



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

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Agenda Report

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Agenda Item No: 5.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager
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SUBJECT:

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER 2024 AND JANUARY 2025

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Legislative Affairs Update for the months of December 2024 and January 2025.

BACKGROUND

The Orange County Sanitation District's (OC San) legislative affairs program includes advocating for OC San's legislative interests; sponsoring legislation (where appropriate); and seeking local, state, and federal funding for projects and programs.

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

PROBLEM

Without a strong advocacy program, elected officials may not be aware of OC San's mission, programs, and projects and how they could be impacted by proposed legislation.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Continue to work with local, state, and federal officials to advocate for OC San's legislative interests. Help to create and monitor legislation and grants that would benefit OC San, the wastewater industry, and the community. To assist in relationship building efforts, OC San will continue to reach out to elected officials through facility tours, one-on-one meetings, and trips to Washington D.C. and Sacramento.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

If OC San does not work with Local, State, and Federal elected officials, legislation could be passed that negatively affects OC San and the wastewater industry. Additionally, a lack of engagement may result in missed funding opportunities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS):

- The EPA released its draft biosolids risk assessment for PFAS on January 14. The draft risk assessment focuses only on health risks to people living near sites where PFAS-containing biosolids have been applied (e.g., farms, land disposal units), or those relying primarily on products from farms where PFAS-containing biosolids have been applied. The EPA specifically notes the draft risk assessment “does not model risks for the general public.” OC San staff, associations, and lobbyist are monitoring this issue and will be submitting public comments within the deadline EPA establishes.

As of January 21, The Trump Administration has withdrawn the proposed Effluent Limitations Guidelines, which are national, technology-based regulations developed to control industrial wastewater discharges to surface waters and into publicly owned treatment works. OC San staff and lobbyist will continue to monitor this and all other future changes to EPA guidelines and regulations.

- To address contamination and treatment concerns of PFAS in wastewater, OC San has partnered with 374Water to build a six-ton-per-day demonstration project called AirSCWO Nix6. This process uses water at a high temperature and pressure to oxidize and break down complex compound materials like PFAS. Once treated, we expect that the compounds are transformed into more basic and benign compounds and ensure enhanced public health including exposure from water and air that would otherwise contain PFAS. Once operational (mid-2025), the AirSCWO Nix6 may provide opportunities to solve other challenges facing OC San and other clean water agencies throughout California.
- Additionally, OC San is conducting a Deep Well Injection Feasibility Study (PS24-01) as a method to dispose of slurry mixtures of treated, non-hazardous municipal sludge, brine and effluent. Deep well injection is a process that involves injecting treated or untreated fluid streams into geologic formations far below and separated from potable water aquifers by an impermeable confining layer. The goal of deep well injection is to:
 - Reduce/eliminate transport costs and carbon emissions
 - Lower treatment costs
 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Provide long-term carbon sequestration
 - PFAS/microplastic/pharmaceuticals (creates a forever home)

The study is slated for completion in summer 2025.

ATTACHMENT

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

- Federal Legislative Update
- EPA Draft Risk Assessment
- State Legislative Update
- Local Legislative Update
- Presentation