

Good afternoon Chairwoman Gray and Directors,

I am Alan Shanahan, President of AFSCME Local 1902. I wrote up comments for today and changed them after listening to the brave women who came forward on KUCI 88.9 this morning. I strongly encourage each of you to listen to the words of the women. Their words and emotions of these very real experiences and MWD culture along with those in the LA Times and OP&T is a call to action!

For years, our Union has engaged in the normal processes of grievances and EEO filings which have shown that MWD merely papers over the issues, applies a band aid to quiet employees, and then continues the same path of abuses and toxic culture. There is a reason 60% of women in trades at MWD have filed complaints and nothing has changed! LET ME BE CLEAR, the MWD Culture and processes do not work or support employees who are abused and they never will unless more Directors step forward and demand real actions, we cannot standby and wait for a report.

For years we have spoken to the GM, Asst GMs, HR, Directors, Chairs, and many others to reform the culture at MWD; all have been ignored! We can no longer stay silent, the brave employees who came forward in the LA Times and on KUCI today, along with those still in the shadows, are deserving of a complete overhaul of MWD and people need to be held accountable to affect change even if that means starting with a clean slate at the top. Abuses go all the way from the lowest levels to the highest in MWD; there is tolerance of this at the top as some of them are abusive themselves. Just because they are professional and kind to Directors, it does not mean abuses towards their employees are untrue. Both can coexist.

MWD is not a place where employees have confidence coming forward even today. Most never even report anything out of fear and many members are now sharing their stories of abuse and state they still cannot come forward as it will affect their career, so they stay silent, avoiding eye contact, staying in their cubicles, taking co-workers with them as witnesses or protection, and much more.

We even hear from managers not in our Union, about the abuses they feel when they stand up for their employees and what is right. Whether it is threats of discipline or to their career or even verbal abuse and bullying, it is present. How many of you will say I am standing with the employees, not upper management, and we will reform MWD? It is not easy, but it is even harder for those that have been abused to speak up publicly and they deserve public support!

We also must address the insensitivities contained in the letter to President Martinez and the one sent to JLAC today. These letters are riddled with legal ease, defensive, make statements about the unanimity of the Board and do not even address or acknowledge the serious cultural issues at MWD.

As a reminder, the women and LGBTQ+ members had been coming forward for months to OP&T and the Board, it was 3 Directors who were former employees of MWD that wrote the letter and demanded the investigation. If they had not done this, would we have the Shaw Law Group Investigation? What happened after the investigation launched? We do know that two of the Directors were suddenly removed mid-term and that impacted this committee, OP&T and helped silence employee advocates. While MWD statements continue to state that agencies choose their directors, in our opinion, political influence occurred after speaking with our allies. So, to deflect and say it was the agencies alone, in our opinion, is flawed, no other directors were removed mid-term but the ones who supported a true, fair independent investigation and demanded an objective General Manager recruitment were. We have been working in politics for decades and have built many friendships and allies and we are aware of the talks about an already chosen successor GM.

If this committee and the Board of Directors are serious about a fair and objective GM recruitment and finding someone to reform and repair MWD in order to create a truly fair and equitable workplace, you would announce the names of the candidates, finalists and ensure that interview process is open to the public not in closed session. The rate and taxpayers deserve to know if the Board of Directors will select a GM that will help to keep water rates affordable and ensure that the

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litigious nature of MWD against its own employees does not continue to waste millions of dollars of their hard-earned money.

We also need to say that abuses on the job still happen to this day, including promoting of employees into management that have a dislike of Unions and workers who speak up!

Just a couple weeks ago a manager was drinking on the job. This same manager that has a history of insubordination, other infractions, and abuses against one of the employees in the article, was promoted over the entire Desert at one point and our Union stepped in and demanded his removal. Why does this happen? Because it is not about your work ethics, knowledge, skills, or abilities, it is about who you know, if you can silence your workers and whether you will carry the water and falsehoods for upper management.

We ask that you publicly state you will make change, not wait for a report, and ensure the GM recruitment is fair, open, transparent, and objective!

Thank you on behalf of the AFSCME Local 1902 members.