



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 21-824, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-4.

CC - (1) Discussion of a Resolution Requesting a State Audit of Alleged Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying and Retaliation at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate.

Meeting Date: April 12, 2021

Contact Person/Dept: Shelly Wolfberg/City Manager's Office

Phone Number: (310) 253-6000

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Metropolitan Water District; Scott Houston, West Basin Municipal Water District; Meetings and Agendas - City Council (04/07/2021).

Department Approval: John M. Nachbar (04/07/2021)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) discuss a Resolution requesting a state audit of alleged sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and retaliation at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD); and (2) provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND/ DISCUSSION

On February 12, 2021, the Los Angeles Times published an article which recounted the mistreatment of women in MWD's trades apprenticeship program, which gives workers an entree into careers traditionally dominated by men. The article identified the female trainees' allegations of unwanted touching, inappropriate and offensive comments, and the apparent lack of action by MWD (Attachment 1).

About MWD

MWD is a regional wholesaler that provides water for 26 member public agencies to deliver - either

directly or through their sub-agencies - to nearly 19 million people living in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage, and other resource-management programs.

To supply its service area with reliable and safe water, MWD owns and operates an extensive water system including: the Colorado River Aqueduct, 16 hydroelectric facilities, nine reservoirs, 819 miles of large-scale pipes and five water treatment plants. Four of these treatment plants are among the 10 largest plants in the world. MWD is the largest distributor of treated drinking water in the United States. MWD imports water from the Feather River in Northern California and the Colorado River to supplement local supplies. It also helps its member agencies develop water recycling, storage, and other local resource programs to provide additional supplies and conservation programs to reduce regional demands. (www.mwdh2o.com <<http://www.mwdh2o.com>>)

About West Basin Municipal Water District (West Basin)

West Basin imports water to supplement local supplies. West Basin and its customer agencies operating within West Basin's service area develop local supplies including groundwater, brackish desalination, and recycled water. West Basin remains one of the largest member agencies of MWD and representation on MWD's Board is critical to making West Basin's customer agencies' voices on regional water issues heard. West Basin's Board of Directors appoints two representatives to serve on the 38-member MWD Board of Directors. (www.westbasin.org/board-directors <<http://www.westbasin.org/board-directors>>)

Scott Houston was elected to the West Basin Board of Directors for Division IV, in 2014. He represents Culver City, El Segundo, Malibu, West Hollywood and unincorporated Los Angeles County areas of Del Aire, Lennox, Marina del Rey, North Ladera Heights, Topanga, View Park, Wiseburn and Windsor Hills.

Golden State Water Company (GSWC)

GSWC has served Culver City for more than 80 years. With approximately 9,500 customers, Culver City is one of GSWC's largest Service Areas. The Culver City System serves imported water from the Colorado River Aqueduct and the State Water Project (imported and distributed by MWD). (<https://www.gswater.com>)

Additionally, some Culver City utility customers receive water service from Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

City and County of Los Angeles Action

On March 9, 2021, LADWP transmitted a letter to MWD in response to the Los Angeles City Council Motion on MWD harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and abuse issues following the direction given at the February 17, 2021, Los Angeles City Council meeting (Attachment 2).

On March 9, 2021, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted a motion to direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a five-signature letter to Assemblymember Rudy Salas Jr., Chair, and

Senator John Laird, Vice Chair, of the Assembly Joint Legislative Audit Committee, with a copy to the Committee members to request a State Audit in order to have a comprehensive investigation into the allegations and concerns regarding the workplace culture surrounding the women and LGBTQIA+ employees who work at MWD (Attachment 3).

City Council Direction

At the March 15, 2021 City Council meeting, the City Council reached consensus to consider a resolution requesting a state audit of alleged sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and retaliation at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), similar to the resolution adopted by the City of Los Angeles (Attachment 4). Staff recommends the City Council discuss consideration of a similar resolution and provide direction to the City Manager. If the City Council desires to adopt a similar resolution, staff will return at the next City Council meeting with a proposed resolution for City Council's consideration. If a resolution is ultimately adopted, staff would transmit a copy of the Resolution to the Assembly Joint Legislative Audit Committee, and Culver City's State and County elected representatives.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Discussion and direction regarding this matter does not create a fiscal impact to the City.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2021-04-12__ATT__LA Times Editorial-Sexual misconduct at MWD
2. 2021-04-12__ATT__Los Angeles Department of Water and Power letter to MWD
3. 2021-04-12__ATT__MWD Motion-Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
4. 2021-04-12__ATT__City of Los Angeles MWD Resolution

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Discuss a resolution requesting a state audit of alleged sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and retaliation at the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California; and/or
2. Provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.