



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

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Agenda Item No: 13.

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

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2025

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of October 2025.

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of October 2025.

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 understand 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

Failing to inform the community, local agencies, and businesses about OC San might result in insufficient support for our mission and hinder our effectiveness.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

July 2025 - Receive and file the Year-End Update to the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026.

December 2024 - Receive and file the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 Mid-Year Update

June 2024 - Receive and file the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 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 are shared across OC San's social media platforms. Of special note, a video reel created for Water Professionals Appreciation Week that garnered over 1.5K impressions. OC San's social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 14 posts reaching 3.3K people
- X: 11 posts reaching 374 people
- Instagram: 18 posts reaching 5.7K people
- LinkedIn: 6 posts reaching 4.5K people
- Nextdoor: 1 post reaching 12.5K people

Presentations and Outreach Events

In October, OC San participated in the Costa Mesa Sanitary District's Eco Expo and the Yorba Linda Water District's Open House.

Staff hosted 11 tours, welcoming a variety of groups including Cal State Long Beach, Rancho

Santiago High School, the California Association of Sanitation Agencies, Orange County Water District, Costa Mesa Sanitary District, Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce, iLead Exploration Charter School, State of OC San guests, and Wastewater 101 graduates. Staff also participated in speaking engagements at Golden West College and Cal State Fullerton STEM Internship and Expo.

Wastewater 101 - Tour and Graduation

The Fall Cohort of the OC San Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy concluded with 41 graduates who successfully completed all four sessions. Participants also had the opportunity to attend an in-person tour on Saturday, October 18, led by Operations Manager, Jon Bradley. Thirty participants toured Reclamation Plant Nos. 1 and 2, and the Steve Anderson Lift Station.

State of OC San

The 12th annual State of OC San took place on Friday, October 17, hosted at Headquarters for the first time. The event featured Joaquin Esquivel, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, as the distinguished guest speaker. The event provided an update on OC San's accomplishments and future direction. This year, approximately 150 local, state, and federal dignitaries, and community members attended.

Educational Display

After months of development, Phase Two of the Educational Display was successfully installed in front of Headquarters. This hands-on display, part of the General Manager's Work Plan, supports our educational efforts by showcasing the magnitude of the pipe system managed and operated by OC San.

Annual Report

OC San's 2024-2025 Annual Report was published highlighting the year's accomplishments, including the Pretreatment Honor Roll Program, the RISE program, our financial standing, and outreach efforts. The report and a year-end video are available at <https://www.ocsan.gov/newsletter>.

OC San Connection Newsletter

The fall issue of the community newsletter was published and distributed to more than 3,000 subscribers. The issue includes information on current construction projects, the new Educational Display, FOG focused content for the upcoming holidays, and a schedule of upcoming OC San public tours. The issue can be found at <https://www.ocsan.gov/newsletter>.

Internal Communication

Over the course of the month, there were 50 posts on the employee intranet - *The San Box*, and four all-staff emails were distributed through the *Three Things to Know* weekly update. We also published our bimonthly Pipeline newsletter covering September and October, featuring articles on the employee picnic, health fairs, and Halloween luncheon.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts for OC San construction activities are ongoing throughout the service area. Updates were shared for projects in the cities of Orange, Cypress and La Palma through the website, email alerts and text notifications reaching more than 4,000 members of the public. OC San also collaborates with the respective cities to share construction updates via city publications. For project details, visit <https://www.ocsan.gov/construction>.

Awards

OC San received three notable recognitions: a Silver Davey Award for its 70th Branding project, the Excellence in IT Practices Award from the Municipal Information Systems Association of California (MISAC) for the 18th consecutive year-an honor earned by only 5% of member agencies statewide-and ENR's Best Government/Public Building Award for the new Headquarters facility, recognized for its innovative hybrid mass timber and steel design and environmentally responsible construction.

Activities in November:**Social Media**

November content will feature fall-themed messaging on FOG and What2Flush. Posts will also highlight America Recycles Day, World Toilet Day, and Veterans Day, among other observances that provide opportunities to share OC San's messaging and recognize staff contributions.

Presentations & Outreach

Five tours are scheduled for November, welcoming groups from Masuda Elementary, Foundation Christian School, Fullerton Fire Department CERT Team, OCWD staff, and the general public. Staff will host a booth at the Girl Scouts of Orange County STEM Expo to promote STEM careers and will also present to the Asian American Architects and Engineers Association.

Construction Outreach

OC San will continue to share construction project updates through its various communication channels to keep the community informed.

CEQA

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 Budget.

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 Report for October 2025