



## **Metropolitan Water District Public Comment San Diego County Board of Supervisors Resolution**

Good morning Chair Jacob and members of the Board. My name is Meena Westford. I am here representing Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and I am here to speak to the resolution pertaining to Metropolitan.

As you all are aware, the Water Authority has sued Metropolitan regarding our rate structure. Once the courts have resolved these issues, both sides will live with those results and we will move on. I bring this up because the resolution before you today has nothing to do with pressing water issues we as a Southland face now and into the future.

California and the American Southwest have just come out of the most severe drought in recorded history. The past decade has broken all records of heat, the lowest rainfall, the smallest snowpack and the lowest deliveries from Northern California water to Metropolitan. On the Colorado River, Lake Mead behind Hoover Dam is approaching shortage conditions for the Lower Basin. In the Central Valley there has been devastating impacts to agriculture, and tens of thousands of acres of fallowed lands and over a billion dollars of losses.

Southern California and San Diego was spared the worst of those impacts thanks to Metropolitan's investments in our storage network. When the drought was at its worst, we met all regional deliveries and pulled nearly two million acre-feet of water out of storage to keep Southern California running. Southern Californians did their part and reduced and conserved water. Thousands of San Diegans, your constituents, used Metropolitan's rebates to rip out their lawns, to buy rain barrels and to upgrade to water efficient appliances in record amounts. While the Water Authority did object to these investments, the local support for those programs was overwhelming.

We are your primary water provider. We typically deliver more than 80 percent of all the water that comes into San Diego. We are your cheapest water provider. Metropolitan rates are generally 50 percent less than those charged by the Water Authority. Water from Carlsbad desalination facility, which is only seven percent of your water supply, comes in at 200 percent more than Metropolitan water.

For our part, we will continue to do our job of delivering water to San Diegans throughout these ongoing lawsuits. We will defend our rate structure in the courts but we will not seek resolutions criticizing the Water Authority from our other five counties that we serve. We believe the Authority's ongoing efforts to politicize this court process and mischaracterize the finances at Metropolitan is extremely unfortunate. Our debt load is far lower than that of the Water Authority, and Wall Street continues to give us the higher credit ratings – the highest credit ratings of any public agency. Regardless of the public relations campaign against us, Metropolitan will fulfill its mission and responsibility to San Diego ratepayers by delivering a reliable and affordable source of water. Thank you.