related issues and identify additional opportunities for collaboration.

Examples include: Engaging in the development of a Community Benefits Program for the Delta Conveyance Project, participating in the multi-interest Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program, opportunities for projects on Metropolitan's Delta Islands, participating in State Water Project Contractors, serving on the Delta Protection Commission Advisory Committee, participating in the Plumas Watershed Forum, and Sites Reservoir Committee and subcommittee engagement.

3C Promote innovative and multi-benefit initiatives

The Delta region is at the intersection of many social, political, environmental and climate related factors. As a result, Delta issues are significantly complex, with a significant degree of uncertainty given the range of physical and biological factors that are involved. Metropolitan recognizes that new technologies and approaches are needed to address current and future challenges in the Bay-Delta.

Examples include: Collaborative and innovative solutions including the use of structured decision making, environmental DNA to detect aquatic species, the Reorienting to Salmon Recovery effort, the Bouldin Island Levee Setback Project, and the Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project.

Attachment 1: *Revised* Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework

Overview

The *Revised* Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework is a consolidation and restatement of existing Bay-Delta Policies; however, it also takes into consideration recent trends relevant to Metropolitan's interests. This document describes each of the three revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Bay-Delta Framework (nine policy principles) with relevant examples listed under each of the nine policy principles.

The Bay-Delta Policy Objectives define Metropolitan's overarching goals to protect reliable, high quality water supplies in an environmentally sensitive manner, consistent with Metropolitan's Mission Statement. The Bay-Delta Framework includes nine policy principles intended to advance the Bay-Delta policy objectives. Once adopted, the Bay-Delta Policy Objectives and Framework collectively will guide Metropolitan staff and will inform future Board actions.

Revised Bay-Delta Policy Objectives		
• **Promote a Sustainable Bay-Delta Within Metropolitan's One Water Approach** • **Support Statewide and Regional Actions that ~~Improve Bay-Delta Sustainability~~Further the Coequal Goals Established in the Delta Reform Act** • **Address the Risks Associated with Climate Change**		
Revised Bay-Delta Policy Framework		
Science and Watershed Management	**Water Supply Reliability and Resilience**	**Partnerships and Cost-Effective Investments**
Protect and restore aquatic species and habitats based on best available science	Protect water supply reliability and ~~water~~quality while reducing reliance consistent with the Delta Reform Act	Maintain and pursue cost-effective financial investments
Partner in watershed-wide approaches to develop comprehensive solutions	Invest in actions that provide seismic and climate resiliency	Foster broad and inclusive engagement of Delta interests and beneficiaries
Advance responsible stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta islands	Seek flexible operations, water management actions, and infrastructure solutions	Promote innovative and multi-benefit initiatives

Bay-Delta Policy Objectives

Objective 1: Promote a Sustainable Bay-Delta Within Metropolitan's One Water Approach

Supplies from the Bay-Delta watershed are integral to implementing Metropolitan's One Water Approach, an integrated planning and implementation approach to managing finite water resources for long-term resilience and reliability, meeting both community and ecosystem needs. Bay-Delta supplies are foundational to the One Water approach as they meet demands in Metropolitan's service area ~~(including the SWP Dependent Area)~~ and acts as source water for local supply projects such as water recycling and groundwater basin replenishment.

Objective 2: Support Statewide and Regional Actions that ~~Improve Bay-Delta Sustainability~~ Further the Coequal Goals Established in the Delta Reform Act[1]

Metropolitan supports the coequal goals established in the Delta Reform Act of (1) providing a more reliable water supply for California and (2) protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. Ongoing statewide and regional investments in ecosystem restoration, flood control, water supplies. multi-benefit projects in the Bay-Delta, and upstream watersheds are essential to building and maintaining resilient water supplies from the Bay-Delta. Effective implementation of state policies related to reduced reliance, water use efficiency, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and initiatives such as the governor's Water Resilience Portfolio will be essential. Likewise, additional funding and permitting efficiencies can help expedite regional and local supply development, and projects that supply ecologically beneficial flows in the Bay-Delta or Bay-Delta watershed.

Objective 3: Address the Risks Associated with Climate Change

Climate change is impacting California's water resources: sea levels are rising, snowpack is decreasing, and water temperatures are increasing. Droughts are expected to become more frequent and more severe, and storm intensities are expected to increase. These climate change trends are anticipated to continue, posing a prolonged threat to the Bay-Delta and Metropolitan's water supplies. An integrated federal, state, regional, and local approach to developing and managing water supply programs and projects is critical to managing for the future with climate change impacts that are occurring. As climate conditions and science continue to evolve, Metropolitan supports the use and development of additional analyses, tools, and actions, including actions to reduce emissions consistent with Metropolitan's Climate Action Plan.

[1] As described in Public Resources Code § 29702

Bay-Delta Policy Framework

Policy Area 1: Science and Watershed Management

1A Protect and restore aquatic species and habitats based on best available science

Sustainable and resilient water supplies rely, in part, on the health of the Delta ecosystem. As populations of native aquatic wildlife continue to trend downwards, rigorous and peer reviewed science protects the environment and Metropolitan's water supply by supporting informed decision-making.

Examples include: Metropolitan staff authored papers on topics including Delta Smelt Habitat, Salmon Growth, and Delta Stressors, the Lower Yolo Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, and participation in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program and inter-agency consultations on coordinated long term operations of the State Water and Central Valley Projects.

1B Partner in watershed-wide approaches to develop comprehensive solutions

With much of the state's water supply originating in the mountains, the health and management of the upper watersheds are critically important to California's water quality and water supply.

Examples include: potential partnerships and opportunities in the upper watershed focused on the long-term potential for climate change adaptation (including adjustments for loss of snowpack), reduction in the impacts of variable precipitation patterns on runoff, and improvements in water quality and water temperature.

1C Advance responsible stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta islands

The Delta Islands provide a unique opportunity for research, innovation, and collaboration with other stakeholders to develop sustainable strategies for Delta land use and environmental stewardship. Staff is engaged in specific processes and opportunities for responsible long-term stewardship of Metropolitan's Delta islands properties. Further advancements on Metropolitan's Delta Islands would comport with both the Bay-Delta Policy Framework and the Board's adopted Climate Action Plan.

Examples include: levee enhancements that protect the freshwater pathways to the State Water Project south-Delta pumps, pilot projects and scientific investigations to evaluate strategies for carbon sequestration, floating organic marshes that can support sensitive fish species, sustainable agriculture that halts or reverses subsidence, experiments to improve measurement of water diversions and water use, compensatory mitigation, habitat restoration for native aquatic species, native fish species preservation, and reduction in stressors affecting state and federal listed fish species.

Policy Area 2: Water Supply Reliability and Resilience

2A Protect water supply reliability and ~~water~~ quality while reducing reliance consistent with the Delta Reform Act[2]

Two of the core tenets of Metropolitan's mission statement are to provide reliable and high-quality water supplies to its service area. The Delta is a major pathway for the source of water for most of the state and the sustainability of Delta water supplies is a critical element of Southern California's water reliability. This reliability is protected through science-based regulatory frameworks, long term water supply planning, collaborative partnerships and pursuing water supply infrastructure solutions~~.~~ while reducing reliance on the Delta.

Delta water quality should be protected for public health and managing salinity. Measures that reduce the salinity of Delta supplies will help meet regional salinity objectives of urban and agricultural agencies throughout California. This includes benefits to Metropolitan's service area to enhance management of Southern California groundwater basins and to develop additional recycled water.

> *Examples include: Water supply and quality initiatives including new Delta conveyance, Voluntary Agreements to implement State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality regulations, Delta Regional Monitoring Program, CV-SALTS, and Delta Nutrient Research Plan*

2B Invest in actions that provide seismic and climate resiliency

Earthquakes in the Delta region, sea level rise and subsidence can result in levee failure and saltwater intrusion into the Delta from the San Francisco Bay and the ocean. Changing weather patterns will result in longer periods of drought and more intense storms and storm periods. Resiliency requires continued participation and investment in actions including flood emergency planning, levee improvements, water storage, and water supply management.

> *Examples include: the DWR/USACE Delta Flood Emergency Integration Plan, the Governor's Water Resilience Portfolio, and new storage and conveyance projects.*

2C Seek flexible operations, water management actions, and infrastructure solutions

Current operations of the State Water Project and Central Valley Project facilities are subject to prescriptive flow and other regulatory standards. Metropolitan staff is working with partners to advance technology and monitoring that could be used to develop more effective water project operations that are protective of aquatic wildlife, with the support of new technological capabilities and better real-time information systems.

> *Examples include: Improved atmospheric river and runoff forecasting, forecast-informed reservoir operations, improved fish monitoring, including steelhead, artificial intelligence, modeling of aquatic wildlife behavior, improved rapid genetic testing of salvaged salmonids, and the use of true adaptive management and structured decision-making processes.*

[2] As described in California Water Code § 85021

Policy Area 3: Partnerships and Cost-Effective Investments

3A Maintain and pursue cost-effective financial investments

Completion and maintenance of large multi-benefit water supply projects require partnership and multiple funding sources to be cost-effective. Advancing partnerships and seeking multiple funding sources can offset or reduce expenditures associated with climate change adaptation for water supply and other public benefits, which are instrumental to future Metropolitan water supply reliability.

Examples include: repair of California Aqueduct subsidence, new Delta conveyance, Sites Reservoir, Pure Water and other local and regional projects.

3B Foster broad and inclusive engagement of Delta interests and beneficiaries

The Bay-Delta is a lifeline to multiple entities with diverse interests including tribes, public water agencies, local, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, underserved communities, environmental justice groups and agricultural interests. ~~Engagement can yield new perspectives on Bay-Delta related issues and identify opportunities for collaboration.~~ Metropolitan embraces a proactive approach to seeking and sustaining engagement with all communities to foster new perspectives on Bay-Delta related issues and identify additional opportunities for collaboration.

Examples include: Engaging in the development of a Community Benefits Program for the Delta Conveyance Project, participating in the multi-interest Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Program, opportunities for projects on Metropolitan's Delta Islands, participating in State Water Project Contractors, serving on the Delta Protection Commission Advisory Committee, participating in the Plumas Watershed Forum, and Sites Reservoir Committee and subcommittee engagement.

3C Promote innovative and multi-benefit initiatives

The Delta region is at the intersection of many social, political, environmental and climate related factors. As a result, Delta issues are significantly complex, with a significant degree of uncertainty given the range of physical and biological factors that are involved. Metropolitan recognizes that new technologies and approaches are needed to address current and future challenges in the Bay-Delta.

Examples include: Collaborative and innovative solutions including the use of structured decision making, environmental DNA to detect aquatic species, the Reorienting to Salmon Recovery effort, the Bouldin Island Levee Setback Project, and the Delta Smelt and Native Species Preservation Project.