



*Dedicated to  
Satisfying our Community's  
Water Needs*

## MEMORANDUM

**Item Arose After  
Agenda was Posted**

TO: Board of Directors  
FROM: Stacy Taylor, Water Policy Manager  
DATE: January 14, 2026  
SUBJECT: Funding for Added Federal Advocacy

### RECOMMENDATION

Approve an additional not-to-exceed \$60,000 for [Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP](#) to conduct additional activities on behalf of Mesa Water District as part of the District's Federal Advocacy Program.

### STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal #1: Provide an abundant, local, reliable and safe water supply.  
Goal #4: Increase public awareness of Mesa Water.  
Goal #7: Actively participate in regional and statewide water issues.

### PRIOR BOARD ACTION

At its November 15, 2022 Committee meeting, following a competitive procurement process conducted by staff, the Board of Directors (Board) approved retaining [Van Scoyoc Associates, Inc.](#) (VSA) to provide Federal Government Advocacy Consulting Services to Mesa Water District (Mesa Water®), with annually-approved renewals since then (most recently by Board action at its November 12, 2025 meeting), to support the District's Federal Advocacy Program and help implement Mesa Water's annually-updated Federal Advocacy Plan (Attachment A).

At its June 11, 2025 meeting, the Board approved its Fiscal Year 2026 budget which included funds for Mesa Water's Federal Advocacy Program and sponsorship of the [California Policy Center](#) (CPC) to support its ongoing efforts to promote water supply abundance for Californians.

At its August 13 and October 8, 2025 meetings, the Board approved expanded advocacy activities by VSA on Mesa Water's behalf to further existing federal policy engagement and pursue new federal policy initiatives (Attachment B), in collaboration with the CPC, as part of the District's Federal Advocacy Program.

At its October 28, 2025 workshop, the Board received draft white papers and presentations on two new federal policy concepts:

- Desalination Plants on Federally-Owned Coastal Lands
- Assessing the U.S. Drought Monitor.

### BACKGROUND

Since November 2022, Mesa Water staff and consultants have implemented the District's Federal Advocacy Program to promote:

- high priority Mesa Water projects for government funding consideration (e.g., appropriations, grants, low-interest loans);

- the District's [Policy Positions](#) and Policy Platforms (Attachment C) as relevant to Federal issues; and
- Mesa Water in general and its [Strategic Plan](#) goals, mission, values and vision.

As part of its Federal Advocacy Program, the District has annually conducted (since 2023) a week of advocacy engagement -- dedicated to promoting Mesa Water's projects and policies -- in Washington, D.C. via meetings with members of the Orange County, CA Congressional delegation as well as with Federal Administration and Agency representatives.

Last year's meetings (in June 2025) included productive policy discussions and ideas exchange with Congressional staff and representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of the Interior. To build upon this foundation for its Federal Advocacy Program, Mesa Water staff and consultants further researched two policy concepts that developed from the District's June 2025 meetings in Washington, D.C.:

- Desalination Plants on Federally-Owned Coastal Lands; and
- Assessing the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#).

Following the Board's approval of a Research and Policy Proposal from the CPC's co-founder, Edward Ring, the below-listed activities were completed:

- Research of the two above-mentioned concepts, including the retention of an attorney at Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP (Cox Castle) with expertise on coastal land use authorities, and a statistician to compare the U.S. Drought Monitor's records to actual rainfall data; and,
- Draft two white papers -- and accompanying presentations -- regarding the two above-mentioned concepts.

Due to the Federal government shutdown, Washington D.C. advocacy by Mesa Water Board members, staff and consultants regarding the white papers has been postponed until the week of March 30, 2026. To prepare for this activity, Mesa Water has requested a "time-and-materials" proposal from Cox Castle for an additional scope of work between January 15 and June 30, 2026, to encompass the following activities:

1. Re-engage the Cox Castle attorney and team that researched and helped draft the "Desalination Plants on Federally-Owned Coastal Lands" to collaborate on the finalization of the white paper and the accompanying presentation;
2. Retain the Cox Castle attorney to co-present on the "Desal" white paper (with author Ed Ring) at CalDesal's annual conference taking place February 12, 2026 in Sacramento; and
3. Assist the District in ongoing advocacy on the "Desal" white paper by conducting follow-up research and/or providing responses to queries resulting from Mesa Water representatives' interactions with government agencies, elected officials and other interested parties.



To accomplish the three above-listed activities, supplementary funding is needed for Cox Castle's attorney and team to perform added services for the District. This augmented funding for Cox Castle's increased support, inclusive of fees and expenses, is anticipated not to exceed \$60,000.

To further the District's existing federal policy engagement, staff recommends the Board approve \$60,000 for Cox Castle's expanded advocacy and support activities on behalf of Mesa Water's new federal policy initiative regarding "Desalination Plants on Federally-Owned Coastal Lands".

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

In Fiscal Year 2026, \$450,000 is budgeted for Water Policy Support Services; \$150,025 has been spent to date. The requested funding would come from Cash on Hand.

#### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Mesa Water's 2026 Federal Advocacy Plan

Attachment B: California Policy Center's Research and Policy Proposal (approved by Mesa Water)

Attachment C: Mesa Water's 2025 Policy Platforms

## 2026 Federal Advocacy Plan

**Vision:** To Be a Top Performing Water Agency

**Mission:** Mesa Water District, a local independent special district, manages its finances and water infrastructure, and advocates water policy, while reliably providing an abundance of clean, safe water to benefit the public's quality of life.

**Core Values:**

- Health and Safety of the Public and Our Staff
- Excellence
- Philosophy of Abundance
- Perpetual Agency Philosophy

**Strategic Goal #7 – “Policy Leadership”:** Actively participate in regional and statewide water issues.

**Objective:** Conduct Federal advocacy to seek funding for Mesa Water's priority projects/programs.

**Q1 Tactics:** Finalize—Mesa Water's 2026 Federal Advocacy Plan and updates to Mesa Water's 2026 Policy Positions and Policy Platforms; OC Federal Delegation Outreach—correspondence and meetings with members and/or staff (in-person and/or virtual), and update DC contacts list; Seek Federal Funding—finalize list of Mesa Water's priority projects and programs for funding, determine potential project/program-specific opportunities, develop capture strategies via the Congressional appropriations process and suggest priorities to delegation; Industry Collaboration—ACWA DC conference (Feb.), OCWD and NSDC coordination; Advocacy Reporting—VSA @ Mesa Water, monthly memo and bill list, grant opportunities emails, virtual Federal Advocacy team meeting(s), ongoing communications.

**Q2 Tactics:** Finalize—Mesa Water's 2026 Federal Advocacy in DC PPT; OC Federal Delegation Outreach—Mesa Water Federal Advocacy in DC; Seek Federal Funding—pursue potential project/program-specific opportunities via agency engagements and the Congressional appropriations process; continue Industry Collaboration (ACWA, etc.); Advocacy Reporting—monthly memo and bill list, grant opportunities emails, virtual Federal Advocacy team meeting(s), ongoing communications.

**Q3 Tactics:** Federal Advocacy—continue Federal Outreach and Industry Collaboration (ACWA, CSDA, etc.), in District meetings with members and/or staff (in-person and/or virtual); Seek Federal Funding—monitor opportunities; Advocacy Reporting—monthly memo and bill list, grant opportunities emails, virtual Federal Advocacy team meeting(s), ongoing communications.

**Q4 Tactics:** Federal Advocacy—continue Federal Outreach and Industry Collaboration (ACWA, etc.), update Mesa Water's Policy Positions and Platforms, Federal Advocacy Plan and Calendar for 2027; Seek Federal Funding—monitor opportunities and update Priorities List; Advocacy Reporting—monthly memo and bill list, grant opportunities emails, virtual Federal Advocacy team meeting(s), ongoing communications.

**Outcome 1:** Policy Positions and Platforms, and accompanying advocacy to benefit Mesa Water and its constituents.

**Outcome 2:** Continue advocacy leadership by positively influencing water policy and other priority policy issues for Mesa Water.

**Outcome 3:** Conduct funding-related advocacy for Mesa Water's priority projects and programs.

**Outcome 4:** Increase positive awareness of Mesa Water with water/government/utility industry and non-governmental organizations.



**Research and Policy Presentations for Mesa Water District**  
**Proposal to Mesa Water District**

**To:** Paul Shoenberger, General Manager, Stacy Taylor, Water Policy Manager  
**From:** Edward Ring, California Policy Center, July 23, 2025

Thank you for inviting me to possibly participate in a project designed to influence how federal water policy may better support water abundance for Californian's during the Trump administration and beyond. What follows for Mesa Water District's (Mesa Water®) consideration is an outline of the proposed scope of work.

**Deliverables:**

**1 – “Desalination Plants on Federally-Owned Coastal Lands”**

A white paper, approximately 5,000 words, reporting on the potential for the federal government to utilize federally-owned coastal lands to construct ocean desalination plants.

- a) Commission an outside attorney to evaluate the extent to which the federal government can unilaterally authorize and commence construction on a desalination plant that would (i) produce fresh water for the sole use of the federal personnel on-site, (ii) produce fresh water for on-site use as well as for sale to surrounding cities and water districts, and (iii) produce fresh water for on-site use with the right to sell surplus fresh water (when available) to surrounding cities and water districts.
- b) Depending on the legal findings, prepare a report summarizing the feasible options the federal government would have to construct ocean desalination facilities on its owned lands, and survey the most likely potential sites for federally-owned desalination plants. Focus on sites on the Southern California coast.

**2 – “Assessing the U.S. Drought Monitor”**

A white paper, approximately 5,000 words, assessing the veracity of the “U.S. Drought Monitor,” a federally-funded online resource (<https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>) that invariably depicts California as undergoing drought even during higher-than-average precipitation years.

- a) Commission a statistician with domain expertise to compare the drought monitor’s historic records against actual rainfall, with a focus on at least three regions – Northern California, Central California, and Southern California. Evaluate the archived reports from the U.S. Drought Monitor against rainfall records by year, going back at least 20 years.

b) Prepare a report summarizing the statistical analysis in order to quantify to what extent and by what percent the U.S. Drought Monitor may overstate the severity of droughts in California when compared to the record of normal, heavy, or light rainfall years. Include, either independently or in collaboration with the statistician, information on the incidence of droughts as documented over the past two hundred years or more, relying on historical records and environmental evidence such as tree ring analysis.

### **3 – Accompany Mesa Water® Delegation to Washington D.C. from 11/03 through 11/07**

During the first week of November 2025, accompany Mesa Water's Board President Marice DePasquale and Vice President Shawn Dewane, along with the District's D.C. lobbyist, to advocate in Washington D.C. and present findings on the white paper(s) mentioned above to Federal agency officials and Federal Administration representatives.

#### **Cost:**

Compensation for preparing up to two (2) white papers can be subsumed within the \$12,500 contribution that Mesa Water has already allocated for Fiscal Year 2026 to the California Policy Center to support its ongoing work advocating ways to achieve water abundance in California.

The outside expenses for (a) an attorney to evaluate the legality of federal desalination options, (b) a statistician to review the U.S. Drought Monitor and compare its records to actual rainfall data, and (c) travel expenses for Edward Ring to Washington D.C. are additional costs to be either paid directly by Mesa Water, or reimbursed to the California Policy Center.

If Edward Ring prepares both white papers *and* travels to Washington D.C. for a full week in November, a modest additional payment of \$2,500 to the California Policy Center is proposed in addition to Mesa Water's currently budgeted contribution of \$12,500 for Fiscal Year 2026, equaling a total amount of \$15,000.

Thank you very much,

Edward Ring  
Director Water and Energy Policy  
California Policy Center  
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916-524-7534

## 2025 Policy Platforms

February 12, 2025

### **Federal**

The 119<sup>th</sup> Congress convened at noon on January 3, 2025. As the nation enters a transition period for the federal government, the House of Representatives and the United States Senate may continue to suffer from a period of legislative gridlock due to tight majorities in both chambers.

The Executive Branch will be industrious in 2025, though it is somewhat unclear what path the Administration will take regarding water policy. Certainly, the Administration will once again have to implement a new "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) rulemaking that closely aligns with Justice Alito's opinion in the *Sackett v. EPA* decision. The Administration will also have to determine if it will follow the previous Administration's "[PFAS Roadmap](#)" or undertake a new rulemaking, similar to its outlook for the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI).

Also uncertain is how the new Administration will maintain or restrain other additional rulemakings and Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) through 2025. While there are no expected large-scale efforts in Congress at reforming the nation's water policy laws, nor at creating new water programs in statute, there are other priorities -- such as reforming many federal permitting programs -- that may be of benefit to Mesa Water District (Mesa Water®) in accelerating its capital improvements. The legislative gains from the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress -- like those included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) -- are largely complete, and Congress will continue rigorous oversight on the execution of these investments.

While the IIJA and IRA included opportunities for municipal water utilities, these programs are coming to their conclusion. Also, through its advisory committee, the Department of Government Efficiency, the new Administration has signaled its intention to identify up to \$2 trillion in savings, and all discretionary programs -- including those of benefit to Mesa Water -- will face increased scrutiny in the next two to four years.

Lastly of note is the overturning of more than 40 years of case law related to the *Chevron* doctrine as held by the Supreme Court in its decision in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*. For decades, courts have shown deference to federal agency rulemakings and interpretations when provided with otherwise ambiguous laws from Congress. With the overturning of the *Chevron* doctrine, lower courts have been instructed to no longer provide the federal agencies with this level of deference. This will curtail ample rulemaking authority of federal agencies, force courts to revisit a series of previous rulemakings, and demand that Congress provide more clarity when instructing agencies to fulfill laws.

### **State**

Calendar Year 2025 marks the first year of California's two-year (2025 and 2026) legislative

session, with the state legislature having reconvened on January 6, 2025. California's water-related legislation and regulations will continue to focus on several priority issues: water affordability and the ever-present possibility of Proposition 218 (Prop. 218) reform; continued investments in climate adaptation, drought response and water resilience, wildfire and forest resilience, and zero-emission vehicles acceleration; and, implementing the newly-adopted water conservation and water use efficiency regulation.

Additionally, in reaction to the recent catastrophic Southern California fires, all branches of state government will be more focused on improving wildfire prevention, protection, and recovery, including forest management, headwaters protection, water infrastructure investments, and related policy issues.

For 2025, some legislative proposals and policy discussions from prior years are anticipated to return, including legislation and regulations that could significantly impact Mesa Water, such as:

- climate adaptation, drought resilience, and related issues (e.g., electrification, energy policies, public safety power shutoffs), including implementation of Proposition 4 (which passed on the November 2024 general election ballot) whereby the state legislature and administration will use the state budget process to propose a spending plan for the authorized \$10 billion;
- headwaters and wildfire prevention, protection and recovery, forest management, and related policy issues (as mentioned previously);
- water affordability related to California's Human Right to Water and the Safe and Affordable Drinking Water Fund (respectively, [AB 685](#) and [SB 200](#)), and Low-Income Rate Assistance (LIRA) programs, also called "lifeline rates" ([AB 401](#)), for residential water customers, as well as the ongoing implementation of the Water Shutoff Protection Act ([SB 998](#));
- affordable housing proposals related to surplus property, CEQA streamlining, and Accessory Dwelling Units, including legislative attempts (as in prior years) to change public agencies' authority to charge impact fees for new housing developments;
- water quality, PFAS, and other Constituents of Emerging Concern (CECs);
- governance, open meetings, and transparency;
- water use efficiency/conservation "clean-up" proposals, including those related to the indoor water use reduction standards of [SB 1157](#) (passed in 2022 and authored by former Senator Hertzberg-D, Van Nuys) resulting from indoor water use studies;
- water district consolidation efforts as considered/continued by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB);
- the Colorado River and California Delta (e.g., Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, Delta Conveyance Project, Endangered Species Act, Healthy Rivers and Landscapes); and,
- California's water rights system could potentially be further amended.

As policy discussions are now underway in 2025, the above issues will be the primary areas of legislative and regulatory focus.

On the air quality front, the administration and regulators finalized (in 2023) CA's [Advanced Clean Fleets \(ACF\) Rule](#) requiring 50% of new medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleet purchases by public agencies to be zero-emission starting this year, increasing to 100% in 2027.

As a reminder, in 2020, Governor Newsom issued two climate-related Executive Orders to require: 1) by 2035, that all new cars and passenger trucks sold in California are Zero-Emission Vehicles ([N-79-20](#)); and, 2) by 2030, the conservation of 30% of the state's land and coastal waters ([N-82-20](#)). These state efforts could be augmented by federal funding opportunities, including approximately \$1 billion that was included in the IRA for Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles through the Environmental Protection Agency to provide grants, rebates, and contract support to replace heavy duty vehicles with zero-emission alternatives.

Lastly, Mesa Water will continue to engage with various agencies and associations that the district is affiliated with (e.g., ACWA, AWWA, CalDesal, CMUA, CSDA, CWSA, MWDOC/MWD, OCWD, OC Tax, SCWC, WateReuse) to advocate on policy issues including, but not necessarily limited to: 1) upholding local control and ratemaking authority; 2) promoting the "true, full cost of water" concept; 3) supporting desalination; and, 4) protecting the principles contained in Prop. 218 (Articles XIII C and XIII D of California's Constitution). In 2025, Mesa Water advocacy staff and consultants will remain focused on these four policy priorities and on government funding opportunities. Listed below, for the Board's consideration, are the proposed policy platforms regarding anticipated high-priority public policy issues in 2025 that could have major consequences for Mesa Water:

- **Water Rates** – Mesa Water supports local rate-setting authority with rate structures, set by publicly-elected boards and councils, that best serve customers and comply with the law. Furthermore, Mesa Water supports cost-based water rates that:
  - represent the true, full cost of water services, including operational costs and infrastructure funding to ensure water system sustainability in perpetuity; and,
  - harmonize the concepts of conservation and legality, with rates that provide a strong price signal for ratepayers to conserve while also complying with legal mandates (e.g., Article X of the California Constitution; SB 606 and AB 1668; and, Propositions 13, 26, and 218).
- **Proposition 13** – Mesa Water supports Article XIII A of the California Constitution (Prop. 13) and the taxpayer protections it provides as passed in 1978, and Mesa Water opposes a "Split Roll" that would remove some of the protections of Prop. 13 from nonresidential properties to raise taxes on them.
- **Proposition 218** – Mesa Water supports Article XIII C and D of the California Constitution regarding government service assessments, fees, rates and taxes, specifically:
  - the "2/3 vote" required from the legislature and voters for approval of new levies;

- the “special benefit and proportionality requirements” provision, which directly connects the special benefits received with reasonable proportionate costs, and ensures that assessments imposed for property-related (water) services must not exceed the proportional cost of the services attributable to the parcel; and,
- transparent rate-setting procedures that protect consumers from potential government overcharge by providing sufficient opportunities for consumer participation and the ability for consumers to protest illegal rates.

- **Water Rate Assistance Programs** – Mesa Water supports localized “lifeline rates” or federal/state-funded LIRA programs that comply with Prop. 218 of the California Constitution and are funded either voluntarily or via non-restricted/non-water-rates revenues. Mesa Water opposes a state tax on local water customer bills.
- **Orange County Groundwater Basin** – Mesa Water opposes any potential streamlined process for adjudicating groundwater basins, including the Orange County groundwater basin, managed by the Orange County Water District (OCWD).
- **Water Bonds Funding (Propositions 1 and 4)** – Mesa Water supports funding from the November 2014 and November 2024 water bonds for projects that provide benefits prioritized by: 1) Mesa Water’s service area, 2) OCWD’s service area, 3) MWDOC’s service area, 4) MWD’s service area, 5) the State Water Contractors, and 6) California as a Lower Basin State user of Colorado River Water.
- **Water Desalination** – Mesa Water supports CalDesal in its desalination advocacy -- including engagement with the state of California’s Ocean Plan Amendment process to enable more favorable permitting conditions for water desalination projects -- as well as the local, regional, and statewide development of cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive brackish groundwater and seawater desalination projects to enhance the availability and reliability of water supply sources, and improve water supply reliability for Orange County, Southern California, statewide, and the West. Mesa Water also supports funding opportunities for these efforts, especially for the district’s Local Groundwater Supply Improvement Project (Local SIP).
- **Water Conservation/Water Use Efficiency** – Mesa Water supports accounting for water resource and supply investments -- such as desalination, potable reuse, and water recycling -- as part of implementing the state’s “Making Conservation a California Way of Life” regulation. Mesa Water supports compliance flexibility and local control; maximum credit for drought-resilient supplies, deference to local discretion regarding variances for potable reuse water; and, regulatory water use and water loss target-setting that is based on local administration and enforcement, as specified in the regulation. Mesa Water also supports the continued streamlining of water reporting data as part of the implementation of, and compliance with, the regulations.
- **Water Recycling** – Mesa Water supports OCWD and WaterReuse in its efforts to advance potable reuse investment, and favorable legislation and regulations. Mesa Water supports

the “Beneficiaries Pay” principle for the development and implementation of new recycled water projects including stormwater capture.

- **Water Quality and Economic Feasibility** – Mesa Water supports efforts by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) and other water industry associations/organizations to protect public health by using a full impact analysis that includes the best available scientific data, public input, and cost/benefit analyses to inform the development of reasonable and fiscally-responsible water quality standards legislation and regulations -- for current and future constituents of concern (e.g., microplastics, PFAS) -- which consider technical and economic feasibility of the standards and treatments to ensure clean, safe drinking water. Mesa Water also supports efforts by the Community Water Systems Alliance (CWSA) to require the SWRCB to define a consistent, objective method for determining the “economic feasibility” of a drinking water regulation. Additionally, Mesa Water believes that the inclusion of certain constituents (like PFAS) as designated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA or “Superfund”) should be subject to public notice and comment under a formal rulemaking process and carefully considered by federal agencies, especially regarding clean-up costs and funding programs to assist such.
- **Water Storage, Banking and Exchange/Transfer Programs** – Mesa Water supports the “Beneficiaries Pay” principle for water storage/banking and exchange/transfer programs if they are market-based, ensure full cost recovery at a minimum, and account for water loss.
- **Affordable Housing** – Mesa Water supports the advocacy efforts of the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) and other industry associations/organizations on policies related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), CEQA streamlining, development impact fees (e.g., capacity charges, connection fees), metering/sub-metering, surplus property, and other proposed affordable housing solutions provided that they protect water utilities’ ability to provide reliable residential water services that are appropriately priced and right-sized for public health and safety.
- **Local Government** – Mesa Water supports the efforts of CSDA and other industry associations/organizations to ensure local control and representation, efficient and transparent delivery of government services, and appropriate reserve funds levels. Mesa Water also supports CSDA’s sponsored legislation -- related to open meetings and the Brown Act -- allowing remote meeting flexibility, and the annual *Special Districts Week*.
- **Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)** – Mesa Water supports the existing protest thresholds for LAFCO-initiated reorganizations, per the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg (CKH) Act, and opposes changes that would make it more difficult for citizens to protest a LAFCO-initiated reorganization. Additionally, Mesa Water opposes any changes to the CKH Act that would weaken local control and representation and/or broaden the mission, powers, and scope of LAFCOs without providing any added public benefit.
- **Special Districts Voting Methods** – Mesa Water supports exempting special districts

from Cumulative Voting and Ranked Choice Voting methods and opposes attempts to make these methods an option or a mandate for special districts elections.

- **Delta Solutions** – Mesa Water supports the efforts of ACWA, Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC), Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), and Southern California Water Coalition (SCWC) to achieve a long-term solution for the Bay Delta that includes functional flows per the “Healthy Rivers and Landscapes” proposal for optimal statewide water supply reliability, sustainability, and quality, and for Delta ecosystem health and restoration for the public benefit. Mesa Water supports the “Beneficiaries Pay” principle for funding the Delta Solution (now called the “Delta Conveyance Project”).
- **California Headwaters and Forest Management** – Mesa Water supports the efforts of ACWA and other water industry coalitions to promote policies that enhance the pace and scale of California headwaters protection, forest management, and wildfires prevention -- including improved planning, coordination, and implementation -- and increase funding, research, and resources to: 1) protect water supply and quality, 2) bring forest management practices in line with modern challenges, and 3) implement pre-hazard mitigation measures.
- **Climate Adaptation/Resilience Bond (Prop. 4) Implementation** – Mesa Water supports the efforts of ACWA and other water industry associations/organizations in engaging with California policymakers to ensure appropriate prioritization of the \$10 billion in added funding from Prop. 4 for water infrastructure projects, such as: brackish water desalination and salinity management projects, groundwater projects, water recycling/reuse projects, and water quality and supply projects.
- **Essential Public Utilities** – Mesa Water supports the concept of exempting Essential Public Utilities -- such as water and wastewater service providers -- from future legislation, administrative actions, and regulations that add costs or time delays to a utility’s work by mandating new, unfunded operational practices.
- **Federal Drought Legislation and Water Infrastructure Funding** – Mesa Water supports the efforts of ACWA, the National Special Districts Association (NSDA), and other water industry associations/organizations in collaborating with the California Congressional delegation and other decision-makers to develop bicameral, bipartisan federal drought legislation and investments in California’s water infrastructure. Mesa Water also supports NSDA’s efforts to define special districts in Federal law.
- **Cannabis Growers’ Negative Water Impacts** – Mesa Water supports legislation and/or regulations that penalize cannabis growers’ water theft and/or actions that harm water supplies, sources, and the environment.
- **ACWA’s Federal Water Policy Priorities** – Mesa Water supports ACWA’s Federal water policy priorities related to: 1) water infrastructure funding, 2) West-Wide Drought Legislation, 3) tax exemptions for water conservation rebates, and 4) regulations related to: a) CECs and PFAS, b) Lead Copper Rule Revisions/Improvements (LCRR/LCRI), c) public

water systems' cybersecurity (and funding for such), and d) potential PVC pipe rulemakings under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

- **CMUA's State Water Policy Priorities** – Mesa Water supports CMUA's state water policy priorities related to advocating for: 1) permissive LIRA programs that comply with Prop. 218 and that can be effectively implemented and efficiently administrated, 2) stronger penalties for tampering with/theft of water infrastructure and to deter water theft, and 3) Statewide Water Solutions legislation -- in partnership with the California Water for All coalition -- to create long-term targets for increasing water supplies for beneficial use throughout California, along with an implementable plan to achieve such targets.
- **Electric Grid Reliability** – Mesa Water supports: 1) energy investments, legislation, and/or regulations that enhance the reliability and/or security of the electrical grid to provide a stable and consistent source of electricity for water operations, 2) variances that allow fossil fuel generator maintenance, testing, and use for water operations during emergencies and/or electric power disruptions, and 3) incentives to offset the costs of water industry compliance with renewable energy and zero-emission vehicle mandates. Mesa Water also supports CSDA's and its coalition's proposal for ACF compliance relief, and exemptions/variances for emergency operations, for California's public utilities.
- **MWD's Regional Reliability Focus** – Mesa Water supports collaborating with MWD and its member/sub-member agencies to advance regional water supply reliability throughout Southern California, including MWD's Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W) process -- particularly in support of the CAMP4W goals of water reliability, resiliency, affordability, and sustainability -- and MWD's efforts to ensure that the Colorado River system remains a reliable water supply resource for Southern California.
- **OCWD's PFAS Cleanup** – Mesa Water supports OCWD's efforts to ensure that public water systems are not responsible for current/future PFAS cleanup costs by: 1) securing PFAS cleanup funding, 2) protecting public water systems that comply with applicable/appropriate management and treatment standards from liability under CERCLA, and 3) upholding the "polluter pays" principle in CERCLA.
- **Water Projects Permitting** – Mesa Water supports CEQA streamlining to expedite the permitting process for water infrastructure projects.
- **Water Rights** – Mesa Water supports the water industry's interest in: 1) protecting the existing water rights priority system, and 2) potentially "modernizing" the administration of existing water rights priority system in collaboration with water associations and water industry coalitions.
- **Third Party Liability Protection** – Mesa Water supports the CWSA coalition's proposal to protect public water agencies from third party litigation while the water agency is working diligently to implement a federal- or state-approved plan to comply with a water quality regulation (such as Chromium-6). Also, for regulations undergoing compliance clarification, Mesa Water supports enforcement delays or exemptions.