

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

June 8, 2004 Board Meeting

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8-11

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**Subject**

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Authorize entering into a professional services agreement with Fraser Communications in an amount not to exceed \$1.15 million for outdoor conservation advertising campaign

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**Description**

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In November 2002, the Board authorized launch of a long-term, educational outreach campaign to encourage outdoor water conservation within its service area (Board Letter 9-5). The far-reaching campaign combines advertising, publicity, use of celebrity spokespersons, community relations and grassroots organization to educate residents about the importance of efficient irrigation and native and California Friendly plants. Not only did the campaign result in real and measurable water savings, but it sparked a trend legitimized a year later by *Sunset Magazine* and other media outlets.

Conservation is an important component of Southern California's water supply, and this campaign focuses on modifying homeowners' water use patterns to reduce outdoor water use, which can range from 30 to 70 percent of household consumption. Metropolitan seeks to achieve long-term, sustained gains in water savings by promoting more efficient watering of existing plants, as well as increased use of native and California Friendly (i.e., drought tolerant) plants. Changing outdoor water use requires behavioral change, and achieving it requires an educational effort sustained over many years. See [Attachment 1](#) for a comprehensive overview of the outreach program, of which this advertising campaign is one component.

To date the campaign has demonstrated measurable results extrapolated from various data, such as a pre- and post-campaign survey measuring consumer attitudes and awareness of water conservation, a statistical study of water sales in the city of Los Angeles and an increasing number of visitors to [bewaterwise.com](#). The campaign has also received widespread support from garden retailers and nurseries interested in partnering with Metropolitan.

Metropolitan issued RFP 681 in April 2004 for advertising and media buying services for continuation of the region-wide advertising campaign in summer/fall 2004. Through a qualifications-based selection process conducted in accordance with Metropolitan's policies and procedures, a technical evaluation committee evaluated the seven firms that submitted proposals to determine the most qualified to perform this work based on its staff/team experience and strengths, past performance, draft campaign proposal and cost proposal. This action will authorize the CEO to enter into an agreement with Fraser Communications for advertising and media buying services with a maximum amount payable of \$1.5 million.

A total of \$1.15 million is allocated in the External Affairs budget for this campaign. This represents a decrease of \$550,000 from last year's campaign budget, in order to keep the External Affairs budget flat. Of that total, \$1 million is earmarked for purchase of advertising time and/or space, with the remainder to be used for creative development and production costs. The firm will be responsible for developing and implementing a media buy strategy, modifying and executing new creative materials and developing a cooperative advertising program with major retailers.

## Policy

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Pursuant to Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code, § 4210, it shall be the policy of the District to undertake and support water conservation programs. To that end, the District may develop and implement such programs and enter into agreements with member public agencies and other organizations to make more efficient use of water resources through water conservation programs so long as such agreements serve a beneficial purpose of the District.

## California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

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CEQA determination for Staff Recommendation:

The proposed actions are not defined as a project under CEQA, because they involve continuing administrative activities such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, the proposed actions are not subject to CEQA because they involve other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The CEQA determination is: Determine that the proposed actions are not subject to CEQA pursuant to Sections 15378(b)(2) and 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

## Staff Recommendation

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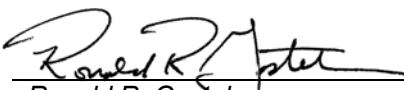
Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize the CEO to enter into agreement with Fraser Communications in an amount not to exceed \$1.15 million for an advertising campaign promoting outdoor conservation in summer and fall 2004.

**Fiscal Impact:** \$1.15 million

  
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Robert S. Joe  
Group Manager, External Affairs

5/20/2004

Date

  
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Ronald R. Gastelum  
Chief Executive Officer

5/20/2004

Date

## Attachment 1 – 2004/05 Outdoor Conservation Outreach Campaign

BLA #2926

## 2004/05 Outdoor Conservation Outreach Campaign

### Background

Conservation is a key component of Metropolitan's long-term integrated resource planning, and last year marked the beginning of a multi-year educational outreach campaign aimed at reducing outdoor water use through the encouragement of greater water use efficiency coupled with use of native and California Friendly plants in landscapes.

While much of the region's conservation efforts in the past have been aimed at reducing indoor water use through installation of permanent devices such as ultra-low-flush toilets and showerheads, a growing portion of the region's conservation goals will be met through reduction in outdoor water use. Programs, such as the newly launched California Friendly builder program as well as the 10-year-old Protector del Agua course, will play increasingly important roles in meeting the region's water conservation goals.

Changing outdoor water use requires behavioral change, and achieving it requires an educational effort sustained over the long term. The outreach campaign launched in summer/fall 2003 laid the foundation for long-term measurable conservation gains; this document outlines the plan for the coming year's continuing efforts.

### Objectives

- Reduce residential and commercial outdoor water use through educational effort on efficient irrigation and use of native and California Friendly plants
- Support existing and new programs under development by Conservation staff

### Strategies

- Conduct regional campaign under the "Family of Southern California Water Agencies" banner, with customizable elements for member agencies and others interested in supporting the campaign
- Utilize existing retail partnerships and forge new ones to reach homeowners at the "ground level"

### Audiences

- Southern California homeowners and gardeners
- Southern California businesses and institutions

### Programs

#### **Bewaterwise.com Regional Advertising Campaign**

Building on the work done in fall 2003, Metropolitan will continue to lead a regional advertising campaign to encourage more efficient watering and use of native and California Friendly plants, timed for August to October 2004 when over-watering is at its high. A regional campaign enables Metropolitan to make the most of its buying power and support its member agencies in their individual efforts. All materials will be customizable and made available to member agencies at no cost. Campaign includes advertising, event sponsorships and publicity.

- **Consumer Attitude and Awareness Survey**

Two surveys conducted by Metropolitan in summer and fall have been very helpful in understanding regional attitudes and outdoor watering behavior, and it is recommended that a similar set of surveys be conducted in year two. The new data will play an important role in evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign. It will also provide an important look at water usage data year-to-year, eliminating the difficulty of adjusting for seasonal shifts in watering.

- **The California Friendly Home**

January '05 is expected to mark the launch of the regional water savings program with new home builders. Marketing needs include development of the California Friendly brand concept, a brochure, a presence on bewaterwise.com, and regional advertising in support of the participating builders.

- **Retailer/Wholesaler Partnerships**

Metropolitan will expand its partnerships with retailers to include a co-op advertising program, the offering of Protector del Agua classes and distribution of CD-ROMs and other educational materials (such as a scaled-down version of PDA handbook). Metropolitan will also work with wholesalers to encourage adoption of “Native and California Friendly” logos into plant labels.

- **Native and California Friendly Plant Hotline/Spokesperson**

Metropolitan will partner with Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden to establish a consumer information phone service staffed by experts who can offer tips on the care and maintenance of native and California Friendly plants. RSABG staff will also be available to act as a spokesperson at Metropolitan-sponsored events and media interviews.

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