



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

P. O. Box 54153, Los Angeles, California 90054-0153 • (213) 217-6485 • www.mwdh2o.com

Contacts: Maritza Fairfield, (213) 217-6853; (909) 816-7722, mobile
Rebecca Kimitch (213) 217-6450; (202) 821-5253, mobile

July 21, 2021

METROPOLITAN RELEASES INDEPENDENT REPORT ON ALLEGATIONS OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION

An independent report of allegations of systemic Equal Employment Opportunity-related discrimination, harassment and retaliation at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is now available following an intensive eight-month review of agency workplace conditions.

Metropolitan’s Board of Directors voted on July 13 to make public the [report](#), which includes recommendations to address the report’s observations. The 67-page report, produced by the Sacramento-based Shaw Law Group, will be presented and discussed at a special July 27 meeting of the board’s Organization, Personnel and Technology Committee.

“We look forward to reviewing the report and discussing its recommendations to support our board’s unequivocal commitment to ensuring every employee feels safe and valued,” Metropolitan board Chairwoman Gloria D. Gray said. “Providing a work environment that promotes and respects equity, inclusion, and diversity--both in policy and in practice--has been and will continue to be my highest priority.”

Metropolitan’s Ethics Officer Abel Salinas selected the Shaw Law Group on behalf of the board of directors in December 2020 and oversaw the board-directed independent review of the district’s EEO policies and procedures as well as employee allegations of EEO-related concerns, after several employees publicly expressed concerns of systemic workplace harassment, retaliation and related issues.

As part of its review, the law firm conducted interviews with more than 190 employees; directed a district-wide workplace assessment survey; reviewed existing policies and the process by which EEO claims are handled by management; examined the board’s current oversight of employment practices and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives; and assessed Metropolitan’s compliance with industry best practices.

more

“We are one at Metropolitan,” said General Manager Adel Hagekhalil. “That means every employee matters, is valued and should have the opportunity to succeed. I offer my deepest gratitude to all Metropolitan employees and stakeholders who participated in the interviews and climate survey, especially those brave individuals who shared their stories and shed light on a situation that compelled the board to call for this review of the agency’s policies and practices. I also want to thank the Shaw Law Group for this important report and recommendations that will help us ensure that we have a safe, positive work environment. I am committed to working with the board, our employees, and our bargaining groups to take the decisive action that is necessary to resolve the issues raised by our workers and articulated in this report.”

###

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that, along with its 26 cities and retail suppliers, provide 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.