



**Final Minutes
Legislative Advocacy Committee Meeting
Monday, July 28, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.
Meeting Location: Zoom**

Call to Order / Roll Call

Chair Oglesby called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Committee Members Present

Ian Oglesby, Chair
George Riley (Alternate)
Karen Paull

Committee Members Absent

Kate Daniels

District Staff Members Present

David Stoldt, General Manager
Mike McCullough, Assistant General Manager
Sara Reyes, Board Clerk

District Staff Members Absent

None

District Counsel Present

Michael Laredo, De Lay & Laredo

Additions and Corrections to the Agenda

None

Comments from the Public

Chair Oglesby opened the public comment period; however, no members of the public were present.

Action Items

Chair Oglesby introduced this item.

1. Consider Adoption of Committee Meeting Minutes from March 20, 2025

On a motion by Riley, seconded by Paull, the minutes of the March 20, 2025, committee meeting were approved on a 3-0 vote: 3 Ayes (Riley, Paull and Oglesby); 0 Noes.

Discussion Items

Chair Oglesby introduced this item.

2. Report from The Ferguson Group on Federal Legislative and Regulatory Activities

General Manager Stoldt noted that The Ferguson Group (TFG) has provided a revised Quarterly Legislative Report and a Legislative Tracker, both of which will be reviewed by TFG.

Chris Kearney provided an update on several key action items. He noted that delays within the executive branch persist due to staffing gaps and freezes on grant funding. Despite these challenges,

Congress managed to pass one major bill by July 4th, and vacancies in the House are expected to be filled by September. Water policy is beginning to regain attention, with a renewed focus on long-term, regional grant strategies. A significant milestone includes the allocation of \$1 billion over ten years for Bureau of Reclamation projects. Additionally, NEPA permitting reform is gaining traction, and municipal bond tools have been successfully preserved through strong advocacy efforts.

Roger Gwinn from TFG shared updates on federal appropriations. The focus has now shifted to the FY26 appropriations process. The House has advanced its Energy & Water Bill, which includes funding for environmental infrastructure projects. Notably, the Monterey Peninsula Stormwater Diversion & Recycling Project may be eligible to compete for \$750,000 in discretionary funding. However, delays in the Senate due to funding disagreements could affect final allocations. Senators Padilla and Schiff have expressed support for the District’s funding request. Efforts are also underway to streamline reimbursements from the Corps of Engineers under Section 219 authority. Furthermore, the transportation reauthorization process has begun, opening new funding opportunities for water and wildlife infrastructure. The administration has issued a public request for input on the reauthorization bill.

Chris Cummins from TFG provided updates on legislative tracking and grant opportunities. He highlighted the FISH Act, which aims to streamline ESA oversight for anadromous fish under the Fish & Wildlife Service. The Assistance for Rural Water Systems Act seeks to expand USDA support for water infrastructure through grants and low-interest loans. Other notable legislative efforts include the Every Drop Counts and Groundwater Technical Assistance Acts, which enhance support for small storage and groundwater recharge projects. The Water Conservation Rebate Tax Parity Act proposes exempting water utility rebates from federal income tax. Ongoing advocacy efforts are focused on ensuring that special districts are clearly included in federal funding programs, with early signs of progress in the 118th Congress.

3. Report from JEA & Associates on Legislative Status and Bill Tracking

John Arriaga from JEA & Associates provided a brief update on California legislative activity. He noted that the Legislature is currently in recess until mid-August, with the final session running through mid-September. A written report was distributed, covering budget details and legislative developments. He also highlighted ongoing engagement with state legislators, particularly regarding the Cease and Desist Order (CDO), and indicated that further updates are expected as bills continue to advance.

Laurie Johnson from JEA & Associates provided a state budget and legislative update. She noted that the Legislature passed a placeholder \$321 billion budget amid ongoing fiscal uncertainty, with further action expected in November and January. Although revenue projections are \$2.7 billion higher than anticipated, concerns remain over potential Medicaid cuts and limited water funding. The Delta Conveyance Project continues to be a priority for the Governor, despite strong legislative opposition. Governor Newsom also advanced SB 131, which weakens CEQA for housing, infrastructure, and wildfire mitigation projects. CEQA reforms were introduced through 22 separate bills to demonstrate broad support and avoid dilution. Overall, the Legislature is working to balance environmental protections with development needs. Additional updates are expected before the session adjourns in mid-September, particularly on water policy and regional control plans.

4. Update on SB 743

General Manager Stoldt provided an update on Senate Bill 473 which aims to reinstate the Water Revenue Adjustment Mechanism (WRAM) for investor-owned water utilities. The District submitted a detailed opposition letter and testified before the Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee; the bills are expected to move to Assembly Appropriations.

Efforts to gain enforcement authority for turf restrictions under AB 1572 are now focused on regulatory recognition as a public water system. Regarding the CDO, informal meetings with State Water Board members are scheduled for August 15, 21, and 25 to advocate for lifting the Order, following the CPUC’s delayed decision to August 14. The District plans to file a formal petition in September, citing no violations, due process concerns, and potential regulatory taking.

5. Schedule next meeting

General Manager Stoldt informed the group that District staff will coordinate with the committee to schedule the next meeting.

Suggest Items to Be Placed on a Future Agenda

- Engagement with TURN (The Utility Reform Network)
- Decoupling Policy Concerns

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Oglesby adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m.

/s/ Sara Reyes

Sara Reyes, Board Clerk to the
MPWMD Water Supply Planning Committee

Approved by the MPWMD Water Supply Planning Committee on November 19, 2025.