



# ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

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## Agenda Report

**File #:** 2024-3938

**Agenda Date:** 11/20/2024

**Agenda Item No:** 18.

**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager  
Originator: Jennifer Cabral, Director of Communications

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2024**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION:

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

**BACKGROUND**

Included in this report are recent activities of interest, managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of October 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 comprehend the vital services we provide. Many customers may not realize that improper waste disposal into the sanitation system can adversely impact our sewer lines, reclamation 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

June 2024 - Received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2026.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Activities in October:

#### **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: 22 posts reaching 2.2k people
- X: 17 posts reaching 727 people
- Instagram: 28 posts reaching 6.4k people
- LinkedIn: 9 posts reaching 4.3k people
- Nextdoor: 2 posts reaching 50,000

#### **Presentations and Outreach Events**

In October, staff presented to various groups including: Colorado State University, the California Association of Public Information Officers, Tustin City Council, Orange City Council, University of California Irvine, the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Energy Event with Sustain SoCal, and the State of OC San.

OC San staff conducted 12 tours, engaging guests from Cypress College, Chapman University, Cabrillo Academy, Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce, University of California Irvine, and Jurupa Community Services. Staff also attended and participated in the Cypress Community Festival and the Placentia Heritage Festival. In total we reached approximately 800 people. Details can be found in the Outreach and Media Report.

As part of our General Manager's outreach efforts, Mr. Thompson is actively engaging with our member agencies through a series of meetings. These meetings aim to strengthen partnerships, discuss key initiatives impacting each agency, and explore collaborative opportunities. By fostering open communication, we seek to ensure alignment on regional goals and enhance the collective impact of our work across Orange County. So far, meetings have taken place with the cities of Fullerton, Huntington Beach, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Tustin, Villa Park, Costa Mesa Sanitary District, and the County Supervisor Vice-Chairman's office. Upcoming meetings are scheduled with the cities of Orange, Buena Park, and the Yorba Linda Water District in November.

### **Internal Communication**

Over the course of the month, there were 47 posts on the employee intranet page, *The San Box*, and four emails were distributed on relevant weekly topics through our Three Things to Know staff email distribution. Additionally, the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, was published at the end of October.

### **Construction Outreach Update**

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Costa Mesa, Seal Beach, Newport Beach, and within both of our reclamation plants. New construction is set to begin in October in the city of Orange for the Taft Sewer Improvement Project. As part of our communication efforts, OC San distributed over 4,000 mailers to residents. 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](http://www.ocsan.gov/construction).

### **State of OC San**

The State of OC San was held on Friday, October 25. The event provided an update on OC San, our accomplishments, and the future direction of the agency. The event was attended by over 175 local, state, and federal dignitaries, and community members.

### **Annual Report**

OC San's Annual Report is available and highlights the 2023-2024 fiscal year accomplishments including the recent completion of Headquarters, the Pretreatment Honor Roll Program, and our financial stability. The report can be found at [www.ocsan.gov](http://www.ocsan.gov) and on our social media channels.

### **OC San Connection Newsletter**

The fall issue of the community newsletter was published and distributed in October. The issue includes information on upcoming construction projects, an update on various programs, and community events. The issue can be found at [www.ocsan.gov/newsletter](http://www.ocsan.gov/newsletter).

### **New OC San Website**

OC San has officially launched its new website. After nearly 10 months of development, staff has created a site that not only looks great but also features improved navigation, mobile responsiveness, enhanced educational resources, and easier access to public information. Explore the new website at [www.ocsan.gov](http://www.ocsan.gov).

### **Awards**

- OC San won Silver for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Capital Improvement Program Annual Report under the Design and Print Category of the Davey Awards. The Davey Awards is an international awards program honoring outstanding creative and marketing work exclusively from small shops, boutique agencies, internal creative teams, and independent creators.
- OC San was awarded the Excellence in Information Technology Practices Award from the Municipal Information Systems Association of California. This award recognizes agencies for implementing information technology practices that excel in creative and efficient uses of local and government resources.
- The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada has awarded OC San with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the current budget. This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting and its attainment represents a significant achievement by our organization.
- The Institute of Asset Management has awarded OC San with the Corporate/Organization Transformation Award for the Asset Management Plan. This award honors the corporate journey and the excellence displayed by organizations to progress their asset management competence.

### **Activities in November:**

#### **OC San Celebrates Our Veterans**

In November, OC San will recognize and celebrate staff who have proudly served in the Armed Forces. Streetlight banners honoring each of our veterans will be displayed throughout the Headquarters parking lot and at both plants. Additionally, we will share posts on our website and social media, and poster boards will be set up at Headquarters and Plant Nos. 1 and 2.

#### **Social Media**

OC San continues to share messaging across the various social media platforms.

#### **CEQA**

N/A

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2024-26 Budget.

#### **ATTACHMENT**

*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 Report - October 2024