THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Action

- **Board of Directors**
  One Water and Adaptation Committee (OWA)

9/15/2026 Board Meeting

8-4

Subject

Amend the Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code to incorporate Board direction on Climate Action and Adaptation; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

Following last month's information item, this action item proposes amendments to Metropolitan's Administrative Code consistent with Board direction on climate matters. The amendments would add new duties and functions to oversight by the OWA Committee over climate adaptation planning and the Climate Action Plan (CAP) (including carbon neutrality goal), as well as a new board policy statement under Division IV, Water Service Policies, Chapter 2, Regional Water Management, codifying climate adaptation as a core policy directive.

These changes build directly on prior board actions, including the 2022 adoption of the CAP, the development and 2025 approval of the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water Implementation Strategy, consistent positions on climate matters in the Board's legislative principles, as well as other program and planning activities. Based on imminent climate impacts and the future uncertainty of our imported and regional water supplies, Board direction has consistently emphasized the need to integrate climate considerations in planning, operations, and investment decisions.

These Administrative Code updates are also important context to other policy provisions in the Administrative Code that address reliability, water planning and conservation.

The proposed amendments are to Division II (Procedures Pertaining to Board, Committees, and Directors) Chapter 4, Article 9 and to Division IV (Water Service Policies) Chapter 2.

Proposed Action(s)/Recommendation(s) and Options

Staff Recommendation: Option #1

Option #1

Amend the Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code to incorporate Board direction on Climate Action and Adaptation.

Fiscal Impact: None
Business Analysis: None

Option #2

Do not amend the Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code to incorporate Board direction on Climate Action and Adaptation.

Fiscal Impact: None
Business Analysis: None

Alternatives Considered

Staff worked through several iterations of the proposed amendments and simplified the content based on feedback from the Board, member agencies, and Metropolitan staff. Attached are both the original proposal from May 2026 (**Attachment 2**) and the revised version, which is staff's recommendation for approval (**Attachment 1**). The proposed content focuses on integrating climate risk reduction strategies and adaptive management into Metropolitan's planning and operations.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

By Minute Item 52776, dated April 12, 2022, the Board adopted the 2020 Integrated Water Resources Plan Needs Assessment.

By Minute Item 52823, dated May 10, 2022, the Board adopted the 2022 Climate Action Plan with a goal of carbon neutrality by 2045.

By Minute Item 52946, dated August 15, 2022, the Board adopted a resolution affirming Metropolitan's call to action and commitment to regional reliability for all member agencies.

By Minute Item 53381, dated September 12, 2023, the Board approved the use of Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 8.5 for planning purposes in the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water.

By Minute Item 53630, dated May 14, 2024, the Board concurred with the CAMP4W: Draft Year One Progress Report and Next Steps, with the understanding that staff would provide the Board updated data and other information before consideration and approval of any CAMP4W projects.

By Minute Item 53436, dated April 8, 2025, the Board approved the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water Five-year Implementation Strategy.

Related Board Action(s)/Future Action(s)

Not applicable

Summary of Outreach Completed

Metropolitan staff conducted extensive outreach with member agencies and brought this item to the One Water and Adaptation Committee in August 2026.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves organizational, maintenance, or administrative activities; personnel-related actions; and/or general policy and procedure making that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (Public Resources Code Section 21065; State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2) and (5).)

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Details and Background

Background

The Board has provided consistent direction on climate matters through the CAP (adopted 2022, with a goal of carbon neutrality by 2045) and the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W), including its iterative policy directives and the Five-Year Implementation Strategy approved in April 2025, as well as through its legislative policies and principles, Capital Improvement Plan, and resource planning efforts. These frameworks address both the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to immediate impacts (actions in response to drought, fire, flood, sea level rise, extreme heat, and compounding impacts).

However, this recognition remains dispersed across separate sources rather than consolidated within a clear guiding policy. Incorporating climate adaptation and action directives into the Administrative Code would consolidate these previously approved commitments into one central policy statement, thereby establishing a clear and consistent reference point for staff, member agencies, and the public regarding the District's approach to climate considerations. Such consolidation helps ensure that future planning, budgetary, and operational decisions are informed uniformly and reliably by the Board's established climate policy direction, reducing the potential for inconsistent interpretation and reinforcing institutional accountability and follow-through. Recommended changes also clarify which Board Committee hears and considers items on climate matters, providing direction to staff.

Metropolitan Water District's Administrative Code currently includes provisions governing water reliability, growth planning, conservation, local supply development, and integrated resource planning, yet lacks explicit directives addressing climate adaptation and action. The Code's existing provisions on supply reliability and long-term planning could be interpreted as assuming a relatively stable climate baseline, rather than experienced and accelerating changes in snowpack, precipitation patterns, sea level rise, and extreme weather events that are reshaping underlying planning assumptions.

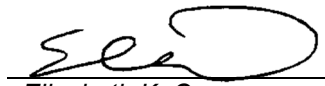
Given current and anticipated changes in the Colorado River Basin hydrology and management, as well as increasing challenges within the State Water Project, it is important that policy direction and commitments clearly take into account the reality of climate change. Codifying climate adaptation and action as an explicit policy directive would provide essential context for existing Code provisions, ensuring that reliability planning, conservation and local supply efforts and growth expectations are read and implemented through a climate-informed lens.

Amending the Administrative Code also codifies an agency-wide directive to integrate climate risk into capital investment, operations, and long-term contracts, and would signal institutional accountability to member agencies, regulators, and the public that the District is proactively managing climate risk.

The proposed changes would add express language to reflect ongoing oversight by the OWA Committee over Climate Action and Adaptation, and add the following policy statement to the Water Services Policies:

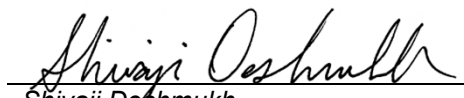
It shall be the policy of the District to consider climate risks and integrate climate adaptation and risk reduction strategies into its programs, policies, planning, and operations. The District will utilize the best available climate science and real-world conditions to evaluate risks and proposed investments to meet regional water needs.

The Board has previously approved policy direction in the area of climate adaptation, and this action seeks to codify that direction. The revisions fit seamlessly with existing language on water supply reliability, local resources, conservation, and regional water management.



9/8/2026

Elizabeth K. Crosson *Date*
Chief Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office



9/8/2026

Shivaji Deshmukh *Date*
General Manager

Attachment 1 – The Administrative Code of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (with changes marked)

Attachment 2 – The Administrative Code of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (with changes marked – May 2026)

Ref# sri12710588

ATTACHMENT 1

Proposed Metropolitan Administrative Code Amendments

Division II

PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO BOARD COMMITTEES AND DIRECTORS

Chapter 4

Article 9

§ 2481. Duties and Functions [One Water and Adaptation Committee]

The OWA Committee shall have oversight over the planning, prioritization, and funding of any current or future regional demand management or any regional or local supply projects within the Metropolitan service area receiving funding from Metropolitan, such as the Regional Recycling Project and local projects funded through Metropolitan's Local Resources Program. The committee shall review and consider:

(a) Establishing policies and programs regarding climate action and adaptation, water conservation and reuse, watershed management, storm water capture and management, recycling, sustainable groundwater management and protection, underground storage, and use thereof;
(b) Seawater desalination, recycling and reuse, and brackish water issues in Metropolitan's service area, and use thereof;
(c) Overseeing development and implementation of Metropolitan's Local Resources Program and Conservation Program and other efforts to meet local supply, climate adaptation, and water use efficiency goals;
(d) The effect of existing and proposed federal, state and local environmental, water supply and water management statutes and regulations on supplies produced or that may be produced within the District's region;
(e) Recommendations for comprehensive solutions to regional supply problems with the intent to increase water reliability, cost effectiveness, and environmental benefit;
(f) Expanding Metropolitan's understanding of regional water supply issues by inviting informational presentations and feedback from external representatives;
(g) Recommendations to the Board on policies and programs that will strengthen relationships with other agencies in furthering Metropolitan's objectives for increased regional self-reliance and greater water use efficiency;
(h) Creating opportunities for collaboration to advance the development of local supplies and achieving greater water use efficiency;
(i) Coordinating and aligning new water supplies, local resources projects and programs, and investments with other Metropolitan strategic priorities and initiatives;
(j) Developing criteria for the prioritization of investments in new water supplies;
(k) Policies, sources, and means of importing and distributing water, transferring water, and wheeling water as required by the District;
(l) Policies and procedures regarding the delivery and exchange of water for various uses;

(m) Metropolitan Water Supply and Climate Adaptation Planning including the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water, the Integrated Resources Planning Process and completion of the Urban Water Management Plan and related policies; ~~and~~

(n) Environmental compliance and requirements, and informing the technical aspects and science factors in providing comments to regulatory agencies and legislation affecting the regulation of water supply operational facilities and the conditions that they operate under; and

(o) Overseeing the development and implementation of Metropolitan's Climate Action Plan and related initiatives to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

Division IV

WATER SERVICE POLICIES

Chapter 2

§ 4212. Climate Adaptation.

It shall be the policy of the District to consider climate risks and integrate climate adaptation and risk reduction strategies into its programs, policies, planning, and operations. The District will utilize the best available climate science and real-world conditions to evaluate risks and proposed investments to meet regional water needs.

ATTACHMENT 2

Proposed Metropolitan Administrative Code Amendments

Division II

PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO BOARD, COMMITTEES AND DIRECTORS

Chapter 4

Article 9

§ 2481. Duties and Functions. [One Water and Adaptation Committee]

The OWA Committee shall have oversight over the planning, prioritization, and funding of any current or future regional demand management or any regional or local supply projects within the Metropolitan service area receiving funding from Metropolitan, such as ~~the Regional Recycling Project~~ Pure Water Southern California and local projects funded through Metropolitan's Local Resources Program. The committee shall review and consider:

(a) Establishing policies and programs regarding climate action and adaptation, water conservation and reuse, watershed management, storm water capture and management, recycling, sustainable groundwater management and protection, underground storage, and use thereof;
(b) Seawater desalination, recycling and reuse, and brackish water issues in Metropolitan's service area, and use thereof;
(c) Overseeing development and implementation of Metropolitan's Local Resources Program and Conservation Program and other efforts to meet local supply, climate adaptation, and water use efficiency goals;
(d) The effect of existing and proposed federal, state and local environmental, water supply and water management statutes and regulations on supplies produced or that may be produced within the District's region;
(e) Recommendations for comprehensive solutions to regional supply problems with the intent to increase water reliability, cost effectiveness, and environmental benefit;
(f) Expanding Metropolitan's understanding of regional water supply issues by inviting informational presentations and feedback from external representatives;
(g) Recommendations to the Board on policies and programs that will strengthen relationships with other agencies in furthering Metropolitan's objectives for increased regional self-reliance and greater water use efficiency;
(h) Creating opportunities for collaboration to advance the development of local supplies and achieving greater water use efficiency;
(i) Coordinating and aligning new water supplies, local resources projects and programs, and investments with other Metropolitan strategic priorities and initiatives;
(j) Developing criteria for the prioritization of investments in new water supplies;
(k) Policies, sources, and means of importing and distributing water, transferring water, and wheeling water as required by the District;
(l) Policies and procedures regarding the delivery and exchange of water for various uses;

(m) Metropolitan Water Supply and Climate Adaptation Planning including the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water, the Integrated Resources Planning ~~Process~~ Needs Assessment and completion of the Urban Water Management Plan and related policies; ~~and~~

(n) Environmental compliance and requirements, and informing the technical aspects and science factors in providing comments to regulatory agencies and legislation affecting the regulation of water supply operational facilities and the conditions that they operate under;

(o) Climate Adaptation and Integrated Resources scenario planning inputs and assumptions and Climate Vulnerability and Risk Assessments related to drought, fire, flood, sea level rise, extreme heat as well as compounding and cascading climate impacts; and

(p) Overseeing the development and implementation of Metropolitan's Climate Action Plan and related initiatives to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

Division IV

WATER SERVICE POLICIES

Chapter 2

§ 4212. Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water.

It is the policy of Metropolitan to utilize its Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W), an iterative comprehensive set of policy directives and decision-making tools, to ensure the Board of Directors is equipped to consider climate risks to water supplies, water quality, infrastructure, operations, workforce, public health, and financial sustainability in its deliberations and investment decisions. CAMP4W provides a roadmap to guide future investments and decision-making as we confront our new climate reality in the years and decades ahead.

§ 4213. Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water Implementation Strategy.

It is the policy of Metropolitan to implement the Board's Climate Adaptation Master Plan (CAMP4W) through analyzing planned programs and projects based on specific criteria that ensure consideration of climate change impacts and climate vulnerabilities, as set forth in the iterative CAMP4W, throughout Metropolitan activities and to systemically institutionalize climate adaptation practices and policies to:

1) Institute the consideration of climate change impacts and climate vulnerabilities throughout Metropolitan activities.
2) Enhance resource planning with the integration of climate and financial information.
3) Increase the frequency of updates to resource needs and the factors that drive them.
4) Set targets to guide the development of potential projects and programs to increase climate resilience and ensure continued reliability.
5) Strengthen decision-making on project and program investments through greater transparency and more holistic and uniform analyses.
6) Establish an adaptive management approach to better manage uncertainty and remain responsive to evolving conditions.