



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2023-3145

**Agenda Date:** 8/23/2023

**Agenda Item No:** 3.

**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF JULY 2023**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of July 2023.

**BACKGROUND**

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of July 2023.

**RELEVANT STANDARDS**

- Maintain influential legislative advocacy and a public outreach program
- Maintain collaborative and cooperative relationships with regulators, stakeholders, and neighboring communities
- Listen to and seriously consider community input on environmental concerns

**PROBLEM**

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) is well-recognized within the water/wastewater industry; however, within our service area, as we do not have direct communications through a billing method, there may be limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve may not realize that when they improperly dispose of waste into the sanitation system, it can negatively affect our sewer lines, our treatment plants, and the quality of water we supply for the GWRS.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION**

By providing tours, community outreach, education, and general communication via OC San's website, social media, and direct mailings, we can share information with the community, local agencies, and businesses on our messaging such as the What2Flush program, energy production, water recycling, biosolids, and OC San's source control program. This, in turn, helps improve the quality of wastewater that is recycled or released to the ocean and the knowledge and understanding of wastewater treatment.

## **RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION**

If OC San does not inform the community, local agencies, and area businesses about OC San, we may not have the support necessary to deliver our mission.

## **PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

July 2022 - Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2024 approved.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Activities for the month of July 2023:**

#### **Outreach Report**

An outreach report that includes tours, website and social media posts, construction notifications, speaker engagements, and more is attached to this Agenda Report.

#### **Social Media**

OC San messaging, announcements, and program updates were posted across OC San's social media platforms.

- Facebook: 18 posts reaching 2.9k people
- Twitter: 16 posts reaching 1k people
- Instagram: 39 posts reaching 6.7k people
- LinkedIn: 8 posts and reaching 5.6k people

#### **Media Coverage**

During the month of July, OC San was highlighted in an article from Granicus regarding our use of technology to modernize processes and in Bloomberg.com regarding forever chemicals. These and other articles can be found in the Outreach Report.

#### **Presentations and Industry Coverage**

In July, employees hosted nine tours and provided two speaking engagements reaching approximately 357 people. Staff presented at the Society of Military Engineers' OC and LA Small Business Forum on the Capital Improvement Program and sat on a panel for the Asian American Architects and Engineers. Our General Manager participated in meetings with the Orange County Business Council and National Water Reliance Industry. Staff also held collaboration and coordination meetings with Central San and OCWD. A presentation was also given to the Huntington Beach Southeast Area Council Committee regarding Plant No. 2 activities. Details can be found in the Outreach Report.

#### **Neighborhood Connection Newsletter**

The summer issue of OC San's community newsletter, The Neighborhood Connection, was distributed. The issue includes information on OC San's 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary, careers in wastewater, a look back at our process improvements, and the return of in-person tours. The newsletter was distributed electronically to approximately 4,500 readers and shared on our social media platforms.

### **Construction Outreach Update**

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Seal Beach, Westminster, Buena Park, Anaheim, and within both of our treatment plants. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. In July, updates were provided to the Fountain Valley, Buena Park, Anaheim, Seal Beach, Los Alamitos, and the Rossmoor communities.

### **Internal Communication**

In July, there were 57 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and four weekly emails distributed on hot topics for the week.

### **Awards**

OC San won two awards from the American Inhouse Design Awards from Graphic Design USA. It is a premier competition for design professionals, with over 7,000 entries and only 10%. The awards were given for the banners on the light poles and for the 2021-22 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Annual Report.

OC San and OCWD's GWRS Project has been awarded the Project Excellence Award from the Water Environment Federation. The award will be given at the October Water Environment Federation Conference.

CASA has awarded OC San and OCWD with the 2023 Capital Project Award for the Final Completion of the GWRS. The award was received by our General Manager at the CASA Conference on August 10.

OC San received the ESRI Special Achievement Award in GIS. Our Ocean Monitoring program uses ArcGIS to ensure safe water for swimming, healthy marine populations, seafood is safe to consume, and good water quality. OC San was one of 197 chosen from more than 100,000 ESRI clients worldwide. ESRI users are nominated by ESRI leadership and distributor organizations, with finalists selected by President and founder of ESRI, Jack Dangermond.

### **Upcoming Activities for August:**

#### **Joint GWRS Staff Appreciation luncheon**

OC San and OCWD are hosting a joint staff luncheon to recognize their efforts in successfully completing the GWRS.

### **CEQA**

N/A

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2022-2024 Budget.

**ATTACHMENT**

*The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OC San website ([www.ocsan.gov](http://www.ocsan.gov)) with the complete agenda package:*

- Outreach & Media Report - July 2023