Community and Workplace Culture Committee

Approve recommendations to the Legislation and Communications Committee regarding Legislative Priorities and Principles for Disadvantaged Communities

Item 8-9

October 12, 2026

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Deputy Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer

Item 8-9

Approve recommendations to the Legislation and Communications Committee regarding Legislative Priorities for Disadvantaged Communities

Subject

Approve recommendations to the Legislation and Communications Committee regarding Legislative and Regulatory Priorities for Disadvantaged Communities

Purpose

Recommend legislative priorities affecting underserved communities to the Legislation and Communications Committee for the 2027 Legislative Priorities and Principles

Recommendation and Fiscal Impact

Option l; no fiscal impact

Overview

Legislative Priorities for Underserved Communities

- Metropolitan Member Agency Panel Discussion
- Purpose & Process of Annual Legislative Priorities & Principles
- Current Legislative Priorities/Principles
- Draft Policy Principles for Consideration
- Committee Discussion

Member Agency Panel Discussion: Common Challenges

- **Water Quality and Building Trust in Tap Water**
  - May be related to residential plumbing quality/age
  - Secondary water quality issues (taste/odor)
  - Could include a cultural component
- **Water Affordability**
  - Community, system, and household levels
  - Particularly impactful for low-income households and residents in multifamily housing
  - Gradual, manageable rate increases (avoid rate shock)
  - Increase awareness of existing customer support programs
- **Capacity Constraints**
  - Small or resource-constrained agencies may not be able to access, apply, and administer grants and other administrative support programs, including annexation

Member Agency Panel Discussion: Common Solutions

- **Shared Service Model & Regional Collaboration**
  - Regional conservation and other programming
  - Sharing technical, financial, and managerial expertise
  - Member Agency Administered Program (MAAP)
- **Communication “We cannot overcommunicate.”**
  - Raising awareness of existing resources and processes
  - Raising awareness of customer support programs
- **Resilience “Resilience is Affordability”**
  - Expand access to policy and funding sources (bonds, grants, etc) to support system resiliency

Purpose & Process of LPP

Annual Collaborative Process

- Provide Board guidance & direction on anticipated legislative/regulatory issues within Metropolitan's scope
- Staff seek & incorporate feedback and input
- Express Metropolitan legislative principles for state and federal advocacy
- Identify Metropolitan & regional priorities and any Metropolitan-sponsored legislative initiative(s)
- After Board adoption (December), posted publicly on website

Legislative Priorities & Principles (2026)

Current, relevant adopted principles

- Section I.A. – Drinking Water: Water Quality & Treatment
- Section I.B. – Drinking Water: Water Governance, Affordability, and Funding
- Section V.A. – Infrastructure
- Section VI.A. – Sustainability, Resiliency and Innovation: Climate Resiliency

Draft Policy Principles for Consideration

	LPP Section		Title	New/Revised Draft Policy Principle
1.	Drinking Water, Water Governance, Affordability and Funding	New	Address financing barriers to allow equitable access to funding and technical assistance	Improve access to state, federal, and regional funding programs for disadvantaged communities and resource-constrained water systems by reducing administrative and cash flow barriers to developing and accessing grants and provide technical assistance to help access funds and address challenges.
2.	Drinking Water, Water Governance, Affordability and Funding	New	Fund connection of disadvantaged/underserved communities	Reduce financial barriers to connecting disadvantaged communities to safe and reliable water systems, where such connections are feasible and supported by the affected water systems.
3.	Infrastructure	Edit	Rehabilitation of aging infrastructure funding	Initiate, expedite, and defray the costs of planning, financing, constructing, repairing, and rehabilitating water and power infrastructure projects, including but not limited to general obligation bonds, tax-exempt municipal bonds, grants, low-interest loans, and direct appropriations. Ensure equitable cost-sharing of water and power infrastructure projects and promote funding criteria that recognize water affordability and the needs of disadvantaged communities.
4.	Drinking Water, Water Quality and Treatment	New	Support transparency of water quality in bottled drinking water	Support transparency and consumer access to comparable information regarding the water quality and regulatory standards of public drinking water and commercially bottled water to help consumers make informed drinking water choices.

Board Options

Option #1:

Approve recommendations to the Legislation and Communications Committee regarding Legislative and Regulatory Priorities for Disadvantaged Communities

Option #2:

Do not approve recommendations to the Legislation and Communications (LEG) Committee regarding Legislative and Regulatory Priorities for Disadvantaged Communities

Board Options

Staff Recommendation

- Option #1

Questions

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
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