

Agenda Item: {{section.number}}J

May 19, 2025

TO: THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Director Mike Gardner
Director Laura Roughton

FROM: Richard R. Aragon, Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer

CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING FOR REPORTING ON WESTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT VACANCIES, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION EFFORTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSEMBLY BILL 2561

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests that the Finance Committee recommend the Board of Directors:

1. Conduct a Public Hearing to receive reporting on Western Municipal Water District vacancies, recruitment, and retention efforts in accordance with Assembly Bill 2561.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In accordance with AB 2561 (Gov. Code §3502.3), which went into effect on January 1, 2025, Western Municipal Water District must hold a required public hearing annually, per fiscal year, on vacancies at Western Water, recruitment and retention efforts and identifying any issues and any necessary changes to Western Municipal Water District's policies, procedures, and recruitment. Staff will present information to that effect at today's meeting.

BUDGET IMPACT:

This action has no budget impact.

DETAIL:

Assembly Bill ("AB") 2561 adds Government Code Section 3502.3 to the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act ("MMBA"), imposing new obligations on public agencies related to tracking and presenting information on job vacancies. The new law and the legal obligations thereunder are effective January 1, 2025.

AB 2561 declares that job vacancies in local government are a widespread and significant problem for the public sector, and that job vacancies may undermine labor relations between public agencies and their employees. AB 2561 requires that, on an annual basis, public agencies assess and address vacancy rates in order to help avoid the negative effects of understaffing on the delivery of public services as well as on public employees.

New Public Hearing Obligations Require Public Agencies to Report on Vacancies

Under Government Code Section 3502.3, public agencies must now do the following:

1. Track job vacancies at the agency;
2. Present information on the status of the vacancies and the agency's recruitment and retention efforts. An agency must present this information at a public hearing before the agency's governing body at least once per fiscal year. If an agency will adopt an annual or multiyear budget in a given year, the public hearing must occur prior to the governing body adopting the agency's budget; and
3. Identify, during the public hearing, any policies, procedures, and recruitment activities that may present obstacles in the agency's hiring process and potential changes that may alleviate such obstacles.

These affirmative obligations apply to all public agencies subject to the MMBA. The new law also entitles recognized employee organizations to make a presentation at the public hearing when the agency makes its presentation.

Reason for Action:

Required by California State Assembly Bill 2561 (Gov. Code §3502.3).

Solution:

Conduct the public hearing and receive the presentation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This action aligns with Western Municipal Water District's Strategic Priority of Elite Workforce.

PROPOSED DATE OF ACTION:

If approved by the Committee, this Public Hearing will be scheduled for the Board of Directors meeting on June 18, 2025.

Finance Committee Meeting

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LEGAL COUNSEL REVIEW:

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted by:

Richard R. Aragon, Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer

Attachment:

1. Presentation - AB 2561 Addressing Vacancies for Public Agency Employees