



November 8, 2023

Honorable Adan Ortega
Chair, Board of Directors
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 N. Alameda St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
dl-boardsupportteam@mwdh2o.com

SUBJECT: Support for Consent Calendar Item 7-1: Water Desalination Studies

Dear Chair Ortega:

On behalf of CalDesal, California's statewide desalination and salinity management industry association, I write to express support for the staff's recommendation on Consent Calendar Item 7-1 to authorize professional services agreements to perform water desalination studies in Metropolitan Water District's (MWD) service area. This item is scheduled to be considered at the Engineering, Operations, and Technology Committee on November 13, 2023, and at the full MWD Board of Directors meeting on November 14, 2023.

Comprised of nearly 60 organizations statewide (including MWD), CalDesal (CalDesal.org) represents public and private sector entities, as well as non-profit organizations integrating the use of desalination to ensure a sustainable water future for California's communities and economy. CalDesal is dedicated to helping California increase its statewide water resilience which has been impacted by a changing climate, unpredictable and erratic precipitation patterns, water supply challenges, and continued population growth.

Over recent years, California's hydrologic conditions have been impacted by both high temperatures and a lack of precipitation. Even as we recently enjoyed a strong precipitation and snowpack season, our state's long-term ability to be water- and drought-resilient and to respond to a rapidly changing climate pattern is challenged. Water use efficiency has been a valuable tool to meet the needs of California's cyclical drought impacts. Nonetheless, the "New Normal" that we are facing with respect to our climate patterns and hydrology indicates that a broader portfolio of resiliency strategies and investments in water supply infrastructure – including recycled water, potable reuse, stormwater management, salt and contaminant removal projects, and brackish and ocean water desalination – must be made now so that we can withstand the next cycle of prolonged and damaging drought and the aridification of California.

As you know, Governor Newsom's Water Resilience Portfolio and Water Supply Strategy emphasize an "All-of-the-Above" approach to developing a water supply portfolio, and this approach is generally consistent and complementary with MWD's "One Water" philosophy to improving the region's water supply resilience for urban, environmental, and agricultural uses of water. As part of the Governor's portfolio approach, his Administration has included seawater and brackish water desalination as integral components of California's water supply planning. Desalination is a crucial tool in the water supply toolbox to help create a balanced water portfolio that can sustain our communities and economy as we adapt to the increasingly unpredictable and drastic effects of climate change.

The work your organization is doing to develop a Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water is instrumental to the region's future water resilience. However, to be most effective and to provide the greatest basis and foundation for decision-making by the Board of Directors and MWD management going forward, the analysis and information-gathering must be sufficiently comprehensive. Simply stated, it is imperative to "Walk the Talk" on an all-of-the-above approach to water supply planning and resilience.

The staff's recommendation on Consent Calendar Item 7-1 is a modest approach to improving the foundation and framework of information that can be available for you and your colleagues to meaningfully evaluate and explore water resilience options for Southern California. There is nothing in the staff recommendation that compels advancement of infrastructure – it is simply developing the scope of resources necessary to best inform future decisions and actions.

CalDesal strongly encourages your approval of Consent Calendar Item 7-1, and we look forward to our continued partnership with MWD to secure California's water resilience future.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to either of us, or to Glenn Farrel, CalDesal's Executive Director, at glenn@gfadvocacy.com or at (916) 216-1747, if you have any questions regarding CalDesal's support or perspectives on this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Donovan
Board Chair, CalDesal



Marice DePasquale
Board Vice Chair, CalDesal

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cc: Members, Metropolitan Water District Board of Directors
Members, CalDesal Executive Committee