



Inland Empire WATERKEEPER®
Advocacy • Education • Research • Restoration • Enforcement



UTLA

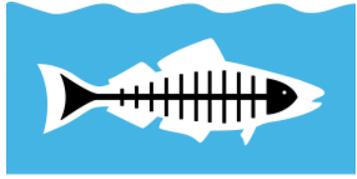
UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES



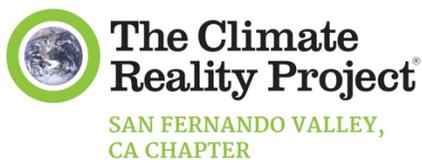
ORANGE COUNTY COASTKEEPER®



SAN DIEGO COASTKEEPER®



Heal the Bay



SAN FERNANDO VALLEY, CA CHAPTER



A NEW ECONOMY FOR ALL



LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

March 19, 2025

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 North Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2944
Attn: Chair Adán Ortega, Jr. and General Manager Deven Upadhyay

Re: Support for CAMP4W Approval and Implementation

Honorable Chair Ortega & General Manager Upadhyay,

The undersigned, who represent a diverse group of nonprofit and community-based organizations that support Southern California's shift to more resilient, multi-benefit, local water supplies, are writing to express our support for the approval and implementation of the agency's first-ever Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W). As especially apparent from LA's devastating fires, as well as today's worsening drought-to-drench weather whiplash, climate resilience and local water are critical for the future of Southern California. We are deeply appreciative of both Chair Ortega and GM Upadhyay for being consistent strong voices in support of this groundbreaking endeavor for MWD and pushing for a revised business model that better reflects our new climate reality, and to all the staff and board members who have helped get us to this point.

We are excited to get CAMP4W over the finish line, support its approval, and appreciate that the evaluation criteria prioritize resilience and include affordability, equity, and environmental co-benefits. We do, however, want to briefly express some areas for improvement in the draft plan and provide recommendations on how to ensure CAMP4W is fully operationalized at MWD with a long-term proactive vision.

In reviewing the first draft of the CAMP4W implementation plan, there are a few areas that could use additional attention. Such updates could include:

- Clearly articulating MWD's starting point to more accurately measure progress beyond where MWD is today;
- Ensuring vulnerability assessments address all climate stressors, not only flooding and drought, but also wildfires (including wildfire technical assistance), long-term aridification, energy usage, extreme heat, and others;
- Incorporating water quality and public health into the policy framework;
- Developing clear metrics to quantify equity and environmental co-benefits, including water quality and promotion of green space, among others; and
- Adding in-depth implementation strategies to achieve the targets. Currently, the approach is designed to assess new projects, programs, and policies. This is critical, but only half the need. Implementation strategies can help inform future project, program, and policy priorities and enable staff and the board to look at the big picture vision of achieving a safe, reliable, climate resilient water supply for the next 50 years. And this approach will better enable MWD to assess the cumulative impacts, both beneficial and detrimental, to achieve this vision.

In alignment with Chair Ortega’s statements in CAMP4W meetings, we also want to ensure this plan is not just “window dressing”, and is truly operationalized within MWD’s decision-making processes, staffing structure, and culture. The draft plan does not delineate a strategy around how CAMP4W will be rolled out across the myriad of staff departments at MWD and how it will engage the general workforce. We were pleased to hear Chair Ortega share a desire to ensure MWD’s staff structure mirrors the critical role of CAMP4W within the agency and support any such changes. We agree that this is a massive effort that will need to be infused into all of MWD’s systems, beyond only being addressed when considering infrastructure investments. Some ideas could include: making CAMP4W a regular report at the Executive Committee (like the Colorado River) so there are monthly updates instead of only annual; MWD’s annual HR reporting and work plans include CAMP4W priorities, especially for executive leadership; and ensuring the budget process is directly linked with CAMP4W targets.

Lastly, though CAMP4W is called a ‘plan’, it presents more as an evaluation framework with strategies and tools to help adapt nimbly to climate change. Though this is a critical first step to infusing climate change ideology throughout MWD on a project-by-project basis, we would like to additionally see a more cohesive and proactive vision that looks at the full picture of how MWD will achieve more climate resilient local water long term. We want to ensure decisions aren’t made in silos with singular projects but instead viewed more holistically within MWD’s full water portfolio to see how it will help meet CAMP4W’s time-bound targets. We recognize the challenges of developing such a proactive vision, a true ‘master plan’, particularly as MWD includes 26 member agencies across a massive stretch of Southern California. But absent such a vision, the agency and more broadly California’s water future will continue to be ‘planned’ reactively and tactically, rather than having a proactive, strategic, and visionary approach to water management. As such, we encourage MWD to work with its member agencies to embark upon such a cohesive vision for our water future.

Thank you again for heralding this novel climate adaptation framework for MWD and we look forward to seeing its passage in April. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions or need additional information.

Kind regards,

Maura Monagan
Policy & Government Affairs Manager
Los Angeles Waterkeeper

Belén Bernal
Executive Director
Nature for All

Zoe Cunliffe, PhD
Environmental Justice Program Manager
Black Women for Wellness

Sean Bothwell
Executive Director
California Coastkeeper Alliance

Julie van Winkle
UTLA/AFT Vice President
AFT 1021 President
United Teachers Los Angeles

Garry Brown
Founder & President
Orange County Coastkeeper
Inland Empire Waterkeeper

Tori Kjer
Executive Director
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust

Jonathan Parfrey
Executive Director
Climate Resolve

Phillip Musegaas
Executive Director
San Diego Coastkeeper

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla
Executive Director
Restore the Delta

Neal Desai
Senior Director, Pacific Region
National Parks Conservation Association

David Diaz, MPH
Executive Director
Active San Gabriel Valley

Jann Dorman
Executive Director
Friends of the River

Annelisa Ehret Moe
Associate Director, Science & Policy
Heal the Bay

Emely Garcia
SoCal Government Affairs Advocate
Natural Resources Defense Council

J.P. Rose
Policy Director, Urban Wildlands Program
Center for Biological Diversity

Peter Drekmeier
Policy Director
Tuolumne River Trust

Conner Everts
Facilitator, Environmental Water Caucus
Executive Director, SoCal Watershed Alliance

Geoff McQuilkin
Executive Director
Mono Lake Committee

Laurene von Klan
Co-Chair
Climate Action Santa Monica

Charming Evelyn
Chair - Water Committee
Sierra Club Angeles Chapter

Diana Weynand
Chair Emeritus, San Fernando Valley Chapter
Climate Reality Project

Andy Hattala
Vice Chair & Water Committee Chair
Climate Reality Project: Los Angeles Chapter

Nicole Capretz
Founder and CEO
Climate Action Campaign

Lauren Ahkiam
Climate Campaign Co-Director
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy

Jennifer Clary
California Director
Clean Water Action