THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

LEGISLATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

August 17, 2026

Chair Lewitt called the meeting to order at 11:32 a.m.

Members present: Directors Ackerman (teleconference posted location), Camacho, Crane, Dennstedt (teleconference posted location), Fellow, Jay, Jung (teleconference posted location, entered after rollcall), Lewitt, Paule, Shepherd Romey (teleconference posted location), and Sutley.

Members absent: Directors Gray, Kassakhian, Katz, and Ramos

Other Board Members present: Directors Barrera, Bryant, Crawford, Cordero, Denham, Erdman, Faessel, Fong-Sakai, Garza, Miller, Ortega, Pakala, and Seckel

Committee Staff present: Deshmukh, Hudson, Rubin, Salgado, Scully, Stites, and Zinke.

1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION

1. Paulina Alvarez, Orange County Business Council, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
2. Valerie Berkeley, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
3. Anthony Angelini, Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke on item 9-5 in support of item Proposition 45
4. Max Gomberg, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, spoke regarding AB 2218
5. Tanya Golisarian, State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, spoke on item 9-5 in opposition to Proposition 45
6. Chris Thorne, San Diego Business Chamber, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
7. Celeste Wilson, Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
8. Kyle Griffin, Yes on Proposition 45 campaign, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
9. Adam Ruiz, representing Tri-County Chamber Alliance, Southwest California Legislative Council, Inland Empire Chamber Alliance, Murrieta Wildomar Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
10. Gabriel Tolson, No on Prop 45 Campaign, spoke on item 9-5 in opposition of Proposition 45

11. Carlos Rodriquez, Building Industry Association of Southern California, spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
12. Michaela Gibson, Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA), spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45
13. Chris Hannon, State Building Construction Trades Council of California, spoke on item 9-5 in opposition to Proposition 45
14. Chris Wilson, Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed), spoke on item 9-5 in support of Proposition 45

Director Jung entered the meeting.

2. COMMITTEE ACTION (ONLY)

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Legislation and Communications Committee for July 13, 2026.

Director Fellow made a motion, seconded by Director Crane, to approve the consent calendar consisting of item 2A.

Ayes:	Directors Ackerman, Camacho, Crane, Dennstedt, Fellow, Jay, Lewitt, Paule, Shepherd Romey, and Sutley
Noes:	None
Abstentions:	None
Absent:	Directors Gray, Jung, Kassakhian, Katz, and Ramos

The motion for item 2A passed by a vote of 10 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstain, and 5 absent.

3. COMMITTEE ITEMS (FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

4. COMMITTEE ITEMS (ACTION FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

None

5.COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION)

9-4 Subject: Permissible Activities Related to Ballot Measures

Presented by: Cathy Stites – Principal Deputy General Counsel

Ms. Stites provided an overview of permissible activities related to ballot measures, emphasizing that public agencies may provide fair, accurate, and impartial information but may not use public funds or resources to advocate for or against a measure. She also reviewed permissible and prohibited activities, potential liabilities, and guidelines for personal political activities.

The following director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Sutley

Staff responded to the director's questions and comments.

Director Jung left the meeting.

9-5 Subject: Report on Proposition 45: Building an Affordable California Initiative

Presented by: Jay Jefferson, II – Executive Legislative Representative

Mr. Jefferson provided an overview of Proposition 45, the "Building an Affordable California Act," which seeks to streamline the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for essential projects through expedited environmental review, permitting timelines, and judicial review. He also highlighted potential impacts to Metropolitan, including shortened review periods and limitations that could affect its ability to protect water supplies and critical infrastructure.

The following directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Paule
2. Raymond
3. Lewitt
4. Sutley
5. Garza
6. Fong-Sakai
7. Camacho
8. Ortega
9. Cordero

Staff responded to the directors' questions and comments.

9-6 Subject: Discussion on Metropolitan's Centennial Recognition

Presented by: Carolyn Schaffer – External Affairs Group Manager

Ms. Schaffer provided an overview of Metropolitan's plans for its Centennial recognition in 2028, including preliminary ideas to commemorate the agency's history and priorities and approved funding. She presented the opportunity to participate in the 2028 Rose Parade as a signature Centennial event, along with associated costs, outreach benefits, and sponsorship considerations. Staff requested Board input and direction on proposed activities and funding approaches. The committee did not have consensus on pursuing the Rose Parade float and requested staff consider other options.

The following directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega
2. Fellow
3. Crane
4. Lewitt
5. Garza
6. Dennstedt
7. Bryant
8. Cordero

Staff responded to the directors' questions and comments.

6. COMMITTEE ITEMS (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Subject: Update on Inspection Trips

Presented by: Christine Frey – Inspection Trips Team Manager

Ms. Frey provided an overview of Metropolitan's Inspection Trip Program, including its history, purpose, and educational value. Updates include enhanced educational objectives and itineraries, new resources for member agencies, and continued alignment of trips with Metropolitan's priorities. Ms. Frey also reviewed applicable travel and Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) reporting requirements and emphasized opportunities to maximize the educational value of future inspection trips.

The following director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega

Staff responded to the Chair's questions and comments.

b. Subject Public Confidence in Tap Water: Focus Group Insights

Presented by: Jannine Rojo, Principal Public Affairs Representative
Adam Probolsky, Probolsky Research

Ms. Rojo and Mr. Probolsky provided an overview of focus group research on public confidence in tap water, highlighting key findings related to trust, knowledge gaps, transparency, and public understanding of the region's water system. They discussed opportunities to strengthen confidence through clearer communications, greater transparency, and public education, with next steps including a region-wide survey and refinement of the "Can't Beat the Tap" campaign.

The following directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega
2. Garza

Staff responded to the directors' questions and comments.

c. Subject: Report on Activities from Sacramento

Presented by: Jay Jefferson, II, Executive Legislative Representative

Mr. Jefferson provided an overview of activities from Sacramento and the legislative session, including legislation signed into law (AB 35 and SB 935) and updates related to the State Water Project (SB 872 and SB 952), affordability (AB 2739 and SB 1125), wildfire response (SB 1153), invasive mussels (AB 1772, AB 1894, and AB 2032), and tribal communities (AB 1881, AB 2218, and SB 1326).

The following director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Fellow

Staff responded to the director's questions and comments.

d. Subject: Quarterly Federal and State Regulatory Update

Presented by: Shradha Upadhayay, Operational Regulatory Services Team Manager

Ms. Upadhayay provided an overview of quarterly state and federal regulatory developments that may impact Metropolitan, including manganese notification and response levels, Lead and Copper Rule Improvements, Advanced Clean Fleets, invasive mussels regulations, PFAS drinking water rules, the Sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, and proposed unmanned aircraft flight restrictions.

The following director provided comments or asked questions:

1. Seckel

Staff responded to the director's questions and comments.

7. MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

a. Subject: External Affairs Activities

Presented by: Dee Zinke – Assistant General Manager, External Affairs

Ms. Zinke deferred her report.

8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

None

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Director Paule requested that Committee Item 9-5 be brought back to the Committee in September for consideration as an action item.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Jay Lewitt
Chair