



*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*

# NEWS RELEASE

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*A photo of Abel Salinas is available upon request.*

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## METROPOLITAN NAMES U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR INVESTIGATOR AS NEW ETHICS OFFICER

Abel Salinas, who led investigations within the U.S. Department of Labor for more than two decades, has been named Metropolitan Water District's new ethics officer.

The Board of Directors today approved Salinas' contract to head the district's ethics office, which is responsible for fostering and supporting an ethical culture among Metropolitan directors, managers and staff. Reporting directly to the board, Salinas will begin in his new role on Monday and will make recommendations regarding rules and policies related to lobbying, conflicts of interest, contracts, campaign contributions and internal disclosures, while providing education and advice about these rules. He will also lead the ethics office in investigating alleged violations and help ensure Metropolitan directors and staff are in compliance with Metropolitan and state ethics rules.

The ethics office operates as an independent entity and protects employees filing complaints, the confidentiality of sources and the due-process rights of those accused of violating Metropolitan's ethics rules. Salinas succeeds General Auditor Gerald Riss, who has been serving as acting ethics officer.

"Metropolitan's ethics office has an integral role in ensuring our agency is transparent in its actions, operates with integrity and upholds high ethical standards," said Chairwoman Gloria Gray. "We look forward to working with Mr. Salinas and also thank Mr. Riss for his leadership during our time of transition."

Prior to joining Metropolitan, Salinas worked as the Special Agent in Charge in the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General. Based out of the agency's Los Angeles Regional Office, he led investigative personnel in multi-state offices, developed policy, and

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investigated public officials, government employees, contractors, educational institutions, businesses, and non-profit organizations for any federal and state law violations, including ethical concerns. Before joining that agency, he served for three years in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Salinas holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from University of Texas – Pan American and a master's degree in policy management from Georgetown University.

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*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that delivers water to 26 member agencies serving 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.*