



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT  
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

*Office of the Board of Directors*

February 19, 2021

**VIA EMAIL**

The Honorable Nury Martinez  
Los Angeles City Council President  
200 N. Spring Street, Suite 470  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Council President Martinez:

I was informed about the motion you have introduced regarding concerns raised by some Metropolitan Water District employees at recent Board meetings, which have also been reported by the Los Angeles Times.

I am deeply disappointed and concerned that you would not reach out to me or our General Manager to better understand the issues addressed at our board meetings and discussed in the newspaper prior to taking this action. The City of Los Angeles is one of the founding members of Metropolitan and has five appointees of Mayor Garcetti serving on our 38-member Board as well as the largest percentage of Metropolitan's weighted voting shares (20.93%).

I assure you that Metropolitan takes these complaints very seriously. The district's longstanding policy is that it does not tolerate harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other misconduct in our workplaces. All employees receive periodic training regarding the prevention of inappropriate conduct. Metropolitan policy encourages employees' prompt reporting of sexual harassment and other Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) violations and requires managers' reporting of such incidents, and there are various options available to lodge such complaints. All complaints of sexual harassment and other EEO violations are taken seriously and investigated. Complaints that are substantiated are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Last fall, in response to the issues raised by Metropolitan employees at meetings of our Board's Organization, Personnel and Technology Committee (which is chaired by Mr. John Murray, Jr., representing the City of Los Angeles) and the Board, the Committee and full Board took swift action. The Committee called for an independent and thorough review, and our full Board voted unanimously to move forward with the review. Specifically, the Board directed Metropolitan's Ethics Officer to engage an external law firm to conduct an independent review of allegations of systemic EEO-related discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and related concerns.

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This process will objectively evaluate many of the allegations listed in your proposed motion. The firm has been engaged, and the review is already in process.

The firm's report will be provided to the Board and it will help the Board determine whether Metropolitan has used best practices regarding employee complaints and investigations, whether additional steps are required, and whether any of Metropolitan's policies, practices, and procedures need to be improved or reformed. At that time, should the city desire, we would be happy to arrange for our Ethics Office to brief you on the outcome.

I also want to address a statement in your motion that identifies two directors as being recently "ousted from the board." Metropolitan does not determine who is appointed to or remains on our Board. The seating of directors is a local decision made by each of our member agencies and one that is respected by our Board. It is fairly common at the start of a new year for member agencies to make changes in their appointees to the Metropolitan Board. In fact, since the start of this year, we have seen five new directors appointed representing the Cities of Fullerton, Los Angeles and Santa Ana, the Municipal Water District of Orange County, and the Upper San Gabriel Municipal Water District. And we look forward to working with all of them.

Metropolitan is proud to partner with the City of Los Angeles in providing its 4 million residents with a reliable water supply. In average water years, the City relies on Metropolitan for roughly 50 percent of its water supply. In dry years, Metropolitan can supply more than 75 percent of Los Angeles' water. We are not only partners with the City in providing critical water supplies for the region, but Metropolitan is a lifeline during periods of drought.

Metropolitan is built on a foundation of respect, integrity, and trust, and we are committed to creating and fostering a work environment that promotes these values. We look forward to working with our Board and the communities we serve, including the City of Los Angeles, to ensure a fair, equitable, and productive workplace for all of our employees at Metropolitan.



Sincerely,  
Gloria D. Gray  
Chairwoman of the Board

cc: Mayor Eric Garcetti  
Los Angeles City Councilmembers  
Metropolitan Board of Directors  
Martin L. Adams, General Manager of LADWP