**2021 State and Federal Legislative Strategy:** The 2021 State and Federal Legislative Priorities and related strategies provide guidance for staff to focus efforts and allocate resources for Eastern Municipal Water District’s (EMWD) federal and state legislative program. These near-term priorities detail the overall strategy staff will advance in the upcoming legislative session to ensure and enhance EMWD’s operations and efficiency, and to elevate EMWD’s profile through the support or opposition of relevant legislation and administrative actions.

The priorities outlined below support EMWD’s mission, vision, and goals, and are intended to serve as an advocacy and educational roadmap to address current issues and events as they arise in the state and federal policy arenas. These priorities support and supplement the longer-term legislative vision outlined in EMWD’s Legislative Policy Principles.

**COVID-19 Response**

- Support the continued availability of personalized protective equipment (PPE), funding, and other resources for essential workers, including water and wastewater providers.
- Encourage an end to the Governor’s executive order issuing a moratorium on water system shutoffs for nonpayment, and transition into SB 998 (Dodd, 2018), which establishes ratepayer protections for residents with medical or financial challenges, to ensure consistency and reliability in the support provided to residents struggling to pay their water bills.
- Advocate for state and/or federal funding for use by water service providers to stabilize declining ratepayer revenues due to nonpayment; and provide assistance to aid ratepayers who are struggling to pay water bills.
- Support and pursue partnerships with the U.S Health and Human Services and Center for Disease Control to utilize water utilities and wastewater base epidemiology to identify local COVID-19 hotspots in communities.

**Wildfire Mitigation and Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)**

- Support efforts and technology that would facilitate earlier and more consistent notifications for critical infrastructure providers in advance of PSPS events or other emergency situations.
- Support policies that would facilitate the deployment of a more targeted approach to PSPS events as a response to wildfire threat.
- Support funding solutions that can be used to reduce the risk of wildfire statewide and/or in the arid west, enable critical infrastructure providers to purchase emergency back-up power generators, and establish mechanisms to recoup increased personnel costs to respond to PSPS events that would not rely on a significant increase in costs to electricity users.
• Support continued efforts to develop statewide emergency response planning to facilitate more robust communication, interagency coordination, and deployment of resources during wildfire and other emergency events.

Water Quality

• Support the availability of funding for water and wastewater providers to address water quality concerns, specifically related to per-and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) remediation, and support efforts to hold those responsible for inclusion in the water or wastewater stream accountable.
• Prioritize the use of reliable scientific data and technology to regulate contaminants, communicate health effects, and develop effective treatment technologies.
• Oppose efforts to designate PFAS as a hazardous substance under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), establishing a potential chain-of-liability exposure for water and wastewater providers, or provide a municipal exemption for water and wastewater agencies.
• Support efforts by the United States Department of Defense to address chemicals, including PFAS, at military bases to locally applicable state and federal standards.
• Support the development of state or federal grant programs that fund septic-to-sewer conversion projects which protect groundwater and drinking water reservoirs for contamination.

Safe and Affordable Drinking Water

• Support continued efforts to implement SB 200 (Monning, 2019) to address failing and at-risk water systems, and actively engage in efforts to ensure these limited resources are effectively deployed.
• Monitor conversations on the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) to ensure that funds continue to be available to address safe and reliable drinking water efforts as outlined under SB 200.
• Support and engage on legislation and administrative actions to address water system consolidations, regionalization and governance reforms to effectively provide water service delivery to communities served by failing water systems and those at-risk of failure.
• Support efforts to develop a low-income water rate assistance program that would not rely on a water tax and would preserve and compliment locally developed assistance programs.
• Effectively communicate and educate regarding the difference between household affordability and system affordability to ensure that the appropriate metrics and resources are utilized to address these complicated issue areas.

Climate Change and Water Resilience

• Support implementation of the Governor’s Water Resilience Portfolio in a manner that preserves local control for the identification, funding, and development of local projects and ensures appropriate consideration of local climate change impacts and regional differences throughout the process.
• Support the development of a funding source to respond to climate change, develop infrastructure projects, and facilitate technology innovations that do not rely on a water tax.
• Support funding and technical assistance to local governments, including special districts, to develop, implement, measure, or qualify a climate action plan.
• Engage and inform efforts to implement the Governor’s 30 x 2030 executive order and the related efforts to craft the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy.

Local and Imported Water Supply

• Support the development of a comprehensive solution in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay Delta (Delta) that will ensure water supply reliability and ecosystem restoration to preserve continued access to this vital imported resource and protection for threatened and endangered species within the Delta, while also adhering to the beneficiary pays principle.
• Support funding to address the subsidence of critical California water conveyance systems.
• Support the continued delivery of imported water supplies as an important component of EMWD’s diverse water supply portfolio that is vital to salt management, groundwater recharge, environmental stewardship, and water recycling.
• Support efforts and funding to implement the California Water Reuse and National Water Reuse Action Plans to facilitate the development of new climate resilient water supplies and to advance water conserving measures.
• Support state and federal efforts to label nonwoven disposable wipes as “not flushable” to protect sewer system infrastructure and prevent sewer overflows.
• Support funding to advance EMWD’s brackish groundwater desalination program, and fully fund the clean and safe drinking water state revolving fund programs.
• Support reauthorization of the Bureau of Reclamation Water Infrastructure Investments for the Nation (WIIN) Act recycled water funding and consolidate the WIIN and legacy Title XVI recycled water funding programs.
• Support efforts to help advance the North Perris Groundwater Contamination and Remediation Project.

Water System Governance and Administration

• Participate in conversations regarding the continued voluntary utilization of virtual meeting platforms to conduct public meetings.
• Support legislation or administrative actions that would allow for flexibility and clarity to be incorporated into the rate design process, which may include the utilization of validation proceedings to set water rates or narrow reforms to Proposition 218 for locally developed low-income water rate assistance.
• Support consensus driven proposals to streamline and consolidate protest provisions under Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg to allow for greater clarity in consolidation and
dissolution laws, and as a means to facilitate the efficient and effective delivery of public services.

- Oppose efforts that would mandate or prescribe the use or shift of special district funds or reserves.

**Energy and Renewable Energy**

- Support funding to purchase zero-emission fleet vehicles and related infrastructure, such as commercial charging and fueling stations.
- Support an “all-of-the-above” approach for entities seeking to enhance their renewable energy portfolio and avoid prioritizing one form of renewable energy over another to minimize the potential for stranded assets and unrealized investments.
- Encourage the broader deployment of resources to support the installation of renewable energy supplies and battery storage solutions to reduce energy costs and limit greenhouse gas emissions.