



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Headquarters
18480 Bandilier Circle
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
(714) 593-7433

Agenda Report

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Agenda Item No: 14.

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

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2026

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of February 2026.

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest, managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of February 2026.

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 the Groundwater Replenishment System (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

December 2025 - Received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 Mid-Year Update.

July 2025 - Received and filed the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Year-End Update to the Public Affairs Strategic Plan (FY 2024-2026).

December 2024 - Received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 Mid-Year Update.

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities in February:

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 - through February 23

OC San messaging, announcements, and program updates are posted across OC San's social media platforms. Our social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 15 posts reaching 6.3k people
- X: 14 posts reaching 343 people
- Instagram: 17 posts reaching 6.9k people
- LinkedIn: 3 posts reaching 2k people
- Nextdoor: 2 posts reaching 16.3k people

Presentations and Outreach Events

In February staff hosted five tours welcoming groups from Pacific Academy High School, Bassett Adult School, California State University Long Beach School of Nursing, and a Headquarters tour for

Cal Poly Pomona students. We also had several speaking engagements including the Fountain Valley Guidevisement Day at Fountain Valley High School, Career Day at Meadow Green Elementary, and a presentation for the Amigo Viejos community group in Newport Beach. Assistant General Manager Lorenzo Tyner attended the Midway Sanitary District's Open House and Jennifer Cabral, Director of Communications, attended the City of Newport Beach's Mayor dinner.

OC San Film Screening

OC San hosted a film screening for "Unless Something Goes Terribly Wrong" on Tuesday, February 24 at OC San Headquarters. Over 150 people attended to watch the film. The screening was followed by a panel Q&A, and a smaller group had the opportunity to tour Plant No. 1. The film focuses on water sustainability, and the essential role wastewater infrastructure plays in protecting public health and the environment.

Wastewater 101 Citizens' Academy Winter 2026 Session

In February, two sessions of the Citizens' Academy were held. The final session will be in March, followed by an optional in-person tour and graduation at the Board of Directors meeting on March 25. For more information on future academies, visit www.ocsan.gov/wastewater101.

Show Your Love for OC San Art Contest

OC San launched its first-ever art contest allowing employees to "Show Your Love for OC San" by submitting original artwork that captures the often-unseen beauty of OC San's infrastructure. The submission period was open for two weeks followed by a judging period for staff to vote for their favorite piece. The top three entries that receive the most votes will be displayed in the Headquarters lobby starting March 18 through March 31. Please stop by and enjoy the beauty of OC San.

Internal Communication (as of February 23)

Over the course of the month, there were 24 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and four emails were distributed to staff on relevant weekly topics through our *Three Things to Know* email. Additionally, the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, was published at the end of February.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts for OC San construction activities are ongoing throughout the service area. Updates were shared for projects taking place in the cities of Orange, Cypress, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, and Huntington Beach through our website, printed content, and email and text alerts. OC San also works with the respective cities to share construction updates via city publications and social media. For details on each project, visit www.ocsan.gov/construction.

Activities in March:

Social Media

OC San continues to share messaging across the various social media platforms. This messaging aligns with OC San's overall communications and includes timely, relevant content, such as rain-focused messaging during the wet weather season.

March Retirement Celebration

On March 18, OC San will host a celebration in the Headquarters courtyard for all employees retiring. This will give staff an opportunity to share stories and send off our dedicated employees with a

heartfelt goodbye. Retirees are also invited to attend.

Presentations & Outreach

OC San has 12 scheduled tours for the month of March. We hope to welcome a variety of groups including Cal State Fullerton, Estancia High School, Canyon High School, Huntington Beach High School, Fullerton College, El Toro/Saddleback Valley students, a general public tour, and the graduates of Wastewater 101. Staff will also participate in a Career Day at Cerro Villa Middle School, attend and participate at a Construction Networking panel, and at the Orange County Science and Engineering Fair.

Construction Outreach

OC San will continue sharing construction project updates using our various communication methods to keep the community informed. Project details are available at www.ocsan.gov/construction.

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 February 2026
- Presentation