THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Bay-Delta Resources

- **Bay-Delta Management Report**

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for August 15, 2026 – September 15, 2026.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect Our Interests

Delta Conveyance Project

In April 2026, the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) adopted the draft Delta Conveyance Project written determination after hearing ten appeals of the California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) certification of consistency with the Delta Plan. Of the ten appeals filed, eight were denied, and two issues were remanded to DWR. DWR submitted a revised certification of consistency on July 13, 2026, addressing golden mussel mitigation and potential land use conflicts with a proposed water recycling project. Three appeals were filed with the Council, which will hold a hearing on October 15, 2026, with a written determination expected within 60 days.

Delta Conveyance-related Joint Powers Authority

At its August 20, 2026, meeting, the Delta Conveyance Design and Construction Authority (DCA) board unanimously appointed Metropolitan's Vice Chair, Juan Garza, as board president for fiscal years 2026/27 and 2027/28. The DCA board will nominate and appoint a vice president at its next meeting on October 15. Director Adnan Anabtawi (Mojave Water Agency) was appointed as secretary for the next two-year term, and Metropolitan's Katano Kasaine was reappointed as treasurer.

The DCA board approved a five-year, not-to-exceed $205.7 million agreement with AECOM for programmatic geotechnical and fieldwork services, to be administered through task orders and annual appropriations.

Community outreach staff provided an update on the Community Benefits Program, noting seven signed community benefits agreements and two additional agreements in development. These agreements support efforts ranging from agricultural education and environmental literacy to sandhill crane conservation and local water and emergency response infrastructure improvements, contingent on the Delta Conveyance Project moving forward.

Sites Reservoir

The California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issued a revised draft water right decision and draft permit for the Sites Reservoir Project (project) on September 3. Metropolitan submitted comments on the March 2026 original draft, which contained terms that could have reduced project diversions and terms that could have imposed conditions on the State Water Project. The revised draft permit, scheduled for consideration in early November, reflects several improvements, including the removal of a 55 percent unimpaired flow requirement and relaxed diversion criteria. Staff is currently reviewing the updated permit to evaluate the extent of these

changes. The forthcoming 2026 Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan may further influence the project's anticipated yield.

On September 10, 2026, the SWRCB issued a final water quality certification for the project, satisfying one of the major requirements for construction under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. This certification ensures compliance with state water quality standards and is separate from the water right permit, which focuses on diversion and use of water.

Advance Science and Multi-Benefit Solutions That Improve the Sustainability of the Delta and Inform Regulation

Metropolitan staff has published their work with UC Davis on the Pilot Pond Culture studies. The studies verified the viability of ponds as aquaculture tools for culturing Delta smelt. There was greater than 95 percent average survival and good growth. Metropolitan staff has published work with Southern Illinois University, UC Davis, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service evaluating the hazard risks of contaminants in the Sacramento River Deepwater Ship Channel. The channel was considered Delta smelt habitat until recently was one of the few places they were detected in routine fish monitoring. Recent studies on the water, sediment, and fish tissue suggest significant hazards for fish in the channel. Legacy pesticides were the most prevalent, with the sediment exhibiting the highest exposure risk.

The Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project planning phase was selected as one of the winners of the 2026 Outstanding Environmental Project Awards by the Friends of the San Francisco Estuary board. The award will be presented at the 2026 Bay-Delta Science Conference, September 28-30, at the Sacramento Convention Center.

Metropolitan staff held an internal kickoff meeting for the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project on August 24. On August 26, Metropolitan's construction contractor, Wood Brothers, took possession of the tule seed stock previously collected on Webb Tract for future propagation. Wood Brothers submitted their baseline schedule for this project on September 8.