



EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT

DATE: January 8, 2026

MEMO TO: Board of Directors

THROUGH: Clifford C. Chan, General Manager 

FROM: Serge V. Terentieff, Director of Engineering and Construction 

SUBJECT: EBMUD/Fire Agency Forum

In 1994, the District initiated an annual joint meeting with all local fire agencies known as the EBMUD/Fire Agency Forum. The annual forum provides an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual concern between the fire agencies and the District, foster working relationships, and improve communication among the agencies.

On December 15, 2025, the District hosted the annual EBMUD/Fire Agency Forum. Attendees included representatives from the Albany Fire Department (FD), City of Alameda FD, Alameda County FD, Berkeley FD, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (FPD), Crockett-Carquinez FD, El Cerrito FD, Oakland FD, and San Ramon Valley FPD.

Discussion topics included hydrant maintenance and inspection practices, public access to hydrant data, new State of California (State) backflow prevention requirements affecting fire protection systems, hydrant locking caps, hydrant mounted smart sensors, seasonal reservoir operations, HeloPods (strategically placed portable water reservoirs connected to hydrants, that can be quickly accessed by helicopters to help fight fires), and hydrant access for private contractors to fight a wildfire. Staff also demonstrated a new public facing Hydrant Flow Test web application ([Public Hydrant Dashboard 1.0](#)) that provides access to available hydrant fire flow test data and status, and a pilot program for a new Fire Hydrant Inspection and Reporting Application intended to allow fire personnel to report hydrant issues observed in the field – fire agencies expressed interest in participating in a pilot program for the reporting application.

Staff responded to questions about existing backflow prevention systems being exempt from the new State backflow prevention requirements, annual testing requirements, and coordination with local jurisdictions during the 10-year implementation period for the new requirements. Staff discussed the District's use of hydrant locking caps to prevent unauthorized water use and protect water quality, noting that locking caps are primarily installed in the City of Oakland and not located in wildland urban interface areas. Information was also provided on hydrant mounted smart sensors used for acoustic leak detection and pressure monitoring, including guidance on identifying and safely removing devices during emergency operations. Staff presented on the new HeloPod program, a portable water tank system designed to support helicopter firefighting operations, in coordination with Contra Costa County FPD. A facilitated discussion was held regarding requests from private wildfire defense contractors seeking access to public hydrants,

with fire agencies indicating that this issue would benefit from statewide coordination through fire chief associations and regulatory agencies for consistency.

During open discussion, fire agencies raised questions regarding hydrant testing frequency, coordination of flow testing and training activities, and potential collaboration or funding for water-saving training equipment. District staff committed to follow up support as needed. The forum, topics and information-sharing were well received, and the group continues to work together to discuss and develop solutions to issues of mutual concern.

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