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Union-Tribune Editorial

## Ensure a water supply

### Legislature should alter the Met's structure

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San Diego County's state legislators must act now to ensure a future water supply for our region's homes, businesses and farms.

A legislative conference committee is considering a bill to change the governance of the Metropolitan Water District, San Diego County's water wholesaler, to make that body more responsive to its constituents and more fair to our county.

San Diego-area Assembly Democrats -- Denise Moreno Ducheny, Howard Wayne and Susan Davis -- need to convince Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa of the critical importance of this issue. Since no local Assembly members are on the conference committee, our legislators must exert pressure from outside the process.

The bill would significantly reduce the Met's oversized and ineffective 51-member board. The board's unwieldy size has made it easy for staff to manipulate the Met into taking actions that hurt San Diego County and the state.

More importantly, the bill would change the board's voting power, which for decades has been based on assessed value of property of each member agency. Today, property taxes provide only a fraction of the Met's revenues. The proposed changes would allocate voting power by the population within member agencies' boundaries and the cumulative total of financial contributions by each agency to the Met.

For years, San Diego County has been the Met's biggest customer, but its voting power on the board has been extremely limited. That needs to change. With a properly constituted board, the Met would be less likely to persist in chronic troublemaking, such as blocking the transfer of Imperial Valley water to San Diego.

Ongoing talks between the San Diego County Water Authority and the Met on piping Imperial Valley water through the Met's Colorado River Aqueduct add even more urgency to the situation. Legislation reforming the Met's governance is imperative to leverage the recalcitrant agency into an aqueduct agreement.

This problem affects the whole state. San Diego County's importation of Imperial Valley water will allow Southern California to live within its Colorado River