



**MWD**

METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

7-4

June 17, 1998

**To:** Board of Directors (Committee on Communications and Legislation--Action)  
(Organization and Personnel Committee--Action)

**From:** *for* General Manager

**Submitted by:** John R. Maloy  
Chief of Communications

*Edward S. Meier*  
*J. Maloy*

**Subject:** Ratification of Agreement No. 16410 with Ross Communications for  
Consulting Services

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

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It is recommended that the Board of Directors ratify the General Manager's execution of Agreement No. 16410 with Ross Communications.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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In August 1997, Metropolitan's Board directed a reorganization of all legislative activities, as well as traditional public affairs functions, into a unified Communications Division. At that time, the Board articulated its specific expectations with respect to the achievement of Metropolitan's legislative objectives.

To supplement staff efforts on these legislative activities, Metropolitan has continued to retain specialized consultants to assure that the Board's expectations are realized.

To ensure that the Board is fully informed with respect to these consultant activities, it is staff's intention to present ongoing contracts for public relations and legislative consultants to the Board for ratification.

Agreement No. 16410, with Ross Communications, is one of several contracts that staff is presenting to the Board under this process. Ross Communications is based in Sacramento and works primarily with Metropolitan's State legislative staff. The firm assists staff in developing its strategies for pursuit of legislative goals at the State level, and also assists staff with its coalition development efforts.

**DETAILED REPORT**

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In August 1997, Metropolitan's Board directed a reorganization of all legislative activities, as well as traditional public affairs functions, into a unified Communications Division. At that time, the Board articulated its specific expectations with respect to the achievement of Metropolitan's legislative objectives. To supplement staff efforts on these legislative activities, Metropolitan has continued to retain consultants with particular expertise in legislative process and/or water policy to assure that the Board's expectations are realized.

To ensure that the Board is fully informed with respect to these consultant activities, it is staff's intention to present ongoing contracts for public relations and legislative consultants to the Board for ratification. Agreement No. 16410, with Ross Communications, is one of several contracts that staff is presenting to the Board under this process.

Metropolitan has contracted with Ross Communications since April 1997. Agreement No. 13741 was awarded as a short-term sole-source contract, with a maximum payable of \$45,000, including expenses. Subsequently, when this first contract expired, new legislative challenges evolved and it became apparent to staff that it would be necessary to again contract with Ross Communications. Under the current Agreement (No. 16410), which was effective October 1997 and is a sole-source Agreement, the maximum amount payable is \$71,000, inclusive of expenses. The consultant, however, continues to be paid at the same rate as was negotiated in the initial contract.

Ross Communications provides services in the following areas:

1. Developing strategy to pursue legislative goals at the State level; and
2. Assisting Metropolitan with its coalition development efforts.

Staff feels that Richard Ross, principal of Ross Communications and the primary Metropolitan contact, is uniquely qualified to perform these services. Mr. Ross' background includes experience as a staff member to the former Speaker of the Assembly, Willie Brown. He has excellent working relationships with Democratic legislators and labor leaders. He has also managed numerous high-profile statewide and local campaigns for individuals and ballot initiatives.

Recent activities of Ross Communications have included work on legislation for bonds to fund Colorado River storage, work on legislation for regulation of perchlorate, and supporting Metropolitan's overall education efforts directed toward State legislators. Ross Communications has also assisted Metropolitan staff in securing appointments for Metropolitan Directors with various high-level officials.

Staff anticipates that Metropolitan's federal legislative and regulatory efforts will require increased and ongoing attention for Metropolitan to meet its water supply and operational goals and protect the interests of its Member Agencies. Staff requests the Board reaffirm its support for these activities by ratifying the Agreement No. 16410.

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