

FACT

Honorable Satoru Tamaribuchi, President
and Members of the Board of Directors
Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC)
18700 Ward Street
Fountain Valley CA 92708
(sent via email)

Dear President Tamaribuchi:

On behalf of the Fullerton Association of Concerned Taxpayers (FACT), I am writing to urge the MWDOC Board of Directors to direct its Metropolitan Water District (MWD) delegates to support Fullerton resident Adán Ortega to be Chairman of the Board of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. During his time on the MWD Board, Mr. Ortega has become a driving force for fiscal responsibility and restraint, especially during the COVID-19 crisis when many ratepayers are distressed.

Over the past year, we note that MWDOC has been on the failing side of most major votes at MWD, while Mr. Ortega has helped to successfully forge collaboration and consensus for responsible cost control measures with a wide spectrum of water agencies. On September 14, 2020, for example, Mr. Ortega's motion to place a moratorium on unbudgeted spending proposals at MWD survived a substitute motion supported by MWDOC delegates to negate such measures in the MWD Finance Committee. Mr. Ortega's motion was passed unanimously by the MWD Board.

We also appeal to MWDOC to discontinue its support of unbudgeted large-ticket proposals at MWD that would drive up water bills at a time when ratepayers can least afford rate hikes. One such proposal supported by MWDOC leadership is a \$500 million project to improve habitat in the Sacramento Bay-Delta at Frank's Tract, that would provide no benefits to Orange County's water users. Furthermore, MWD's largest budget item is its payments to the State Water Project for which MWD and its customers -- including Orange County's water users -- are getting less and less water over the years. To spend half a billion dollars of Orange County's ratepayer funds on Frank's Tract for no direct benefits, except the hope of good-will in return, is irresponsible.

In 2020, Mr. Ortega has led efforts to reduce scheduled imported water rate increases, and to expand public transparency of the 25-year MWD Integrated Regional Planning (IRP) process. He has fought for Fullerton and other Orange County cities to be represented in the process to select the next General Manager of MWD. MWDOC can take great strides in forging better relationships with agencies in Southern California by working closely with Mr. Ortega.

On Southern California regional water issues coming from Orange County, we need leadership from someone who works well with diverse parts of Southern California, and stands for taxpayers. We feel that Mr. Ortega is well qualified to undertake major issues such as the IRP, recruitment of a new general manager, and fiscal prudence. We ask that you formally support his candidacy for MWD Board Chair.

Cordially,

Jack Dean, President

Fullerton Association of Concerned Taxpayers (FACT)

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