From:	Amr Shabaik
To:	Chair of the Board; DL-Board Support Team
Subject:	Letter of Concern Re the Placement of Mr. Hagekhalil on Leave
Date:	Monday, July 8, 2024 2:44:58 PM
Attachments:	2024.07.08 LT MWD Board Members.pdf

Dear Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California,

Attached please find a letter from the Council on American Islamic Relations, Los Angeles (CAIR-LA) regarding concerns over the placement of Mr. Adel Hagekhalil, the Metropolitan's first Muslim Arab-American, on administrative leave.

Amr Shabaik | Legal Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations, California
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July 8, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Board of Directors
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
ChairoftheBoard@mwdh2o.com
dl-boardsupportteam@mwdh2o.com

Re: Placement of Mr. Adel Hagekhalil on Administrative Leave

Dear Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California,

I am the Legal Director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Greater Los Angeles area office, one of four offices that make up CAIR California (CAIR-CA). CAIR is America's largest American-Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization, with staff, attorneys, and regional offices nationwide.

I write to you with concerns regarding the recent placement of Mr. Adel Hagekhalil on administrative leave and the surrounding circumstances regarding this decision and the ongoing investigation.

Mr. Hagekhalil is proudly the first Muslim Arab-American General Manager in the Metropolitan's 100 years of history. Unfortunately, Mr. Hagekhalil has alleged that from the beginning, even when competing to be hired as General Manager, he was personally attacked and subjected to discriminatory and racist actions and behaviors from some Board members, who continue to serve on the Board to this day. He alleges that these attacks against him continued even as he worked to address the various challenges posed by his position, including internal turmoil, and the larger climate challenges facing Southern California's water supply. Mr. Hagekhalil has also faced retaliatory complaints and investigations throughout his tenure in an alleged attempt to undermine his position and authority.

Despite the challenges of his position, Mr. Hagekhalil has excelled and garnered the support of many people both inside and outside the Metropolitan. The recent decision to place Mr. Hagekhalil on administrative leave raises concerns given the accomplishments of Mr. Hagekhalil and his ability to build trust with various stakeholders despite the numerous challenges he has faced. The recent placement of Mr. Hagekhalil was allegedly done abruptly and without any semblance of due process. To make matters worse, this confidential personnel matter has now been actively litigated in the public by members of the Board – including public attempts to tie Mr. Hagekhalil to old lawsuits and complaints that pre-dated his tenure. It has also been reported to us that some Board members and leadership have questioned the sincerity of those publicly announcing their support for Mr. Hagekhalil, allegedly going so far as to threaten and reprimand them for their support of the first Muslim Arab-American General Manager of the

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Metropolitan. Such actions and statements unfairly show Mr. Hagekhalil in a negative light and are indicative of a potentially unfair and discriminatory process and investigation into Mr. Hagekhalil.

We are monitoring the situation, and we ask that all allegations of discrimination and harassment against Mr. Hagekhalil be addressed and remedied and that no discrimination or harassment, Islamophobia, anti-Arab sentiment color or influence any of the Board's future decisions on Mr. Hagekhalil. Regardless of his protected categories, Mr. Hagekhalil must be treated with respect, fairness and provided with due process. And because of his status as a Muslim Arab American, the Board must take active steps to ensure that he is not targeted or treated unfairly because of his protected categories.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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