



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

**January 28, 2026
4:30 p.m.**

 626 443 2297

 www.upperdistrict.org

 248 E. Foothill Blvd., Suite 200 – Monrovia, CA. 91016

 info@usgymwd.org

Securing Water Resilience for the San Gabriel Valley

**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2026
4:30 P.M.**

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. ROLL CALL OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA [1]

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

As provided under Government Code Section 54954.3, members of the public may address the Board on items considered on this agenda, as well as items not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of the Board. Please complete the appropriate speaker's card and submit it to the Board Secretary. A three-minute time limit on remarks is requested.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS [2] - None

7. CONSENT CALENDAR [1]

(a) Minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on January 14, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

8. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS [1]

(a) Appointment of a Representative and an Alternate to the Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA) (Staff memorandum enclosed for items a through c).

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Board review the representative appointments and consider new appointments for the appropriate terms.

(b) Appointment of a Representative and an Alternate to the San Gabriel Valley Water Association (SGVWA).

(c) Appointment of a Representative to the San Gabriel Valley Protective Association (SGVPA).

(d) Potential Conflict Waiver for Best Best & Krieger Law Firm (*Staff memorandum enclosed*).

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Board waive the potential conflict of interest for special counsel BBK.

(e) Pure Water of Southern California Update (*The General Manager will provide a presentation*).

(f) SB 707 Ethics Overview (*Martin Koczanowicz, District Counsel, will provide a presentation*).

9. INFORMATION ITEMS [2]

(a) Press Releases and News Articles

10. ATTORNEY'S REPORT [2]

11. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT [2]

12. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS [2]

13. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS [1]

**14. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION - CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATOR;
Government Code section 54956.8**

Property: 2444 Huntington Drive, Duarte, CA 91010

District Negotiator: Thomas A. Love

Negotiating parties: Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District; 2444 Huntington LLC

Under negotiation: Terms of potential acquisition

**15. ADJOURNMENT – To a regular meeting of the Board of Directors to be held on
February 11, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. at 248 E. Foothill Blvd. Room #103, Monrovia, CA 91016.**

LEGEND: [1] INDICATES ACTION ANTICIPATED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON THIS ITEM
[2] INDICATES INFORMATION ITEM - NO BOARD ACTION NECESSARY

PRESIDENT KATARINA GARCIA, PRESIDING



American Disabilities Act Compliance (Government Code Section 54954.2(a))



To request special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the District office at (626) 443-2297.



UPPER SAN GABRIEL VALLEY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT
 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
 Wednesday, January 14, 2026 | 4:30pm

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 4:30pm at the District office located at 248 E. Foothill Blvd, Rm. 103, Monrovia, California. The presiding officer was President Jennifer Santana.

ROLL CALL

DIRECTORS Treviño, Chavez, Garcia, Fellow, and Santana
PRESENT:

DIRECTORS None
ABSENT:

STAFF Tom Love, General Manager; Patty Cortez, Assistant General Manager; Steve O'Neill, District Counsel; Steve Johnson, District Engineer; Judy Lancaster, Interim Chief Financial Officer; Venessa Navarrette, Executive Assistant/Board Secretary I; Jessica Hernandez, Administrative/Accounting Assistant
PRESENT:

OTHERS PRESENT

Martin Koczanowicz

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

On motion by Vice President Fellow, second by Treasurer Garcia, the agenda was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: **TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA**
NOES: **NONE**
ABSTAIN: **NONE**
ABSENT: **NONE**

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR
 CALENDAR YEAR 2026**

Director Santana opened the nominations for officers for the election. She nominated the slate of officers as follows:

1. President – Katarina Garcia
2. Vice President – Anthony Fellow
3. Treasurer – Edward Chavez
4. Secretary – Jennifer Santana

With no other nominations, on motion by Director Santana, seconded by Vice President Fellow, the slate of officers was approved by the following roll call vote:

TREVIÑO: **AYE**
CHAVEZ: **AYE**
FELLOW: **AYE**
GARCIA: **AYE**
SANTANA: **AYE**

President Garcia continued the meeting as presiding officer.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (a) Administration and Finance Committee (Santana, Chair - Treviño, Vice-Chair) Minutes of meeting held on January 6, 2026 enclosed.
- (b) Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee (Fellow, Chair-Chavez, Vice-Chair) Minutes of meeting held on January 7, 2026 enclosed.

CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion by Director Treviño, seconded by Vice President Fellow, the consent calendar was approved by the following vote:

AYES: TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

- (a) Minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Directors held on December 10, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
- (b) List of Demands
- (c) Financial Reports – November 2025
 - 1. Financial Statements
 - 2. Director's Public Outreach
- (d) Proposed Policy amendments to Policy Nos. 1.1 – Purpose of Policies, 1.2 – Mission Statement, 2.1 – Board Meeting Procedures, 3.1 – General Manager Authority and Duties, and 3.6 – Medical Benefits of Upper Water's Policy Manual.
- (e) Upper Water's 2026 Meeting Schedule.
- (f) Adopt Resolution No. 12-25-674, Reflecting Updated Positions and Pay Structure for Manager and Director of Finance.
- (g) 2026 Legislative Priorities Update.
- (h) Proposed Policy Nos. 3.9 – AI Policy, and 5.1 – Public Outreach Program of Upper Water's Policy Manual.

**RESOLUTION NO.: 01-26-675 OF
 SUPPORT FOR METROPOLITAN WATER
 DISTRICT'S PURE WATER SOUTHERN
 CALIFORNIA PROJECT.**

Patty Cortez, Assistant General Manager, presented staff's recommendation for the Board to adopt Resolution No. 01-26-675 expressing support for Metropolitan Water District's Pure Water Southern California project.

On motion by Director Treviño, second by Vice President Fellow, the adoption of Resolution 01-26-675 was approved by the following vote:

AYES: TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

RESOLUTION NO.: 01-26-676
APPOINTMENT FOR NEGOTIATOR FOR
ALL PROPERTY INTEREST
ACQUISITIONS AND DISPOSALS

The District Counsel presented Resolution No. 01-26-676, to appoint a property negotiator, as required under the Brown Act, in anticipation of potential real property acquisitions or dispositions. The resolution designates the General Manager as the District's property negotiator, acting under Board direction. It was clarified that the General Manager would not act as a realtor, would receive specific instructions from the Board as needed (including in closed session), and that any final acquisition terms would be returned to the Board for approval.

On motion by Director Treviño, second by Vice President Fellow, the adoption of Resolution 01-26-676 was approved by the following vote:

AYES: TREVIÑO, GARCIA, CHAVEZ, FELLOW AND SANTANA
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

INFORMATION ITEMS

The following items listed on the agenda were presented as informational items and ordered received and filed:

- Press Releases and News Articles

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

The District Counsel reported coordination with staff on policy manual updates related to the General Manager's role and medical benefits, and preparation with the General Manager for the current closed session. Counsel also noted receipt of a notice regarding Los Angeles County retaining outside legal counsel related to invasive mussels and water releases, which has been shared with staff.

Lastly, counsel advised the Board that beginning in 2026, partner Martin Koczanowicz will take a more active role in District matters, as counsel plans to scale back practice, while remaining available to support District business.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

The District Engineer reported that several projects are complete and awaiting further action by partner agencies, including the Alternative Water Supply Evaluation for San Gabriel County Water District and Sunnyslope Water Company, and the Monrovia USG-7 connection. He stated that the Emergency Response Plan update has also been completed and filed by the Board. The Integrated Resources Plan is largely complete, with final updates in progress to address invasive mussel risks related to imported water supply. Boundary matters have been completed and forwarded to Three Valleys. Lastly, the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan is underway, with a draft expected by April. Upper Water will serve as the lead agency for imported water supply planning, which other basin agencies will reference.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The General Manager reported minor updates to the written report, including the addition of a staffing update under Finance and Administration. He stated that the District has ten full-time equivalent positions, with two current vacancies. An interim finance consultant remains in place, one intern was reclassified to an hourly entry-level position, and an employee anniversary was noted. Katherine Vazquez was acknowledged for 3 years of service. He then reported that water supply conditions remain favorable, with MWD managing a projected supply gap through storage and demand programs and improved State Water Project allocations anticipated due to recent precipitation. He also provided an update on the Golden Mussel issue, including a February 5 court status conference at which the County will participate. The MWD Board approved guiding principles for Pure Water Southern California, with Environmental Impact Report certification expected in February. He also reported participation in MWD's reverse cyclic water program, with treated water deliveries expected this year, which will replenish financial reserves.

METROPOLITAN REPORT

Vice President Fellow and the General Manager reported on MWD's approval of guiding principles for the Pure Water Southern California project, emphasizing phased implementation, regional supply benefits, reliability, fair cost allocation, and shared infrastructure. The vote passed with 97.67% support. Key milestones include Environmental Impact Report certification in February, budget approval in April, LACSD agreements in May, and initial program implementation by June. Partnerships include MWD member agencies, State Water Project partners (including SGVMWD), and Colorado River partners. Southern Nevada strongly supported the project, highlighting reduced reliance on the Colorado River. Directors stressed continued advocacy to ensure later phases proceed. Staff will coordinate strategic public comment opportunities at MWD meetings.

WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY REPORT

Treasurer Chavez reported on the recent WQA election. Robert Gonzales, Mayor of Azusa, was re-elected to a four-year term. Jeff Maloney, Mayor of Alhambra, finished second and will serve as the alternate member.

WATERMASTER REPORT

The District Engineer reported that recent rainfall significantly improved local water supply conditions, and groundwater levels rising to over 250 feet. Canyon and downstream spreading grounds reached capacity, requiring temporary flood control releases, including limited releases to the ocean. Despite high inflows to regional reservoirs, no imported water deliveries occurred through USG-3 during this period. Rainfall totals exceeded long-term averages, and water quality monitoring in December included sampling of 22 wells with no new well shutdowns reported.

AB 1234 COMPLIANCE REPORT

A summary report was provided in the agenda packet.

DIRECTORS' COMMENTS

Director Treviño requested a future board discussion on the Alhambra Exchange Agreement; The General Manager reported that internal review is underway and a dedicated agenda item is planned. Lastly, Director Treviño expressed appreciation for his long-standing professional collaboration with Steven O'Neill.

Treasurer Chavez echoed sentiments recognizing Mr. O'Neill. He also suggested holding a local board retreat to allow for in-depth discussion of key district issues and training, potentially including ethics training. He proposed that the Alhambra Exchange Agreement could be addressed during such a retreat.

Secretary Santana expressed support for Director Chavez's retreat suggestion and conveyed best wishes to Steve, thanking him for his service. She also thanked the Board for her three years as President, praised the leadership transition, and expressed confidence in Director Garcia as the incoming President.

Vice President Fellow requested the meeting be adjourned in memory of William McIntyre, a Covina resident, entrepreneur, and long-time water contributor. He noted McIntyre's significant community impact and celebrated life. Director Fellow also mentioned a future agenda item.

President Garcia thanked the board for the opportunity to serve as president. She expressed appreciation for the shared wisdom and history. She also congratulated Katherine Vazquez on three years of service. Lastly, President Garcia noted she will miss Steve's stories and contributions.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Vice President Fellow noted that MET provided an update on new Brown Act regulations and shared the materials with Steve. He asked Steve to provide a summary, when convenient, emphasizing caution on social media interactions, as directors should avoid commenting or sharing posts to prevent violations.

ADJORN TO CLOSED SESSION

The Board adjourned to closed session under Government Code Section 54956.8 to discuss potential real property negotiations. Staff were given instructions, and no reportable action was taken. This concludes the closed session report.

ADJOURNMENT

President Garcia asked if there was any other business to come before the Board. There being none, the meeting was adjourned in memory of William McIntyre to a regular meeting of the Board of Directors to be held on January 28, 2026, at 4:30 p.m.

PRESIDENT

ATTEST

SECRETARY

SEAL

Attachment 1
 Consent Item 7 (b)
 January 14, 2026

Demands numbered 23229 through 23263 on the General Fund Account of the Upper Water at Citizens Business Bank, totaling \$1,467,009.80 and demands numbered 1356 through 1362 on the Water Fund Account at the same bank totaling \$531,599.20.

23229	Katarina Garcia	Director's Compensation, November 2025 6 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	1,944.00 516.87 (500.00) <u>(303.21)</u>	\$ 1,657.66
		(Previously Paid 12/11/25)		
23230	Liu Bo Xu	Inv. 2024-25REI, Art Contest Winner - Replacement Check (Previously Paid 12/12/25)		25.00
23231	CA Public Employees Retirement	Inv. 100000018140471, CEPPT Contributions, Strategy 1 Inv. 100000018140472, CEPPT Contributions, Strategy 2 (Previously Paid 12/12/25)	250,000.00 <u>250,000.00</u>	500,000.00
23232	CA Public Employees Retirement	Inv. 100000018138867, Additional UAL Payment (Previously Paid 12/12/25)		500,000.00
23233	Xu Jun Feng	Inv. 2024-25REI, Art Contest Winner - Replacement Check (Previously Paid 12/12/25)		100.00
23234	Misha Fukushima	Inv. 2024-25REI, Art Contest Winner - Replacement Check (Previously Paid 12/12/25)		50.00
23235	789, Inc.	Inv. UW-529121, Branding and Creative Services, January 2026 (Board approved 7/09/25)		5,750.00
23236	Aaron Read & Associates, LLC	Inv. 214395, State Legislative Advocacy Services, November 2025 Inv. 214402, State Legislative Advocacy Services, December 2025 (Board approved 1/22/25)	10,000.00 <u>10,000.00</u>	20,000.00
23237	ACWA/JPIA	Inv. 0707782, Health Insurance Premium - January 2026		35,723.74
23238	Aleshire & Wynder, LLP	Legal Services, November 2025 Inv. 101299, Retainer Inv. 101300, Transactional Fees Inv. 101301, Transactional Fees (Board approved 04/13/22)	4,713.00 174.00 <u>1,091.50</u>	5,978.50
23239	Amazon Capital Services	Inv. 1K1J-6FGR-HDQG, Meeting and Office Supplies, Nov. - Dec. 2025		219.69
23240	Best Best & Krieger, LLP	Inv. 1047157, Federal Legislative Advocacy Services through 11/30/25 (Board approved 01/22/25)		7,500.00
23241	Commercial Door Company, Inc.	Inv. 91841, Building Maintenance, Service Call - 12/04/25		830.00
23242	Department of Water & Power	Inv. GA441548, Recycled Water Program Permit Fees, January 2026		83.33
23243	Discovery Science Center	Inv. 2226, Water Education Program, November 2025 (Board approved 07/08/20)		2,497.00
23244	Garden View, Inc.	Inv. INV-113025, Plant Voucher Program		3,983.64
23245	Hernan Quezada	Inv. 12/18/25UD, Building Maintenance, Service Dates - 12/13/25 & 12/15/25		460.00
23246	Home Depot Credit Services	Building Maintenance Supplies, Sept. - Nov. 2025 Inv. 2117748 Inv. 2210184 Inv. 2210189 Inv. 24568 Inv. 7543143	24.74 (219.91) 251.94 56.11 <u>17.54</u>	130.42
23247	Image Property Services, LLC	Inv. 21045, Janitorial Services, December 2025		1,907.59
23248	Joey C. Soto	Inv. 2025-UD-GA-NOV-134, Grant Writing Services, November 2025 (Board approved 06/08/22)		2,021.25

23249	Kelly Services, Inc.	Inv. 5612586432, Temporary Services, Week Ending 11/23/25 Inv. 5612813030, Temporary Services, Week Ending 11/30/25 Inv. 5612959281, Temporary Services, Week Ending 12/07/26 Inv. 5613153506, Temporary Services, Week Ending 12/14/25 (Board approved 10/11/23)	1,393.00 574.00 896.00 917.00 <hr/> 3,780.00
23250	Luis Aguilar	Inv. 0074910, District Logo Items	566.28
23251	Rogers, Anderson, Malody & Scott	Inv. 79302, Progress Billing for June 30, 2025 Audit Services (Board approved 02/19/22)	12,300.00
23252	San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership	Inv. 8539, Annual Membership Dues, 02/01/26 - 01/31/27	20,000.00
23253	Southern California Water Coalition	Inv. 2105, Quarterly Luncheon Sponsorship, 01/23/26	2,500.00
23254	Stetson Engineers, Inc.	Inv. 2533-235, General Engineering Support Services, October 2025 Inv. 2533-236, General Engineering Support Services, November 2025 Inv. 2728-043, Integrated Resource Plan Update, November 2025	32,484.15 39,540.19 1,528.00 <hr/> 73,552.34
23255	Upper District Payroll Fund	Inv. Nov 25, Reimbursement of Payroll and Payroll Taxes for Employees Inv. Nov 25D, Reimbursement of Payroll Taxes for Directors Inv. Nov 25D-A, Reimbursement of Payroll Taxes for Directors	161,148.40 10,454.87 1,529.71 <hr/> 173,132.98
23256	Upper District Revolving Fund	Inv. DEC 25, Revolving Fund Account Replenishment - December 2025 Office Supplies Computer Systems/Equipment/Maintenance/Insurance/Outside Service Directors's Outreach Telephone/Utilities/Building Maintenance Meeting/Travel/Conferences/Dues/Assessments/Membership Water Conservation Program Expenses WRP Operation & Maintenance/Permits/Water Purchases/Public Info Medical/ODA Reimbursement/Processing Fee/Others	1,330.84 1,481.71 1,457.50 9,908.85 55.24 1,026.19 45,764.48 3,090.91 <hr/> 64,115.72
23257	U.S. Bank Corporate Payment System	CalCard Charges through 12/22/25 Membership/Other Meetings, Travel, Conferences Computer Systems/Office Equipment/Supplies/Maintenance & Service/Utilities Conservation Program Expenses, Education and Outreach	1,097.78 7,254.48 1,937.36 2,827.07 <hr/> 13,116.69
23258	VC3, Inc.	Inv. VC3-228802, Credit Memo, August 2025 Inv. VC3-228857, IT Management Service, November 2025 Inv. INV3565794VC3, Inv. VC3-231601, IT Management Service, December 2025 (Board approved 12/10/25)	(1,410.88) 3,274.32 216.00 3,297.41 <hr/> 5,376.85
23259	Vortex Industries, LLC	Inv. 04-2098988, Building Maintenance, Service Call - 12/09/25	495.95
23260	Anthony Fellow	Director's Compensation, December 2025 10 Days District Business 6 Days MWD Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	3,240.00 1,944.00 516.87 (500.00) (1,525.43) <hr/> 3,675.44
23261	Ed Chavez	Director's Compensation, December 2025 10 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	3,240.00 516.87 (500.00) (1,384.88) <hr/> 1,871.99
23262	Charles Treviño	Director's Compensation, December 2025 9 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	2,916.00 516.87 (500.00) (1,076.88) <hr/> 1,855.99
23263	Jennifer Santana	Director's Compensation, December 2025 7 Days District Business Meeting/Travel Expenses/Allowance Less Deferred Comp. Less Taxes Withheld	2,268.00 516.87 (500.00) (533.12) <hr/> 1,751.75
		TOTAL	\$1,467,009.80

1356	Central Basin MWD	Invoice No. USGV-NOV25, Purchase of 4.1 AF of Recycled Water in October 2025 (Previously Paid 01/06/26)	\$	3,002.52
1357	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R11302025-D, Purchase of 17.2 AF of Recycled Water in November 2025		7,224.00
1358	City of Industry City Hall	Invoice No. R11302025-E, CIP Charge for November 2025		4,360.40
1359	Metropolitan Water District	Invoice No. 12055, Purchase of 368.9 AF of Treated Water in November 2025		484,370.81
1360	San Gabriel Valley MWD	Invoice No. 583, 78.58AF of Water Delivered through the Alhambra/MWD Exchange Agreement in November 2025 @ \$260 per AF		20,430.80
1361	Suburban Water System	Invoice No. 6808, Aug. - Nov. 2025 Operating Costs		10,320.86
1362	Suburban Water System	Invoice No. 6809, Phase IIB Normal Operating Charge, December 2025		<u>1,889.81</u>
		TOTAL	\$	<u>531,599.20</u>

MEMORANDUM

Item 8. (a-c) ACTION

DATE: January 28, 2026
TO: Board of Directors
FROM: General Manager
SUBJECT: 2026 Representative Appointments

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board review the representative appointments and consider new appointments for the appropriate terms detailed below.

Background

Annual Appointments: The Board annually considers appointments of Upper Water representatives to the following organizations: Association of California Water Agencies/Joint Powers Insurance Authority, San Gabriel Valley Water Association, and the San Gabriel Valley Protective Association. The current representatives are as follows:

ACWA/JPIA

Director Santana – Rep
Director Fellow – Alt

San Gabriel Valley Water Association

Director Fellow – Rep
Director Garcia – Alt

San Gabriel Valley Protective Association

Director Santana - Rep

ACWA/JPIA: These meetings are focused on governance, insurance and financial matters. Staff recommends the Board appoint an executive employee to serve as the representative.

Attachment

MEMORANDUM

Attachment

2025 APPOINTMENTS AND AT-WILL REPRESENTATIVES

APPOINTMENT	CURRENT APPOINTEE	MEETINGS
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) *At-Will	Anthony Fellow - Rep	<u>Board Meeting</u> 2 nd Tuesday of each month <u>Committee Meetings</u> 1 st Monday, 2 nd Tuesday, and 4 th Tuesday of each month
Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (WATERMASTER)	Anthony Fellow - Rep Jenifer Santana - Rep	<u>Board Meeting</u> 1 st Wednesday of each month at 2:30 p.m. <u>Committee Meetings</u> 2 nd Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. 3 rd Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m.
San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA)	Ed Chavez - Rep Katarina Garcia - Alt	<u>Board Meeting</u> 3 rd Wednesday of each month at 12:30 p.m. <u>Committee Meetings</u> 2 nd Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. 2 nd Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m.
Association of California Water Agencies Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA)	Jennifer Santana – Rep Anthony Fellow – Alt	February – ACWA DC Conference March – ACWA Legislative Symposium May – ACWA/JPIA Spring Conference December – ACWA/JPIA Fall Conference
San Gabriel Valley Water Association (SGVWA)	Anthony Fellow – Rep Katarina Garcia – Alt	Meets Quarterly at 11:30 a.m. 2 nd Wednesday in February, May, August, November
San Gabriel Valley Protective Association (SGVPA)	Jennifer Santana – Rep	Meets Annually 4 th Monday in April at 12:00 p.m.

MEMORANDUM

Item 8. (d) ACTION

DATE: January 28, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: District Counsel

SUBJECT: Potential Conflict Waiver for Best Best & Krieger Law Firm

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Board waive the potential conflict of interest for special counsel BBK.

Background

The law firm of Best Best & Krieger represents Upper Water as federal advocates. Board receives regular reports on status of pending federal legislation as well as lobbying efforts from the Washington DC office of BBK. Staff has been advised by Ana D. Schwab, BBK Director of Governmental Affairs, that BBK has taken on representation of the County of Los Angeles in connection with the Golden Mussel contamination. Staff was also informed that BBK is putting up an ethical screen between the BBK Upper Water team and the BBK County team to eliminate any potential exchange of information between those two groups that would prejudice Upper Water, or the County of Los Angeles. This was done since Upper Water and County of Los Angeles have diverse interests in the Golden Mussel matter.

The Board has the option of waiving the potential conflict, based on the ethical wall and the fact that an occurrence of an actual conflict is very unlikely. Should such conflict occur, or the ethical wall was compromised to the detriment of either client, BBK would be required to advise and withdraw from both representations. The other option is to advise BBK that Upper Water will not consent to dual representation. Should BBK not withdraw from representing the County, Board would need to seek other legislative counsel.

As stated above, based on the ethical wall being established and the fact that the possibility of an actual conflict is very remote, our office recommends that the Board waive the potential conflict and continue to retain BBK as legislative counsel.

A data center boom is coming to the San Gabriel Valley. Residents had no idea

LA County residents are being blindsided by proposals that may drain massive amounts of electricity and water. In Monterey Park, a single facility would use more power than the entire city.

by Ashley Orona

01/14/2026 10:44 am Updated 01/15/2026 10:46 am



Kana Lee showed up Saturday morning to Barnes Park in Monterey Park with her partner and two small children to learn more about plans for a sprawling data center that would almost double the energy usage of the city's 20,737 households.

Lee said she was "impressed" to see more than 100 residents from a community that isn't very politically active turn out to express concerns about the project. "It warms my heart to see my neighbors," she said.

Lee lives less than a mile away from where the proposed project will be. She said she's concerned about the data center's massive use of energy making climate change worse and the effects it could have on people's physical and mental health, especially as she's raising a three and five year old in the area.

She also questioned why the city and applicant did not share widespread information about a project of this magnitude. The project has been in the works for more than a year, but she said she only learned about it last month.

"Did they just think that nobody would pay attention?" Lee asked.

The community meeting was hosted by San Gabriel Valley Progressive Action, a grassroots collective advocating for racial justice. It was organized independently of the city and applicant.

The San Gabriel Valley is quietly emerging as LA County's next data center hotspot. Monterey Park is the latest example of how local communities here are being blindsided by proposals that drain massive amounts of electricity and water. Many Monterey Park residents said they only found out about the proposal because organizers are taking the lead in informing the community.

In city documents, the project applicant is listed as SDCF Monterey Park, LLC, but no companies with that name are registered as businesses with the California Secretary of State.

The applicant is proposing to demolish vacant commercial buildings at 1977 Saturn St. and replace them with a 218,400 square foot single story data center that would sit on 15.8 acres, housing computer servers and equipment for "private clients." However, specific clients are not mentioned in official documents.

Bryan Marsh, who is listed as the chief executive of SDCF Monterey Park, LLC, and James Pugh, another representative for the project applicant and a partner at Sheppard Mullin, did not respond to requests for comment by the time of the story's publication. Marsh is also the head of data center real estate at StratCap, an "alternative investment management platform" owned by HMC Capital, an Australian company.

The project is part of the city's larger plan to revitalize Saturn Park, also known as McCasline Business Park, which has seen a "decline in occupancy and utility" since the rise of remote work post-pandemic, according to the city's website. The site is surrounded by a park, a commercial nursery, water towers, and residences — with the nearest home less than 500 feet away.

Community advocates hosted the teach-in on Jan. 10 after the Monterey Park City Council postponed a vote on the project on Dec. 3, which would have approved the site's development plan and adopted what's known as a mitigated negative declaration, which is a statement that the project won't cause significant harm to the environment because changes were made to reduce potential impacts. However, local residents do not agree that this step is enough to prevent harm. They're asking the city to conduct a full environmental impact report.

A new vote was set for Jan. 21 to give the applicant more time to address concerns, but that date was later postponed; a new date has not been set.

Monterey Park residents and allies packed the city council chambers on Dec. 3, filling nearly every seat in the audience and forcing people to stand on the sidelines and hallways. Over two hundred people emailed public comments opposing the project and many more had signed up to speak at the council meeting.

"It's apparent that the applicant should take some time for community outreach and address a lot of community's concerns," Mayor Elizabeth Yang said at the Dec. 3. City Council meeting.

Marsh spoke at the meeting and acknowledged residents' concerns around the data center and stated the applicant wanted to engage with the public as much as possible.

"We do feel like there's been a lot of misinformation out there so we'd like to set the record straight," Marsh said. He vowed to host public meetings to address resident concerns, but no meetings have been scheduled yet, according to residents.

Monterey Park mayor Yang said at the meeting that the decision to postpone the vote was also made to give time to the state's Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to respond to the city's inquiry about council member Thomas Wong's possible conflict of interest in the project. Wong works at Southern California Edison, which will be responsible for providing electrical services to the project, and he has been a key decision maker in the project so far.

In an email to LA Public Press on Thursday, Monterey Park assistant city manager Diana Garcia, said that information about the pending data center project can be found on the city's website, including the city's

inquiry to the FPPC about council member Wong. Garcia confirmed that the project applicant also has yet to schedule a community meeting.

“As the applicant has not withdrawn its application, and it has not yet been considered by the City Council, the City cannot comment further on the project,” Garcia said, and directed LA Public Press to the applicant for additional information.

Mayor Yang did not respond to a request for comment.

Massive energy use could exacerbate existing power grid issues

Residents have expressed many concerns about living next to a data center — but a big one is the massive projected energy use. At its peak, the center is expected to use 49.9 megawatts — enough to power about 40,000 households, according to Shaolei Ren, an associate professor at UC Riverside.

Ren said the proposed data center is considered “medium sized.” An average operating data center is 45 megawatts, according to an article by the Washington Post. The article highlights that “supersized” data centers are popping up across the U.S. It also projects that data centers will consume more than 10% of the nation’s power usage by 2030.

Barbara, a Monterey Park resident who declined to give her last name to LA Public Press, citing privacy concerns, said she’s concerned the data center will exacerbate recurring blackouts in the neighborhood. She said she already has to tape her fridge shut when there’s blackouts to remind herself not to open it and not spoil her food.

“They want to build a data center when they can’t handle the current load,” she said.

She’d rather see community investments that benefit residents — not make their life harder. “I want houses, I want parks, I want green spaces instead,” she said. “There’s so much opportunity to make our town amazing.”

Residents also worry about the environment and public health. Data centers run continuously and need on-site generators in case of blackouts.

The proposed Monterey Park data center would have 14 stationary diesel-fueled internal combustion engines and generators built on-site. According to Ren, generators release a “large amount of tiny air pollutants,” such as nitrogen oxides, which can cause respiratory health complications, including asthma.

In the city’s initial study of the project, the consultants who prepared the document wrote that the generators would only be used “upon loss of grid power,” but Ren said they need to be maintained regularly and turned on to ensure they’re working. The 14 generators are estimated to use nearly 200 thousand gallons of diesel per year due to testing and maintenance, according to the study.

The project is expected to use zero water on site and instead use a “closed loop cooling system” to keep the servers cool, according to city documents. However, that means that the cooling system, in addition to the client servers, will be “major sources of energy demand for Project operations.”

Local residents said they didn’t know about the proposed data center

Randye, who requested her last name not be used in fear of retaliation, lives in Alhambra on the border of Monterey Park. She said she talked with three neighbors and none of them knew about the project. She’s concerned about the lack of information provided in languages other than English in a community that, according to census data, is 64.7% Asian and 26.7% Hispanic.

“There hasn’t been widespread information given out in the community,” she said. “It needs to be given out in a manner in which it is understood.”

Farrah Su, a spokesperson for the City of Alhambra, said the city had no comment on their resident’s concerns about how the neighboring data center may affect them.

But unions like Ironworkers Local 433, which represents construction workers, are supporting the project because it will bring “significant economic and workforce benefits” to the city.

“The data center represents a substantial capital investment that will generate high-quality construction jobs, expand pathways for state-certified apprentices, and contribute to the region’s long-term economic stability,” Keith Harkey, a business manager for Ironworkers Local 433, wrote in a Dec. 3 letter to the city.

Although data centers can bring jobs during the construction phase, very few of them are permanent, according to an April report by NPR. OpenAI’s Texas-based data center that opened last year took 1,500 workers to build, but only created about a hundred full-time jobs, according to the Wall Street Journal.

UC Riverside professor Shaolei Ren said we “need” data centers as our lives become more digitized. “Internet data doesn’t live in the cloud,” Ren said. “They live in a physical data center space.”

He said data centers will be less of a problem if owners and operators find ways to make them more sustainable and less harmful for neighbors — and that will take public input “and a lot of other considerations.”

Metropolitan breaks ground on project that will help communities hit hard in state droughts

New pump stations will bring additional water to area dependent on State Water Project when state supplies are limited

Jan. 21, 2026

CULVER CITY – Officials from Los Angeles and Ventura counties celebrated today the start of construction of a \$280 million project to bring additional sources of water to Southern California communities hit particularly hard by the state's last drought.

The Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project will allow Metropolitan to reverse flows in its system if needed during severe California droughts, pushing water from the Colorado River and Diamond Valley Lake into communities that currently have limited access to these resources. These areas normally rely almost exclusively on water from the northern Sierra, delivered through the State Water Project.

During the 2020-2022 drought, when California saw its three driest years on record and State Water Project deliveries were severely curtailed, these communities in Ventura County and Los Angeles County did not have sufficient water to meet normal demands. As a result, residents and businesses were required to dramatically reduce their water use.

“Metropolitan had never before imposed such strong reductions in water use on a portion of our service area. It was an unprecedented situation sparked by the hotter temperatures and more extreme droughts we are facing as the climate changes,” Metropolitan General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh said. “When we saw the impacts of this historic drought on some portions of our service area, we committed to taking action to avoid this ever happening again.”

The Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project helps fulfill that commitment. It consists of building two new pump stations that, when needed, can push Colorado River water and water stored in DVL, Southern California's largest reservoir, into northern Los Angeles and southern Ventura counties, reversing normal flows in the existing Sepulveda Feeder pipeline.

When this project is complete, expected in early 2029, Metropolitan will be able to deliver up to 22,000 acre-feet of additional water annually to the State Water Project-dependent area during severe droughts (an acre-foot is approximately 326,000 gallons, enough to

serve roughly three Southern California families for a year). The pump stations are being constructed in a manner that will allow them to be readily expanded in the future depending on water supply conditions and future board approvals.

“Under normal circumstances, our system largely relies on gravity to deliver water. But we learned during the last drought that left some communities without access to available water. Now, we will have the ability to pump more water uphill when needed,” Deshmukh said. “Simply put, this project strengthens our ability to move water where it’s needed during droughts, during emergencies, and when major infrastructure must be taken out of service for maintenance or rehabilitation.”

The Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations project is being expedited through the use of the progressive design-build method for construction, which allows Metropolitan to use a single firm for both design and construction. It allows designers, builders and owners to work collaboratively from the very beginning and creates opportunities to deliver projects more effectively and efficiently. This is Metropolitan’s first project using the progressive design-build method since the state legislature granted the agency the authority to use such alternative methods to expedite completion of construction projects.

Metropolitan is also in the process of building four projects that together will allow additional water from Diamond Valley Lake and the Colorado River to be delivered to communities in the Inland Empire and San Gabriel Valley that are also currently dependent on the State Water Project and were under mandatory restrictions during the last drought. That series of projects is expected to be completed in 2027.

“When all of these projects are completed, they will deliver water, and, importantly, they will deliver reliability and equity,” Metropolitan board Vice Chair Nancy Sutley said. “They are a key part of Metropolitan’s climate adaptation strategy and are investments in flexibility and preparedness so that our communities are better positioned when the next drought inevitably hits.”

Operations in Normal Years:
A blend of Colorado River and State Water Project supplies delivered to most communities



Metropolitan's operations in normal years.

Operations in California Drought Years:
New pumps push additional Colorado River water to communities that need it



Metropolitan's operations in drought years, using new pump stations.



ESSENTIAL CALIFORNIA



By **Hugo Martín**
Assistant Editor, Fast Break Desk

Good morning. Here's what you need to know to start your Sunday.

- Lessons in DIY turf replacement in SoCal.
- Expect to see more coyotes in your neighborhood. [Here's why](#).
- [Two Altadena restaurants](#) bring light and comfort to a recovering community.
- And here's [today's e-newspaper](#).

The 17-year-old turf replacement program still makes sense

For the longest time, I resisted replacing my lawn. I take great pride in mowing my own grass, trimming the edges, plucking dandelions by hand and snickering at my water-conscious friends' drought tolerant alternatives. My attitude: You can take my lawn when you pry it from my cold, dead hands.

But on Jan. 7, Mother Nature forced my hand. The gale-force winds that fueled devastating fires in Altadena and Pacific Palisades toppled over two gorgeous Texas Umbrella trees that had shaded my front yard since long before I bought my house in Monrovia. When the trees tipped over, the extensive root system tore up my manicured lawn.

I developed a new attitude: If a government rebate program will help pay for it, why not overhaul my front yard?

The timing turned out to be fortunate: My lawn had gone dormant for the winter, so I likely wouldn't have to battle a regrowth of my grass until next spring.

I'm coming late to the water-saving party. Southern California's turf replacement program, funded by the Metropolitan Water District, began 17 years ago and has helped remove about 233 million square feet of lawn, saving about 29,000 acre-feet

of water per year. That's enough to serve 88,000 homes annually, according to the MWD. More than 65,000 households have gotten a rebate.

A nearby nonprofit — Grow Monrovia — gave me an estimate to remove my lawn, design a new drought-tolerant landscape, buy the plants and mulch and perform the work. But being an avid DIY homeowner (and a cheapskate), I opted to do the work myself and pay Grow Monrovia for the supplies only.

There's nothing like an extensive landscaping project to draw a procession of critics and commentators. As I toiled on my front yard project over several weekends, a parade of neighbors and friends stopped by to unload nuggets of advice. (Curiously, not one offered to help.)

The most popular topic my walk-by pundits wanted to cover was how best to kill my lawn and keep the blades from springing back.

Friends who live nearby advised me to cover my lawn with a layer of cardboard, topped with three inches of mulch.

But a neighbor who saw me laying down sheets of cardboard on top of my existing lawn had other thoughts. "That's not going to work," he said, while eyeing my work. "You have to rent a tiller and dig up the grass first."

A college friend who runs a landscaping company offered an additional idea: "Dig it up and then lay down herbicide," she said.

But my yard is often visited by wild rabbits and deer, so potentially harmful chemical agents were out of the question.

"Rent a sod cutter," another neighbor suggested, referring to a mower-type machine that slices out an 18-inch row of lawn as it plows along my yard.

In the end, I rejected the idea of renting equipment (again, I'm a cheapskate) and went with an old-fashioned pick ax to dig up my lawn. I added a layer of cardboard (filched from nearby dumpsters) and mulch on top. A few truckloads of river rock provided the material to build a dry riverbed that cut diagonally across my yard.

Will remnants of my buried lawn come back to life? Probably. I imagine myself, in the warmth of spring, doubled over, plucking shoots of grass emerging from the river rock, only to hear some passing neighbor call out: "You know, there's a better way of doing that!"

News for Immediate Release

State authorizes expedited judicial review for Pure Water Southern California environmental process

Metropolitan preparing to release final Environmental Impact Report for large-scale recycled water project

Jan. 12, 2026

Gov. Gavin Newsom and the California State Legislature have given the Pure Water Southern California large-scale recycled water project a potential boost by approving measures designed to quickly resolve any legal challenges to its environmental review.

Metropolitan Water District and Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts are jointly planning the Carson-based project, which would purify and reuse cleaned wastewater currently discharged to the ocean. After gathering feedback on the project's draft Environmental Impact Report last summer, Metropolitan is preparing to release a final EIR in the coming weeks.

Gov. Newsom and the State Legislature last week certified the project under SB 149, the California Environmental Quality Act judicial streamlining process. The 2023 law is designed to help critical infrastructure projects move forward without lengthy court delays, while maintaining CEQA's environmental standards. The certification of Pure Water means if the project's final EIR faces any legal challenges, it will benefit from expedited judicial review.

“Following an inclusive public engagement process, we are confident that the EIR identifies all potential impacts of Pure Water and is in full compliance with state environmental laws. But we also know projects of this size and scope often face legal challenges,” Metropolitan General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh said. “We are grateful to the governor and state lawmakers for granting Pure Water this judicial streamlining certification. It will help ensure that the project’s advancement is not delayed by drawn-out court battles, while also maintaining important environmental protections and allowing for public engagement”

The project's EIR, a requirement under state environmental laws, identifies potential impacts associated with the program's construction and long-term operation, including both purification facilities in Carson and the distribution pipelines across the region. The

report evaluates potential impacts, including land use and planning, noise, and air quality, and describes measures to address impacts where feasible.

During the 61-day public comment period for the project's draft EIR, which included three public meetings, Metropolitan received 39 comments regarding the report's adequacy. Those comments have been considered and addressed in the production of the final EIR.

Metropolitan expects to release the final EIR in mid-January. The agency's board of directors will then consider certification of the final EIR in February and potential approval to begin implementation of the initial stage of the program in Spring 2026. If approved, water could be delivered from the facility as early as 2035.

"We are proud to partner with the Metropolitan Water District on this critically important water resource project to diversify Southern California's water supply and improve climate resiliency in the Southwest for decades to come," said Robert Ferrante, Sanitation Districts Chief Engineer and General Manager. "We greatly appreciate Gov. Newsom and the State Legislature's recognition of the significant environmental and economic benefits that this innovative project will provide the region and the state.

Pure Water Southern California would purify and reuse cleaned wastewater currently discharged to the ocean. At full capacity, the program is expected to produce 150 million gallons of purified water daily – enough to meet the needs of 1.5 million people and benefiting the entire region.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that, along with its 26 cities and retail suppliers, provides water for 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.

The Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts are a regional agency consisting of 24 independent special districts serving over 5.6 million people in 78 cities and unincorporated territory within Los Angeles County. The Sanitation Districts protect public health and the environment through innovative and cost-effective wastewater and solid waste management and, in doing so, convert waste into resources such as recycled water, energy and recycled materials.

New director representing Eastern Municipal Water District joins Metropolitan board

Jan. 13, 2026

Longtime Eastern Municipal Water District Director Philip E. Paule was seated Tuesday as the agency's newest representative on the board of directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

Paule is currently chief of staff for a Riverside County supervisor and has worked at various levels of government, including leading the offices of both congressional and county representatives. He has represented Division I on EMWD's board since 2007, during which time he has served multiple terms as board president. He succeeds Jeff Armstrong, who served on Metropolitan's 38-member board since 2023.

"Director Paule's lengthy service with EMWD, as well as his experience working with local, state and federal legislators, make him a welcome addition to Metropolitan's board," said Metropolitan board Chair Adán Ortega, Jr. "I look forward to partnering with him as we strive to address long-term water reliability, affordability and resilience in Southern California."

Paule's service on the EMWD's board includes participating in ad hoc committees for Western Municipal Water District, Lake Hemet Municipal Water District, Nuevo Water Company, Pechanga Band of Luiseño Tribal Committee, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians Tribal Committee, and the Doheny Ocean Desalination Project. He is EMWD's representative to the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, and an alternate to the Western Riverside Council of Governments.

Paule resides in French Valley with his wife, Julie, and has two adult sons.

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

California's Delta waters are in poor ecological health, scientists warn



A grain ship passes through a deep channel in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta between the Port of Sacramento and San Francisco Bay. (Design Pics Editorial / Universal Images Group)



By Ian James

Staff Writer |  Follow

Jan. 15, 2026 3 AM PT

California's biggest rivers converge in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, the waterways and wetlands forming an ecosystem where fresh water meets salt water from San Francisco Bay, and where native fish historically flourished.

Every few years, dozens of scientists examine the environmental health of the estuary in a report card that considers water flows, wildlife and habitat, as well as other factors. Their latest shows the bay is mostly in fair condition and stable, but the Delta is “mostly in poor condition and declining.”

According to the [State of Our Estuary report](#), less fresh water has been flowing through the Delta in recent years, which creates “chronic artificial drought conditions” and harms fish.

To learn more about the findings, I called Christina Swanson, a biologist who for more than two decades has worked on the assessments. One reason the Delta’s health is declining, she said, is that giant state and federal pumps, as well as those of other entities, are taking more water out of rivers and the Delta, “degrading the environmental and ecological conditions that species need to survive and to thrive.”

“The amount of water that we’re taking out of the system, it’s too much,” Swanson said, and it has “been increasing for years, despite the fact that we know that it’s an environmental problem.”

The new report, the first since 2019, was prepared by the San Francisco Estuary Institute, an independent environmental research organization, together with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership. It was supported with federal funds that are funneled through the state for water initiatives.

California’s largest estuary provides vital habitat for fish including Chinook salmon, steelhead, green sturgeon, longfin smelt and Delta smelt, but the numbers of many native fish have declined over the last few decades.

On the positive side, the researchers found that wet years such as 2023 still allow some fish to rebound, at least locally, especially near floodplains that people have worked to restore.

Wetlands restoration projects have increased the tidal marshes around San Francisco Bay to 57,800 acres, nearly twice the size of the city of San Francisco. The Delta's tidal marshes have grown from 8,000 to 13,000 acres over the last five years. Two types of birds that live in tidal marshes — black rails and yellowthroats — are rebounding.

The researchers said large wetland restorations, such as a recent 3,400-acre project at [Lookout Slough](#), are helping the Delta's native fish.

Still, fish have been struggling to spawn and survive as the amount of water left in their habitats has decreased since the early 2000s, and as they have endured longer and more severe droughts, Swanson said.



CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

How a 'death trap' for fish in California's water system is limiting the pumping of supplies

May 2, 2024

She noted that during the last 50 years, a series of rules and regulations were adopted to protect the estuary's ecosystem.

"And yet, during those same five decades, freshwater flow has continued to decline. Today, flow is poorer than it's ever been," she said. "That says to me that our efforts to establish protections have not been effective, and we need to do a better job and be better stewards."

The report does not propose policy solutions, but the findings will be discussed as California water officials debate options for the Delta. The State Water Resources Control Board is now [updating a Bay-Delta water plan](#) that will determine how much water may be taken out, and how much should be allowed to flow through the Delta.

Efforts to protect the Delta environment are further complicated by climate change, which is driving more extreme droughts in the West and altering precipitation patterns, bringing less snow and more rain.

The Trump administration, meanwhile, has adopted a controversial plan to pump more water from the Delta to Central Valley farmlands.

“The Trump administration’s attempt to take more water out,” Swanson said, “will do nothing but exacerbate the deteriorating condition of the system and the species that rely on it.”

More water news

Gov. Gavin Newsom’s administration is working on a plan to build a 45-mile water tunnel beneath the Delta, creating a second route to the aqueducts of the State Water Project. But as I reported for the L.A. Times last week, a state appeals court rejected the state’s financing plan for the project. The administration still has another case pending as it seeks to issue bonds.

For years, groundwater has been dropping beneath desert farmlands in Arizona, where the state has allowed landowners to pump unlimited amounts. Now, the state is finally imposing limits. Last month, I traveled to an area of Arizona called the Ranegras Plain, where the aquifer has been falling as a Saudi-owned dairy company irrigates vast alfalfa fields. This week, Gov. Katie Hobbs announced that Arizona is establishing a new “active management area” there to protect the groundwater.

I also wrote about a first-of-its-kind agreement between Arizona Atty. Gen. Kris Mayes and another of the state’s biggest farming businesses, which has agreed to leave some croplands dry and pay \$11 million to help residents whose wells have gone dry.

The Trump administration has released an outline of new options for dealing with deepening water shortages along the Colorado River. As I [reported for The Times](#), the federal government's options could dramatically reduce the amount of water available for Southern California. The rules for dealing with shortages are set to expire at the end of this year, and representatives of seven Western states are holding difficult negotiations on how to share necessary cutbacks in the coming years.

More climate and environment news

My colleague Hayley Smith reported on [one of President Trump's latest moves](#) to halt involvement in international climate efforts, as he pulled the U.S. out of dozens of international organizations and treaties, including the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

For months, federal disaster officials leading the Eaton fire cleanup claimed that soil testing was unnecessary, but as Tony Briscoe and Noah Haggerty [report](#) for The Times, the Environmental Protection Agency is now expected to announce that the government will pay to test the soil for lead at 100 homes destroyed in the fire.

An invasive beetle responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of oak trees in Southern California has now [expanded into Ventura County](#). Lila Seidman reported for The Times that to prevent further spread, some experts are calling for regulations limiting the movement of firewood.

This is the latest edition of Boiling Point, a newsletter about climate change and the environment in the American West. [Sign up here to get it in your inbox](#). And listen to our Boiling Point podcast [here](#).

For more water and climate news, follow Ian James [@ianjames.bsky.social](#) on Bluesky and [@ByIanJames](#) on X.



Ian James

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