



2023 Legislative Advocacy Plan

Approved by the Board of Director's on Monday, March 20, 2023

Purpose

The purpose of the Plan is to guide District officials and staff in considering legislative or regulatory proposals that are likely to have an impact on the District, and to allow for a timely response to important legislative issues. Although the expenditure of public funds for the purpose of supporting or opposing a ballot measure or candidate is prohibited, the expenditure of public funds is allowed to advocate for or against proposed legislation or regulatory actions which will affect the public agency expending the funds.

The purpose for identifying legislative advocacy procedures is to provide clear direction to District staff with regard to monitoring and acting upon bills during state and federal legislative sessions. Adherence to such procedures will ensure that legislative inquiries and responses will be administered consistently with "one voice" as to the identified advocacy priorities adopted by the Board of Directors. The advocacy priorities will provide the District General Manager, or other designee, discretion to advocate in best interests in a manner consistent with the goals and priorities adopted by the Board of Directors. This Plan is intended to be manageable, consistent, and tailored to the specific needs and culture of the District.

Plan Goals

- Advocate the District's legislative interests at the State, County, and Federal levels.
- Inform and provide information to the Board and staff on the legislative process and key issues and legislation that could have a potential impact on the District.
- Serve as an active participant with other local governments, the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), the California Special Districts Association (CSDA), and local government associations on legislative and regulatory issues that are important to the District and the region.
- Seek grant and funding assistance for District projects, services, and programs to enhance services for the community.

Plan Principles

The Board recognizes the need to protect District interests and local control, and to identify various avenues to implement its strategic and long-term goals. It is the policy of the District to proactively monitor and advocate for legislation as directed by the advocacy priorities and by the specific direction of the Board of Directors.

This Plan provides the District General Manager, or other designee, the flexibility to adopt positions on legislation in a timely manner, while allowing the Board of Directors to set advocacy priorities to provide policy guidance. The Board of Directors shall establish various advocacy priorities and, so long as the position fits within the advocacy priorities, staff is authorized to take a position without board approval.

Whenever an applicable advocacy priority does not exist pertaining to legislation affecting the District, the matter shall be brought before the Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled board meeting for formal direction from the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has chosen to establish a standing committee of three Directors, known as the “Legislative Advocacy Committee”, with the authority to adopt a position when consideration by the full Board of Directors is not feasible within the time-constraints of the legislative process.

Generally, the District will not address matters that are not pertinent to the District’s local government services, such as social issues or international relations issues.

Advocacy Priorities

Revenue, Finances, and Taxation

Ensure adequate funding for the Districts’ safe and reliable core local service delivery. Protect Districts’ resources from the shift or diversion of revenues without its consent. Promote financial independence and afford access to revenue opportunities equal to that of other types of local agencies. Protect and preserve the Districts’ property tax allocation and local flexibility with revenue and diversify local revenue sources.

Support opportunities that allow the District to compete for its fair share of regional, state, and federal funding, and that maintain funding streams. Opportunities may include competitive grant and funding programs. Opportunities may also include dedicated funding streams at the regional, state, or federal levels that allow the District to maximize local revenues, offset and leverage capital expenditures, and maintain District goals and standards.

Governance and Accountability

Enhance the Districts’ ability to govern as an independent, local government body in an open and accessible manner. Encourage best practices that avoid burdensome, costly, redundant or one-size-fits all approaches. Ensure local services meet the unique needs, priorities, and preferences of the community.

Oppose additional public meeting and records requirements that unnecessarily increase the burden on public resources without effectively fostering public engagement and enhancing accountability of government agencies.

Promote local-level solutions, decision-making, and management concerning service delivery and governance structures while upholding voter control.

Human Resources and Personnel

Promote policies related to hiring, management, and benefits and retirement that afford flexibility, contain costs, and enhance the ability to recruit and retain highly qualified, career-minded employees to public service. As public agency employers, support policies that foster productive relationships between management and employees.

Maintain the Districts' ability to exercise local flexibility by minimizing state-mandated contract requirements. Oppose any measure that would hinder the ability of special districts to maximize local resources and efficiencies through the use of contracted services.

Infrastructure, Innovation, and Investment

Encourage prudent planning for investment and maintenance of innovative long-term infrastructure. Support the contracting flexibility and fiscal tools and incentives needed to help special districts meet California's changing demands. Promote the efficient, effective, and sustainable delivery of core local services.

Prevent restrictive one-size-fits-all public works requirements that increase costs to taxpayers and reduce local flexibility.

Legislative Advocacy Procedures

It is the Plan of the District to proactively monitor and advocate for legislation as directed by the advocacy priorities and by the specific direction of the Board of Directors. This process involves interaction with local, state, and federal government entities both in regard to specific items of legislation and to promote positive intergovernmental relationships. Accordingly, involvement and participation in regional, state, and national organizations is encouraged and supported by the District.

Monitoring legislation is a shared function of the Board of Directors and General Manager or designated staff. Legislative advocacy procedures are the process by which staff will track and respond to legislative issues in a timely and consistent manner. The General Manager, or other designee, will act on legislation utilizing the following procedures:

1. The General Manager or other designee shall review requests that the District take a position on legislative issues to determine if the legislation aligns with the district's current approved advocacy priorities.
2. The General Manager or other designee will conduct a review of positions and analysis completed by ACWA, CSDA, WateReuse, and other local government associations when formulating positions.
3. If the matter aligns with the approved priorities, District response shall be supplied in the form of a letter to the legislative body reviewing the bill or measure. Advocacy methods

utilized on behalf of the District, including but not limited to letters, phone calls, emails, and prepared forms, will be communicated through the General Manager or designee. The General Manager or designee shall advise staff to administer the form of advocacy, typically via letters signed by the General Manager, or designee, on behalf of the Board of Directors.

4. All draft legislative position letters initiated by the General Manager or designee shall state whether the district is requesting “support”, “support if amended”, “oppose”, or “oppose unless amended” action on the issue, and shall include adequate justification for the recommended action. If possible, the letter should include examples of how a bill would specifically affect the district, e.g. “the funding the district will lose due to this bill could pay for X capital improvements.”
 - a. Support – legislation in this area advances the district’s goals and priorities.
 - b. Oppose – legislation in this area could potentially harm, negatively impact or undo positive momentum for the district, or does not advance the district’s goals and priorities.
5. The General Manager may also provide a letter of concern or interest regarding a legislative issue without taking a formal position on a piece of legislation. Letters of concern or interest are to be administered through the General Manager or designee.
6. When a letter is sent to a state or federal legislative body, the appropriate federal or state legislators representing the District shall be included as a copy or “cc” on the letter. The appropriate contacts at ACWA or the CSDA and other local government associations, if applicable, shall be included as a cc on legislative letters.
7. A position may be adopted by the General Manager or designee if any of the following criteria is met:
 - a. The position is consistent with the adopted advocacy priorities;
 - b. The position is consistent with that of organizations to which the District is a member, such as ACWA or CSDA; or
 - c. The position is approved by the Board of Directors or the Legislative Advocacy Committee.
8. All legislative positions adopted via a process outside of a regularly scheduled Board Meeting shall be communicated to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting. When appropriate, the General Manager or other designee will submit a report (either written or verbal) summarizing activity on legislative measures to the Board of Directors.

Federal Delegation



Senator Dianne Feinstein



Senator Alex Padilla



Rep. Jimmy Panetta, 19th Dist.

Federal Strategy

1) Continue relationship and services with The Ferguson Group

- Identifying legislation or proposed regulatory changes that may impact the District.
- Submit and pursue WRDA earmarks; Work with Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco regional office.
- Consider additional requests under Community Project Funding program.
- Consult with staff to develop positions on relevant legislation.
- Advocate the District's position on bills and matters of interest.
- Identify funding opportunities and notify of timing, requirements, and advocate on behalf of District or District's partners (e.g. WaterSMART) for, but not limited to:
 - ✓ Fisheries and watersheds
 - ✓ Pure Water Monterey Expansion
- Prepare materials for briefing – talking points, briefing books, letters, as necessary
- Coordinate with other water district lobbyists and organizations
- Maintain close relationships with Monterey legislative delegation

2) Maintain Washington DC profile:

- Work with The Ferguson Group to organize timely trips as needed, but at least once a year separate from ACWA trip
- Both Congressional delegation and regulatory departments related to water, including but not limited to BLM, NOAA (NMFS), USBR, USDA, and EPA.
- Develop relationships with new legislative staff.
- Attend ACWA trip each year or every other year
- Direct contact with associations including ACWA, WateReuse, etc.

3) Provide support for relevant legislation.

4) Perform on existing federal grants:

- \$10.3 million Pure Water Monterey Expansion USBR Title XVI grant – M1W

- WIFIA loan through the EPA – M1W
- Salinas and Carmel Rivers Basin Study (\$900,000 USBR to be completed in 2023)

State of California Delegation



John Laird, Senate District 17



Dawn Addis, Assembly District 30

Also: Anna Caballero (Senate District 12) and Robert Rivas (Assembly District 29)

State of California Strategy

1) Monitor and pursue grant opportunities:

- \$11.94 Million Urban Community Drought Relief Grant – MPWMD
- \$4.8 Million Budget Act of 2022 (Governor’s 2022-23 Budget earmark) – MPWMD
- \$15 Million State Revolving Fund grant for PWM Expansion – M1W
- Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP): Position the District for a 2023 application for Monitoring Watershed Restoration (MO) for Carmel River in the aftermath of the San Clemente dam removal.
- IRWM: Will maintain our effort to attain State funding in the next IRWM round

2) Maintain Sacramento profile:

- Work with JEA Associates to organize timely trips as needed, but at least once a year separate from needs-based visits.
- Follow through on the “Water for Housing” application to SWRCB and develop and execute advocacy plan.
- Pursue other grant and/or special legislation opportunities.
- Visit w/ Governor Newsom’s appointee’s in relevant key positions
- Meet with legislative team locally
- Attend CSDA, ACWA, and/or WateReuse legislative days

3) Provide support/opposition for relevant legislation.

- Maintain JEA bill-tracking
- Provide letters of support or opposition on legislation and regulations that affect the water industry. Current effort on proposed SWRCB regulations.

4) Develop helpful relationships: ACWA, WateReuse, others

Local Strategy

1) Maintain District role in regional water issues related to:

- Pure Water Monterey expansion
- Los Padres Dam and Reservoir studies
- Manage local IRWM and WRDA efforts
- Groundwater Sustainability
- Regionalism in water, generally

2) Encourage information flow and public participation in Rule 19.8/Measure J feasibility analysis where possible.

3) Participate in County-wide efforts (CEQA, OES, Water planning, Carmel River/Lagoon)

4) Maintain outreach to local associations government affairs committees (Chambers, MCAR, MCHA, Coalition of Peninsula Businesses, jurisdictions' mayors and councils); Meet new councilmembers and board members.

5) Better articulate CPUC activities to local ratepayer groups