



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2021-1559

**Agenda Date:** 3/24/2021

**Agenda Item No:** 11.

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

**SUBJECT:**

**AUTHORIZATION OF CONTRIBUTION TO CASA EDUCATION FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. OC SAN 21-06, entitled "A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sanitation District approving a not to exceed Annual contribution amount of \$2,500 to the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) Education Foundation Scholarship Fund beginning FY 2020-2021; and Repealing Resolution No. OCSD 15-22".

**BACKGROUND**

CASA represents the interests of local clean water agencies in California that treat wastewater and produce renewable resources such as recycled water, clean energy, and soil enhancements (biosolids). Recognizing the need to recruit new professionals into the industry, CASA members encouraged the association to establish the CASA Education Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to raising money and offering competitive scholarships to support undergraduate students seeking degrees connected to working at a local public wastewater facility.

Founded in 2013, the CASA Education Foundation (Foundation) was established to provide scholarships that contribute to a student's academic development and career potential in the wastewater field. The Foundation's goals are to expose students to careers in the clean water community and increase the visibility of California's publicly owned wastewater agencies with the public, civic leaders, and the academic community.

Each year, the Foundation awards competitive scholarships to students pursuing higher education in engineering, environmental science, public administration, or other related fields, and who show an interest in serving the wastewater (clean water) industry. The Foundation awarded five \$5,000 scholarships in 2020.

Scholarship funds are obtained through fundraising events, individual contributions, and organizational contributions. The Foundation is reaching out to CASA member agencies for contributions as a means to generate a sustainable stream of income to support and possibly expand the scholarship program.

## RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Comply with OC San Policy (Resolution No. OCSD 15-22)
- Ensure the public's money is wisely spent
- Cultivate a highly qualified, well-trained, and diverse workforce

## PROBLEM

Resolution No. OCSD 15-22 requires the Orange County Sanitation District (Sanitation District) to budget and contribute \$5,000 per year to the Foundation. The existing Resolution doesn't provide flexibility to allow a contribution of less than \$5,000.

## PROPOSED SOLUTION

Adopt a Resolution stating the Sanitation District's support for the Foundation and authorizing the General Manager to approve an annual contribution up to \$2,500 per year.

## TIMING CONCERNS

The Sanitation District is currently updating the annual budget for approval by the Board of Directors in June 2021.

## RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

The Sanitation District is required by Resolution to continue to budget and contribute \$5,000 annually, and that amount would therefore be included in the 2021-22 budget.

## PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

October 2015 - Adopted Resolution No. OCSD 15-22 entitled: "A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sanitation District approving an annual contribution of \$5,000 to the California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) Education Foundation Scholarship Fund beginning FY 2015-2016".

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The focus of the Foundation is undergraduate education. Eligible applicants are California residents attending or incoming freshmen to an accredited college or university located in California. Each spring, applications are solicited from students pursuing degrees in engineering, environmental science, natural/water resources, public administration, or other degrees which would prepare a student for a career in a clean water agency. Clean water agencies are encouraged to publicize the scholarship opportunity and provide application materials to community members.

Applicants must submit an application, statement of purpose, a coursework plan for the funded period, academic transcripts, and two letters of recommendation to be considered. The applications

are screened by members of the Foundation Board of Directors who make a final determination of awardees based on three criteria:

- **Commitment to the clean water industry.** Students must demonstrate a sincere desire to pursue a career in the clean water industry. The relationship of a student's academic and career goals to the water environment community are considered in making scholarship selections.
- **Academic achievement.** While there is no minimum grade point average to qualify for a scholarship, academic performance plays a role in deciding which students are awarded scholarships.
- **Extracurricular pursuits.** Student applicants need to be aware of issues that face the wastewater industry and how they can contribute to enhancing the future of California's clean water community. This may be demonstrated by work experience, volunteer activity, participation in school or extracurricular projects, internships, or membership in civic, professional, or student chapter organizations.

## **CEQA**

N/A

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This request complies with authority levels of the Sanitation District's Purchasing Ordinance. This item has been budgeted.

## **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:*

- Draft Resolution No. OC SAN 21-06