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Water authority official blasts MWD pension plan

By Helen Gao

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Bud Lewis, board chairman of the San Diego County Water Authority, and a half-dozen of his fellow trustees spoke out yesterday against a plan by the Metropolitan Water District to boost pension benefits for its employees.

The county authority is a member of the MWD, which imports water for 19 million Southern California residents. Increased water rates charged by the MWD are eventually passed onto residents by their provider.

Lewis, mayor of Carlsbad, said the timing of MWD's proposed pension hike is terrible, a sentiment echoed by others.

“In my community, we have foreclosures, people who have lost their jobs. All of kinds of bad things are happening,” he said.

Lewis said he doesn't buy the MWD argument that other concessions made by its employees will more than offset the $70 million cost of the pension boost.

The MWD board is scheduled to vote on the contracts in October.

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