



May 9, 2025

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

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RE: AB 580 (Wallis): Surface mining: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – (As amended March 26, 2025) SUPPORT

Dear Chair Wicks:

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 extend 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, 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 extend the sunset to January 1, 2051, which will allow Metropolitan to continue to comply with SMARA directly with 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 at rthompson@mwdh2o.com or (916)712-2504.

Sincerely,

Deven Upadhyay
General Manager
Metropolitan Water District of Southern
California

Julia Hall
State Legislative Director
Association of California Water Agencies

Kris Murray
Executive Director
Association of California Cities – Orange
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Andrea Abergel
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California Municipal Utilities Association

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Central Basin Municipal Water District

Joe Mouawad, P.E.
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Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Jeremy Harris
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Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce

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Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

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Municipal Water District of Orange County

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Orange County Business Council

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

Brian Tisdale
Advocacy Committee Chair
Western Riverside Council of Governments

cc: Assemblymember Kate Sanchez, 71st AD, Vice Chair
Assemblymember Dr. Joaquin Arambula, 31st AD
Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, 56th AD
Assemblymember Jessica M. Caloza, 52nd AD
Assemblymember Diane B. Dixon, 72nd AD
Assemblymember Sade Elhawary, 57th AD
Assemblymember Mike Fong, 49th AD
Assemblymember Mark González, 54th AD
Assemblymember Gregg Hart, 37th AD
Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco, 64th AD
Assemblymember Gail Pellerin, 28th AD
Assemblymember José Luis Solache Jr., 62nd AD
Assemblymember Tri Ta, 70th AD
Assemblymember David J. Tangipa, 8th AD
Ashley Ames, Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
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