



Orange County Sanitation District

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Agenda Report

File #: 2020-1222

Agenda Date: 8/26/2020

Agenda Item No: 8.

FROM: James D. Herberg, General Manager
Originator: James D. Herberg, General Manager

SUBJECT:

WATER UCI INDUSTRY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTER ANALYSIS

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Authorize the General Manager to enter into an agreement with the University of California, Irvine (UCI) and the UCI Foundation with a contribution of \$50,000 for the Sewershed-scale analysis of perfluorinated compounds in wastewater in partnership with the Orange County Water District, Irvine Ranch Water District, Santa Margarita Water District, and Moulton Niguel Water District; in a form approved by General Counsel.

BACKGROUND

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are synthetic chemicals that have been widely used in consumer and industrial products since the 1940s due to their resistance to heat, water, and oil. These chemicals do not break down readily in the environment and can accumulate over time. As a result of their presence in everyday items, more than 95 percent the U.S. population has PFAS in their bodies, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

This year, the California Division of Drinking water issued new notification and response levels of PFAS for drinking water. These levels are more stringent than the health advisory levels established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2016.

In July 2020, the Orange County Sanitation District (Sanitation District) received an order from the State Water Board to begin testing our influent, effluent, and biosolids for PFAS compounds on a quarterly basis. Utilities like the Sanitation District are receivers of PFAS compounds from incoming wastewater and the sources of these compounds in wastewater influent have not been documented.

The objectives of the proposed project with the UCI Industry Research Center are to develop a methodology to identify the sources of PFAS in wastewater influent, and to implement the methodology to identify the primary sources of PFAS by analyzing samples of commercial, industrial, and domestic sewage. The data obtained will be used to quantify contributions of PFAS to the wastewater stream, identify specific products/processes leading to large PFAS releases, and investigate PFAS compounds from different sources.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Maintain and adhere to appropriate internal planning documents - 2019 Strategic Plan
- Maintain collaborative and cooperative relationships with regulators, stakeholders, and neighboring communities

PROBLEM

The sources of PFAS compounds that could be entering the Sanitation District's influent wastewater have not been identified, and a methodology for identifying these sources has not been developed.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Enter into an agreement with the UCI with a contribution of \$50,000 and participate in the cooperative research program to identify sources of PFAS in influent wastewater.

TIMING CONCERNS

The Water UCI Industry Research Center is planning to begin the project in Fall 2020.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

The Sanitation District would miss out on the opportunity to leverage our contribution with other water and wastewater agencies and UCI to research the sources of PFAS in wastewater.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

November 2019 Strategic Plan - Wastewater Management, Constituents of Emerging Concern Policy.

CEQA

As the Lead Agency, CEQA applicability and efforts will be conducted by UCI.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This request complies with authority levels of the Sanitation District's Purchasing Ordinance. This item has been budgeted. (Line item: Section 5, Page 6).

ATTACHMENT

The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OCSD website (www.ocsd.com) with the complete agenda package:

- Water UCI - Full Proposal
- Water UCI - OCSD Draft Agreement