

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Agenda

The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

Special Joint Meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors - Final

January 29, 2025

9:00 AM

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 Meeting Schedule
09:00 a.m. Sp.Joint Exec and BOD
11:00 a.m. Break
11:30 a.m. LTRPPBM

Agendas, live streaming, meeting schedules, and other board materials are available here: <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. Written public comments received by 5:00 p.m. the business days before the meeting is scheduled will be posted under the Submitted Items and Responses tab available here: <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>.

If you have technical difficulties with the live streaming page, a listen-only phone line is available at 1-877-853-5257; enter meeting ID: 891 1613 4145.

Members of the public may present their comments to the Board on matters within their jurisdiction as listed on the agenda via in-person or teleconference. To participate via teleconference 1-833-548-0276 and enter meeting ID: 815 2066 4276 or to join by computer [click here](#).

MWD Headquarters Building • 700 N. Alameda Street • Los Angeles, CA 90012

Teleconference Locations:

Allendale Ins Agency • 337 W Foothill Boulevard • Glendora, CA 91740

San Diego County Water Authority • 4677 Overland Avenue • San Diego, CA 92123

1005 South Cardiff Street • Anaheim, CA 92806

25 Via La Selva • Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Santa Ana City Hall • 20 Civic Center Plaza • Santa Ana, CA 92701

30378 Canyon Trail Court • Menifee, CA 92584

City Hall • 303 W. Commonwealth Avenue • Fullerton, CA 92832

Hilton Palm Springs • 400 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way • Palm Springs, CA 92262

3024 Fairview Drive • Vista, CA 92084

Cedars Sinai Medical Center • 8700 Beverly Blvd • Los Angeles, CA 90048

3008 W. 82nd Place • Inglewood, CA 90305

* The Metropolitan Water District's meeting of this Committee is noticed as a joint committee meeting with the Board of Directors for the purpose of compliance with the Brown Act. Members of the Board who are not assigned to this Committee may participate as members of the Board, whether or not a quorum of the Board is present. In order to preserve the function of the committee as advisory to the Board, members of the Board who are not assigned to this Committee will not vote on matters before this Committee.

1. Call to Order

2. **Roll Call**
3. **Determination of a Quorum**
4. **Opportunity for members of the public to address the Board limited to the items listed on the agenda. (As required by Gov. Code Section 54954.3(a))**

SPECIAL EXECUTIVE AND BOARD ITEMS

5. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

- a. Review and report on five completed investigations involving the General Manager, which include allegations of Equal Employment Opportunity policy and Ethics Policy violations by the General Manager [Public employee performance evaluation: General Manager, to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957] [21-4276](#)
- b. Report on two claims presented involving the General Manager and a pending investigation regarding one of the claims [Conference with legal counsel — anticipated litigation; based on existing facts and circumstances of receipt of claims pursuant to the Government Claims Act (Gov. Code Section 910 et seq.) on behalf of two individuals threatening litigation, there is significant exposure to litigation against Metropolitan; two potential cases; to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)] [21-4277](#)

6. **ACTION ITEMS**

- a. Consider action regarding General Manager's paid administrative leave status [Public employee performance evaluation: General Manager, to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957] [21-4278](#)
- b. General Manager Performance Evaluation [Public employee performance evaluation: General Manager, to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957] [21-4279](#)
- c. Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release [To be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957] [21-4280](#)

- d. Consider potential settlement terms; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA [Conference with legal counsel regarding anticipated litigation based on existing facts and circumstances, including receipt of a correspondence threatening litigation, there is significant exposure to litigation against Metropolitan: one potential case; to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)] [21-4282](#)

Attachments: [01292025 Sp JT Exec and BOD 6d Letter](#)

- e. Ratification of separation agreement with the General Manager; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA [21-4283](#)
- f. Public Employee Appointment for General Manager [To be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957] [21-4281](#)

7. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

NONE

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9. ADJOURNMENT

NOTE: This committee reviews items and makes a recommendation for final action to the full Board of Directors. Final action will be taken by the Board of Directors. Committee agendas may be obtained on Metropolitan's Web site <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. This committee will not take any final action that is binding on the Board, even when a quorum of the Board is present.

Writings relating to open session agenda items distributed to Directors less than 72 hours prior to a regular meeting are available for public inspection at Metropolitan's Headquarters Building and on Metropolitan's Web site <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Requests for a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to attend or participate in a meeting should be made to the Board Executive Secretary in advance of the meeting to ensure availability of the requested service or accommodation.



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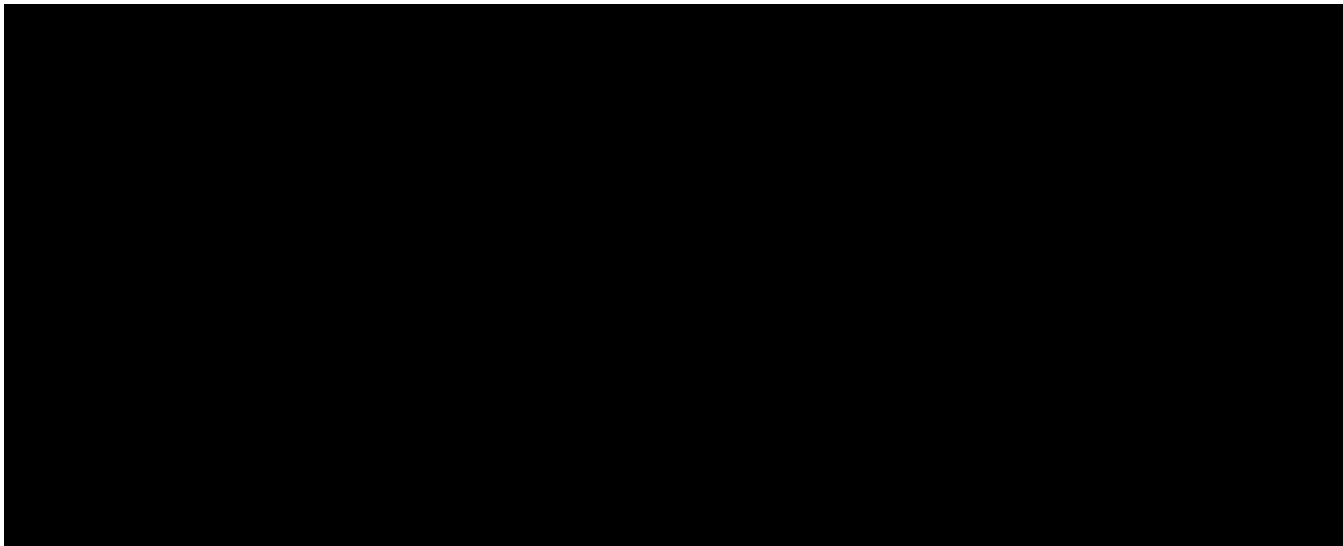
January 16, 2025

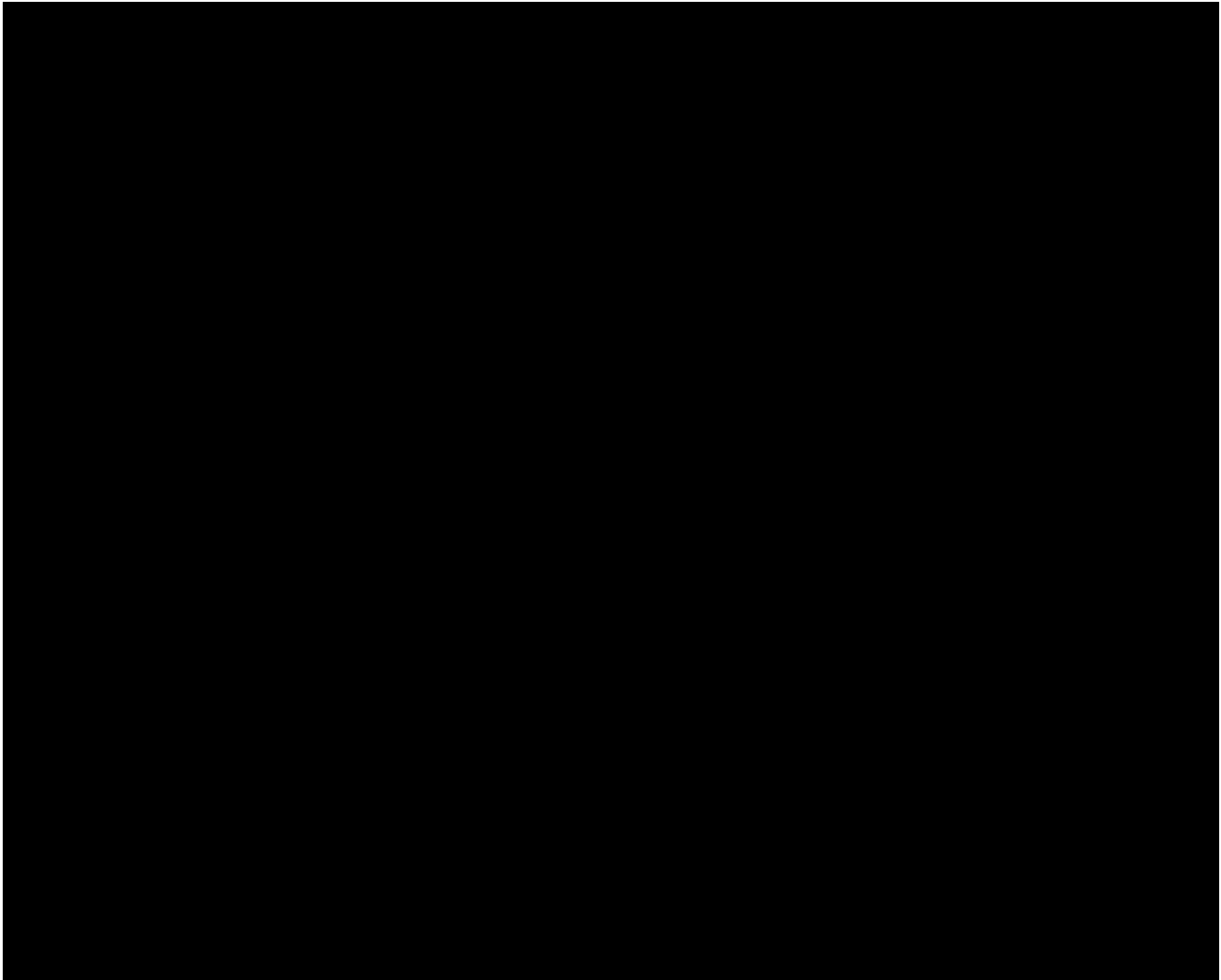
BY EMAIL
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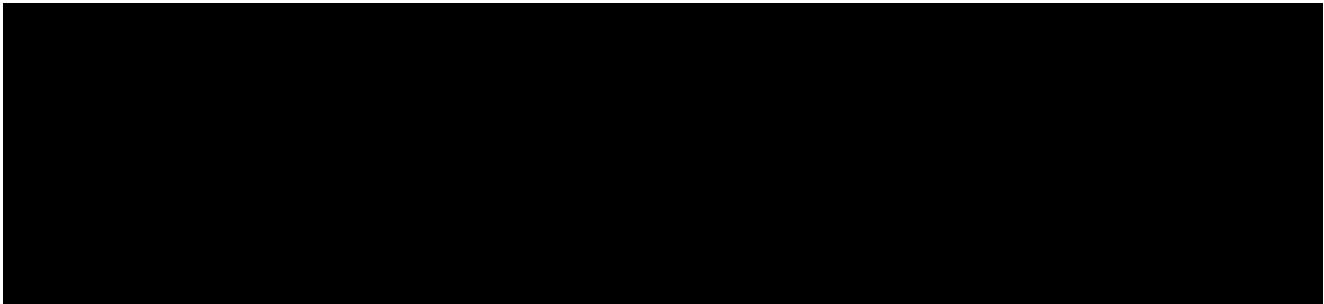
Re: *Adel Hagekhalil/Metropolitan Water District of Southern California ("MWD" or "the District)*

Dear Ms. Rosner,

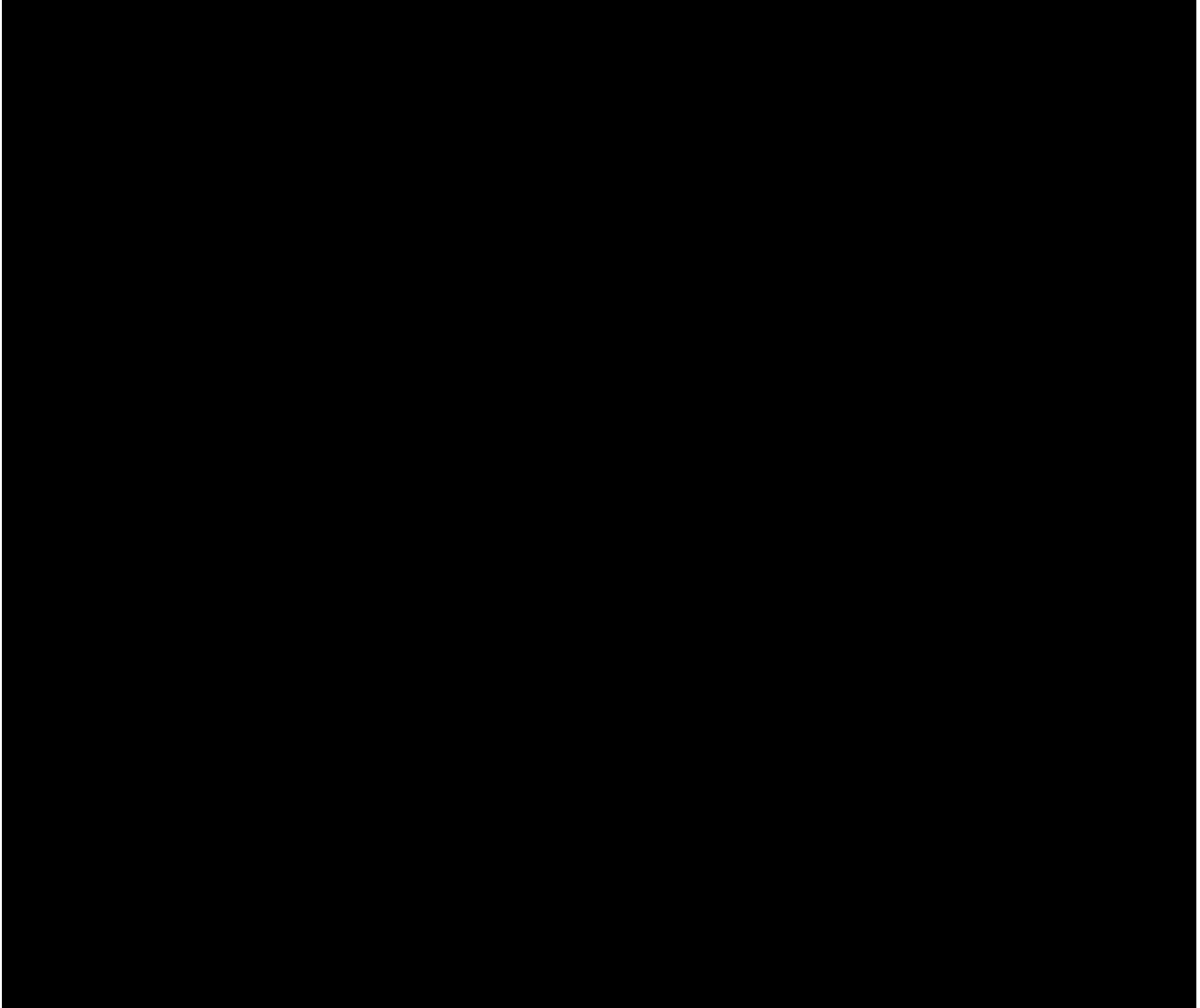




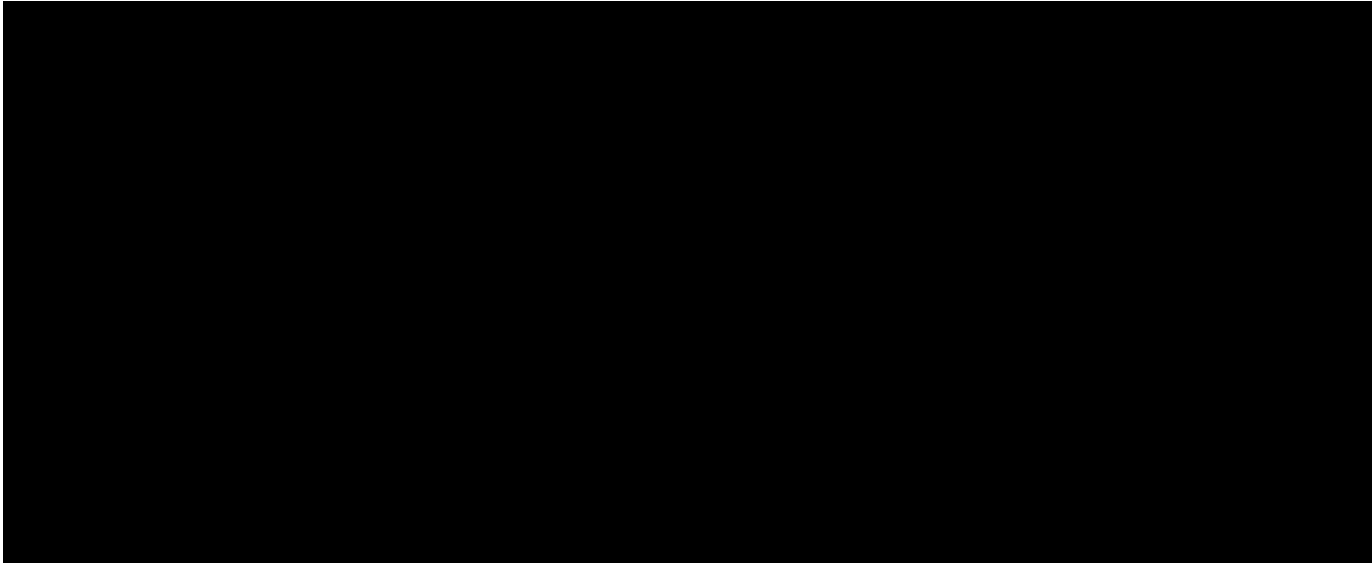
Any adverse action by the Board against Mr. Hagekhalil will not withstand legal scrutiny. Not when one director has admittedly made, and another is being investigated for making, overtly Anti-Arab and Islamophobic statements about Mr. Hagekhalil and



others of Arab descent, including Mr. Hagekhalil’s Chief of Staff.³ That these directors have been or will be involved in decisions about Mr. Hagekhalil’s employment—from precipitously placing him on “temporary” administrative leave to whether he will continue to serve the District—is not only wrong, but it is also powerful evidence of racial and ethnic discrimination, which of course is unlawful.

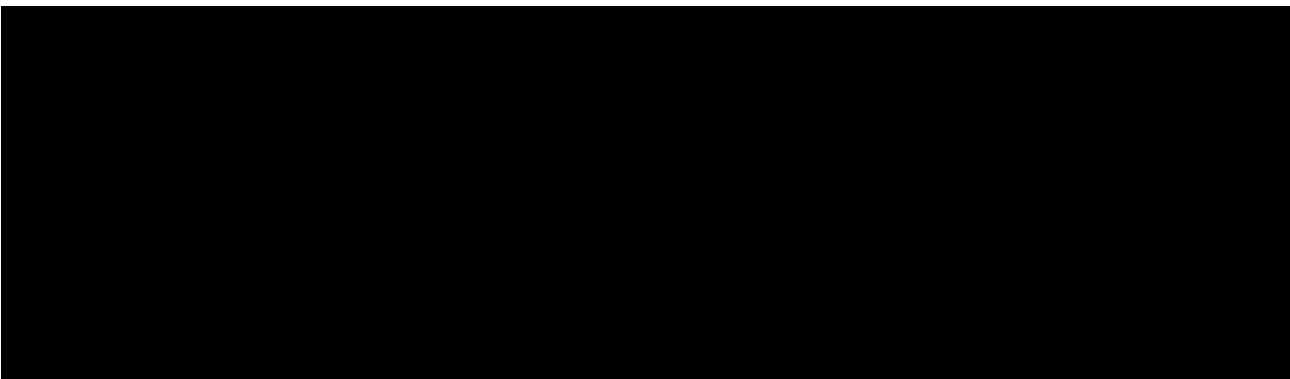


³ A Board member was found to have used the term “camel jockey” to refer to Mr. Hagekhalil’s Chief of Staff. Multiple witnesses heard another Board member, also under investigation, saying “When are we going to get rid of those refugees?” and “When are we going to hire someone that we can pronounce their last name?”—referring to Mr. Hagekhalil and/or his Chief of Staff.



While the Board hired Mr. Hagekhalil to reform this agency, each time he took appropriate action to that end, he was subjected to baseless complaints. This occurred when 1) he took action in response to the Shaw Law Group report, 2) he brought in new leadership in Human Resources, 3) he hired a chief of staff from outside the agency, 4) he told Ms. Kasaine that he was considering changing her job responsibilities, and told the same to the General Counsel, and 5) when he disagreed with the Assistant General Counsel in a closed session board committee meeting.

Each time, he was subjected to a full EEO investigation, approved by the Board, or an ethics investigation. Clearly, Mr. Hagekhalil has been treated very differently than his predecessor (a white male), whose workplace behavior was openly tolerated by the Board.



In short, there is no basis to take adverse action against Mr. Hagekhalil. To do so would expose the District and the Board to significant legal liability, not to mention catastrophic reputational and other fallout. The only path to avoid this risk and at the same time restore Mr. Hagekhalil's reputation, which has been so regrettably tarnished, is to reinstate him so that, in partnership with the Board, he can lead the District and continue its important work, especially during this critical time.

All of Mr. Hagekhalil's rights and remedies are expressly reserved.

Cordially,



Kerry Garvis Wright
of GLASER WEIL FINK HOWARD JORDAN & SHAPIRO LLP

cc: Adan Ortega, Jr., Chair, MWD Board of Directors + Board Members
Adel Hagekhalil
Patricia L. Glaser