

- **Board of Directors**
Communications, Outreach and Legislation Committee

May 15, 2001 Board Meeting

8-6

Subject

Legislative support for chromium 6 funding

Description

Congressman Adam Schiff (D – Glendale) has requested that the Metropolitan Board support federal efforts to fund a research proposal in the city of Glendale to remove chromium 6 from contaminated groundwater. Congressman Schiff requests that Metropolitan’s Board consider a position to support a \$3 million federal appropriation to be matched with \$6 million in state and local funds to pay for the construction and operations of a pilot treatment plant to be built in Glendale.

Industrial activities have been known to contaminate drinking water supplies with chromium 6. However, recent studies indicate that chromium 6 may also occur naturally in some groundwater environments. There is considerable debate among public health officials over the epidemiological and toxicological effects of ingestion of chromium 6 in drinking water. Research needs to take place in order to assess the health risks and to establish a drinking water standard if one is needed. There is currently no state or federal drinking water standard for chromium 6. However, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has established a 0.2 parts per billion (ppb) health protective level. In addition to the city of Glendale, the cities of Burbank, Los Angeles and San Fernando have groundwater supplies impacted by industrial contamination in and around the San Fernando Valley. Water utilities in the Chino and San Gabriel groundwater basins, as well as in Ventura County, have also been impacted by industrial sources of chromium 6.

In the California Legislature, a total of seven bills have been introduced regarding chromium 6 contamination in drinking water supplies. Included in this list is SB 460, authored by state Sen. Jack Scott (D -Glendale) and sponsored by the city of Glendale. This bill would require the state Department of Health Services, in conjunction with State Water Resources Control Board, to investigate various technologies that remove chromium 6 from drinking water and conduct various testing models that appear to be promising technologies to remove chromium 6 from drinking water supplies. SB 460 also would appropriate \$15 million from the state General Fund to support these activities. To date, Metropolitan has not taken a position on these bills.

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the following legislative policy principle so that Metropolitan can support external funding efforts for research on chromium 6 in drinking water:

Support legislative and administrative efforts to secure funding for the purpose of studying the health effects of chromium 6 and, if necessary, fund treatment technology development in order to establish drinking water regulations.

The proposed action is not defined as a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the proposed action involves continuing administrative activities such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed action in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the proposed action is not subject to CEQA (Section 15061(b)(3) of the state CEQA Guidelines).

Policy

Currently, Metropolitan does not have existing legislative policy principles that would authorize staff to support external funding efforts for chromium 6 research.

Board Options/Fiscal Impacts

Determine that the proposed action is not subject to CEQA per Sections 15378(b)(2) and 15061(b)(3) of the state CEQA Guidelines.

Option #1

Adopt legislative policy principle:

Support legislative and administrative efforts to secure funding for the purpose of studying the health effects of chromium 6 and if necessary fund treatment technology development in order to establish drinking water regulations.

Fiscal Impact: None

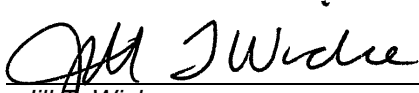

Option #2

Take no action at this time

Fiscal Impact: None

Staff Recommendation

Option #1

	4/30/2001
Jill J. Wicke Manager, Water System Operations	Date
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	4/30/2001
Ronald R. Jester General Manager	Date