



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2023-3049

**Agenda Date:** 6/28/2023

**Agenda Item No:** 3.

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**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2023**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of May 2023.

**BACKGROUND**

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of May 2023.

**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 well-recognized within the water/wastewater industry; however, within our service area, as we do not have direct communications through a billing method, there may be limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve may 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 for the GWRS.

**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 OC San's 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**

If OC San does not inform the community, local agencies, and area businesses about OC San, we may not have the support necessary to deliver our mission.

## **PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

July 2022 - Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2022-2024 approved.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Outreach Report**

An outreach report that includes tours, website and social media posts, construction notifications, speaker 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 in May and added 145 new followers. Our reach across the four platforms remains consistent month to month.

- Facebook: 21 posts reaching 2.7k people
- Twitter: 17 posts reaching 1.3k people
- Instagram: 32 posts reaching 5.1k people
- LinkedIn: 3 posts and reaching 5k people

### **Media Coverage**

In May, OC San was mentioned in several articles including *Water Finance Management* announcing Wally Ritchie as the new Director of Finance and in *Hazen All things Water* issue regarding the Supercritical Water Oxidation Project. These and other articles can be found in the Outreach Report.

### **Presentations**

In May, staff participated in six tours and five speaking engagements including the Water Environment Foundation Conference, Orange County Water District PFAS Webinar, and others. Details can be found in the Outreach Report.

### **Construction Outreach**

OC San construction outreach activities continue throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Seal Beach, Westminster, Buena Park, Anaheim, and within both of our treatment plants. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. In May we reached approximately 1,500 people in Seal Beach, Los Alamitos, Rossmoor, Fountain Valley, and Anaheim.

### **Internal Communication**

Internal communication is a key component of the Public Affairs Office. In May there were 165 posts on the employee intranet - *The San Box*, four weekly emails distributed on hot topics for the week, and the employee newsletter - *The Pipeline Newsletter* will be published at the end of June.

**Awards**

The Platinum Peak Performance Award recognizes member agencies for achieving 100% water discharge permit compliance over a consecutive five-year period. This is the 6th year that OC San has received this award.

**Five Minutes Per Month Email**

On a monthly basis, an email is sent to OC San's policy influencers and stakeholders on topics of importance to OC San and the wastewater industry. This month's email focused on the Orange County Health Care Agency's water quality report regarding the reduction of beach closures related to sewer spills.

**Upcoming Activities for June:****Member Agency Outreach Toolkit**

On a quarterly basis, OC San prepares toolkits to share with our member agencies on topics of interest and general OC San messaging. The summer toolkit covers water quality and ocean monitoring efforts employed by OC San to protect the environment.

**Honor Walk Recognition**

The Honor Walk Recognition celebration will be held on Wednesday, June 28 at 3:30 p.m. at OC San's Plant No. 1 in Fountain Valley. As a reminder, the program honors former employees and Board members who made significant contributions to OC San.

**Neighborhood Connection Newsletter**

The summer issue of OC San's community newsletter is scheduled for distribution in June. The newsletter is distributed electronically to approximately 4,500 readers and shared on our social media platforms.

**Orange County Register California Water Insert**

OC San is once again included in the annual water supplemental educational insert of the *OC Register*. The piece highlights our efforts in protecting public health and the environment with a special feature our recent achievement of recycling 100% of our reclaimable flow and the recent completion of the GWRS.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2022-2024 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 & Media Report - May 2023