



June 12, 2025

The Honorable Monique Limón
Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3220
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Monique Limón

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

Dear Chair Limón:

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. 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,

The Honorable Monique Limón

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Association of California Water Agencies

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

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Nem Ochoa
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Matthew Litchfield
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Three Valleys Municipal Water District

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Andy Conli
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West Ventura County Business Alliance

Craig D. Miller, P.E.
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Brian Tisdale
Advocacy Committee Chair
Western Riverside Council of Governments

cc: Senator Kelly Seyarto, 32nd SD, Vice Chair
Senator Benjamin Allen, 24th SD
Senator Shannon Grove, 12th SD
Senator Melissa Hurtado, 16th SD
Senator John Laird, 17th SD
Senator Henry Stern, 27th SD
Katharine Moore, Consultant, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Todd Moffitt, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus