

## ORANGE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT

### HONOR WALL NOMINEE FORM

Please complete this form and return it to the OC San Public Affairs Office.

Name of nominee James Herberg

Relationship to OC San Former General Manager

On a separate sheet, please describe:

- The length and nature of the nominee's relationship to OC San;
- How he or she has enhanced the quality of operations and/or leadership; and
- How the nominee has made an exceptional contribution to OC San or people served by OC San.

Please use the attached leadership competencies and resolution adopted by the Board of Directors establishing the program, as reference.

**Nominees should be past Board Members or former employees.**

Name of requestor Robert Thompson

Phone/email address 714 593-7110/rthompson@ocsan.gov

Department head approval\* N/A Date N/A

General manager approval\* Robert Thompson Date 04/14/2025

Steering Committee approval ☐ Yes ☐ No Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Required for employee nominations only.

RESOLUTION NO. OCSD 08-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ORANGE  
COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT ESTABLISHING A POLICY FOR  
NAMING FACILITIES AND THE PLACEMENT OF MONUMENTS AND  
OTHER MEMORIALS

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WHEREAS, the Orange County Sanitation District wishes to recognize individuals that have provided meaningful and important service to the Sanitation District;

WHEREAS, the District recognizes the need for guidance in the naming of facilities and placing of monuments and other memorials;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sanitation District

DOES HEREBY RESOLVE, DETERMINE AND ORDER:

Section 1: The naming of District facilities or the placement of monuments and other memorials will be a rare event designed to honor an individual who has made distinct and significant contributions to the District.

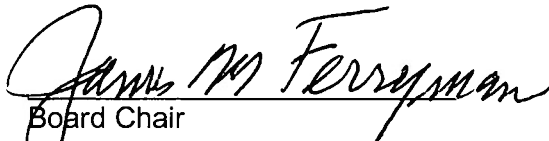
Section 2: To be recognized by the District, the individual must have demonstrated or performed the following:

- Have a long standing affiliation with and made an exceptional contribution to, the Orange County Sanitation District
- Significantly enhanced the quality of operations and/or leadership directly contributing to the well-being of the District and the people served by OCSD


Section 3: By a majority vote of the Steering Committee, an individual may be recognized by the naming of a component, building, support facility, or through the placement of a plaque, marker, or other memorial.

Section 4: Only new or unnamed facilities will be named in honor of an individual.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting held June 25, 2008.

  
Board Chair

ATTEST:

  
Clerk of the Board

## OC San Leadership Competencies

| COMPETENCY  | DESCRIPTION  |
|---|--|
| <b>Communication</b>                              | Ability to communicate ideas, thoughts, and facts both verbally and written. Ability to interpret, comprehend, or understand ideas, thoughts, and facts expressed by others. Conveying information using correct grammar, appropriate body language, proper tone and inflection, recognizing verbal and nonverbal cues, and respecting and listening to the audience to effectively communicate ideas. |
| <b>Integrity/ Honesty</b>                         | Degree to which an individual can be trusted. Operates in an ethical manner. Degree of trustworthiness and ethical behavior of an individual with consideration for the knowledge one has of the impact and consequences when making a decision or taking action.  |
| <b>Interpersonal Skills (Working with Others)</b> | Extent to which an individual gets along and interacts positively with co-workers. Degree and style of understanding and relating to others.   |
| <b>Conflict Management</b>                        | Ability to effectively resolve disputes among others. Manages disagreements. Methods and style of dealing with disagreements. Requires the ability to remain impartial and unbiased.   |
| <b>Team Leadership</b>                            | Ability to effectively manage and guide group efforts. Includes providing appropriate level of feedback concerning group process.  |
| <b>Teaching Others</b>                            | Overall concern for the developmental level of an individual or group. Takes steps to explain and provide guidance.  |
| <b>Decisiveness</b>                               | Degree to which an individual successfully determines, follows, and persists with a timely course of action. Requires the consideration of multiple factors and influences in making decisions.  |
| <b>Planning and Evaluation</b>                    | The concurrent management of projects, time, self, and other resources including prioritizing, planning, goal setting, and coordinating with respect to goals and objectives. Ability to create and follow a set path in order to achieve a goal. Ability to determine the effectiveness of a given plan.  |
| <b>Problem Solving</b>                            | The identification of various types of problems along with the creating of workable solutions. Requires the identification and analysis of problems, evaluation of alternatives, and provision of solutions.   |
| <b>Goal &amp; Task Management</b>                 | The extent to which one plans, prioritizes, sets goals, establishes standards, coordinates tasks, shows concern for deadlines, and tracks progress with respect to personal performance. Includes the ability to perform under pressure and in stressful situations.   |
| <b>Effort &amp; Initiative</b>                    | Level of concern for own effort and initiative. Refers to effort an employee will display during a particular task. The extent that an individual will work and take action without specific direction and without being monitored. Also refers to the degree that an individual is a self-starter, motivated, and is a risk-taker.  |

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Vision</b>                    | Understanding of how an organization must change in light of internal and external trends and influences.  |
| <b>Organizational Awareness</b>  | Understanding of the formal and informal structures within an organization, and the ability to operate effectively within them.  |
| <b>Career Specific Expertise</b> | Extent to which an individual possesses and applies job-related knowledge in the completion of work tasks and activities. Includes knowledge gained through formal and informal education or training. |

## James D Herberg Honor Wall Nomination

Former General Manager James D Herberg left a positive indelible mark on OC San. In his more than thirty years of service he witnessed and help to lead its metamorphosis from the County Sanitation Districts of Orange County to OC San, from an agency that discharged partial primary effluent in the Pacific Ocean to a world leading resource recovery agency.

Jim's service included operations engineering roles, engineering planning leadership, Director of Engineering, Assistant General Manager and General Manager duties. His evolution from hands on, boots on the ground roles through planning leadership and agency leadership define his contribution. Jim was instrumental in laying the foundation for moving to full secondary treatment and partnering with the Orange County Water District to create the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) with his master planning efforts in the early 2000's. His work as the Director of Engineering led the effort to deliver full secondary treatment and total water reclamation. As General Manager, Jim finished the drive for final expansion of GWRS.

Jim was more than just a technical leader; he also improved the people that make up OC San. Jim embodied a high moral and ethical standard of behavior to compliment his technical competence. He held everyone to that same standard and lifted the agency up along the way. Jim invested in people with his time, honest feedback on their performance and with agency capital in training and growth assignments.

OC San's many accomplishments under his leadership are well documented and I won't bore you with an exhaustive list here. Suffice it to say that OC San would not be the low cost, environmentally leading agency that it is without his visionary and steady leadership over thirty years.

**WaterReuse Awards for Excellence**  
**Advocacy Achievement Award Nomination**  
**Nominee: James D. Herberg, OC San General Manager**

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**Leadership**

James (Jim) D. Herberg, PE is the General Manager for the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San). Mr. Herberg has been with OC San since 1995 rising through the ranks of Engineer, Engineering Supervisor, Engineering Manager, Director of Operations and Maintenance, Director of Engineering and Assistant General Manager until reaching the highest position of General Manager for one of the largest wastewater agencies in the United States. Among his achievements is the successful management of OC San's \$2.7 billion capital improvement program including \$554 million in secondary treatment upgrades, which were completed in September 2012 - on time and on budget.

Mr. Herberg is a registered Civil Engineer in the State of California and is a Board-Certified Environmental Engineer by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Oklahoma, and a Master's Degree in Civil Engineering from Long Beach State. He also completed the Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program at Harvard University in 2002.

OC San is a publicly-owned water resource recovery facility that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County, California. OC San has two treatment plants that treat residential, commercial, and industrial wastewater: Plant No. 1 in Fountain Valley and Plant No. 2 in Huntington Beach, as well as 15 offsite pump stations and approximately 400 miles of sewer pipes throughout the service area. Together both plants currently treat about 180 million gallons of wastewater per day (MGD).

OC San is also partners with the Orange County Water District (OCWD) on the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) - the world's largest water purification system for indirect potable reuse. The system takes highly treated wastewater from OC San that would have previously been released into the Pacific Ocean and purifies it using a three-step advanced treatment process consisting of microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultraviolet light with hydrogen peroxide. The process produces high-quality water that meets or exceeds all state and federal drinking water standards.

**How It All Started**

Mr. Herberg's career began with water reuse, and it has led him to where he is today, leading an innovative agency with a state-of-the-art program. One of Mr. Herberg's first assignments was to manage and conduct analysis for hydraulic capacity studies of OC San's two ocean outfalls: the primary 120-inch outfall which is 5-miles offshore and an emergency 76-inch outfall one mile offshore in Huntington Beach, CA. The

*Serving:*

Anaheim  
Brea  
Buena Park  
Cypress  
Fountain Valley  
Fullerton  
Garden Grove  
Huntington Beach  
Irvine  
La Habra  
La Palma  
Los Alamitos  
Newport Beach  
Orange  
Placentia  
Santa Ana  
Seal Beach  
Stanton  
Tustin  
Villa Park  
County of Orange  
Costa Mesa  
Sanitary District  
Midway City  
Sanitary District  
Irvine Ranch  
Water District  
Yorba Linda  
Water District

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purpose behind the study was to determine whether OC San needed a third ocean outfall due to the increased flow it was receiving. This is when the idea of taking the collaboration between OC San and the OCWD from more than just Water Factory 21 (WF-21) which took treated wastewater and recycled it, blended it with imported water and injected it into 23 wells in Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach, CA to combat seawater intrusion.

At this same time, Mr. Herberg transitioned from his role as engineer at OC San and was hired at OCWD as the Project Manager for the GWRS microfiltration demonstration project for full-scale evaluation of microfiltration as pretreatment for reverse osmosis. During his time at OCWD he also managed retrofit projects for reclaimed water irrigation in the service area cities, reclaimed water transmission pipelines for Green Acres Project extension into Newport Beach, CA, a water reuse effort that provides recycled water for landscape irrigation at parks, schools and golf courses and for industrial uses, and a pilot project for ultra-violet disinfection of reclaimed water. When he returned to OC San in the mid 1990's he had a better understanding of what needed to be done on the wastewater treatment side as well as what improvements could be made to further advance water reuse. Because of his experience on the water side, Mr. Herberg was assigned as project leader for the GWRS joint reclamation project with OCWD.

Mr. Herberg also played a key role in developing and advocating for the Urban Runoff Program, which required California legislature to allow OC San to accept a controlled amount of up to 3 million gallons per day of discharge of surface urban runoff into its wastewater system and was authorized in April 2000. This approved policy approach would assist the region in addressing a contamination issue that impacts our beach cities. In 2013, under Mr. Herberg's leadership, OC San's Board modified its policy to expand the program from 3 MGD to 10 MGD per day which in turn keeps our beaches clean in addition to providing additional treated wastewater to OCWD to increase the water available for water recycling. Since the inception of this program in 2000, OC San has treated over 10 billion gallons of urban runoff providing a subset of that water for GWRS.

As Mr. Herberg continued to climb the leadership ladder, his involvement and guidance of GWRS became more prominent and significant. As Engineering Manager, he was responsible for the long range operational and capital improvement planning which included all the construction projects and operational changes that had to be made to make GWRS a reality. In 2004, construction began for the GWRS site and in 2008 the first drop of GWRS water was received. This project produced a 70-million-gallon drought-proof and sustainable water supply for Orange County. A few years later the initial expansion took place resulting in a total of 100 million gallons of water for 850,000 people in the service area. Today we are in the middle of constructing the final expansion of GWRS which will yield 130 MGD, enough water for 1 million people, and utilize all of OC San's reclaimable flow from both the Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach facilities.

To make this final expansion possible, OC San and OCWD embarked on a joint feasibility study to identify and determine how to make more water available for GWRS. This also helped accomplish OC San's strategic goal under the leadership and advocacy of Mr. Herberg of recycling 100 percent of the reclaimable flow.

Mr. Herberg has been instrumental in making all of this happen. His vision, understanding of the issue, the functions of both agencies, and his leadership and guidance have allowed for this several decades long relationship between the two agencies to continue to flourish and be an example throughout the world.

### **Advocacy and Legislation**

In 2016, Mr. Herberg and members of the OC San Board of Directors along with OCWD Board of Directors, lobbied Washington, and Sacramento to get the GWRS water bottled. Assembly Bill (AB) 2022 authored by Assemblymember Rich Gordon and co-sponsored by the two agencies was a move towards providing a reliable source of water for our growing community in an innovative way.

AB 2022 was signed by Governor Jerry Brown and took effect in January 2017 which allowed for the only place in the Western Hemisphere where we were allowed to hand out bottles of purified recycled water to support educational outreach efforts. With the passing of AB 2022, OC San and OCWD took the bottled water on the road attending community events, celebrations and conferences allowing community members for the first time ever to taste test the ultra-purified wastewater. Public understanding of the purity of this water is seen as a key requirement for more widespread acceptance of potable reuse in California.

In January 2018, GWRS celebrated 10 years of service. In celebration of this milestone, Mr. Herberg along with the General Manager for OCWD and Board Members from both agencies hosted the setting of the Guinness World Records™ title for "the most wastewater recycled to drinking water in 24 hours." The final official number for the 24-hour period was registered at 100,008,000 million gallons of ultra-pure recycled water.

That number was announced at a Winter Fest Community Celebration where members of the public and dignitaries could attend and take a tour of GWRS and provide plaques commemorating this special occasion. OC San General Manager, Jim Herberg, OCWD General Manager Mike Markus, and members of both Boards attended the community celebration where nearly 16,000 commemorative bottles were distributed to the public.

### **Grants and Project Funding**

Mr. Herberg has been instrumental in helping OC San receive grant funding throughout his tenure. In May 2015, OC San was successful at obtaining a \$450,000 grant from the Bureau of Reclamation. The grant helped fund a \$2 million effluent reuse study to identify operational and treatment plant improvements necessary for OC San to best support the final expansion of GWRS and move towards achieving OC San's goal of 100 percent water recycling.



WaterReuse Award of Excellence  
Advocacy Achievement Award Nomination  
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In addition, through his leadership, Mr. Herberg helped OC San secure \$1.325 million from the United States Bureau of Reclamation Title XVI under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act. OC San was selected to receive the funding for the expansion of GWRS. The GWRS was one of 38 projects to qualify for funding through a competitive process. The project is to implement necessary OC San facility improvements to provide an adequate supply of highly treated wastewater needed for the operation of the GWRS Final Expansion. The expansion will bring an additional 30 million gallons a day (MGD) of water to the region; bringing the total water production to 130 MGD, enough water for over one million people. Additionally, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency Potable Reuse Compendium recognized GWRS as an example and highlighted the role of source control as a fundamental element of potable reuse. The compendium outlines key science, technical, and policy considerations regarding the practice of water reuse.

### **Awards Won**

Through Mr. Herberg's guidance and ingenuity, GWRS is one of the most celebrated civil engineering and water reuse projects in the world. It was declared "Officially Amazing" by the Guinness World Records when both agencies succeeded in setting the Guinness World Records title for the most wastewater recycled to drinking water in 24 hours on February 16, 2018. GWRS has received more than 50 local, regional, national, and international awards, including the 2008 Stockholm International Industry Water Award, the 2009 American Society of Civil Engineers Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award, and the 2018 Grand Prize for Environmental Communications for the GWRS Bottled Water Campaign by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists. We are honored that Jim has chosen to lead not only our agency, but to serve as guiding source in developing the world renown GWRS.

## Supplemental Items for Advocacy Achievement Award



OC San GM Welcome: <https://youtu.be/PdDCpPEnvis>

Visit [OCSan.gov](https://ocsan.gov) to learn more.

### Youtube Video

[OC San – New Name and Look, Same Great Service - YouTube](#)

### The dedication of the Steve Anderson Lift Station in 2009.

Photo from left to right: former Assistant General Manager, Bob Ghirelli; former Board member Larry Crandall; current General Manager Jim Herberg; former General Manager Jim Ruth and former Board member Doug Davert.



**In 2014 our then Chairman, Tom Beamish spoke on the same stage as Governor Jerry Brown regarding water sustainability, the California drought and the Groundwater Replenishment System. Our General Manager, Jim Herberg was part of the event.**



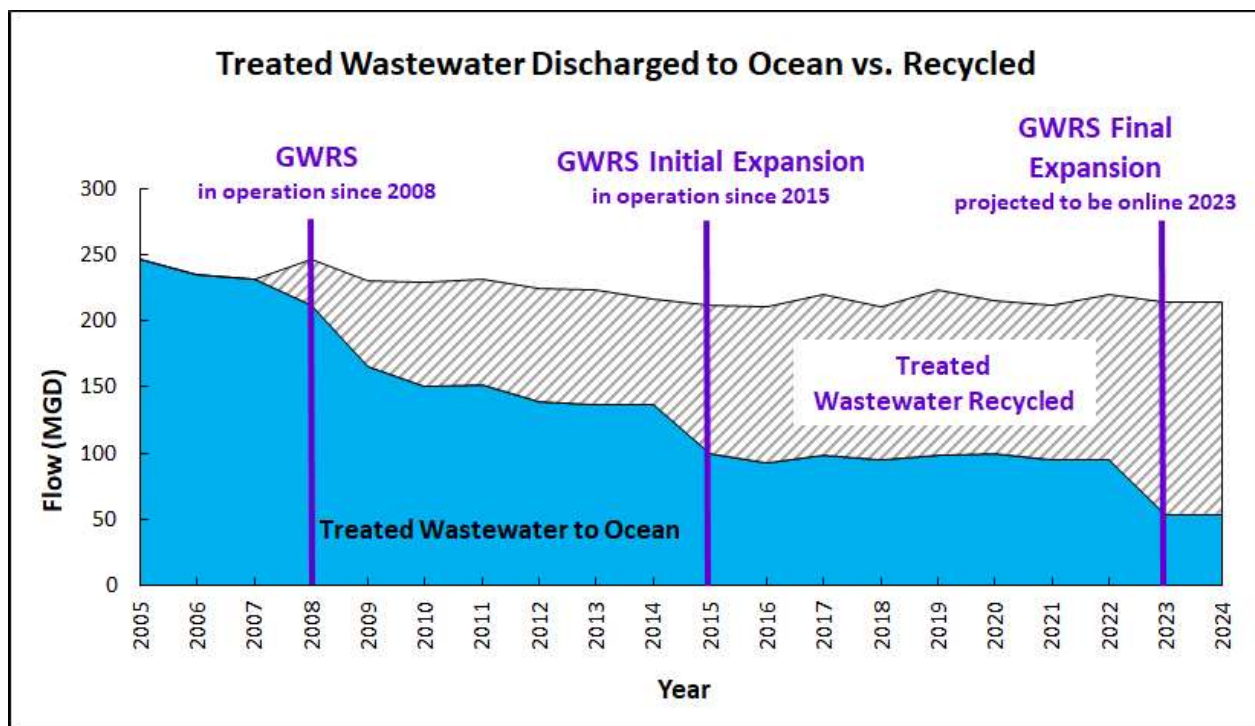
**In 2016 OC San General Manager, Jim Herberg testified on water recycling bill- HR 2993 in Washington DC.**



In 2017, our General Manager Jim Herberg participated in the Santa Ana River Watershed Conference speaking about the Groundwater Replenishment System.



Graph of the Treated Wastewater Discharged to Ocean vs. Recycled





**OC San General Manager Jim Herberg speaking to reporters at the start of the Guinness World Record event in 2018.**



### **GWRS 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event**

Left to Right: OC San General Manager, Jim Herberg, Guinness World Record Representative, OCWD General Manager, Mike Markus



## **NACWA - 2022 Utility Leadership Award – James D. Herberg, OC San**

### **Introduction:**

James D. Herberg, PE, BCEE, is the General Manager for the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San). Mr. Herberg has been with OC San since 1995 rising through the ranks of Engineer, Supervisor, Manager, Director of Operations and Maintenance, Director of Engineering and Assistant General Manager until reaching the highest position of General Manager for one of the largest wastewater agencies in the country. Mr. Herberg has spent over 30 years working in the water/wastewater industry. He's been a tremendous leader helping OC San embark on innovative and world-renowned projects. He is being nominated for his lifetime dedication to the water industry and the environment.

### **Achievements:**

- Managed OC San's \$2.7 billion capital improvement program including \$554 million in secondary treatment upgrades. Completed in 2012, on time and on budget.
- Responsible for long range operational and capital improvement planning which included the construction projects and operational changes to make the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) a reality which began by producing 70-million-gallon drought-proof and sustainable water supply for Orange County.
- Helped obtain a \$450,000 grant from the Bureau of Reclamation for a \$2 million effluent reuse study to identify plant improvements to support GWRS final expansion and help achieve OC San's goal of 100 percent water recycling.
- Secured \$1.325 million from the United States Bureau of Reclamation Title XVI under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act for the expansion of GWRS.

### **Contributions**

- Developed and advocated for the Urban Runoff Program, requiring California legislature to allow OC San to accept up to 3 million gallons per day (MDG) of discharge of surface urban runoff into its wastewater system. In 2013, OC San modified its policy to expand to 10 MGD.

## **NACWA - 2022 Utility Leadership Award – James D. Herberg, OC San**

—Under his leadership, OC San and OCWD embarked on a joint feasibility study to determine how to make more water available for GWRS while addressing OC San’s strategic goal to recycle 100% of OC San’s reclaimable flow.

### **Samples**

—Testified before Congress on the importance of supporting accelerated construction of water recycling projects. Addressed the House Committee on Natural Resources’ Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans. Mr. Herberg called for the passage of Representative Matsui’s Water Recycling Acceleration Act (H.R. 2993), allowing the secretary of the interior to award grants to water/wastewater agencies that demonstrated a feasible recycling project under Title XVI.

—Alongside OC San and OCWD Board Members lobbied Washington and Sacramento to get GWRS water bottled. Assembly Bill 2022 was signed by Governor Brown and took effect in 2017, allowing this to be the only place in the Western Hemisphere to distribute bottles of recycled water to support educational outreach efforts.

### **Conclusion**

As GM his goal has been to make OC San a model agency, prepared to tackle unforeseen situations and be prepared for future demands of the industry. Today, OC San stands stronger than ever, with long range plans to cover every aspect of wastewater treatment and excel. Mr. Herberg’s leadership and guidance have allowed for this to happen organically and strategically just in time for his retirement.