

**Contact: Patricia Cortez**

**Phone Number: (626) 443-2297**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 22, 2026

## **Upper Water Elects New Board President, Dr. Katarina Garcia**

**Monrovia, CA** – At the January 14th Board of Directors meeting, Dr. Katarina “Katie” Garcia was unanimously elected board president of the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Upper Water). Garcia has served on the board since November 2020 and represents Division 4, which includes the communities of Covina, West Covina, and portions of Azusa and Glendora. Garcia’s appointment makes her the first Latina and Asian-Pacific Islander to serve as president in the district’s history.

During the meeting, Board President Garcia expressed her gratitude to her fellow board members, stating, “Thank you for putting your trust in me to lead this agency and I am honored to serve in this capacity. My passion has always been water education; I look forward to working with staff to reach new audiences and bring awareness to the benefits and safety of our drinking water.”

Garcia brings a deep background in science education and community leadership to her new role. She holds a bachelor’s degree in education from Arizona State University, a master’s degree in secondary education from California State University, Fullerton, and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Southern California.

Her early work at ASU’s Global Institute of Sustainability sparked her interest in water science and guided her 13-year career as a high school science teacher and assistant principal, where she taught Biology and AP Environmental Science, developed water-focused curriculum recognized through multiple education grants, and mentored student teams in the Metropolitan Water District’s Solar Cup program. She was named Teacher of the Year in 2018 for the West Covina Unified School District.

The Board also confirmed its 2026 officer slate, electing Dr. Anthony R. Fellow as Vice President, Ed Chavez as Treasurer, and Jennifer Santana as Secretary, with Charles Treviño continuing his service as board member.

Upper Water’s mission is to provide a reliable, sustainable, diversified, and affordable portfolio of high-quality water supplies to the San Gabriel Valley; including water conservation, recycled water, storm water capture, storage, water transfers and imported water. Upper Water services nearly one million people in its 144 square mile service territory. Governed by a five-member elected board of directors, Upper Water is a member agency of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Annually, more than 78 billion gallons of water is used in Upper Water’s service area. For more information about Upper Water and the water use efficiency programs mentioned, please visit our website [www.upperwater.org](http://www.upperwater.org)

###