

**REPORT OF THE  
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

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DATE: March 27, 2026

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations  
Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso   
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No. 26-0002-S6  
Assignment No: 26-02-0133

SUBJECT: Resolution to Support the Pure Water Southern California Program

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt revised Resolution to include in the City's 2025-2026 State Legislative Program, support for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' Pure Water Southern California program.

SUMMARY

Resolution (Nazarian – Jurado), introduced February 6, 2026, describes the Pure Water Southern California program, a partnership between the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (County), which would purify and reuse cleaned wastewater that currently flows into the ocean, producing up to 150 million gallons of water daily—enough to serve 1.5 million people—while replenishing groundwater basins. The program is intended to diversify water supplies and ensure reliability amidst a changing climate or a natural disaster.

The Resolution notes that currently 50% of the Department of Water and Power's water supply is provided by the MWD. It also notes that groundwater basins in the region have provided 30% of Southern California's water supply but have dropped to historic lows during drought conditions. The Resolution states that the program would increase local supplies and reduce reliance on imported supplies from the Colorado River and Sierra Nevada, which grow scarcer each year.

The Resolution explains that the program is being developed in phases, with the first phase introducing 115 million gallons of purified water daily and the second phase reaching its full capacity of 150 million gallons daily after its operations begin in a few years. The Resolution stresses that the development of a regional program on the scale of Pure Water Southern California requires partners, including the County, several MWD member agencies, local groundwater basin managers, and water agencies in Nevada and Arizona that are interested in water exchanges to enhance water reliability.

The Resolution also posits that this could be an opportunity to partner with MWD on Pure Water Southern California and integrate with Pure Water Los Angeles to provide greater water supply resiliency for City and MWD customers. It also expresses support for this program as part of the 2026-27 State Legislative and Federal Legislative Programs.

Therefore, the revised Resolution requests that the City include, as part of the 2025-2026 State and Federal Legislative Programs, support for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' Pure Water Southern California program, a regional water recycling partnership that would purify and reuse cleaned wastewater that currently flows into the ocean, in order to ensure regional water supply resiliency and sustainability.

## BACKGROUND

MWD and the County began exploring the concept of the Pure Water Southern California program in 2010, conducting a pilot study in 2012 and a feasibility study concluding in 2016. The foundation was a Joint Groundwater Replenishment Study from 2010, which established the technical basis for the program.

In 2019, MWD and the County completed construction of a proof-of-concept facility located at the Sanitation Districts' Joint Water Pollution Control Plant in Carson—one of the largest wastewater treatment plants in the world, processing approximately 260 million gallons per day of wastewater currently discharged to the Pacific Ocean. The demonstration plant produces 500,000 gallons of purified water per day and has been used to test the purification technology and pursue regulatory approval.

The formal California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental review process was launched in 2021. While under review, the program secured major financial commitments: an \$80 million grant from the State of California in 2023 and a \$125 million WaterSMART Large-Scale Water Recycling Program grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 2024.

Following more than five years of environmental analysis, outreach, and public input, MWD's Board of Directors voted unanimously on February 10, 2026, to certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Governor Newsom had previously certified the project under CEQA's judicial streamlining process, meaning that any legal challenges to the EIR would face expedited judicial review rather than potentially years of litigation.

The program itself addresses the problem of the County's A.K. Warren Water Resource Facility in Carson currently discharging cleaned wastewater into the Pacific Ocean. Pure Water Southern California would intercept that water, purify it through advanced treatment processes, and distribute it through up to 60 miles of new pipelines to groundwater basins, industrial facilities, and MWD water treatment plants—with water deliveries potentially beginning as early as 2033. These efforts will ensure the program meets its primary objective of ensuring regional water supply resiliency and sustainability for the benefit of City residents and Southern Californians.

## DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

Department of Public Works, Bureau of Sanitation  
Department of Water and Power

*CD Fields*  
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Christopher Fields  
Analyst

Attachment: 1. Revised Resolution

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations, or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal government body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Pure Water Southern California program, established by a partnership between the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, would create a new water supply to help meet Southern California's needs by providing up to 150 million gallons of water daily, enough for 1.5 million people and replenish groundwater basins and provide additional supplies for the region's drinking water treatment and delivery systems through the purified water; and

WHEREAS, the program would diversify water supplies and ensure reliability, especially in a changing climate, and support the region in case of an earthquake or other emergency disrupts imported supplies; and

WHEREAS, currently 50% of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's water supply is provided by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California; and

WHEREAS, groundwater basins in the region have provided 30% of Southern California's water supply but have dropped to historic lows during the drought conditions; and

WHEREAS, the City has goals to increase local supply, this program would produce high-quality water to refill these underground reservoirs; and

WHEREAS, the program would increase local supplies and reduce reliance on imported supplies from the Colorado River and Sierra Nevada, which grow scarcer every year; and

WHEREAS, the program's benefits would extend beyond water supply by fueling job creation and the local economy, as a 2021 Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation study found that construction of Pure Water Southern California facilities could create 47,000 new jobs and \$8.7 billion in economic output, while Metropolitan is exploring workforce development opportunities to support local hiring and provide necessary job training; and

WHEREAS, the program would be developed in phases, with the first phase producing 115 million gallons of purified water daily and the second phase reaching its fully capacity of 150 million gallons per day after its operations begin a few years later; and

WHEREAS, developing a regional program on the scale of Pure Water Southern California requires partners, including the Sanitation Districts, several Metropolitan member agencies, local groundwater basin managers, and water agencies in Nevada and Arizona that are interested in water exchanges to enhance water reliability across the southwestern U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the City has a valuable opportunity to partner with Metropolitan on Pure Water Southern California to increase regional reliability, and integrating with Pure Water Los Angeles may serve both the City and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's customers by providing greater water supply resiliency and local supply benefits, especially in emergency scenarios; and

WHEREAS, climate change—manifested through drier summers, wetter winters, unpredictable weather extremes, and a steady decline in snowpack—is forcing California to rethink its water future and, for Los Angeles, is reducing both the overall water available in the system and the reliability and sustainability of imported supplies, thereby threatening access and affordability for Angelenos;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2025-2026 State Legislative and Federal Legislative Programs SUPPORT for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' Pure Water Southern California program, a regional water recycling partnership that would purify and reuse cleaned wastewater that currently flows into the ocean, in order to ensure regional water supply resiliency and sustainability.