



STEERING COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

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File #: 2024-3736

Agenda Date: 7/24/2024

Agenda Item No: 16.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2024

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of June 2024.

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of June 2024.

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 a distinguished entity in the water/wastewater industry. Despite our industry recognition, there may be limited awareness among our customers regarding the pivotal role we play in protecting public health and the environment. The absence of direct communication through a billing method may contribute to this gap in knowledge.

It is our responsibility to ensure that our ratepayers are aware of the vital services we provide. Many customers may not realize that improper waste disposal into the sanitation system can adversely impact our sewer lines, treatment plants, and the quality of water supplied through GWRS. By enhancing communication channels and fostering understanding, we aim to bridge the gap and empower our ratepayers with the knowledge needed to support and appreciate the essential work we undertake for the well-being of our community and the environment.

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 our 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

Neglecting to inform the community, local agencies, and area businesses about OC San could lead to insufficient support for our mission, hindering our ability to fulfill our responsibilities effectively.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities in June:

Outreach Report

An outreach report that includes tours, website updates, social media posts, construction notifications, speaking 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. Our social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 14 posts reaching 2.6k people
- X: 8 posts reaching 601 people
- Instagram: 32 posts reaching 14.7k people
- LinkedIn: 5 posts reaching 11.1k people

Presentations and Outreach Events

This month, staff conducted four tours at both plants and Headquarters, engaging guests from the Cal State Fullerton Nursing Program, the Southern California Environmental Association, and the International Facility Management Association. OC San hosted the American Water Works Association ACE24 Conference, providing a tour of GWRS. We also hosted the first national Isle Technology Approval Group, updating them on the Supercritical Water Oxidation project. Additionally, staff presented to a Biosolids community group. In total we reached approximately 1,400 people for the month. Details can be found in the Outreach Report.

Internal Communication

In June, there were 51 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and four weekly emails were distributed on relevant topics. Additionally, the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, was published at the end of June.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa, Buena Park, Anaheim, Newport Beach, Rossmoor, and within both of our treatment plants. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. Details on each project can be found at www.ocsan.gov/construction.

70th Anniversary Open House

OC San's Community Open House took place on Saturday, June 8. The event welcomed 1,300 visitors to learn about the essential services we provide and how they too can become environmental stewards. OC San was joined by several agencies from across the county to showcase their contributions to the community. Various entertainment and performance groups from local schools also joined this special event.

Headquarters Move In

The first week of June, OC San administrative staff moved into the new Headquarters building. This move consolidated over 300 staff members into one building, allowing for easier collaboration.

OC San Receives Award

OC San hosted the first national Isle Technology Approval Group and was acknowledged with the 2024 Audacity award as part of the Trailblazer Award for its innovative approaches in wastewater treatment and resource recovery. The award recognized OC San's commitment to pioneering solutions that set new standards in the industry.

Local Legislative and Governmental Support

Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors (WPAA) continues to provide support to OC San. A monthly report is attached to this Agenda Report. Activities to note include monitoring various City Council agendas of each of OC San's member agencies and highlighting issues and items of relevance to OC San.

Activities in July:**OC San Connection Community Newsletter**

The summer issue of OC San's community newsletter was distributed in July. It features a recap on the 70th Anniversary Open House, our new Headquarters building, updates on infrastructure projects, and more. The newsletter is sent electronically to about 4,500 readers and shared on our social media platforms.

Member Agency Outreach Toolkit

The summer outreach toolkit was distributed to our member agencies to help spread OC San messaging across a wider audience. It covers summer topics which include sand in the pipes and fats, oil, and grease. The toolkit includes graphics, articles for websites and newsletters, and social media posts.

CEQA

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2022-24 and FY 2024-26 Budgets.

ATTACHMENT

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

- Outreach and Media Report - June 2024
- WPAA Local Public Affairs Report - June 2024