THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Committee Item
INFORMATION

Ethics Committee

10/12/2026 Committee Meeting

6b

Subject

Ethics Office Overview Part II

Background

Item 6b provides a brief summary of the Ethics Office's mission, core programs, and investigation statistics. This item is a continuation of the April 14, 2026 Ethics Office Overview presentation.

Applicable Policy

Metropolitan Water District Act and Administrative Code provisions related to the Ethics Office's duties and authorities are provided below.

Metropolitan Water District Act

Sec. 126.7 [Establishment of Office of Ethics; Adoption of rules and penalties for Violations]

(a) The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California shall establish and operate an Office of Ethics and adopt rules relating to internal disclosure, lobbying, conflicts of interest, contracts, campaign contributions, and ethics for application to its board members, officers, and employees consistent with the intent and spirit of the laws and regulations of the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission, the Fair Political Practices Commission, and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

(b) The rules described in subdivision (a) shall address, and seek to avoid potential ethical abuses relating to, all of the following matters:

(1) The direct and indirect business relationships between board members, contractors, and vendors, and between board members and officers or employees of member public agencies.

(2) The solicitation of campaign contributions by board members, officers, or employees and the receipt of contributions from bidders, contractors, or subcontractors.

(3) Public notice and approval procedures for contracts of fifty thousand dollars ($50,000) or more.

(c) (1) The office shall operate as an independent entity that is not subject to political influence and shall be staffed with professional, qualified persons.

(2) The office shall adopt the rules described in subdivision (a) for approval by the board, educate the board, staff, contractors, and subcontractors concerning those rules, and shall investigate complaints concerning the violation of those rules.

(3) The office shall adopt procedures for protecting the confidentiality of sources, the job security of "whistle blowers," and due process rights of the accused.

(d) Subject to paragraph (3) of subdivision (c), the office shall make available to the public the results of the investigation that it undertakes.

(e) The office shall propose, and the board shall adopt, a schedule of penalties for violations of the rules described in subdivision (a) by board members, officers, staff, or contractors.

(f) For any association of individuals or entities that includes board members, officers, or employees of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California or of a member public agency of that district that is known by a name other than the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California or the name of a member public agency of the district, the rules of ethics shall prohibit any association structure or identification that is likely to mislead the public as to the association's true identity, its source of funding, or its purpose.

(g) Nothing in this section prohibits the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, a member public agency of that district, or a board member, officer, or employee of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California or of a member public agency of the district, from participating in, or, providing funding in a clearly identifiable way for, an association formed for the purpose of undertaking legitimate activities, including, but not limited to, advocating on behalf of that association before a local agency, the Legislature, or the United States Congress.

Added by Stats. 1999, ch. 415

Metropolitan Administrative Code section 6470

Article 5

ETHICS OFFICER

Sec.
6470. Powers and Duties
6471. Authority to Obtain Professional Services
6472. Reports to Ethics Committee
6473. Principal Assistant Ethics Officer

§ 6470. Powers and Duties.

The powers and duties of the Ethics Officer shall be as follows:

(a) The Ethics Officer shall report to the Board, through the Ethics Committee.

(b) The Ethics Officer shall oversee an Ethics Office staffed with professional, qualified persons.

(c) The Ethics Officer shall be free from political interference in fulfilling the responsibilities detailed in this article and in Division VII.

(d) The Ethics Officer shall have sole authority to interpret Metropolitan's ethics rules.

(e) The Ethics Officer shall propose amendments to the Administrative Code to the Ethics Committee for approval and adoption by the Board, relating to:

(1) Regulation of lobbying activities;

(2) Conflicts of interest and financial disclosure;

(3) Public notice and approval procedures for contracts of $50,000 or more;

(4) Disclosure of campaign contributions related to potential conflicts of interest; and

(5) Such other ethics rules for application to board members, officers, employees, lobbyists, lobbying firms, and contractors as deemed appropriate.

(f) The Ethics Officer shall educate, train, provide advice and seek compliance from board members, officers, applicable employees, lobbyist, lobbying firms, and Metropolitan contractors and subcontractors concerning:

(1) The rules prescribed in Division VII;

(2) The Political Reform Act of 1974, as amended and applicable regulations;

(3) The conflict of interest rules of Government Code section 1090.

(g) The Ethics Officer shall investigate potential violations of ethics rules in Division VII by board members, officers, applicable staff, lobbyists, lobbying firms, and contractors consistent with the rules specified in Division VII. The Ethics Officer shall prepare status reports of pending investigations on a bi-monthly basis. The reports shall include the general nature and status of the investigation, how long the investigation has been pending, when the investigation is expected to be completed and, when completed, the resolution of the investigation.

(h) The Ethics Officer shall be the filing officer on behalf of the District to receive and file Statements of Economic Interest pursuant to the California Government Code and Section 7501 of this Administrative Code.

(i) The Ethics Officer shall have the authority to confer with the Chair of the Board and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethics Committee for the purpose of seeking advice and feedback on any policy and operational matters, or feedback on investigative matters, subject to the confidentiality requirements in section 7412 of the Administrative Code.

(j) The Ethics Officer shall have the authority to obtain, and have unrestricted access to all functions, documents, records, property, personnel and other information requested as part of an Ethics Office complaint or investigation without waiving any privileges that may apply.

M. I. 45285 - April 8, 2003; paragraph (e) deleted by M. I. 46338 - August 16, 2005; paragraph (e) added by M.I. 49648 - January 14, 2014; amended paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d), added paragraphs (e), (f) and (g), and renumbered former paragraph (e) to paragraph (h) and amended same by M.I. 51391 - November 6, 2018; amended paragraphs (e), (f), (g), and (h), and added new paragraph (i) by M.I. 52574 - November 9, 2021; amended paragraphs (c), (d). (g), and (i), and added new paragraph (j) by M.I. 52941- August 16, 2022; amended paragraphs (a), (c), (e) and (i) by M.I. 53064 – December 13, 2022; amended paragraphs (a), (e), and (i) by M.I. 53408 - March 11, 2025; amend paragraphs (a), (e), (e)(4), and (i) by M.I. 54419 – March 10, 2026.