



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 15, 2007

TO: Dr. Timothy Bertch, Wastewater Department Director  
Mr. Rich Haas, Deputy Chief of Public Works

FROM: Henry Abarbanel, Metro Wastewater JPA, Chair  
Mayda Winter, Metro Wastewater JPA, Vice Chair

At the May 3, 2007 Metro Wastewater JPA (Metro JPA) Strategic Planning Workshop, governance alternatives to the participating agencies and City of San Diego current Metro system arrangements were discussed in detail. Although there was a general opinion that creating a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with full control of the regional Metro system could be the best for the region in the long-term, a consensus was formed around another option which meets many of the goals of the PAs and addresses those of the City of San Diego. At their June 7, 2007 meeting, the Metro Commission/JPA recommended and approved this strategy for moving towards regional governance of the Metro System and directed the Chair to send a letter to the Mayor with our proposal. The purpose of this letter is to discuss this on a staff level prior to contacting the Mayor's office.

This alternative is based on the concept of establishing a direct line of communication with the Mayor and City Council regarding Metro issues. The concept is envisioned to add the Mayor of San Diego to the Metro Commission with voting rights. With the weighted vote, as we have proposed, no recommendation would ever go to the City Council that the Mayor had not approved at the Commission level. This expanded body would be responsible for all decisions and recommendations regarding the Metro system. San Diego's City Council working with the Mayor of San Diego could ratify or could overturn the Commission's decisions, but the Commission would be the initial deciding body. This is similar in structure to how the City of San Antonio, Texas and the City of San Jose operate their sewer systems.

The voice that we are seeking is peer to peer with policy makers as opposed to advisory recommendations to subcommittees. We feel this arrangement would be beneficial to all parties for the following reasons:

- It would not have any financial effects on the rates of either the Participating Agencies or the City of San Diego.
- It would bring all participants together in a unified policy authority. The PAs would work with other elected officials to deal with regional issues related to the Metro System without diluting the authority or responsibility of the City of San Diego or themselves.
- It could be implemented by minor changes to the Regional Wastewater Disposal Agreement and San Diego Mayor and Council action.
- It would create a regional voice for wastewater lobbying efforts that supports mutual goals. When reaching out to State and Federal legislators for matters of regional importance the

influence of all cities and water districts in the Metro Commission would be heard by a much larger set of responsible parties.

- It could streamline the current process – the Metro Commission could replace the NR&C on Metro matters.
- It will allow for all political entities (PAs and City of San Diego) to communicate in an unfiltered manner
- It would provide more cohesive regional support and direction for achieving major issues affecting the Metro System, i.e. waiver issues, and dealing with future modifications regarding secondary treatment
- It would not change the current arrangement that San Diego is the owner/operator of the Metro system
- It would provide a buffer for the City of San Diego on thorny issues, as the PAs would be jointly responsible for any decision
- It would add to the skills and expertise of the City of San Diego staff the extensive experience and ability of the MetroTAC members

Stated in its simplest form: on a regional basis we would all be working together to get things done. We would like to meet with you at your earliest opportunity to discuss this very important issue. We will have Teri Basta contact you to set a mutually convenient time.