

OLIVENHAIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT



LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY REVIEW

2025



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LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY REVIEW
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MISSION

Olivenhain Municipal Water District is a public agency providing water, wastewater services, recycled water, hydroelectricity, and operation of Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. Organized in 1959, OMWD currently serves approximately 87,000 customers over 48 square miles in northern San Diego County.

OMWD is committed to serving present and future customers with safe, reliable, high-quality water while exceeding all regulatory requirements in a cost-effective and environmentally responsive manner.

OMWD is dedicated to providing recycled water, wastewater treatment, and hydroelectricity in the most cost-effective, environmentally responsive, and service-oriented manner.

OMWD is devoted to the safe operation of Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve and providing all users with a unique recreational, educational, and environmental experience.

OMWD is committed to pursuing alternative and/or renewable resources with the most sustainable, efficient, and cost-effective approach.

OMWD is steadfast in complying with policies and procedures that adhere to local, state, and federal guidelines for national security and disaster preparedness.



LEADERSHIP

OMWD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected for staggered four-year terms, with each director being elected from a specific geographic area of OMWD's service area. Current directors are as follows:

Olivenhain Municipal Water District
Board of Directors



Matthew R. Hahn, President

Term of Office: 2022-2026 Division 4



Neal Meyers, Vice President

Term of Office: 2024-2028 Division 5



Christy Guerin, Secretary

Term of Office: 2024-2028 Division 3



Scott Maloni, Director

Term of Office: 2024-2028 Division 2

Vacant, Director

Division 1

INTRODUCTION

LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Olivenhain Municipal Water District has established itself as a regional leader by engaging federal and state leaders on a wide array of legislative and regulatory issues. Many of OMWD's priorities are outlined through its legislative guidelines, which offer a framework to evaluate the impact of legislation upon OMWD and its customers. In addition to the staff analysis, OMWD has contracted professional representation at the federal and state level. On behalf of the North San Diego Water Reuse Coalition, BlueWater Strategies, LLC, provides legislative and regulatory advice and assistance with federal agencies, United States House of Representatives, and United States Senate. Nossaman, LLP, provides staff with legislative and regulatory relations services at the state level.

LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY REVIEW

The 2025 Legislative & Regulatory Review provides an overview of legislative and regulatory activities to customers, interested parties, and OMWD's Board of Directors.

This report is comprised of three main components, beginning with an overview of legislative and regulatory outreach conducted by OMWD staff in calendar year 2024. This section begins with a summary of major developments impacting legislation during the year. The summary is followed with an outline of official legislative and regulatory correspondence sent by OMWD on key issues facing our customers, along with a summary of collaborative advocacy conducted by staff.

After a review of the past year, this report offers a general outline of policy and regulatory issues that are anticipated in calendar year 2025. This assessment is formulated through staff analysis, with information from professional representatives.

Finally, the report concludes with OMWD's Legislative Guidelines, which were approved at the January 15, 2025 Board of Directors meeting. OMWD staff uses these guidelines to take action on pressing issues, provide regulatory comments, and take positions on pending legislation.

REVIEW OF 2024

SUMMARY

Legislative Session Overview

California's 2023-2024 legislative session concluded on August 31, 2024. Over 4,821 bills were introduced, with 1,206 reaching the governor's desk. Of these, 1,017 were signed into law, while 189 were vetoed largely due to budget constraints.

Throughout the year, Olivenhain Municipal Water District prioritized advocacy on key legislative issues, including regulatory standards, water affordability policy, Proposition 218 reforms, labor and contracting policy, and water and wastewater-related legislation.

Regulatory and Rulemaking Updates

State Water Resources Control Board finalized the long-term water conservation standards and announced on October 22, 2024 that the Office of Administrative Law had approved the Long-term Water Conservation Standards "Framework" Regulation. The first compliance deadline was set for January 1, 2025, and applied to annual reports that urban water suppliers submit to Department of Water Resources and SWRCB. Throughout 2024, OMWD submitted comments to SWRCB on the proposed Regulatory Framework for Making Conservation a California Way of Life. While the adopted regulations addressed some of OMWD's feasibility, cost, and flexibility concerns, SWRCB did not resolve all of OMWD's concerns, as shared in several comment letters and stakeholder workshops in 2024. The new rules affect how much water OMWD can provide customers and don't consider available water supplies.

California Air Resources Board conducted workshops throughout 2024 on targeted amendments to the Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation, refining requirements for fleet transitions under AB 1594 (2023). OMWD continued to monitor and engage, as necessary. Meanwhile, new PFAS regulations were introduced at the federal level, with OMWD supporting PFAS liability protections for water and wastewater agencies under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. OMWD continues to advocate for the CERCLA "polluter pays" principle to protect water systems and ratepayers served by supporting a tailored legislative exemption from PFAS liability.

OMWD also provided input on US Environmental Protection Agency's National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper. OMWD shared concerns regarding lead service line replacement requirements and the unprecedented transfer of liability and costs to the public associated with replacing customer-owned service lines.

Additionally, OMWD and San Diego County Water Authority advocated for updates to California Public Contract Code to promote greater procurement flexibility while maintaining fiscal accountability.

Water Affordability and Proposition 4

Recognizing water affordability as a key issue, Senator Durazo introduced SB 1255 to establish a Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance program. While well-intentioned, the bill raised transparency, data security, administrative burdens, and inevitable financial impacts on ineligible ratepayers. The bill proposed an opt-out funding mechanism, requiring water agencies to collect voluntary contributions unless customers explicitly declined. Additionally, Propositions 218 and 26 legally constrained the redistribution of funds under the proposed framework. Nossaman worked closely with Association of California Water Agencies at the end of the legislative session to raise these concerns and request the bill be held in the fiscal committee. Due to significant fiscal and regulatory concerns, SB 1255 stalled in the Assembly Appropriations Committee's suspense file and failed to advance.

Following the bill's failure, OMWD led a coalition of San Diego water districts and sent a comment letter to Senator Durazo, urging a review of the AB 401 report and advocating for a more sustainable, data-driven approach to long-term affordability. OMWD and the coalition offered potential solutions and input in developing an effective, mutually agreeable program in the new legislative session. Additionally, Nossaman coordinated a meeting with State Water Resources Control Board to discuss the AB 401 report and concerns with the proposals in SB 1255. SWRCB was open to continuing the dialogue on this issue.

Meanwhile, voters approved Proposition 4 in November 2024, authorizing \$10 billion in bonds for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, and climate resilience projects. OMWD's Board of Directors established and approved climate bond priorities, which were incorporated into OMWD's Legislative Guidelines in 2024. OMWD may choose to apply for Proposition 4 funding that will become available via competitive grant opportunities administered by California Natural Resources Agency.

Drought Conditions and Water Resilience

Improved water supply conditions in 2024 allowed for the expiration of SWRCB's drought emergency order. The drought-related State of Emergency that Governor Newsom had declared in 2021 was lifted in September 2024 for 19 coastal and desert counties representing 70 percent of California's population, including San Diego County. At the same time, however, the governor decided to keep the state of emergency in effect in California's remaining 39 counties, where significant impacts from the multi-year drought persisted. These 39 counties included part of the Central Valley and in the watersheds of the Scott, Shasta, and Klamath rivers, among other areas where long-term recovery from the three driest years on record continued. In addition, SWRCB's emergency regulations to ban decorative grass watering in commercial, industrial, and institutional areas expired in June 2024.

OMWD activated Level 1 of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan in 2016. At the Level 1 condition, customers were encouraged to take voluntary actions to reduce water waste, such as promptly fixing leaks, preventing runoff from inefficient irrigation, irrigating only during night and early morning hours, and avoiding washing down paved surfaces.

Throughout 2024, OMWD continued to champion funding for recycled water infrastructure, which resulted in the savings of more than 12.5 million gallons of imported water each year. OMWD was successful in achieving approximately \$900,000 in grant funding toward 2024 recycled water projects from the US Bureau of Reclamation, and the California Department of Water Resources to offset project costs and make these projects more cost-effective for OMWD ratepayers.

While California's surface water conditions greatly improved in 2024, the state remained ready to respond to changing water conditions. OMWD, along with a statewide coalition, worked to raise awareness among California policymakers and leaders on the ongoing water supply crisis. OMWD supported SB 366 through the legislature in 2024, which would have set specific targets for new water supply development and adequate funding for water supply projects. With estimates that hotter, drier conditions could reduce California's water supply, the state worked on approaches to safeguard and boost water supplies as outlined in the California Water Plan, Water Supply Strategy, and Water Resilience Portfolio. Although SB 366 was vetoed by the governor, the coalition continues to work on this important legislation, reintroduced in the new legislative session as SB 72 for sustainable water supply policies impacting future generations of Californians.

[November 2024 Election Results: Impacts on OMWD's Legislative Delegation](#)

On December 2, 2024, newly elected members of the state legislature were sworn in, resulting in 65 percent of California Assembly members having two or fewer years of legislative experience, while the Senate saw a 30 percent turnover. OMWD's state legislative delegation remained largely unchanged, except for Assemblymember Darshana Patel replacing Assemblymember Brian Maienschein.

At the federal level, Representative Adam Schiff won the US Senate seat replacing Senator Laphonza Butler, who resigned effective December 8, 2024. Governor Newsom appointed Senator-elect Schiff to complete the remainder of the term before his elected service officially began.

OMWD’S LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY OUTREACH

On nearly a daily basis, OMWD’s public affairs team communicates and works with San Diego County Water Authority, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, neighboring agencies, elected representatives, advocacy organizations, along with state and federal agencies on a wide array of issues. These communications are made through formal correspondence and collaborative meetings.

Formal Correspondence

On occasion, OMWD provides formal comments on proposed regulatory frameworks and takes positions on proposed legislation and policies. The list below provides an at-a-glance “snapshot” of the formal correspondence OMWD produced in 2024:

February 1, 2024 Comments provided to United States Environmental Protection Agency regarding national primary drinking water regulations for lead and copper.

February 14, 2024 Position letter provided to California State Assembly in support of AB 2257, which would authorize public agencies to adopt procedures for the submittal and consideration of public comments regarding proposed water and sewer rates and assessments.

March 11, 2024 Position letter provided to United States Senate supporting perfluoroalkyl substances liability protections for water and wastewater agencies under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act.

March 13, 2024 Position letter provided to California State Senate in support of SB 1218, which would enact a state policy to encourage greater investment and development in emergency water supplies across the state.

March 21, 2024 Position letter provided to members of United States House of Representatives in support of H.R. 7525, which would direct federal agencies to recognize special districts as local governments for the

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In 2024, OMWD produced 38 comments on proposed regulatory frameworks and positions on proposed legislation and policies.

purpose of ensuring that districts are eligible to receive appropriate forms of federal assistance, including funding and resources through key grant programs.

- March 25, 2024** Comment letter provided to California Department of Housing and Community Development related to the Surplus Land Act draft updated guidelines, which were inconsistent with recently adopted statutes that could result in operational challenges for special districts.
- March 25, 2024** Comment letter provided to State Water Resources Control Board regarding proposed regulations on Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life.
- March 27, 2024** Coalition comment letter provided to State Water Resources Control Board regarding regulations on Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life.
- April 9, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to member of California State Senate in support of SB 1218, which would enact a state policy to encourage greater investment and development in emergency water supplies across the state.
- April 17, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to California State Assembly in support of SB 366, which would bring fundamental changes necessary to ensure a sustainable water future.
- April 24, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to California State Assembly in support of AB 2257, which would authorize public agencies to adopt procedures for the submittal and consideration of public comments regarding proposed water and sewer rates and assessments.
- May 2, 2024** Position letter provided to members of California State Assembly in support of AB 1827, which would clarify that the law allows a water supplier to impose fees or charges for property-related water services that include the incrementally higher costs of water service due to higher water usage demand, maximum potential water use, and projected peak water usage parcels.

- May 8, 2024** Position letter provided to California State Assembly in support of SB 366, which would bring fundamental changes necessary to ensure a sustainable water future.
- May 20, 2024** Coalition floor alert sent to California State Senate supporting SB 1218, which would enact a state policy to encourage greater investment in and development of emergency water supplies across the state.
- May 29, 2024** Comment letter provided to members of United States Senate, offering input on the proposed Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act (S. 3830), which would permanently enshrine low-income water and wastewater ratepayer aid in the federal safety net.
- May 29, 2024** Position letter provided to California State Senate in support of SB 1072, which would provide that if a court determines that a fee or charge for a property-related service violates Proposition 218, then the local agency must credit that amount against the cost of providing the property related service.
- May 29, 2024** Comment letter provided to State Water Resources Control Board, offering input on proposed regulations on Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life.
- June 3, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to California State Assembly supporting SB 366, which would bring fundamental changes necessary to ensure a sustainable water future.
- June 4, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to California State Senate supporting AB 2257, which would authorize public agencies to adopt procedures for the submittal and consideration of public comments regarding proposed water and sewer rates and assessments.
- June 10, 2024** Position letters provided to members of California State Senate opposing SB 1255, which would establish a low-income rate assistance program that conflicts with State Water Resources Control Board recommendations and worsen the affordability crisis, among other concerns.
- June 24, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to California State Senate supporting AB 2257, which would authorize public agencies to adopt procedures for the

submittal and consideration of public comments regarding proposed water and sewer rates and assessments.

- June 28, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to members of California State Assembly supporting SB 1218, which would enact a state policy to encourage greater investment and development in emergency water supplies across the state.
- June 28, 2024** Comment letter provided to State Water Resources Control Board offering input on proposed regulations on Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life.
- July 1, 2024** Coalition comment letter provided to State Water Resources Control Board sharing feedback on proposed regulations on Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life.
- July 2, 2024** Position letter provided to members of California State Assembly opposing SB 1255, which would establish a low-income rate assistance program that conflicts with State Water Resources Control Board recommendations and worsen the affordability crisis, among other concerns.
- July 23, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to members of California State Assembly opposing SB 1255, which would establish a low-income rate assistance program that conflicts with State Water Resources Control Board recommendations and worsen the affordability crisis, among other concerns.
- July 29, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to members of California State Assembly opposing SB 1255, which would establish a low-income rate assistance program that conflicts with State Water Resources Control Board recommendations and worsen the affordability crisis, among other concerns.
- August 1, 2024** Position letter provided to California State Assembly supporting SB 366, which would bring fundamental changes necessary to ensure a sustainable water future.

- August 5, 2024** Coalition Senate floor alert provided to each California State Senate office supporting AB 2257, which would authorize public agencies to adopt procedures for the submittal and consideration of public comments regarding proposed water and sewer rates and assessments.
- August 6, 2024** Position letter provided to members of California State Senate supporting SB 1330, which would make substantial changes to the urban water use efficiency framework including moving several dates to reflect implementation delays, among other provisions.
- August 23, 2024** Position letter provided to member of California State Assembly supporting SB 366, which would bring fundamental changes necessary to ensure a sustainable water future.
- August 26, 2024** Position letter provided to California State Governor in support of AB 1827, which would clarify that the law allows a water supplier to impose fees or charges for property-related water services that include the incrementally higher costs of water service due to higher water usage demand, maximum potential water use, and projected peak water usage parcels.
- August 29, 2024** Position letter of support provided to California State Governor regarding SB 366, which would bring fundamental changes necessary to ensure a sustainable water future.
- August 30, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to California State Governor in support of AB 2257, which would authorize public agencies to adopt procedures for the submittal and consideration of public comments regarding proposed water and sewer rates and assessments.
- September 12, 2024** Position letter provided to California State Governor requesting veto of SB 399, which would prohibit an employer from subjecting, or threatening to subject, an employee to any adverse action because the employee declines to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or affirmatively declines to participate in, receive, or listen to any communications with the employer, the purpose of which is to communicate the employer's opinion about religious or political matters.

- September 19, 2024** Coalition position letter provided to members of United States House of Representatives and United States Senate, opposing proposed budget cut to the Title XVI Water Reuse Grants Program.
- November 8, 2024** Position letter of support provided to United States Bureau of Reclamation for the San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Program's Landscape Efficiency and Direct Installation Project for funding.
- December 11, 2024** Coalition comment letter provided to a member of California State Senate, offering input and requesting collaboration in developing new legislation that considers solutions for a state-administered, statewide low-income water rate assistance program.

Legislative and Regulatory Collaboration

OMWD collaborates extensively with partners and stakeholders throughout California. Staff participates in multiple meetings to advocate for OMWD customers on a wide range of issues from water reuse to governance of water resources in the San Diego region. The list below provides an overview of the meetings and agencies OMWD worked on within 2024:

Association of California Water Agencies

ACWA Fall and Spring Conferences & Exhibitions

ACWA conferences offer comprehensive and relevant analyses of issues surrounding the reliable delivery of safe water to millions of Californians. The OMWD Board of Directors and General Manager attended these conferences in 2024.

300

In 2024, OMWD participated in over 300 meetings or workgroups with partners and stakeholders.

ACWA Region 10

As a member of ACWA Region 10, OMWD's General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner participated in the election of officers. OMWD attended the ACWA Region 10 meeting held at Santa Fe Irrigation District in January 2024.

ACWA Monday Morning Lobby Group Meeting

Nossaman, LLP participates in these meetings that include lobbyists representing the water industry from all over California.

ACWA Regulatory Committees: Water Management, Water Quality, Energy, Groundwater and Legal Affairs

Nossaman, LLP regulatory subconsultants participate in these regulatory meetings on behalf of OMWD. OMWD's Director Meyers serves on ACWA's Legal Affairs Committee for the 2024-2025 term, and Director Maloni served on ACWA's Energy Committee in 2024.

American Public Works Association-San Diego Chapter Meeting

American Public Works Association provides education, idea exchange, and networking opportunities through a network of professionals dedicated to public works.

American Water Works Association California-Nevada Section

AWWA is an international, nonprofit, scientific, and educational society dedicated to providing total water solutions, assuring the effective management of water. OMWD holds a membership with the AWWA California-Nevada Section.

San Diego Women in Water

San Diego Women in Water January Meeting

The January 2024 San Diego Women in Water meeting was held in the City of Carlsbad. OMWD's General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner attended to share ideas and connect with industry professionals.

San Diego Women in Water August Meeting

The August 2024 San Diego Women in Water meeting held at Sweetwater Authority's Robert A. Perdue Water Treatment Plant (and co-sponsored by OMWD, Otay Water District, and Santa Fe Irrigation District) brought more than 150 water professionals and elected officials together, including OMWD's General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner, to exchange ideas with industry professionals.

Women in Water Symposium

The Women in Water Symposium (in partnership with Cuyamaca College) is a multi-day, online conference offering workshops for students, water industry professionals, and those exploring careers in water and wastewater.

CalDesal

CalDesal is a statewide association comprised of water industry leaders, representing public and private sector entities as well as non-profit organizations, integrating the use of desalination to ensure a sustainable water future for communities throughout California. OMWD's Assistant General Manager Joseph Randall, serves on the Regulatory Committee. OMWD's involvement in CalDesal speaks to regional collaboration, industry leadership, and knowledge sharing in desalination and water sustainability.

California Special Districts Association

CSDA Special Districts Annual Conference

This annual conference highlights in-depth topics on issues that special districts are facing through presentations and panel discussions. General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner presented at the "So You Want to be a General Manager" workshop, supporting the development of the next generation of general managers.

CSDA San Diego Chapter Quarterly Meeting

These quarterly meetings are attended by CSDA members, including OMWD, other special districts, and representatives of industry. Meetings discuss upcoming legislation, regulatory changes, and conversations on good governance and improving core local services through professional development, advocacy, and other services for special districts.

CSDA Special District Leadership Academy

Provides the knowledge base to perform essential governance responsibilities and is designed for both new and experienced special district board members. Modules include courses on

Governance Foundations, Setting Direction/Community Leadership, Board's Role in Human Resources, and the Board's Role in Finance and Fiscal Accountability. General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner served as faculty for this program in 2024.

CSDA Special District Leadership Foundation

OMWD achieved reaccreditation with the District of Distinction Award at the Platinum level (one of the most prestigious local government awards in the state of California) in 2022, which remains valid for three years. This award recognizes OMWD's commitment to good governance, and to ethical and sound operating practices.

Council of Water Utilities San Diego County

COWU is a quarterly forum for regional San Diego water utility agencies. Meetings are designed to inform participants and share information relevant to water and related agencies. These monthly collaborative meetings have also included notable guest speakers from the water industry.

County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health and Quality - Recycled Water Program & Recycled Water Purveyors

San Diego County Department of Health and Quality recycled water staff meets biannually with San Diego's large recycled water system purveyors and OMWD staff. Discussions primarily focus on recycled water use management processes and procedures to protect the public from potential health risks associated with cross-connections of recycled water and drinking water supplies. Meetings also facilitate discussion on preventing health risks from direct contact with recycled water.

Cross-Connection Control Advisory Committee of San Diego

As a nonprofit, the Cross-Connection Control Advisory Committee is a collaborative effort between stakeholders concerned with a safe and healthy water supply. The Cross-Connection Control Advisory Committee exists to protect the public health by increasing awareness of the best cross-connection control and backflow prevention methods. OMWD staff participates in biannual meetings of the Cross-Connection Control Advisory Committee, working to prevent dangerous backflow into potable water systems.

Center for Water Studies Industry Advisory Commission at Cuyamaca College

The IAC plays a critical role in ensuring that Cuyamaca College's program meets the water industry's employment needs and assists the Center for Water Studies staff in staying current on local waterworks issues so that programs have the necessary resources to meet the challenges ahead. General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner and Operations Manager Jesse Bartlett-May served on this Advisory Commission in 2024 and will continue to serve in 2025.

Local Agency Formation Commission - San Diego

Special Districts Advisory Committee

OMWD's General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner serves as Chair of San Diego LAFCO's Special Districts Advisory Committee. The committee provides feedback and recommendations on germane topics to assist LAFCO in fulfilling its regulatory and planning functions.

Bylaws, Rules, and Policy Review Ad hoc Committee

The ad hoc committee reviews and considers modernizing its rules as part of the Commission's adopted work plan. OMWD's General Manager, Kimberly A. Thorner, serves as Chair of this ad hoc committee.

Municipal Service Review for Water Wholesalers Advisory Committee

The committee advises on matters related to water wholesaling within the San Diego region. General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner served on this committee in 2024 and will continue to serve in 2025.

North San Diego Water Reuse Coalition

The NSDWRC consists of nine water and wastewater agencies collaborating and taking inventory of where there is a supply of wastewater and a demand for recycled water for irrigation, industrial, or potable uses. The coalition periodically meets with legislators, works with BlueWater Strategies, LLC to assist in securing grant funding, and makes advocacy trips when possible.

One Water North San Diego Coalition

The coalition consists of local agencies in North County who actively support a future regional Potable Reuse project. These agencies will have input into the final potable reuse concept, institutional structure, financing approach, and branding efforts.

San Diego County Water Authority

Board of Directors

SDCWA is governed by a 34-member board of directors representing the 22 member agencies in San Diego County, one of which is OMWD. The board of directors establishes and administers policies for SDCWA at its monthly meetings. OMWD's Board of Directors appointed Director Meyers as its representative to the SDCWA board of directors in 2024.



Administrative and Finance Committee

The committee is responsible for administrative and finance matters, including rates, fees, charges, other sources of revenue, budget, and investments. Administrative responsibilities include human resources, employer-employee relations, information technology, insurance, risk management, and other matters of general business operations. Director Meyers served on this committee in 2024.

Imported Water Committee

The Imported Water Committee is responsible for imported water supply matters including: activities and issues as a member agency of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; administration of the Quantification Settlement Agreement and related agreements; Colorado River Board; State Water Project; CalFed; and other matters relating to water supplies from sources outside San Diego County. Director Meyers served as Vice Chair of this committee in 2024 and will serve as Chair in 2025.

Finance Planning Work Group

General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner served on the Finance Planning Work Group which aimed to evaluate and enhance prudent financial practices, policies, and opportunities in collaboration with member agencies.

Joint Public Information Council

SDCWA hosts monthly JPIC meetings with representatives from its member agencies, including OMWD. Representatives to these collaborative meetings discuss ongoing regional water topics focused, outreach initiatives, and a focus on water conservation issues.

Member Agency Managers Meeting

This meeting is held monthly to discuss and coordinate upcoming SDCWA topics and their impact on member agencies. General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner attends monthly meetings and hosted one meeting at OMWD headquarters in 2024.

Member Agency Managers / Member Agency Finance Officers Work Group

This workgroup meets to discuss and coordinate rate design and its impact on member agencies. General Manager Thorner and OMWD's Finance Officer served on this committee which met seven times in 2024.

Member Agency Legislative Liaisons Meeting

Hosted by SDCWA's Manager of Government Relations, this meeting discusses water legislation and updates from Sacramento. OMWD staff and Nossaman, LLP participate in the meetings, which are held monthly. The Legislative Liaisons Meeting also strives to set up yearly meetings with select legislators.

San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Group/Regional Advisory Committee

The Regional Advisory Committee to San Diego IRWM plays a critical role in shaping and developing such key elements of the IRWM Plan as goals and objectives, long-term targets, the proposed institutional structure, and project prioritization. The Regional Advisory Committee currently meets on a bi-monthly basis to provide guidance on upcoming IRWM planning and funding application activities. OMWD is represented by General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner, with Assistant General Manager Joey Randall serving as an alternate member.

San Diego North Economic Development Council

OMWD participates in SDNEDC's quarterly meetings with the mission of building a stronger North County economy through regional collaboration and leadership. SDNEDC facilitates public and private sectors working together as community partners to sustain and strategically grow the economic base of northern San Diego County. OMWD is represented by Assistant General Manager Joey Randall serving on the board.

WateReuse Association

California Board of Trustees

WateReuse is a trade association that focuses on advancing laws, policy, and funding to increase water reuse. The California section is governed by the Board of Trustees and is actively engaged in working with appointed and elected officials to pass legislation and develop regulations that will accelerate the implementation of both non-potable and potable reuse. OMWD's General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner was an officer of the Board of Trustees, serving as Secretary, and also served on the Executive Committee in 2024 (serving in this capacity for six years). WateReuse California Board of Trustees and Executive Committee meet monthly.

WateReuse Executive Committee

General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner served on the Executive Committee as Secretary, through the end of her term in 2024. The Executive Committee meets and plans all Association agendas and activities.

WateReuse CA Legislative and Regulatory Committee

The Legislative and Regulatory Committee reviews, analyzes, and recommends positions on state legislation that affects the goals and objectives of the section and its membership. Policy framework and the annual agenda for advocacy are established through the group.

California Communications Collaborative Group

The group provides a forum to discuss and collaborate on potable water reuse communications. Participants meet quarterly to learn about current challenges facing reuse communications, discuss tools and resources, and network with colleagues.

San Diego Regional Chapter

The San Diego Regional Chapter of the WateReuse Association provides a quarterly forum for

the exchange of information to promote the beneficial use of recycled water in the San Diego region. In 2024, OMWD Engineering Manager Lindsey Stephenson served as board president, and participated in monthly board meetings. Members of the San Diego Regional Chapter include recycled water purveyors, recycled water customers, regulatory agencies, engineering and consulting firms, and equipment vendors.

WateReuse California Annual Conference

The annual WateReuse conference features numerous technical sessions and panels on the most pressing reuse issues in the state.

WateReuse Symposium

The annual WateReuse Symposium provides a virtual online event about water reuse policy, technology, operations, research, and public acceptance. Presenters and exhibitors include elected officials, academic researchers, public officials, and industry leaders. Attendees also participate in several session groups with experts to advance the goals of WateReuse.

Urban Water Institute

OMWD participates in the annual conference. The group provides non-partisan information to the water industry with an emphasis on water economics, management, and resource policies as they affect consumers and the general economy.

Water for All (SB 366)

Water for All seeks to raise awareness among California policymakers and leaders on the ongoing water supply crisis impacting residents, economic growth, community health, the environment, and the future generation of Californians. General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner serves as an officer on the steering committee as well as the board of directors, which are comprised of 15 general managers representing each California region.

In 2024, General Manager Kimberly A. Thorner advocated for SB 366 through a series of meetings with Assemblymember Christopher Ward, Assemblymember Dr. Akilah Weber, and Senator Brian Jones. OMWD staff briefed San Diego Union-Tribune on the Legislative Analyst's Office report on urban conservation regulations and how they related to SB 366 for an editorial.

With the statewide coalition, OMWD successfully advanced SB 366 through the legislature, which would have set specific targets for new water supply development and adequate funding for these projects. However, this bill was vetoed by the governor in 2024. The coalition will need to continue to work on this important legislation in 2025, which has been reintroduced as SB 72.

State Water Resources Control Board Meetings

The State Water Resources Control Board held meetings regarding emergency regulations to prohibit wasteful water use practices in 2024 to save water and preserve California's water

supply. OMWD Public Affairs Supervisor Brian Sodeman participated in these meetings and provided testimony on a draft proposed emergency regulation for water conservation.

State Legislature Committee Hearings

Nossaman, LLP conveyed OMWD’s legislative positions on proposed bills through testimony at approximately 24 committee hearings throughout the year.

ANTICIPATED ISSUES IN 2025

SUMMARY

OMWD has developed a general outlook regarding anticipated legislation and legislative/regulatory areas of focus expected in 2025. This assessment is formulated through staff analysis, with information from professional representatives.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

- State funding for potential federally frozen grant funding
- Cross-connection and backflow protection control policy
- Direct potable reuse
- Recycled water regulations
- Water use efficiency standards and making conservation a way of life:
 - Water Loss
 - Indoor Water Efficiency Standard
 - Outdoor Water Use Standard
 - CII Dedicated Irrigation Meter Standard
 - Annual Water Supply and Demand Assessment
- Water affordability
- Low-income water rate assistance
- Lead and copper regulations
- PFAS regulations and CERCLA designation rule without exempting water and wastewater systems
- Natural resource protection and restoration
- Emergency preparedness and planning
- Dams and water storage
- Climate change resilience
- Public meetings and the Brown Act
- Cybersecurity
- Climate change bond allocations and implementation
- Balancing the state budget
- Co-sponsor a legislative measure with SDCWA to amend California Public Contract Code:
 - Adjust the authority limit from \$35,000 to \$70,000
 - Align the code with established procurement practices

- Account for CPI inflation since 1999
- New legislator outreach and education

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Potential impact on the continuity of federal grant funding due to administration transition
- Tariffs on imports imposed by the new administration
- Colorado River crisis
- PFAS regulations and CERCLA designation rule without exempting water and wastewater systems
- Federal court finding that EPA must take regulatory action to evaluate risk of fluoridation of drinking water
- Governance at water wholesalers
- San Diego's congressional delegation will be contacted and informed of projects and needed policy changes based upon OMWD board adopted positions in the Legislative Guidelines

LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Olivenhain Municipal Water District is a multi-purpose public agency established in 1959. OMWD provides water, wastewater, recycled water, and recreation management services to its customers in northern San Diego County.

OMWD faces water supply uncertainty in addition to minimal growth necessitating the acquisition and development of water treatment and supply opportunities, infrastructure expansion and improvements, and enhanced customer services. OMWD also operates in an environment of escalating costs, increased regulatory compliance, customer demands for continuously improving services, and competition for resources.

In this dynamic environment, OMWD strives to accomplish its mission of providing safe, reliable water, wastewater, and recycled water services to its customers in a cost-efficient and environmentally responsible manner. To support the accomplishment of this objective, OMWD has developed a legislative program to represent its interests and those of its customers in Sacramento and Washington, DC. OMWD is fully committed to proactive legislative action in a rapidly changing water supply environment.

These guidelines provide direction to staff as to how to respond to state and federal legislation that may impact OMWD. The guidelines may also be applied as appropriate to administrative or regulatory issues of concern. Legislation that meets or fails to meet the principles set forth in these guidelines may be supported or opposed accordingly. These guidelines permit staff to act expeditiously between board meetings on issues that fall within the guidelines; such actions are then reported to the board at their next meeting. Staff will not act upon legislation with potentially complicated, cost-prohibitive, or indeterminate implications without guidance from the board. Concepts for new legislation may be presented to the board for action in the event that OMWD seeks sponsorship of a bill.

OMWD will also use the monthly Legislative Report to inform the board and generate discussion of legislative, regulatory, or administrative items of significance.

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

- Staff will maintain a current list of bills or proposed legislation that may affect OMWD and its customers
- Staff will prepare regular updates accessible to OMWD's Board of Directors, the General Manager, and the executive team
- Staff will represent OMWD before state and federal legislative and administrative bodies
- Staff will defend, sponsor, or promote legislation that serves OMWD and its customers

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCATE

OMWD's current state legislative advocate is Nossaman, LLP. The firm's scope of work includes but is not limited to reporting to the board and staff on legislation, budget action, and regulatory action that may affect OMWD; making recommendations to OMWD regarding strategy on when to engage on issues impacting OMWD; conveying the positions of OMWD through direct advocacy with Sacramento decision-makers; ensuring that OMWD is part of all discussion and negotiation before legislation and regulatory issues are finalized; facilitating meetings for OMWD with legislators/regulatory decision makers; and assisting OMWD in educating local and state policymakers/regulators on the development of local water supply projects within OMWD's service territory.

In the role of state legislative advocate, Nossaman, LLP's scope also includes identifying grant opportunities for the priority projects of OMWD; providing strategy on drafting and coordinating the preparation of grant applications for state funding and/or Integrated Regional Water Management opportunities; meeting with relevant state agency staff to review the scope of projects and review the components necessary to submit successful grant applications; coordinating support for grant applications from local government partners, local organizations, political leaders, and community groups; providing direct advocacy for grant projects with SWRCB members and/or executive staff; providing availability to meet with regional partners, district leadership, board members, or the community to educate and advocate for grant projects; and providing other services as determined by mutual agreement that will lead to OMWD receiving state financial assistance for construction of a project.

In addition, OMWD's current federal legislative advocate is BlueWater Strategies, LLC. The firm's scope of work is to assist OMWD and its North San Diego Water Reuse Coalition partners with federal lobbying and government relations services.

GUIDELINES FOR POLICY ON LEGISLATION

OMWD's Legislative Guidelines for the current legislative session shall be applied at the direction of the General Manager as relevant legislation arises. Actions taken by staff shall be reported to the board, citing the guideline(s) with which the action complies.

I. Imported water supply - it shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Provides for development of a comprehensive state water plan that balances California's competing water needs in an equitable "fair share" approach that balances costs amongst regions and results in a reliable and affordable supply of high-quality water for the San Diego region.
2. Provides conveyance and storage facilities that are cost-effective and are proportionate to the benefits they receive, improve the reliability and quality of the San Diego region's water supplies, and protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's ecosystem.
3. Investigates and provides financial support to projects designed to mitigate potential negative impacts of climate change on water supply reliability.
4. Authorizes and appropriates the federal share of funding for the long-term Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta solution.
5. Provides the ongoing state share of funding for the long-term Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta solution.
6. Provides state funding for aquatic toxicity monitoring in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Such legislation should not place a surcharge on water supply exports nor should it substantively reduce funding for other measures that protect the environment and public health.
7. Supports implementation and funding of the California Colorado River Water Use Plan, including the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.
8. Provides funding for Colorado River salinity control projects and other water quality management efforts.

9. Encourages and facilitates voluntary water transfers and exchanges consistent with other OMWD policies and agreements.
10. Provides appropriate protection or mitigation for the environment, groundwater basins, water-rights holders, and third-party impacts within the district transferring water.
11. Streamlines the permitting and approval process for implementing transfers and exchanges that will improve water management.
12. Encourages efficient use of existing facilities to advance voluntary transfers and exchanges of water.
13. Provides an appropriate level of accountability and cost control over Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and San Diego County Water Authority spending. When time permits, legislation on this issue is to be brought to the board before any action is taken.
14. Requires Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the San Diego County Water Authority to refund or credit to their member agencies revenues collected from them that result in reserve balances greater than the maximum reserve levels established pursuant to state legislation.
15. Supports the sustainability of the Colorado River and provides operational flexibility through the development of storage, including in Lake Mead, and through the renegotiation of the new interim shortage guidelines for the Colorado River's continued operation.
16. Provides federal and/or state authorization, resources to manage, and appropriations of funding to implement, Salton Sea mitigation efforts, and the state's phased approach to restoration consistent with the Salton Sea Management Program.
17. Supports the state's Salton Sea Management Program adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board in November 2017.
18. Supports a more equitable voting structure at the San Diego County Water Authority.
19. Advances strategic long-term water management that includes the ability to transfer, share, and exchange supplies both within the state of California and across state lines.

20. Incorporates seawater desalination and brackish groundwater desalination as part of a slate of long-term infrastructure projects to support the Colorado River.
21. Advances Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta levee improvements, funded by statewide and/or federal funding, including levee modernization for the existing Delta levee system and levee maintenance programs, that protect it from earthquake and other hazards to the levee system, that improve water supply reliability, and that are not in opposition to the Delta Conveyance Project.

II. Imported Water Supply - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Establishes a broad-based user fee that does not support a specific Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta conveyance option; any fee must provide a clear nexus to the benefit the fee would provide.
2. Makes urban water supplies less reliable or substantially increases the cost of imported water without also improving the reliability and/or quality of the water.
3. Adversely affects local water management efforts.
4. Impedes the ability to implement water transfers and exchanges both inter-state and intra-state through increased regulatory or procedural impediments.
5. Does not adhere to the Law of the River, nor protect water rights.
6. As part of the development of the next set of Colorado River management guidelines, imposes potential future reductions on just the Lower Basin rather than balancing potential reductions between both the Upper and Lower Basins.

III. Local Water Resources - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Provides funding to the San Diego County Water Authority and/or its member agencies for conservation, peak management programs, water recycling (including potable reuse), groundwater recovery and recharge, surface water and groundwater development and management projects, including reservoir management, source water protection and watershed planning studies, and facilities that sustain long-term, cost-effective, and reliable water resources.

2. Provides funding to the San Diego County Water Authority and/or its member agencies for cost-effective seawater and brackish groundwater desalination studies and facilities.
3. Recognizes and supports the development of seawater desalination as a critical new water supply for the state, including San Diego County.
4. Preserves and protects potential cost-effective seawater desalination sites and existing coastal facilities including intake and discharge infrastructure that could be used or reused by a seawater desalination facility.
5. Ensures that desalination intake and discharge regulations are science-based, considering site-specific conditions, and recognizing that all technologies or mitigation strategies are feasible or cost-effective at every site.
6. Recognizes and supports the development of potable water reuse as critical water sources for San Diego County and the State of California.
7. Authorizes and/or facilitates expanded use of cost-effective local water resources including water recycling, potable reuse, graywater, and rainwater harvesting, and brackish groundwater.
8. Facilitates and encourages the safe use of rainwater capture systems (e.g., barrels and cisterns) and alternative water sources (e.g., air conditioner condensate) for use in irrigation.
9. Authorizes local governmental agencies to regulate the discharge of contaminants to the sewer collection system that may adversely affect water recycling and reuse.
10. Facilitates and encourages the use of recycled water in commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential settings.
11. Encourages dual-plumbing in all new development to enable utilization of recycled water when available.

12. Provides financial incentives to assist in the disposal of concentrate, sludge, and other byproducts created in the water treatment process and supports the appropriate degree of regulation commensurate with the effect on the environment.
13. Ensures OMWD receives the dry-year water supply benefits of its investment in local water supply sources.
14. Provides for the interchangeability of funding for groundwater and surface water enhancements to best fit the hydrogeological attributes of a particular region.
15. Provides for watershed planning, watershed signage, and actions to protect source water (including reservoirs), such as land acquisition around reservoirs, limited land use, and increased buffer areas.
16. Promotes uniform regulatory interpretation of state recycled water system standards.
17. Supports beneficial revisions to the California Plumbing Code that address recycled water systems.
18. Authorizes, promotes, and/or provides incentives or credits for development of local drought-resilient water supply projects such as desalination, non-potable recycling, and potable reuse projects.
19. Streamlines regulatory processes and requirements to encourage and support the development of potable reuse as a municipal water supply.
20. Defines purified recycled water as a source of water supply and not as waste.
21. Ensures that decision-making with regard to stormwater management and recapture is kept at the local or regional level through local water agencies, stormwater districts, cities, counties, and regional water management groups.
22. Recognizes that stormwater management and recapture are important tools in a diversified water portfolio that can help to achieve improved water quality in local

surface and groundwater supplies, augment surface and groundwater supplies for local water agencies, and promote landscape conservation from a water runoff perspective.

23. Promotes and encourages the use of stormwater best management practices to reduce pollutant loading, increase local municipal water supplies, and improve water quality through low-impact development and watershed-based stormwater treatment systems.
24. Provides incentives for the local or regional use of stormwater management, nutrient management, and/or recapture.
25. Reduces or removes regulatory hurdles that hinder the use of stormwater management and recapture.
26. Preserves local water agencies' ability to establish local priorities for water resources planning decisions.

IV. Local Water Resources - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Limits the ability of local governmental agencies to regulate the discharge of contaminants to the sewer collection system that may adversely affect water recycling and reuse.
2. Establishes unreasonable regulatory requirements or fees relative to the safe use of recycled water, which may unreasonably impede or create a disincentive to its further development.
3. Contributes to the degradation of source water quality in and around reservoirs and groundwater basins.
4. Promotes unreasonable and burdensome restrictions on reporting requirements on the effective operation of OMWD facilities, such as the classification of a water treatment plant as a chemical facility under Homeland Security reporting provisions.
5. Restricts OMWD's ability to manage, store, or distribute water supplied through actions to manage or recapture stormwater.

6. Diminishes the water rights of downstream water users through actions to manage or recapture stormwater.
7. Imposes unnecessary regulations or costs upon local retail agencies developing alternative water supplies such as recycled water, desalination, brackish groundwater desalination, etc.
8. Limits local water agencies' ability to establish local priorities for water resources planning decisions.
9. Mandates the reduction of wastewater discharges to the ocean absent the inclusion of funding to offset the significant costs of implementation.

V. Water Affordability - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Is consistent with, and does not conflict in any way with, the standard of Proposition 218 and Proposition 26 in the California Constitution regarding proportionality of water rates and cost-of-service provisions.
2. Requires data-driven analysis to be included in California's Water Plan, including water affordability analysis.
3. Creates a low-income water rate assistance program that provides financial relief to ratepayers by utilizing existing resources within the State's General Fund, or by allocating cap-and-trade funding.
4. Does not include burdensome or prescriptive mandates, including collecting water taxes or water rate and water district boundary data.
5. Creates a low-income water rate assistance program in which funding is state/or federally provided, benefit distribution is state-administered, eligibility is state-determined, and there is no direct impact or burden to retail agencies or ratepayers.

VI. Water Affordability - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Is not targeted in scope to low-income households and individuals.
2. Does not have a sustainable funding source, or relies on a water tax or water surcharge.

3. Does not use an existing benefit distribution method, and requires water agencies to create a new method.
4. Imposes unfair financial and legal leverage to other parties for damages to water infrastructure.

VII. Water Quality Issues - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Assists in achieving a year-round blend of imported water supplies that achieves board-adopted water quality objectives, which allow OMWD and the region to maximize the development of recycled water and reduce financial costs to the customer due to high levels of total dissolved solids in imported water supplies.
2. Assures cost-effective remediation and cleanup of contaminants of concern that have impacted groundwater and surface water.
3. Provides the necessary funding for research on the occurrence, treatment, health effects, and environmental clean-up related to contamination of drinking water sources.
4. Incorporates sound scientific principles in adopting drinking water standards for drinking water contaminants.
5. Provides for the protection of source water such as reservoirs and groundwater basins so that the waters can be beneficially used for consumptive purposes.
6. Implements and funds the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board's triennial review of water quality standards.
7. Supports enhancements to treatment technology beneficial to the water industry.
8. Provides funds for water treatment facility upgrades in order to comply with future regulations.
9. Exempts the conveyance, storage, or release of water supplies from regulation as a discharge under the Clean Water Act and other water quality control laws.

10. Appropriately protects drinking source water reservoirs as special-purpose, man-made water bodies different in nature than natural waterways, rivers, lakes, and coastal waters, while allowing maximum flexibility for operations as part of a managed water supply system.
11. Establishes appropriate quality standards, testing procedures, and treatment processes for emerging contaminants.
12. Directs the state's participation or assistance in water quality issues related to or threatening the Colorado River water source.
13. Provides funding and support for Colorado River salinity control projects and other water quality management efforts.
14. Alters the definition of "lead free" to reduce the permissible amount of lead in fixtures, plumbing, and pipe fittings to be installed for the delivery of drinking water.
15. Exempts purified wastewater from regulation as a discharge under the Clean Water Act.
16. Streamlines permitting of facilities constructed for the purpose of improving water quality.
17. Implements source control for management and prevention of contamination by constituents of emerging concern.

VIII. Water Quality Issues - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Creates unreasonable and costly restrictions on water treatment facilities.
2. Makes water suppliers financially and legally responsible for mitigation of pollution and/or contamination caused by third parties.
3. Makes water suppliers financially and legally responsible for testing or correcting any water quality-related issues associated with private property or on-site plumbing systems

IX. Integrated Regional Water Management Planning - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Defines the "San Diego sub-region" and "San Diego County watersheds" as those portions of the westward-flowing watersheds of the South Coast hydrologic region situated within the boundaries of San Diego County.
2. Requires the state agencies responsible for preparing the integrated regional water management grant program guidelines to conduct a comprehensive public outreach process that ensures stakeholders have an opportunity to provide adequate input on preparation of the guidelines and that the state agencies consider and respond to comments received through the outreach process.
3. Provides for population-based distribution of funds to ensure adequate distribution of grant funding throughout the state.
4. Allows for creation of sub-area plans that enhance, but do not duplicate, or replace, a larger recognized integrated regional water management plan.
5. Establishes a task force to provide recommendations to the state on improving the integrated regional water management planning process in California.
6. Provides for the use of state funds for binational projects where projects benefit water supply or water quality in the San Diego region.
7. Improves and streamlines the state's reimbursement process to ensure timely remittance of IRWM funds.
8. Promotes the ability of the Regional Water Management Group to more directly administer state grant funds specifically identified for IRWM programs.
9. Promotes cost sharing amongst regions for regional conveyance.

X. *Integrated Regional Water Management Planning - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:*

1. Dilutes public water agency participation on a Regional Water Management Group.
2. Establishes funding criteria that limit local discretion in project selection.

XI. Water Facilities/Facility Improvement - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Funds or otherwise facilitates planning, design, construction, and/or maintenance of public water storage, watershed areas, and treatment and delivery facilities and facilitates maintenance and/or enhancement of groundwater recharge spreading areas and groundwater basin rehabilitation that benefit OMWD and/or San Diego County.
2. Provides funding for water infrastructure development, security, rehabilitation, and/or replacement projects that benefit OMWD and/or San Diego County.
3. Funds enhancements to water treatment, recycling, and potable reuse facilities to meet more stringent regulations.
4. Funds improvements to water treatment facilities that allow greater use of State Project water.
5. Provides funding for the preservation of cultural resources affected by construction or operation of water conveyance and storage facilities.
6. Provides funding for habitat preservation programs that address impacts resulting from construction or operation of water system facilities.
7. Provides OMWD with greater flexibility in the management of environmental mitigation parcels.
8. Provides funding for the control, prevention, or eradication of non-indigenous aquatic species, including dreissenid mussels.
9. Authorizes state and federal wildlife agencies to provide assistance to local water agencies in the control, prevention, and eradication of non-indigenous aquatic species, including dreissenid mussels.
10. Exempts owners and operators of water supply facilities from criminal and civil liabilities associated with dreissenid mussel infestations if due diligence requirements are being met.

11. Provides incentives that encourage the optimization, expansion, and cooperative use of existing surface reservoirs.
12. Provides funding for projects that improve the security of OMWD facilities and operations.
13. Provides funding to water agencies for the voluntary retrofit of facilities for on-site generation of chlorine.
14. Permits the use of grant funding for projects implemented under public-private partnerships where the grant provides funding for a public benefit.

XII. Water Facilities/Facility Improvement - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Impairs OMWD's ability to provide and operate the necessary facilities for a safe, reliable, and operationally flexible water system.
2. Limits OMWD's sole jurisdiction over the bidding, planning, design, routing, approval, procurement, construction, operation, or maintenance of its water facilities.
3. Limits OMWD's discretion over protecting the security and privacy of comprehensive inventories of all assets, which includes infrastructure location, condition, performance, and useful life.
4. Shifts the risks of indemnity for damages and defense of claims from contractors to OMWD.
5. Impairs OMWD's ability to execute the planning, design, and construction of projects using its own employees.
6. Authorizes state and federal wildlife agencies to control, prevent, or eradicate invasive species in a way that excessively interferes with the operations or water supplies of local water agencies.

7. Requires prior to the construction of new facilities any consultation, mitigation, or restitution to the Native American Heritage Commission and/or local tribal authorities additional to the existing requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
8. Prohibits or in any way limits the ability of water agencies from making full beneficial use of any water, wastewater, or recycling facility and resource investments.
9. Impedes individual water agency discretion for achieving water loss efficiency objectives or any state-mandated water use efficiency goals, targets, or standards.
10. Establishes meter testing requirements that fail to consider industry standards and cost-effectiveness.
11. Limits the autonomy or discretion of water suppliers to develop and execute asset management inspection programs that include visual inspections, internal/external inspections, asset condition assessments, and corrosion mitigation in a manner that recognizes the individuality and uniqueness of each water supplier and its systems.

XIII. Water Use Efficiency - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Preserves individual water agency discretion and options for achieving water use efficiency objectives or any state-mandated water use efficiency goals, targets, or standards.
2. Establishes multiple compliance options for urban retail water suppliers for achieving water use efficiency objectives or any state-mandated water use efficiency goals, targets, or standards.
3. Establishes an appropriate existing "baseline" and recognizes unique hydrology, weather, and land-use patterns, as well as past conservation efforts, within a particular water supplier's jurisdiction for achieving water use efficiency objectives or any state-mandated water use efficiency goals, targets, or standards.
4. Provides full credit for past and future distribution of recycled water for non-potable uses and indirect potable groundwater recharge and reservoir augmentation where advanced treatment is part of the full treatment.

5. Allows for individual water agencies to collaborate, if so desired, to establish integrated regional water conservation goals.
6. Allows for local agencies to account for all water supplies available during droughts or other events when calculating a water supply shortage level.
7. Recognizes the variations among communities, regions, and counties with respect to their abilities to withstand the impacts and effects of droughts and assurance that any temporary or permanent statutory or regulatory direction for improving water use efficiency to meet statutory or regulatory goals, targets, or standards is focused on regional achievement of objectives rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.
8. Assists OMWD's ability to provide and operate the necessary facilities for a safe, reliable, and operationally flexible water storage, treatment, and delivery system.
9. Requires installation and use of retail water meters.
10. Sets cost-effective efficiency standards for water-using devices.
11. Provides loans and grants to fund incentives for water-efficient devices or practices, and demonstration projects and studies.
12. Ensures accurate and meaningful reporting of implementation of water conservation measures.
13. Encourages implementation of effective water management practices for urban landscape and agricultural irrigation.
14. Recognizes local control in determining water use efficiency criteria, such as the impact of recycled water salinity on irrigation use and efficiency for the application of non-potable recycled water
15. Encourages the use of decentralized non-potable water systems and graywater where it complies with local guidelines and regulations and is cost-effective.

16. Establishes standards for the utilization of high-efficiency commercial and residential clothes washers.
17. Requires sub-metering connections to be built in new construction of multiple commercial or residential buildings.
18. Encourages plumbing fixture retrofit upon real property resale.
19. Encourages stakeholders to investigate and develop statewide landscape water conservation standards and regulations.
20. Restricts Property Owner Associations from forbidding the use of California native plants, other low-water-use plants, or artificial turf in well-maintained landscapes.
21. Restricts Property Owner Associations from forbidding retrofits of multiple unit facilities for the purpose of sub-metering, if feasible.
22. Ensures plumbing codes and standards facilitate the installation and/or retrofit of water-efficient devices.
23. Encourages and/or supports programs that promote a sustainable approach to landscape design, construction, and maintenance.
24. Provides for federal tax-exempt status for water use efficiency rebates, consistent with income tax treatment at the state level.
25. Recognizes local control in determining how to meet an overall efficient water use goal, based on the combined efficient indoor use, outdoor use, and leak loss, as established under the criteria provided for in any applicable statute.
26. Facilitates and encourages the development and use of new agricultural technologies (e.g., vertical farming, integrated remote soil moisture monitoring, hydroponics) resulting in irrigation water savings and other “Agtech” irrigation water savings technologies.
27. Supports and encourages the transfer and storage of water during both emergency and non-emergency conditions to reduce the impact of drought.

28. Streamlines reporting requirements to reduce redundant efforts.

XIV. Water Use Efficiency - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Repeals cost-effective efficiency standards for water-using devices.
2. Prescribes mandatory urban water conservation management practices that override the authority of the board of directors of local water agencies to adopt management practices that are most appropriate for the specific needs of their water agencies.
3. Prescribes mandatory conservation-based rate structures that override the authority of the boards of directors of local water agencies to set rate structures and management practices according to the specific needs of the water agencies in accordance with cost-of-service requirements.
4. Creates a disincentive or impedes water agencies from making investments to maximize the potential for recycled water, potable reuse, desalination, and other drought-resilient water supplies.
5. Mandates regulation of the commercial sector in a manner that is discriminatory, sets unachievable compliance targets, or would otherwise impair economic activity or the viability of the commercial sector.
6. Requires redundant reporting of water conservation-related information.

XV. Biological and Habitat Preservation - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Supports development of comprehensive multi-species habitat conservation plans that anticipate and mitigate project development impacts while preserving representative ecosystems, rather than individual species.
2. Exempts operation, maintenance, and repair of water system facilities from endangered species and other habitat conservation regulations because they provide beneficial cyclical habitat values to declining species and foster biological diversity in California.
3. Provides environmental regulatory certainty for implementation of existing and proposed long-term water supply programs.

4. Authorizes federal and state funding to develop and implement regional or sub-regional wildlife and habitat conservation programs, including but not limited to property acquisition, re-vegetation programs, and watershed plans.
5. Incorporates an emergency exemption for "take" of a listed species listed under the state or federal Endangered Species Acts when necessary to mitigate or prevent loss of or damage to life, health, property, or essential public services.
6. Encourages species listings, critical habitat designation, and recovery plans developed pursuant to the state or federal Endangered Species Acts to be consistent with existing interstate compacts, tribal treaties, and other state and federal agreements.
7. Provides federal and/or state funding to implement actions that address the ecological, watershed, and water supply management issues of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta.
8. Provides federal and/or state funding for restoration of the Salton Sea.
9. Consolidates wetland regulations to alleviate multi-agency jurisdiction over the same environmental resource. Supports development of comprehensive multi-species habitat conservation plans that anticipate and mitigate project development impacts while preserving representative ecosystems, rather than individual species.

XVI. *Biological and Habitat Preservation - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:*

1. Provides for after-the-fact reduction in quantity or quality of a public water supply due to new restrictions on the operation or use of water supply facilities unless, funding for alternate sources of water is provided.
2. Imposes endangered species or habitat conservation requirements that restrict the operation, maintenance, or repair of public water supply, conveyance, treatment, or storage facilities.

3. Imposes a “user utility fee” or “surcharge” on water for the purposes of financing open space/habitat preservation, restoration, or creation.

XVII. Fiscal Policy and Water Rates - It shall be OMWD’s policy to support legislation that:

1. Requires the federal and state governments to provide a subvention to reimburse local governments for all mandated costs or regulatory actions.
2. Provides OMWD with additional forms of cost-effective financing for public facilities.
3. Provides OMWD with grant funding for public facilities.
4. Provides OMWD with additional investment opportunities.
5. Maintains the authority and requirements of water agencies to establish water rates, consistent with cost-of-service requirements of the law.
6. Maximizes the ability of water agencies to design rate structures to meet local water supply goals.
7. Protects or enhances OMWD’s ability to receive/collect funds it is owed.
8. Provides OMWD and water ratepayers with financial relief during economic downturns and/or economic shocks such as pandemics through a variety of means, including but not limited to, direct financial assistance and flexibility in debt management.
9. Makes updates to Public Contract Code to establish reasonable limits for public works contracts and allow OMWD the flexibility to cost-effectively procure goods and services according to its needs.

XVIII. Fiscal Policy and Water Rates - It shall be OMWD’s policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Imposes mandated costs or regulatory constraints on local governments without providing subventions to reimburse local governments for such costs.
2. Is inconsistent with OMWD’s current investment policies and practices.

3. Makes any unilateral reallocation of OMWD's revenues by the state.
4. Impairs OMWD's ability to provide reliable service at reasonable costs or to charge the same or similar rate for each class of service consistent with cost-of-service requirements of the law.
5. Pre-empts OMWD's ability to impose or change rate charges, fees, or assessments.
6. Impairs OMWD's ability to maintain reasonable reserve funds and obtain and retain reasonable rates of return on its reserve accounts.
7. Imposes additional administrative requirements and/or restricts OMWD or its ability to finance public facilities through the issuance of long-term debt.
8. Reduces OMWD's revenues without giving OMWD a commensurate public benefit that is clearly identifiable and separate from a general statewide benefit.
9. Restructures OMWD's responsibilities without also providing the commensurate restructuring of revenues.
10. Requires the expenditure of OMWD or member agency funds to accomplish federal water supply commitments such as may be required in national treaties.
11. Weakens the protections afforded OMWD under California's Proposition 1A (2004) or Proposition 26 (2010).
12. Mandates a specific rate structure for retail water agencies.
13. Imposes a water user fee on water agencies or water users that do not provide a commensurate and directly linked local benefit in the local area or region from which the water user fee is collected.
14. Imposes a water user fee for statewide projects or programs for which the projects or programs are not clearly defined, the beneficiaries identified, and the reasonable cost identified.

15. Imposes a water user fee in order to create a state fund that can be used to finance undefined future projects and programs.
16. Imposes a “public goods charge” on public water agencies or their ratepayers.
17. Interferes with the responsibility of a region, operating under an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan, for setting priorities and generating projects to be paid from any IRWM accounts and grants.
18. Interferes with the control exercised by the San Diego funding sub-region over the use and expenditure of any water user fee revenues that may be dedicated to the region.
19. Reduces or eliminates the tax-exempt status of municipal financing.

XIX. Water Bond Legislation or Initiative - It shall be OMWD’s policy to support water bond (legislation and/or an initiative) that:

1. Allocates funds to developing water storage infrastructure that will bolster resilience against droughts and ensures reliable supplies.
2. Provides OMWD’s wholesalers with funding that protects local ratepayers from rising costs while offering solutions that benefit the region.
3. Allocates resources for the rehabilitation and modernization of aging water and wastewater (recycled) infrastructure that improves operational efficiency and minimizes water loss.
4. Finances robust cybersecurity measures that are necessary to safeguard water infrastructure against state and non-state cyber targeting of American interests from cyber threats, protect sensitive data, and ensure uninterrupted service delivery.
5. Provides funding for the Lake Hodges Dam which serves OMWD in an emergency capacity and helps to control wholesale rates.
6. Dedicates funds towards regulatory compliance efforts, with a specific focus on addressing emerging contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to ensure water quality and public health protection.

7. Advances investment in new water supply projects that maximize and diversify limited water resources.
8. Prioritizes the allocation of funds for open spaces surrounding water reservoirs.
9. Ensures that the application process for funding is not unnecessarily burdensome and costly, with an emphasis on auditing and streamlining the process.
10. Consolidates administration of all voter-approved water-related bond funding in one place, preserves existing expertise within the state bureaucracy to manage bond funding processes, and provides consistent application and evaluation of bond funding applications.

XX. *Water Bond Legislation or Initiative - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose water bond (legislation and/or an initiative) that:*

1. Imposes a fee on water users to repay the principal and interest on a statewide general obligation bond.
2. Prioritizes hydroelectric generation, or is laden with investment criteria that do not adequately bolster water infrastructure.
3. Disproportionately funds non-water or wastewater related priorities.

XXI. *Right of Way and Property - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:*

1. Improves OMWD's efforts to maintain and protect its property, rights of way, easements, pipelines, and related facilities and minimizes liability to OMWD.
2. Protects OMWD's properties from restriction when surrounding properties are incorporated into preservation areas.

XXII. *Right of Way and Property - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:*

1. Impairs OMWD's efforts to acquire property or property interests required for essential capital improvement projects.
2. Increases the cost of property and right of way acquisition.

3. Restricts OMWD's use of public rights of way or increases the cost of using public rights of way.
4. Restricts the transfer of property acquired for purposes of environmental mitigation credits to other public entities for long-term management.

XXIII. Energy - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Provides opportunities for reduced energy rates for OMWD.
2. Provides greater flexibility in the utilization of OMWD facilities for generation and acquisition of electrical power.
3. Provides OMWD with greater flexibility in the licensing, permitting, interconnection, construction, and operation of its existing and potential in-line hydroelectric, solar, or other renewable energy generation or energy storage projects.
4. Provides protection from energy rate increases and provides rate relief.
5. Makes State Water Project power available for seawater and brackish groundwater desalination.
6. Promotes the classification of electricity generated by in-line hydroelectric and off-stream pumped storage facilities as environmentally sound.
7. Provides state and federal grants for the construction of in-line hydroelectric, solar, wind, biogas cogeneration, and off-stream pumped storage facilities as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs.
8. Promotes funding for use of renewable energy in the operation of OMWD facilities.
9. Provides for restrictions on price gouging during public safety power shutoff events and for at least 72 hours following restoration of power.
10. Provides that de-energization or public safety power shutoff events may be included as a condition constituting a state emergency or local emergency.

11. Provides a tax exemption for the sale of, or the storage, use, or consumption of, a backup electrical resource, that is purchased for exclusive use by a city, county, special district, or other entity of local government, during a de-energization or public safety power shutoff event.
12. Establishes the use of alternative power sources, such as generators, by essential public services during de-energization or public safety power shutoff events shall not be limited by state or local regulations or rules.

XXIV. Energy - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Adversely affects the cost or reliability of energy needed to move, treat, or deliver water.
2. Adversely affects OMWD's ability to own, operate, and/or contract work for supplying its own facilities with natural gas and electricity.
3. Impedes OMWD's ability to contract for the purchase of gas and electricity from the United States, the State of California, and any other public agency or private entity and sell the gas and electricity to any public agency or private entity engaged in retail sales of electricity and gas.
4. Restricts or caps future energy demands needed for possible expansion of recycled water, potable reuse, and desalination projects.
5. Adversely affects OMWD's ability to expand cogeneration at planned or existing facilities.
6. Prevents OMWD from enhancing energy reliability and independence for its facilities.
7. Imposes greenhouse gas reduction obligations on public water agencies for energy purchased or produced for the sole purpose of operating its system.
8. Does not count or credit qualified renewable energy projects toward accomplishment and satisfaction of the California Renewables Portfolio Standard objectives.

9. Mandates that water agencies include an embedded energy calculation for their water supply sources in the Urban Water Management Plan or any other water resource planning or master planning document.
10. Results in a lengthy, more complicated, or more costly interconnection of energy loads and resources such as solar, in-line hydroelectricity, pumped storage, and other renewable energy generation or storage technologies to the electric distribution and transmission grid.
11. Authorizes air quality management districts or other regulatory bodies to adopt or maintain rules that would limit or prohibit a local government entity's use of a state and/or federally compliant power generator during a de-energization or public safety power shutoff event.

XXV. Local Autonomy - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Diminishes the power of OMWD's Board of Directors to govern OMWD's affairs.
2. Diminishes OMWD's power or rights to govern relations with its employees.
3. Limits or restricts the ability of OMWD, or professional associations, trade groups, or regional coalitions it is a part of, to engage in public outreach, educational activities, legislative advocacy, training seminars, regional coordination, and similar activities that promote OMWD's mission.

XXVI. Land Use and Water Management Planning - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Promotes enhanced coordination and linkage of general plans and water management plans.
2. Discourages piecemeal or uncoordinated land use and water management planning.
3. Requires that projected population and other demographic factors utilized in forecasting future water demands in accordance with the Urban Water Management Planning Act and state law be consistent with the regional growth management plans and general plans applicable to the territory within the service area of the supplier.

4. Allows and funds land exchanges between local public agencies and federal or state agencies when mutually beneficial to all agencies and enhances water resources for the region.
5. Designates public lands that are tributary to drinking source water reservoirs as wilderness, habitat preserve, open space, or other protected status, provided such designation does not impede current or reasonable future use of those water resources.
6. Provides funding for, or otherwise facilitates, development of groundwater management plans pursuant to the sustainability efforts under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.
7. Protects floodplains and lands over prime groundwater recharge zones for stormwater catchment and bioremediation.
8. Considers the multiple local variables and priorities that are associated with water supply planning and the selection of water resources for implementation.

XXVII. Land Use and Water Management Planning - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Restricts OMWD's ability to utilize a demand forecasting methodology that is best suited for the region.
2. Imposes land use designations that preclude the use of such lands for public water infrastructure determined necessary to ensure a cost-effective, safe, and reliable water supply.
3. Requires the use of specific evaluation criteria in water supply planning and selection of potential water supply projects that fail to take into account or conflict with existing local and regional planning policies and implementation priorities.
4. Imposes mandates requiring specific water resources to be developed by water agencies that fail to take into account local factors such as water reliability, hydrologic and geographic characteristics, and the economic, political, public acceptance, and social environment, which can influence selection of resources, and/or fails to take into account

or conflicts with existing local and regional planning policies and implementation priorities.

XXVIII. Safety & Security - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Provides funding for water infrastructure development, infrastructure security, cybersecurity, and replacement projects that benefit OMWD.
2. Provides funding for projects that provide security against terrorist acts or other criminal threats to water operations, facilities, or supplies.
3. Provides funding for security and cybersecurity vulnerability assessments.
4. Recognizes water agencies as emergency responders in the event of a sudden, unexpected occurrence that poses a clear and imminent danger, requiring immediate action to prevent and mitigate the loss or impairment of life, health, property, or essential public services due to natural disasters (e.g., wildfires, earthquakes), power outages, and terrorist or other criminal activities.
5. Provides or expands protections of utility workers and vehicles by creating criminal penalty enhancements for violence or harassment against a worker and adding utility vehicles to the list of stationary vehicles drivers must treat with caution.

XXIX. Safety & Security - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Restricts OMWD's ability to respond swiftly and decisively to an emergency that threatens to disrupt water deliveries or restricts the draining of pipelines or other facilities in emergencies or for repairs or preventive maintenance.

XXX. Jurisdictional Authority - It shall be OMWD's policy to refer all such legislation to its Board of Directors.

XXXI. Climate Change - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:

1. Incorporates state-provided climate change information into statewide, regional, and local water management planning, and provides funding for projects that assist in adapting to the effects of climate change on the water supply portfolios across the state.

2. Provides financial support to local projects designed to mitigate or adapt to potential negative impacts of climate change on water supply reliability.
3. Promotes continued development and deployment of more sophisticated and integrated hydrological, water quality, and meteorological water monitoring for the purpose of assessing water supply conditions resulting from climate change.

XXXII. *Climate Change - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:*

1. Places an undue burden or compromises OMWD's ability to implement its primary mission.

XXXIII. *Employment Matters - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:*

1. Continues to reform workers' compensation.
2. Results in predictable costs and benefits for employees.
3. Provides a pathway for military veterans to apply their advanced skills and experience toward state and industry-supplied certifications in the water and wastewater treatment and distribution operator fields.

XXXIV. *Employment Matters - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:*

1. Creates unrealistic ergonomic protocol.
2. Interferes with OMWD's efficient operation.
3. Results in unreasonable costs associated with unnecessary requirements such as providing 24 hours' notice for overtime work.

XXXV. *Governance - It shall be OMWD's policy to support legislation that:*

1. Promotes transparent government processes when burdens upon OMWD are reasonable and cost-neutral.
2. Ensures an open and transparent process for adoption of regulations, policies, and guidelines by state agencies.

XXXVI. Governance - It shall be OMWD's policy to oppose legislation that:

1. Does not provide resources, while requiring additional burdensome governance-related requirements.

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