

- **Board of Directors**
 - Engineering and Operations Committee**
 - Water Planning and Resources Committee**
 - Communications and Legislation Committee**

February 8, 2000 Board Meeting

10-5

Subject

Dry weather and potential drought planning and preparedness activities for February 2000.

Description

The water year began October 1, 1999, with the following rainfall reports to date: October, 90% of average; November, 108% of average; December, 18% of average--the sixth driest December on record. The lack of snow pack and weather indications of higher-than-normal temperatures have led the press and some others to speculate on the potential for a drought. The most significant part of the water year continues until April 1, 2000, and statistically nearly 70% of the rainy season is yet to come, according to Maurice Roos, Department of Water Resources' chief hydrologist. Metropolitan staff reported in January on the favorable storage conditions of the State Water Project (SWP), and anticipated deliveries for the SWP and Colorado. Nevertheless, the experience of the most recent 1988-92 drought period is causing some to express early concern. Although recent rainfall in Northern California is encouraging, local rainfall has thus far been too limited for significant natural groundwater basin replenishment. In addition, regulatory management of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta is exposing urban areas of California to sudden reductions in State Water Project deliveries and adverse water quality conditions.

The Metropolitan Board of Directors adopted the Water Surplus and Drought Management Plan (WSDM) in mid-1999, after staff spent months working with member agency managers and their staff on the plan. At the board meeting when the plan was adopted, the managers supported the plan and recommended adoption. That participatory process serves as a model for other drought management activities, including additional outreach efforts with member agencies.

With the WSDM in place, a drought management outreach plan can begin. The outreach plan will complement the WSDM, and tap into the information base, assessment criteria, and decision-making processes of various agencies and groups affected by or interested in drought preparedness and mitigation planning.

The basis for the outreach plan includes gathering the most accurate weather predictions, water resource inventory, risk management factors and water demand projection information, followed by reaching agreement on whether that information signals a potential drought condition. Conducting an information-sharing, assessment and evaluation exercise with the affected decision-makers helps to resolve this issue. Even when the information base and the prospects for a drought are agreed to, the decision-making criteria and procedures during an event are not always shared uniformly. As a result, the outreach plan includes a "simulated drought" or "virtual drought" exercise. Since the concept of drought in the Metropolitan service area involves a variety of factors, such as meteorological conditions, storage, "regulatory drought," and consequential water quality impacts, those features, along with others decided by the participants are included in the simulated drought exercise.

Once the data assessment and simulated drought exercises are completed, the outreach plan anticipates a well-publicized and monitored "Conservation Day," similar to the "Great American Smoke Out." Specific publicity and water-savings measures for the aggressive one day of conservation will be developed as part of the simulated drought exercise.

Letters of invitation will be sent to the member agencies, business and community leaders, environmental representatives and others by the end of January 2000 to attend an interactive data assessment and simulated

drought workshop in February 2000. The “Conservation Day” will be developed by the participants at the workshop as well. Details on the date, time and location will be provided at the February board meeting.

Policy

Within the General Manager’s Authority.

Fiscal Impact

None.

	1/27/2000
Adán Ortega, Jr.	Date
Executive Assistant to the General Manager and Acting Outreach Group Manager	
	1/27/2000
General Manager	Date