

- **Board of Directors**
Water Planning, Quality and Resources Committee
Communications, Outreach and Legislation Committee

March 12, 2002 Board Meeting

9-7

Subject

Adopt policy principles on global climate change as related to water resources planning

Description

Metropolitan's responsibilities as the steward of a regional water supply serving over 17 million people in Southern California include planning for and managing long-term uncertainties. The potential impacts of climate change to water resources are a growing uncertainty generating press coverage and public interest. Adopting policy principles on this issue – proposed below – allows Metropolitan to continue its leadership role in managing the risks of climate change within the context of other uncertainties the agency has always faced, such as drought, growth and regulatory uncertainty.

In 2000, Metropolitan hosted a board workshop featuring presentations by leading experts in climate change science. Since then, Metropolitan has hosted a California Water Plan Update 2003 meeting on climate change and most recently convened a Drought Preparedness Workshop on similar issues. A recurring theme from these efforts is that while scientists are unable to predict with certainty how or when water resources will be affected by climate change, the potential consequences are serious enough to begin addressing the issue on a policy level.

Water agencies around the state are beginning to factor climate change impacts to water resources into their planning. The Department of Water Resources' (DWR) California Water Plan Update 2003 report will include a major discussion on potential climate change impacts. CALFED is planning to produce a series of white papers on climate change and the potential impacts to the actions specified in its August 2000 Record of Decision. In November and December 2001, key select committees in both the state Senate and state Assembly held informal hearings on global climate change and the potential impacts to the Bay-Delta. These hearings included testimony from DWR, CALFED, the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as representatives from academia, water utilities and agricultural agencies. Most recently, the East Bay Municipal Utilities District supported AB 1058, a bill designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California.

Metropolitan will likely be called upon for input and continued leadership on climate change issues, and staff suggests the Board consider adopting policy principles to guide staff actions.

Proposed Policy Principles

Issue: Global Climate Change and Water Resources Planning

According to recent national reports, global climate change has the potential for far-reaching impacts to water resources and quality, including sea level rise that could threaten Delta water quality, changes to precipitation patterns and snow melt that could affect the timing of runoff, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme wet and dry periods.

The potential risks of global climate change to water resources, though uncertain, justify further research into the issue and justify implementation of flexible multiple benefit "no-regret" solutions such as those already being developed under Metropolitan's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). "No-regret" solutions provide water supply and quality benefits now, while increasing the ability to manage potential climate change impacts if they occur. Examples of multiple benefit solutions found in the IRP include non-structural programs such as conservation,

and structural programs such as groundwater conjunctive use, recycling and the Inland Feeder, which improves Metropolitan's capabilities to receive and store more water during wet or high run-off periods.

Recommended Policy Principles: Metropolitan supports further research into the potential water resource and quality effects of global climate change, and supports flexible "no-regret" solutions that provide water supply and quality benefits while increasing the ability to manage future climate change impacts. In addition, Metropolitan supports reasonable, economically viable, and technologically feasible management strategies and efforts for reducing the potential impacts of global climate change to water resources.

Policy

This action creates new Board policy principles on climate change and water resources planning.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Options #1 and #2:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under 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).

The CEQA determination for Options #1 and #2 is: Determine that the proposed action is not subject to the provisions of CEQA per Sections 15378(b)(2) and 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA determination for Option #3:

None required.

Board Options/Fiscal Impacts

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and approve staff recommendation to adopt the proposed policy principles regarding global climate change and water resources.

Fiscal Impact: None

Option #2

Adopt the CEQA determination and approve staff recommendation to adopt the proposed policy principles regarding global climate change and water resources with amendments.

Fiscal Impact: None

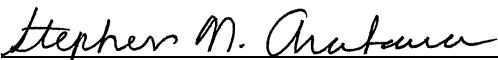
Option #3

Reject staff recommendation to adopt the policy principles regarding global climate change and water resources.

Fiscal Impact: None

Staff Recommendation

Option #1



Stephen N. Arakawa
Manager, Water Resource Management

2/27/2002

Date



Ronald R. Gastelum
Chief Executive Officer

2/27/2002

Date

BLA #1542