

# 2022 General Election Candidate Questionnaire

## MID Board of Directors Division 2

### Janice Keating

#### **1. What are your qualifications?**

As a two term Modesto City Councilwoman, I gained extensive experience with rate-based services like water, sewer, garbage - and watched them closely - ensuring rates set contained only what was necessary to provide services. I will examine MID rates in the same way. I served eight years on the City of Modesto/MID Joint Water Policy Committee that oversaw the domestic water treatment plant with MID. I was the chair of the Modesto City Council Finance Committee for eight years, who was responsible for understanding and monitoring the complex finances and funding of all the functions of the City expenditures. I am known as a fiscal conservative and rate payer advocate. I am very familiar with the New Don Pedro Reservoir. I have been attending Don Pedro Recreation Agency meetings for well over six years. I also followed the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process that started in 2010 (actually not yet resolved!) very closely and understand how important our reservoir is, especially during drought years, to maintain our ability to provide both agricultural & municipal water, recreation to our ratepayers at affordable rates. I also understand how many different attempts have been made to take our water by the State of California. I have owned and operated a small business for 28 years. I am a CTEC registered tax preparer. I have the experience to understand complicated regulations and forms and I am able to quickly evaluate budget presentations and properly question expenditures.

#### **2. What would be your top priorities?**

I'm running to represent our working-class households, small businesses and commercial customers on the Modesto Irrigation District to focus on what can be controlled, locally, to keep our electricity and water costs affordable, safe and reliable. We ALL feel it. From the kitchen table to the gas pump, working families are hurting financially. I'll review the budgets and financials and examine the underlying costs driving customer's monthly rates. The last thing we want is for our electricity rates to skyrocket like we saw with our natural gas bills (PG&E) last winter. We hear about the State's many attempts to take our local water. We should fight for every last drop to protect our district households, farms and businesses who rely on our investment in water for their livelihoods. Our water bills, in Division 2, come from the City of Modesto through a contract with MID. Our electricity bill comes from MID. We need to keep both our water and power bills low. We have to fight to protect MID's water and power because, in fact they both, are OURS. My top priority is YOU. I will always fight for ALL our ratepayers, big or small.

### **3. How can MID help businesses in their service area?**

Every business in the service area of MID would benefit from my attention to detail, ability to follow legal and environmental challenges closely and fight to keep our power and water rates affordable, safe and reliable. I understand how agenda reports can sometimes be slanted in the opinion of the bureaucrat assigned to writing them and am very adept at cutting through the nonsense, and just request information be presented in a fact-based manner for Board Members to decide good policy, not the staff.

### **4. What are the greatest challenges MID faces and how would you address them?**

1) Rates. I will strive to make good budget and policy decisions to keep and maintain our affordable electrical and water rates, some of the lowest in the State.

2) State Water Grab. I will strive to protect the district from the State stealing our water resources, to the last drop.

3) FERC. I will protect our electrical rates by striving to reach a reasonable decision in the ongoing negotiations with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

4) SGMA in 2014 the State signed the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. It defines our sub-basin and the water table levels within it. I plan to deeply engage in this policy issue.

For any of this to happen it will require leadership, both by elected officials and staff, with knowledge, negotiating skills and tenacity.

### **5. Do you believe the electric side of MID subsidizes the water side of MID? If so, what changes if any should be made?**

There is current litigation working through the courts that is attempting to address this question. Phase one of the case has been decided and MID has appealed. This has been an ongoing policy debate for many years. Both the current Board of Directors and prior Boards haven't addressed this policy issue. Both departments of the district, electric and water, are uniquely married to one another and an honest and forthright discussion of how ratepayers from each side help one another, if at all, is urgently needed. As I stated before, I am a fiscal conservative and a known ratepayer advocate. With my extensive financial background and common-sense business approach, I will research the issue and help formulate or develop a policy that is fair and reasonable for ALL ratepayers.

## **Frank Damrell Jr.**

### **1. What are your qualifications?**

Much of my professional career has been engaged in the issues of MID. When I first worked for Congressman Tony Coelho, he was working closely with MID & TID as they explored additional hydroelectricity on the Tuolumne River. As a commercial real estate agent, my clients were regularly discussing land valuations within the irrigation district and outside and making business decisions based on the availability of reliable and affordable water. Most recently, I worked with Senator Cathleen Galgiani. We campaigned for SB 1 (the water bond) and with the districts and farmers to stop the State Water Board's attempt to steal our water rights.

### **2. What would be your top priorities?**

Many challenges face the families and businesses within Modesto Irrigation District due to climate change and regulations. My priority is to protect our water rights for our ratepayers, both urban and rural. MID serves the people. We all benefit from secure and sustainable water. I will also make a priority to thoughtfully advance our transition to renewable energy as mandated. Energy must be reliable and equitable for all. Its essential to our prosperity and quality of life.

### **3. How can MID help businesses in their service area?**

The two greatest electricity requirements for businesses are affordable and reliable energy for day-to-day operation. MID delivers exceptional value compared to other parts of the state. MID also provides one of the most secure water situations in the California.

### **4. What are the greatest challenges MID faces and how would you address them?**

The State Water Board mandates are a tremendous challenge. Cooperation with our regional partners to secure sustainable groundwater in the Modesto Sub Basin is another challenge. And, as I mentioned earlier, the conversion of our energy portfolio to 100% renewable energy is looming.

### **5. Do you believe the electric side of MID subsidizes the water side of MID? If so, what changes if any should be made?**

I understand the court ruled "yes," but a second judge is considering damages. Any path forward has to be guided by that decision.