STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type:	Board of Directors
Title:	El Niño Preparedness
From:	Brett Pedisich, Safety & Emergency Response Manager BKP
Through:	Shaun Horne, General Manager
Meeting Date:	November 17, 2026

TYPE OF ITEM: Action X Information

RECOMMENDATION: Receive a presentation on the District's El Niño preparation activities

SUMMARY: A strong El Niño event has developed in the Pacific Ocean and is forecasted to peak between October and December 2026, with potential impacts extending through March 2027. For California, this increases the probability of a wetter-than-average winter, including the potential for extreme rainfall events that could lead to flooding, landslides, mudslides, and impacts to critical infrastructure. Staff will provide a presentation on the District's El Niño preparation activities.

DISCUSSION: El Niño is the warm phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), characterized by warmer-than-average ocean temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific. These conditions can alter the Pacific jet stream and storm tracks, increasing the potential for wetter and more active winter weather in California. For the 2026-27 winter, the National Weather Service California El Niño Information & Preparedness Guide reports that El Niño is continuing to strengthen. On September 21, 2026, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a statewide State of Emergency in response to the developing El Niño, mobilizing state resources and accelerating preparedness efforts for potential flooding, landslides, coastal impacts, and other winter storm-related hazards. For California, this increases the probability of a wetter-than-average winter, including the potential for extreme rainfall events. Historically, the relationship between El Niño and increased precipitation is strongest in Southern California and less consistent in Northern California.

The District has undertaken extensive preparations to reduce potential impacts from the forecasted El Niño winter season, including infrastructure maintenance and improvements, culvert replacement projects, operational adjustments, storm-response supply staging, and deployment of an employee emergency notification system. The District is also coordinating with partner agencies, assessing flood vulnerabilities at critical facilities, and validating emergency communication and response procedures. Overall, while specific local impacts cannot be predicted with certainty, the District is proactively preparing for the possibility of a historically wet winter season. These preparedness actions are intended to maintain safe and reliable drinking water operations, protect District facilities and

infrastructure, support employee safety, and reduce impacts to customers during severe weather events.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENT(S): None.