



MesaWater

DISTRICT<sup>®</sup>

WATER POLICY MANAGER



**BOB MURRAY  
& ASSOCIATES**  
EXPERTS IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

## INSIDE THE DISTRICT

Mesa Water District is an independent special district that provides 16,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of domestic water and 1,100 AFY of recycled water to 110,000 customers in an 18-square mile area covering the City of Costa Mesa, parts of the City of Newport Beach, and John Wayne Airport. The District is governed by a publicly elected, five-member Board of Directors responsible for setting policy, establishing rates, and overseeing District operations. Directors serve four-year terms, are elected by district, and represent the District on both internal committees and external agencies. The District employs a total of 61 full-time staff.

Mesa Water's vision is to be a top-performing public water agency. Its mission emphasizes managing finances and water infrastructure, advocating for sound water policy, and reliably delivering an abundance of clean, safe water to enhance the public's quality of life. Core values include prioritizing the health and safety of the public and staff, commitment to excellence, a philosophy of abundance, and a perpetual agency mindset.

For Fiscal Year 2026, the District has a \$60 million operating budget. The capital budget for the same fiscal year totals \$13.8 million. Mesa Water maintains a strong financial position, holding AAA credit ratings from both Fitch and Standard & Poor's. The District also pursues grant funding and low-interest loans to support capital improvements.

Mesa Water District recently received the ACWA Certificate of Excellence (A.C.E.) award for outstanding achievements in water management, recognizing leadership, innovation, and excellence in stewarding California's water resources. The District relies entirely on local groundwater supplies, with imported water serving as a fully reliable backup. Major infrastructure investments are underway, including the Interagency Water Transfer Project, reservoir upgrades, and local SIP (Supply Improvement Project) which is exploring a brackish groundwater desalination facility. Mesa Water also conducts regular internal process reviews and employee engagement surveys to support continuous improvement efforts.

[Click here to learn more about Mesa Water District's Strategic Goals.](#)

## THE COMMUNITY

Nestled in the vibrant heart of Orange County, California, Mesa Water District proudly serves a dynamic region encompassing the City of Costa Mesa, parts of beautiful Newport Beach, and the bustling John Wayne Airport. This highly desirable area combines the quintessential Southern California lifestyle with a thriving economic and cultural landscape.

Residents of Mesa Water District's service area enjoy a diverse and welcoming community, benefiting from an exceptional quality of life. The region is renowned for its outstanding schools, creating a family-friendly environment within its well-maintained neighborhoods.



With sun-drenched beaches just moments away, the area offers unparalleled opportunities for outdoor recreation, including surfing, paddleboarding, and an abundance of parks and green spaces perfect for hiking, biking, and leisurely strolls under the California sun.

Culture and the arts flourish here, with Costa Mesa celebrated as the "City of the Arts" and home to the Segerstrom Center for the Arts, offering world-class performances. Throughout the year, the community enjoys a rich calendar of events, festivals, and diverse culinary experiences that reflect its lively spirit.

Economically, the region is a powerhouse within Southern California. Key economic drivers include tourism, retail, real estate, technology, and healthcare, with John Wayne Airport (JWA) serving as a major transportation and business hub. John Wayne Airport offers travelers the rare luxury of a world-class airport experience just minutes from the heart of Orange County. This robust and stable economy provides ample opportunities and a high standard of living.

## THE POSITION

Under the direction of the General Manager, the Water Policy Manager leads and oversees all Water Policy functions. This role is responsible for planning, managing, implementing, and evaluating governmental relations, legislative affairs, and regulatory and political activities. The Water Policy Manager analyzes policy issues; conducts advocacy at the regional, state, and federal levels; and manages relationships within the water and utility industries, as well as external affairs on behalf of the District.

The position serves as a key representative of the District, Board of Directors, and General Manager in interactions with local, regional, state, and federal agencies; community, business, and civic organizations; and non-governmental entities such as environmental and nonprofit organizations. Responsibilities include delivering presentations, providing testimony at public hearings and industry events, and coordinating activities across departments. The

role requires strong collaboration and communication with outside agencies, elected and appointed officials, and administrative staff to build consensus on policy matters, while providing professional administrative support to management and performing other duties as assigned. Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to:



- Reviewing and analyzing current and proposed legislation and regulations at the local, regional, state, and federal levels, and developing advocacy strategies to advance the District's legislative priorities, policy positions, and political objectives, including direct engagement with elected and appointed officials and their staff.
- Preparing legislative reports, analyses, and position letters; representing the District before industry groups and legislative and regulatory bodies; and providing testimony at public hearings across all levels of government.
- Monitoring legislation and regulatory developments, recommending positions of support or opposition, and participating in committees and associations with other water and utility agencies to advance District goals.
- Coordinating with organizations, associations, and public agencies on legislative and regulatory initiatives; attending and actively participating in relevant meetings to stay informed on policy and political developments affecting the District.
- Supporting and influencing industry association and organizational elections through advocacy, coalition-building, collaboration, and relationship management.
- Participating in advisory committees, workgroups, and other quasi-legislative bodies to promote and protect the District's interests.
- Building and maintaining strong, collaborative relationships with legislative and regulatory officials, lobbyists, local governments, businesses, civic organizations, community groups, and chambers of commerce.
- Developing and implementing advocacy strategies, including setting schedules, identifying resource needs, and allocating resources in coordination with management.
- Organizing and leading grassroots efforts and programs to build public and constituent support for District initiatives at the local, regional, and statewide levels.
- Managing departmental goals, objectives, policies, and procedures; recommending improvements; and ensuring compliance with established standards.
- Preparing and managing the Water Policy budget.

- Collaborating with the Public Affairs department to develop communication materials such as newsletters, brochures, press releases, social media content, and website updates.
- Preparing reports and delivering presentations to the Board of Directors, District staff, and the public on legislative, regulatory, and political matters.
- Overseeing and contributing to the preparation of requests for proposals and contracts for specialized professional services.
- Conducting research and analysis on legislation, regulations, and laws affecting water utilities and government operations; developing and implementing recommendations and alternative solutions.
- Serving as the primary liaison for water policy and advocacy efforts across departments and with external stakeholders, ensuring effective coordination and alignment.
- Explaining, justifying, and defending programs, policies, and activities, and negotiating and resolving complex or sensitive issues.
- Participating in professional organizations, boards, commissions, and committees.
- Responding to and resolving complex and sensitive inquiries and complaints from the public.
- Performing related duties as assigned.



## THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The ideal candidate is a strategic and collaborative leader with a strong understanding of the complexities of water policy in California and the ability to navigate the evolving regulatory and legislative landscape. This individual will build and maintain productive relationships with local, state, and federal legislators and regional partners to advance the District's priorities and long-term

water management goals. The successful candidate will be a skilled and credible communicator, comfortable presenting complex policy issues before the public as well as legislative bodies, boards, and commissions. Equally important is the ability to translate technical and policy matters into clear, compelling messages that support informed decision-making and strengthen the District's presence throughout the region.

The ideal candidate also provides strong administrative and professional direction while fostering a positive, high-performing team environment. This individual demonstrates sound financial and analytical skills, including the ability to manage complex budgets, perform detailed analyses, and develop clear, concise reports that support informed decision-making. They possess strong knowledge of applicable laws, regulations, and policies, and can effectively research, interpret, and update these frameworks as needed. The successful candidate is highly organized, able to prioritize competing demands, meet critical deadlines, and adapt to evolving technologies and systems. Mesa Water District is seeking a forward-thinking and skilled Water Policy Manager who will continue to further the District's position of reliable domestic water supply to its 110,000 customers.

Candidates are considered qualified through a combination of education, training, and professional experience that demonstrates the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for success in the role. Typically, this includes a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with coursework in communications, public relations, journalism, public administration, or a related field; a master's degree is preferred. Applicants should bring at least eight years of progressively responsible experience in legislative affairs and public relations, including a minimum of three years in a management role. Ideal candidates will have a proven track record of building and maintaining effective coalitions and relationships with industry leaders, legislators, and regulatory partners, along with advanced expertise in legislative, regulatory, and political processes. Experience in the water industry or public service is highly desirable. A valid California Class C driver's license and a satisfactory driving record is also required.



## COMPENSATION

The annual salary range for the Water Policy Manager is \$156,291 - \$215,446; placement within this range is dependent on qualifications and experience. The District offers and excellent benefits package which can be viewed [here](#). Highlights include comprehensive health coverage for employees and their dependents (including \$2,400/month for benefits expenses), life and disability insurance, membership in CalPERS (California Public Employees' Retirement System), a voluntary deferred compensation plan that includes a District match of up to 3.5%, and generous vacation, sick, and holiday leave.

## TO APPLY

If you are interested in this outstanding opportunity, please apply online at:

[www.bobmurrayassoc.com](http://www.bobmurrayassoc.com)

**Filing Deadline:  
April 26, 2026**

Following the closing date, resumes will be screened according to the qualifications outlined above. The most qualified candidates will be invited to personal interviews with Bob Murray & Associates. A select group of candidates will be asked to provide references once it is anticipated that they may be recommended as finalists. References will be contacted only following candidate approval. Finalist interviews will be held with the Mesa Water District. Candidates will be advised of the status of the recruitment following selection of the Water Policy Manager.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Ms. Yasmin Beers at:

(916) 784-9080

