



# ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

## Agenda Report

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

**SUBJECT:**

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2025**

#### **GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

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

#### **BACKGROUND**

Included in this report are recent activities of interest, managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of September 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, many customers may not be fully aware of our crucial role in protecting public health and the environment. A lack of direct communication, such as through a billing method, may contribute to this knowledge gap.

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**

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 - Received and filed the Year-End Update to the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2026.

December 2024 - Receive and File 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 Year 2024-2026.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Activities in September:**

#### **Outreach Report**

An outreach report detailing 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 posted across OC San's social media platforms. For Septic Tank Week, OC San collaborated with the Orange County Watershed Management Team. Together we created and shared content across social media. Our social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 10 posts reaching 3.4k people
- X: 8 posts reaching 379 people
- Instagram: 13 posts reaching 4.2k people
- LinkedIn: 3 posts reaching 1.8k people
- Nextdoor: 2 posts reaching 19.5k people

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

During the month of September, OC San participated in outreach events including the OC Water Summit and the Coastal Cleanup Day.

Staff hosted nine tours, welcoming a variety of groups including San Diego Public Utilities, County of Orange, Inside the Outdoors, Cypress College, Huntington Beach Fishing and Recreation Club, Santa Ana River Water Quality Control Board, among others. Overall, we reached approximately 150 people.

### **OC San Family Picnic**

On Saturday, September 13, OC San hosted its first Family Picnic in more than 20 years! Over 300 employees and their families spent the day at Lakeview Park in Silverado Canyon enjoying games, classic BBQ, and quality time with one another outside of work. This effort shows OC San's commitment to staff appreciation efforts which cultivate a positive and productive work environment.

### **Volunteer Incentive Program Luncheon**

OC San's volunteers were recognized during a luncheon celebrating their commitment to support OC San's Educational Outreach Program. Five awards were given out as acknowledgement: VIP of the Year, Department of the Year, Spirit Award, Star Award, and Retiree of the Year. Through these volunteer efforts, 110 tours were given, and we participated in 11 community events and 31 speaking engagements; it is estimated that OC San reached 5,500 people in fiscal year 2024-2025.

### **Coastal Cleanup Day**

OC San partnered with the Santa Ana River Basin Section of the California Water Environment Association to gather volunteers for the Huntington Beach Marsh Wetlands Coastal Cleanup Day. Through this collaboration, OC San registered over 30 volunteers in support of OC San's mission of protecting the environment.

### **Internal Communication**

Over the course of the month, there were 32 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and five emails were distributed to staff on relevant weekly topics through our Three Things to Know email.

### **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, Seal Beach, Cypress and Newport Beach through our website, email alerts, text alerts, and direct notifications. These efforts reached approximately 1,500 members of the public. OC San also works with the respective cities to share construction updates via city publications. For details on each project, visit [www.ocsan.gov/construction](http://www.ocsan.gov/construction).

### **Member Agency Outreach Toolkit**

In preparation for the holiday season, OC San developed a holiday-specific communications toolkit for distribution to the communication teams across the cities and member agencies within the OC San service area. This resource is designed to support localized outreach by aligning key messaging around What2Flush and Fats, Oils, and Grease with upcoming seasonal celebrations. The toolkit provides ready-to-use social media posts, graphics, and articles that help make these messages timely, relevant, and easily shareable with the public.

### **Awards**

OC San was recently honored with the Savvy Award from 3CMA (City-County Communications & Marketing Association) for our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Branding. This year's program received more than 1,100 entries from 365 agencies nationwide, making this recognition especially meaningful.

**Activities in October:****Social Media**

OC San continues to share messaging across the various social media platforms. Collaborations are also being developed with the Orange County Water District for Good Neighbor Day and joint tours.

**Community Outreach**

OC San is participating in the Costa Mesa Sanitary District Eco Expo and at the Yorba Linda Water District Open House by hosting informational booth. Key messages shared include What 2 Flush, FOG (Fats, Oils, and Grease), and general awareness about OC San's role in protecting public health and the environment.

**Wastewater 101 - Tour and Graduation**

OC San Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy - Fall Cohort wraps up on October 14. The participants who attend all four sessions are invited to a special recognition ceremony at the Board of Directors meeting on October 22 where they will receive certificates of completion and be recognized for their participation.

Participants also have the opportunity to join a behind-the-scenes tour led by Operations Manager, Jon Bradley, to visit Plant Nos. 1 and 2, and the Steve Anderson Lift Station.

**State of OC San**

The State of OC San is taking place on Friday, October 17 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at OC San Headquarters. The event will feature Joaquin Esquivel, Chair of the State Water Resources Control Board as the distinguished guest speaker. It will also host community members, and local, state, and federal dignitaries to provide an update on OC San, our accomplishments, and the future direction of the agency.

**Annual Report**

The OC San's 2024-2025 Annual Report will be distributed during the State of OC San. The report highlights the year's accomplishments including the Pretreatment Honor Roll Program, our financial standing, and outreach efforts.

**OC San Connection Newsletter**

The fall issue of the community newsletter will be published and distributed in October. The issue will include information on upcoming construction projects, an update on various programs, and a schedule of upcoming community events OC San is participating in. Past issues can be found at [www.ocsan.gov/newsletter](http://www.ocsan.gov/newsletter).

**Presentations & Outreach**

In October, OC San has eight scheduled tours, welcoming a variety of groups including Cal State Long Beach, Rancho Santiago High School, California Association of Sanitation Agencies, Orange County Water District, Huntington Beach Fishing and Recreation Club, and our Wastewater 101 participants.

**Construction Outreach**

Outreach efforts continue for various construction projects including: the Bay Bridge Pump Station

and Force Main project in Newport Beach, the Taft Avenue Sewer Improvement Project in the City of Orange, the Cypress Trunk Sewer project in the cities of Cypress, Los Alamitos, and La Palma, Along the 405 and the Airway Airport Loop Projects in the City of Costa Mesa, and the Wall and Soil Improvements Project in the City of Huntington Beach.

**CEQA**

N/A

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 approved 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 for September 2025