

June 22, 2023

Ádán Ortega
Chair of the Board
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
700 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2944

Dear Chair Ortega,

We write to you as the four members of the San Diego County Water Authority's MWD board delegation, regarding the unfortunate June 22 letter Fallbrook and Rainbow sent to you ("the Letter"), copied to the MWD board, San Diego LAFCO and Mayors Todd Gloria and Karen Bass.

Attached is a copy of a statement approved by all of us and presented by Director Smith today to the Water Authority's board of directors and public to correct the record and express our objection to the Letter and strong disagreement with the baseless accusations and veiled threats against you.

We are grateful for the strong leadership you are bringing to the MWD board in your capacity as our Board Chair, for the diverse leadership team you have assembled, and for your strong commitment to disadvantaged communities and affordability. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the board on the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for water and all other pending issues.

Sincerely,



Lois Fong-Sakai
Director



S. Gail Goldberg
Director



Marty Miller
Director



Tim Smith
Director

Cc: via email

Water Authority Board of Directors
MWD Board of Directors
Honorable Todd Gloria, Mayor, and Nick Serrano, Deputy Chief of Staff, City of San Diego
Honorable Karen Bass, Mayor, City of Los Angeles and Nancy Sutley, Deputy Mayor
MWD General Manager Adel Hagekhalil
Rainbow MWD Board of Directors/ General Manager Tom Kennedy
Fallbrook PUD Board of Directors/ General Manager Jack Bebee
San Diego LAFCO Executive Director Keene Simonds and Commissioners

MEMBER AGENCIES

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City of Oceanside • Olivenhain MWD • Otay Water District • Padre Dam MWD • Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base • City of Poway • Rainbow MWD
Ramona MWD • Rincon del Diablo MWD • City of San Diego • San Dieguito Water District • Santa Fe Irrigation District • Sweetwater Authority
Vallecitos Water District • Valley Center MWD • Vista Irrigation District • Yuima Municipal Water District

Tim Smith Public Statement
@ Water Authority's June 22, 2023, Board of Directors Meeting

- On behalf of the four members of our MWD board delegation, I want to make a public comment on the June 22 letter Fallbrook and Rainbow sent to MWD Board Chair Ortega, copied to the MWD board, San Diego LAFCO and Mayors Todd Gloria and Karen Bass.
- As members of the MWD board and as representatives of the Water Authority, we are embarrassed by this letter—not only the poor judgment in sending it in the first place, making personal attacks on our board chair, but due to the authors' lack of understanding of what has—and has not—transpired at MWD with regard to the subject of the potential annexations.
- If Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Bebee had followed or read the transcript of the FAIRP committee last week, it would be readily apparent that the accusations made in their letter—including that Chair Ortega has acted improperly and outside the scope of his authority as a board member and Chair—are entirely baseless.
- Not only did Chair Ortega present the annexation issues of concern to him in a public and transparent process on a board agenda approved by the Executive Committee, but there was almost unanimous agreement that the issues should be addressed by the MWD board.
- This process is now beginning with an ad hoc committee being formed by Chair Ortega with the concurrence of the FAIRP committee, which I chair.
- In the end, we are confident that the MWD board will decide for itself what its policies are and how they may or may not impact the yet-to-be-requested annexations of Fallbrook and Rainbow, should detachments be approved by the LAFCO.
- We are confident this will be done based on the MWD board's interpretation of its Act and policies, not the interpretations offered by Fallbrook and Rainbow.
- In closing, we want to publicly apologize to Chair Ortega, whom we fully support and who we believe is working in the best interest of all MWD board members and member agencies, having been elected by a board vote of just under 82%.
- Chair Ortega is not some “rogue” actor. To the contrary, he is highly respected by those who know him, and he is entitled to all the respect due his office.
- We regret the actions of these two agencies to disrupt the strong working relationship we have with Chair Ortega and his administration, in which all of our delegates are in leadership.
- We plan to send a letter to Chair Ortega stating our views.