



# LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Administration Building  
10844 Ellis Avenue  
Fountain Valley, CA 92708  
(714) 593-7433

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2021-1561

**Agenda Date:** 4/12/2021

**Agenda Item No:** 4.

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

**SUBJECT:**

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 2021**

#### **GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of March 2021.

#### **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 have the ability to 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 MONTH OF MARCH 2021**

### **Virtual Tours**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person Plant tours are temporarily suspended. To continue engaging with the community and stakeholders, staff conducts virtual tours of the Plant which allows participants an opportunity to remotely visit OC San and learn how we protect public health and the environment. For this reporting period, four virtual tours were held.

### **Presentations**

During the month of March, staff presented virtually at a City Engineers Association of Orange County meeting to discuss outreach during a pandemic and at the Orange County Water Association to present on Asset Management. Additionally, staff made a presentation at the Association of California Cities of Orange County's Public Policy Academy and was part of the Regional Intergovernmental Agency Panel. Staff also spoke at the No Dig Show on the Newhope-Placentia Truck Sewer Project and the trenchless technology used in a heavily populated area to reduce community impact. Staff also presented on a panel for COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance through the California Water Environmental Association.

### **Orange County Science and Engineering Fair (OCSEF)**

The OCSEF is an annual event organized to encourage the youth of our county to learn about science and to consider a career in science or engineering. The OCSEF is open to 6th - 12th grade students attending public or private schools in Orange County. Each year OC San volunteers to help with the judging and this year eight employees volunteered by participating virtually.

### **Plant No. 1 Newsletter**

As part of the ongoing outreach efforts to keep our neighbors informed and engaged with the projects going on at the Plant, we launched a Plant No. 1 neighborhood newsletter. The newsletter will go to the residents surrounding the Plant No 1 facility in Fountain Valley, Huntington Beach, and Costa Mesa. The newsletter will include updates on the ongoing construction projects that are planned, including the Headworks project.

### **Celebrating our Recent Retirees**

During the month of March, OC San sees many retirements. Due to safety precautions, this year in-person celebrations were not an option; however, virtual celebration boards were created for each retiree to give them a heartfelt send-off. The virtual boards included stories, photos, and warm wishes from fellow staff members. Each retiree will receive a copy of their kudos boards.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

*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 and Media Summary Report March 2021
- Presentation