

- **External Affairs' June 2005 Activity Report**

Summary

This report discusses significant activities in which External Affairs was involved during June 2005

Attachments

None

Detailed Report

Media Services

Media Services provided on-site media coordination and a press release about a malfunction at the Skinner plant that caused temporary reductions in water deliveries to water agencies serving Southwest Riverside and San Diego counties. Coverage of the event appeared in the following media outlets: *North County Times*, *San Diego Union Tribune*, *Riverside Press Enterprise*, *Channel 10 News* (San Diego), and *KNSD*, the NBC affiliate in San Diego.

Chief Operating Officer Debra Man was quoted in a June 29 *North County Times* article about the unanimous approval by the Metropolitan Board of Director's desalination committee to recommend final approval and funding for desalination projects for five member agencies.

Planning and preparatory work is under way for communication and outreach efforts to project a balanced message about the CALFED program, its benefits to water users and the environment, and the need to continue with a refocused implementation strategy. Staff is currently coordinating plans with member agencies and related stakeholders, such as other State Water Contractors. Efforts to be made through the summer and fall months include grassroots coalition building, media outreach, and legislative outreach, as appropriate.

Community and Business Outreach

The new Community Partnering Program debuted in June, with a year-round online application process that includes all sponsorship levels and a timelier panel review. In anticipation of the rollout, staff distributed CPP postcard mailers to member agencies, past recipients and prospective applicants.

The Business Outreach team participated in a panel discussion for the Small Business Administration's Annual Business Matchmaking Event in Pasadena, offering small businesses advice on how to market themselves effectively to Metropolitan and other government agencies. There were about 500 attendees and the panel consisted of representatives from the federal, state and county governments. Business Outreach also conducted a two-day seminar on Strategies for Public Sector Contracting for 30 small businesses at the Metropolitan headquarters where small business owners learn strategies on how to compete successfully for requests for proposals, develop cost estimating and project pricing.

Education and Outreach

World Water Forum grants were formally announced to the college applicants. Staff supported the event with a media advisory, press release, and three speeches, garnering coverage in the *Riverside Press Enterprise*. State Senator Jack Scott (D-Pasadena), Assemblywoman Carol Liu (D-Pasadena) and Director Tim Brick spoke at the event, where Metropolitan awarded 12 grants for water use efficiency proposals from the following eight universities and colleges: Cal Poly Pomona, Cal State Long Beach, Los Angeles City College, Loyola Marymount, Pasadena City College, UC Riverside, University of Redlands and USC.

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Inspection trip staff began the off-season work to prepare for next season. Activities under way include revising printed materials and converting materials from notebooks to CD's and establishing new vendor contracts for the 2005/2006 fiscal year.

Staff conducted a Member Agency Education Coordinators Meeting. The meetings are focusing more specifically on member agency contributions, questions and programs in addition to dialogue on common approaches to database and communication, curriculum training and other components. The minutes and action items will be on the Member Agency Web site in early July.

Metropolitan hosted one of several public workshops conducted by the California Department of Water Resources for input on the California Water Plan (Bulletin 160). About 50 individuals from interested stakeholder groups and the general public attended this workshop held on June 22.

Conservation Campaign

Staff from Metropolitan and Municipal Water District of Orange County attended the Building Industry of America, Orange County, Board of Directors meeting in June to brief the home builders and associate members on why the "California Friendly" Model Home Program was of benefit to the future of water supply for southern California. Additionally, Joe Berg from MWDOC reported on MWDOC's SmartController rebate program and encouraged homebuilders and developers to participate in the program.

Metropolitan staff conducted a two-hour workshop with member agency conservation and public affairs staff on June 23 to discuss development of a region-wide California Friendly brand that stands for water-wise choices in our personal and business lives. The workshop focused on cooperative efforts conducted by Metropolitan and its member agencies to promote water-wise programs and initiatives starting this fall in order to maximize promotional dollars, encourage more water conservation and more easily and effectively launch new programs. Twenty-two member and sub-agencies were represented and staff members were very receptive to the branding concept and work will continue through the summer on its development.

Legislative Update

Regional

Metropolitan's staff conducted a Diamond Valley Lake facilities tour for more than 35 business professionals as a part of their leadership training through the Leadership LA program. Each month, these future leaders spend a full day learning about some aspect of their community and this day was focused solely on water and its impact on business and communities. The tour was so successful and well received that Metropolitan has been asked to participate in its leadership program annually.

Throughout the month, staff has been meeting with the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley, Sempra Energy, Southern California Edison, and the Cities of Burbank and Los Angeles to strategize on a way to combine marketing resources to develop a single portal through which businesses can learn more about the programs and projects available to them, such as rebates, grants, business contracts, conservation education, and more.

Sacramento

Metropolitan is currently opposed to SB 113, the CALFED finance-related legislation authored by Senator Mike Machado (D-Linden). This measure, as last amended on April 14, defines the CALFED concept of "beneficiary pays." Metropolitan is concerned that the bill would yield unintended consequences for ongoing and future investments in conservation, recycling, desalination and water transfers. Metropolitan and other water users will work with the author during the legislative recess to determine if alternative, acceptable language can be developed.

Senate Bill 820, by Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee Chair Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica), which seeks to develop better reporting of water use and improved water planning, continues to be discussed among stakeholders. The latest version of the bill reflects refinements requested by Metropolitan.

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Metropolitan supports AB 371, a bill by Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg (D-Los Angeles) that seeks to reduce barriers to the use of recycled water. The bill was substantially amended May 17 to remove controversial provisions that limited health-based requirements to those established by the California Department of Health Services. The amendment also directs the State Water Resources Control Board to adopt general water recycling requirements rather than individual water recycling or water discharge requirements for non-potable uses of recycled water. Remaining provisions include a requirement that the Department of Water Resources, in consultation with the State Department of Health Services, adopt building code to safely plumb buildings with both potable and recycled water systems.

The local government "reform" legislation, SB 393 by Senator Deborah Ortiz (D-Sacramento), which in its latest amended version, would impose travel reimbursement caps on special districts, add audit oversight provisions and require ethics training, was held on the suspense file by the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 26.

Metropolitan staff continues to work to support AB 1234, the local government "sunshine" measure authored by Assemblyman Simon Salinas (D-Salinas) that would provide criteria for compensation and reimbursement practices, but would also allow local governments to adopt their own guidelines as long as the policies are publicly adopted and accessible. The measure, which would affect cities, counties, special districts and school districts, passed the Senate Local Government Committee and is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 672, by Assemblyman Johan Klehs (D-Hayward), seeks to require governmental entities that own reservoirs with a capacity of 3,500 acre-feet or greater to prepare a recreation plan for their facilities. Metropolitan and several of its member agencies were opposed to the April 28 version of the measure due to the infeasibility of providing recreation at certain facilities for a variety of reasons, including security and water quality. Metropolitan and member agencies reached agreement with the author on amendments to the measure that took the water districts to a neutral position. In light of this agreement, the author has requested support from Metropolitan and member agencies.

Governor Schwarzenegger has called a special election for November 8. To date, eight initiatives have qualified for the ballot, including an electricity measure that would impose restrictions on large energy customers' ability to change providers, among other provisions. Other qualified measures include a measure to require employee consent for political contributions via union dues; a reapportionment measure that would place legislative redistricting in the hands of a three-judge panel; and a state spending restriction measure that would change state minimum school funding requirements and would require the Governor to reduce state appropriations under specified circumstances.

Washington D.C.

Staff worked closely with Senate Members and Committee Staff to promote Metropolitan's priority requests for FY 2006 funding in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill. The bill was reported out of committee with provisions to enhance spending for storage efficiency improvements in the Colorado River Lower Basin, increasing the figure included in the House Bill from \$1.5 million to \$5 million in the coming fiscal year.

The Senate Appropriations Committee also increased federal spending for CALFED related programs and projects to \$37 million, and maintained the House recommended figures for Title XVI, Regional Water Use Efficiency Programs, Colorado River Salinity Control, and the clean-up efforts for the Atlas uranium mine tailings at Moab, Utah.

Staff conducted an inspection trip and briefing, in coordination with Chairman Bannister and several Metropolitan directors and member agencies, for U.S. Representative George Radanovich, Chairman of the House Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power. The briefing including a flyover and on-ground inspection of Diamond Valley Lake, as well as member-agency-sponsored programs associated with native plants and conservation efforts in the construction home building industry, a comprehensive demonstration

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and briefing of desalination technology development in Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego and Long Beach. After the tours, the Congressman discussed these issues over a working dinner in the City of Long Beach.

In furtherance of community improvement programs as part of the Metropolitan/Palo Verde Irrigation District Land Management, Crop Rotation, and Water Supply Program, staff conducted an inspection trip for the Palo Verde Valley Community Improvement Fund Board. The purpose for the trip was to inform the newly selected members of the board of Southern California resource policy objectives and to demonstrate the successful implementation of these programs in conserving water.