

## 2024 BCWWA Board of Directors Election – Candidate Statement

NAME	Carlos Hunte
EMPLOYER	Metro Vancouver
TITLE	Program Manager, Major Projects Operations Support
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Vancouver BC

### About Carlos

<p>Industry knowledge, contacts, experience</p>	<p>I have been working in the Water Sector as an Engineer and Manager with Metro Vancouver for 11 years. I have gained diverse experience in biosolids management, research and innovation, resource recovery, capital planning, wastewater treatment plant design and operations. A recent highlight of my career was leading the conceptual design for the new Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant that incorporates island-wide ecological and community improvements. This complex project required an integrative design approach with an emphasis on public, stakeholder and First Nations values. In addition to the Iona project, I have worked on novel wastewater initiatives such as sewer heat, biosolids drying, hydrothermal liquefaction and resource recovery technology trials.</p> <p>My current focus is delivering Operations and Maintenance (O&amp;M) support to major wastewater treatment plant upgrade projects. Operations and maintenance considerations are critical to enabling practical and cost-effective wastewater treatment infrastructure designs that perform and provide long-lasting resiliency. My work ensures that there is early input from O&amp;M staff, focusing on operability and serviceability requirements, performance specifications, health and safety, and reliability. This means building strong collaborative working relationships with O&amp;M subject matter experts, project delivery teams, and design consultants as part of an integrated design process. This approach is a shift from the classic design methods and creates effective decision-making. I have seen the power of collaboration first hand and I believe that over time we will see industry shift to widespread adoption of improved collaborative processes like we are at Metro Vancouver.</p> <p>The most important aspect of my job is communication. I spend a lot of time ensuring the right skills are in place to support projects successfully. I also enable executive decision making by providing access to clear information, making it easier for informed discussions and to maintain confidence in my team’s ability to mitigate risks. As a manager in local government, I am responsive to the needs of the public, stakeholders and Rights Holders. I am committed to building trust with First Nations and stakeholders, responding to their concerns and incorporating their values into project plans.</p> <p>I have built a strong and diverse professional network with field staff, government agencies, research community, environmental NGOs, industry experts, and community leaders. These relationships, help me stay informed on industry best practices, trends, challenges and anticipated regulatory</p>
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	<p>changes. I am confident that with a working style that emphasises collaboration, my relationships can be of benefit to the BCWWA Board.</p> <p>I have a genuine desire to make a positive impact on the broader water community. My volunteer contributions have been focused on various Metro Vancouver initiatives such as leading an Innovation Incubator, sitting on the DEI steering committee and providing mentorship for junior engineers. I am eager to take on a more direct role in strategic directions at the regional level. Helping the BCWWA respond to evolving needs of the sector would bring me a sense of professional satisfaction. My diverse experience, strategic acumen, industry knowledge, extensive networks, and commitment to collaboration and inclusivity will allow me to contribute meaningfully to the BCWWA Board.</p>
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**What is your approach to understanding and representing the interests of all members and stakeholders?**

As a new member of the board of a water and wastewater professional association, my first goal would be to quickly improve my understanding of members and various stakeholders along with their needs. An immediate step would be reviewing past meeting minutes, reports and any other information available, to gain insights into recurring themes or challenges that have been discussed by members. The current board and committee members are a wealth of information and I would have one-on-one discussions to understand their individual perspectives and experiences. I would also review the strategic plans to examine how they support the information gathered on stakeholder interest and priorities.

I believe in the benefits of inclusivity and participation so that all members feel heard and represented. My work requires that I pay attention to the interest and needs of Operations and Maintenance staff. I understand the value they place on the availability of training and certification and the challenges in meeting that demand. I advocate for this group everyday and given the opportunity I will continue to do so on the BCWWA Board. At the same time, I recognise that the Board represents all members and I would work collaboratively with fellow board members to ensure that strategic plans are aligned with the diverse interests and priorities of membership.

As a Board member, I would reach out to my network and industry contacts to share their thoughts and solicit feedback on effective representation. This is my approach as the Departmental representative on Metro Vancouver’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. I have been in this role since its inception and help champion the vision, objectives and action plans to improve the workplace experience for all current and future staff. Fostering inclusivity, improving participation from all members, and regularly evaluating and adjusting strategies based on evolving needs and industry dynamic would be my chosen path to successfully representing the interest of all members and stakeholders.

**Describe how you can advance the value of being inclusive in the BCWWA, defined as “we actively work with a diverse water community to provide meaningful opportunities to share skills and expertise.”**

Being a naturalised Canadian and a member of an underrepresented community, I am attuned to the importance of inclusivity. My commitment to inclusion can be demonstrated through my participation on the DEI Steering Committee at Metro Vancouver. A notable initiative I helped promote was the Canadian Experience program, which offers opportunities for new immigrants to gain valuable work experience. This initiative has resulted in the permanent employment of a number of engineers, some of whom I personally coached. There is view among O&M field staff that their contributions are often undervalued.

I advocate for their inclusion, recognizing their crucial role in providing essential services and in enabling practical and cost-effective infrastructure design that provides long-lasting resiliency. To enhance their participation, my team is planning to present at the 2024 BCWWA conference, to demonstrate the importance of designing with operations in mind. This will be a great opportunity to share the lessons we have learnt in adopting inclusive and collaborative processes. By championing the interests of this group, promoting inclusivity for underrepresented communities, and advocating for meaningful skill-sharing opportunities, I hope to contribute to BCWWA's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.