



March 18, 2025

The Honorable Isaac Bryan
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 580 (Wallis): Surface Mining: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Bryan:

On behalf of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) and the undersigned organizations, we write to express our support for AB 580, which seeks to remove the sunset on existing law and allow Metropolitan to continue to operate under a single Master Reclamation Plan for Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) compliance.

Metropolitan is a regional water wholesaler that works in partnership with our 26 member agencies to provide drinking water to approximately 19 million California residents across six counties in Southern California, specifically Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange, San Bernardino,

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Riverside and Ventura counties. The Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA), which is owned and operated by Metropolitan, represents a core source of supply in Metropolitan's water supply portfolio.

When Metropolitan completed construction of the CRA in 1941, it retained ownership of the land beneath and adjacent to the CRA, including excess stone, gravel and sand used for the construction of the CRA. Metropolitan uses these raw materials to restore the CRA facilities from storm and flood damage, and other necessary repairs. As a result of these activities, Metropolitan is subject to SMARA, which requires counties to approve a reclamation plan within its respective jurisdiction. However, the CRA spans across multiple counties, which results in varied compliance and reporting processes.

To streamline this process, Metropolitan sponsored AB 442 (Mayes, CH. 166, 2021) to allow it to work under a single Master Reclamation Plan approved by the State Mining and Geology Board (Mining Board), in addition to requiring annual inspections and reporting. AB 442 centralizes compliance at the state level to ensure Metropolitan can properly maintain the CRA for water supply reliability throughout Southern California.

Since AB 442 was enacted, Metropolitan has worked diligently with the Mining Board to comply with SMARA. The Mining Board has conducted the required inspections of Metropolitan's reclamation sites and Metropolitan has submitted an annual report on our operations to the Mining Board. AB 580 will remove the current January 1, 2026, sunset date established in AB 442 to allow Metropolitan to continue to comply with SMARA through the Mining Board.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal that will ensure Metropolitan is able to carry out its repair and maintenance of the CRA in a timely and efficient manner. If you should have any questions or need additional details, please contact Rosie Thompson, Principal Legislative Representative, at rthompson@mwdh2o.com or (916)712-2504.

Sincerely,

Deven Upadhyay
General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern
California

Kris Murray
Executive Director
Association of California Cities – Orange
County

Julia Hall
State Legislative Director
Association of California Water Agencies

Harvey De La Torre
General Manager
Municipal Water District of Orange County

Andrea Abergel
Director of Water
California Municipal Utilities Association

Amanda Walsh
Vice President, Government Affairs
Orange County Business Council

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Kristine McCaffrey, P.E.
General Manager
Calleguas Municipal Water District

Sara Catalan
Executive Director
Orange County Taxpayers Association

Nem Ochoa
Board President
Central Basin Municipal Water District

Jason A. Martin
General Manager
Rancho Water

Nina Jazmadarian
General Manager
Foothill Municipal Water District

Matthew Litchfield
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Three Valleys Municipal Water District

Danielle Borja
President/CEO
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

Donna Duperron
President & CEO
Torrance Area Chamber of Commerce

Shivaji Deshmukh, P.E.
General Manager
Inland Empire Utilities Agency

Andy Conli
President & CEO
West Ventura County Business Alliance

David Pedersen
General Manager
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Craig D. Miller, P.E.
General Manager
Western Municipal Water District

cc: Assemblymember Juan Alanis, 22nd AD, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Laurie Davis 74th AD
Assemblymember Damon Connolly, 12th AD
Assemblymember Heath Flora, 9th AD
Assemblymember Robert Garcia, 50th AD
Assemblymember Matt Haney, 17th AD
Assemblymember Josh Hoover, 7th AD
Assemblymember Ash Kalra, 25th AD
Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi, 66th AD
Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, 28th AD
Assemblymember Nick Schultz, 44th AD
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, 14th AD
Assemblymember Rick Chavez Zbur, 51st AD