



LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE

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Agenda Report

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Agenda Item No: 21.

FROM: James D. Herberg, General Manager

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTHS OF NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2021 AND JANUARY 2022

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the months of November & December 2021 and January 2022.

BACKGROUND

Staff will provide an update on recent public affairs activities.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Maintain influential legislative advocacy and a public outreach program
- Build brand, trust, and support with policy makers and community leaders
- 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 there is limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve do 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 to the Groundwater Replenishment System.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

By providing tours, community outreach, education, and general communication via OC San's website, social media outlets, and direct mailings, we can educate 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.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities for the months of November & December 2021 and January 2022:

Outreach Report

An outreach report that includes tours, website postings, social media postings, construction notifications, speaker engagements, and more is included as an attachment to this Agenda Report.

Virtual Tours

To continue engaging with the community and our stakeholders, staff conducts virtual tours of the Plant which has allowed participants an opportunity to remotely visit OC San and learn how we protect public health and the environment. For this reporting period, we held five virtual tours reaching 81 people.

Social Media

Over the last three months, OC San has been very active on our social media accounts. This is a quick snapshot of what we did:

- Facebook: 46 posts and reached 9.7k people
- Twitter: 44 posts and reached 9.3k people
- Instagram: 38 posts and 625 likes
- LinkedIn: 8 posts and 161 likes

Presentations

During this reporting period, OC San had four speaking engagements. Staff gave a presentation to the H2OC Sub-Committee on our rebranding efforts, to the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) for Women in Wastewater, presented during a webinar for California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA), and to the Seal Beach City Council on the Los Alamitos Trunk Sewer Project.

Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy

OC San is launching a Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy for our customers, fellow agencies, and influential public to showcase OC San operations and initiatives. The academy consists of four informational sessions and a Plant tour (tentative based on COVID-19 restrictions). The academy is free to attend, and completion of all four courses will result in a certificate of completion. The first session will begin in May.

Member Agency Outreach Toolkit - Education

On a quarterly basis, OC San prepares and distributes outreach toolkits to our member agencies with messaging to be shared with the community. The most recent toolkit was just distributed and

focused on our educational efforts including our virtual tours and our partnership with the Heritage Museum of Orange County. The toolkit includes messaging for websites, newsletters, and social media that our member agencies can share with their communities to encourage people to participate in the academy.

Construction Outreach

Construction has started on the Orange-Western Trunk Sewer Project in the cities of Buena Park, Anaheim, and Cypress. Outreach efforts are underway to keep the community informed of the project activities as well as the benefits. Construction notifications, text alerts, email alerts, web updates, social media posts, city newsletters updates, etc. are all components of the outreach program developed for this project. Further details on the project can be found at www.ocsan.gov/OrangeWestern.

Community Engagement

The OC San Connection is an electronic newsletter that we first launched in fall 2021 to share with our customers that OC San is more than just a wastewater treatment facility. The winter 2022 issue was just released and featured articles on construction projects, our source control efforts, and the statewide, No Wipes in the Pipe campaign. The newsletter was shared with our member agencies, our influential public, across our social media platforms, and via email to those who have signed up for receive the newsletter directly in their inbox. The newsletter can be found at www.ocsan.gov.

Vendor Outreach Program

OC San is relaunching the Vendor Outreach Program with a focus on Orange County businesses to enhance the competitive bidding opportunities for OC San. The intent is to increase the number of vendor and contractors soliciting OC San projects thus expanding the pool and providing a greater variety of partners. Staff is currently preparing to host a vendor workshop to take place in March 2022.

Awards

OC San's Plant No. 1 was selected as the Santa Ana River Basin Section (SARBS) winner for Large Plant Safety. OC San now advances to the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) state level. CWEA's Large Plant Safety of the Year award evaluates nominees on number of injuries, lost-time accidents, recordkeeping, in-house training, emergency response, and program implementation. The Local SARBS Safety Award will be given to OC San at the March 2022 SARBS Banquet.

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 Summary Report - November & December 2021 and January 2022
- Presentation