



Our Region's Trusted Water Leader
San Diego County Water Authority

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News Release

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Mel Katz Elected Board Chair of San Diego County Water Authority

Nick Serrano is Vice Chair and Frank Hilliker becomes Secretary

September 22, 2022 – New officers for the San Diego County Water Authority's Board of Directors were elected today, with Mel Katz starting his two-year term as Board chair on Oct. 1. Katz, vice chair of the Board for the past six months as a representative for the City of Del Mar, will serve with incoming Vice Chair Nick Serrano, a Board representative from the City of San Diego, and incoming Secretary Frank Hilliker. Katz will serve as the 27th board chair since the Water Authority's founding in 1944.

Gary Croucher, who represents the Otay Water District on the Water Authority's Board, served as chair the past two years. His term ends on Sept. 30. Croucher has served on the Board since 2001.

"As Water Authority Board Chair, I am committed to continuing the collaboration with our member agencies, and our regional, state and federal partners, as we navigate the challenges of the on-going drought," said Katz. "Ensuring a reliable and safe water supply for San Diego County and the Southwest, requires cooperation, flexibility, and innovative solutions."

"We continue to support our 24 member agencies as they develop new, sustainable local supply sources, such as potable reuse, which lessens the region's reliance on imported sources," Katz said.

"As Water Authority Board Chair, I am committed to continuing the collaboration with our member agencies and our regional, state and federal partners, as we navigate the challenges of the on-going drought."

-- Mel Katz, Incoming Board Chair, San Diego County Water Authority

He also said the Water Authority will continue efforts to resolve legal disputes over rates with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and continue working with MWD on partnership opportunities advanced under Croucher's leadership.

Croucher, presiding over his last meeting as Board chair, was honored by staff and Board members for his leadership on rate case litigation, which included securing nearly \$91 million from MWD during his term. Croucher also presided over successful efforts to secure funds to help residents cover unpaid water bills during the coronavirus pandemic and to minimize Water Authority rate increases.

Incoming Board Chair Katz has been on the Water Authority Board since March 2018 and served as Board Vice Chair the past six months. He has been serving on the Legislation and Public Outreach Committee, along with appointments to the Administrative and Finance Committee, the Labor Negotiations Work Group, the Project Labor Agreement Work Group. Katz is also the Water Authority's representative to the San Diego Association of Governments.

Katz brings a wealth of civic and business experience to the post as an executive board member of The San Diego Foundation, a board member of the San Diego Rotary Foundation and a former chair of the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, among several other posts. He also is executive officer of Manpower San Diego, which has been in business for 45 years, and a leading workforce solutions provider and one of the region's largest for-profit employers.

Serrano, the new vice chair, has been on the Board since May 2021, representing the City of San Diego. He sits on the Water Authority's committees for Imported Water, Water Planning and Environmental, the Detachment Work Group, and is also Chair of the Project Labor Agreement Work Group. A native San Diegan, Serrano is Deputy Chief of Staff to San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria and is a former communications director for the City of San Diego.

Frank Hilliker, the new Board secretary, currently serves as chair of the Water Authority's Legislation and Public Outreach Committee and sits on the Administrative and Finance Committee. He also is chair of the Financial Strategy Work Group and is on the Labor Negotiations Work Group. Hilliker joined the Water Authority Board in 2007 representing the Lakeside Water District. He is the current vice chair of the Lakeside Chamber of Commerce and president of Hilliker's Ranch Fresh Eggs, Inc.

The Water Authority's 36-member board, representing 24 retail member water agencies, holds its regular meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month January through October. The November and December meetings are combined, and this year that meeting is November 17. Board meetings have been conducted online since April 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and are live-streamed on the Water Authority's website. Board documents and webcasts of Board meetings are at www.sdewa.org/board-directors.

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The San Diego County Water Authority sustains a \$240 billion regional economy and the quality of life for 3.3 million residents through a multi-decade water supply diversification plan, major infrastructure investments and forward-thinking policies that promote fiscal and environmental responsibility. A public agency created in 1944, the Water Authority delivers wholesale water supplies to 24 retail water providers, including cities, special districts and a military base.



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