



## Orange County Sanitation District

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### LEGISLATIVE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

#### Agenda Report

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**File #:** 2020-1265

**Agenda Date:** 11/9/2020

**Agenda Item No:** 5.

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**FROM:** James D. Herberg, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2020**

**GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the months of September and October 2020.

**BACKGROUND**

Staff will provide an update on recent public affairs activities.

**RELEVANT STANDARDS**

- Maintain influential legislative advocacy and a public outreach program
- Build brand, trust, and support with policy makers and community leaders
- 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 (Sanitation District) is well-recognized within the water/wastewater industry; however, within our service area there is limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve do 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 Groundwater Replenishment System.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION**

By providing tours, community outreach, education, and general communication via the Sanitation District's website, social media outlets, and direct mailings, we have the ability to educate 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.

## **TIMING CONCERNS**

N/A

## **RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION**

If we do not educate the community, local agencies, and area businesses about the Sanitation District, we may not have the support necessary to deliver our mission.

## **PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

N/A

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Current activities for the months of September and October**

#### **Outreach Report**

Staff has created a new outreach report that includes tours, website postings, social media postings, construction notifications, speaker engagements, and more. This report is included as an attachment to this Agenda Report.

#### **Virtual Tours**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Plant tours have been temporarily suspended. To continue engaging with the community and our stakeholders, staff has developed virtual tours of the Plant which has allowed participants an opportunity to remotely visit the Sanitation District and learn how we protect public health and the environment. Over the last two months, nine virtual tours have taken place reaching 368 people with more coming in the future.

#### **OC Polling**

As a follow-up to the poll conducted in March 2020 to determine the service area's awareness of the Sanitation District, a new poll took place to identify any changes or improvements in the awareness level. The polling was conducted via social media and direct phone calls, and a verbal report will be given at the Committee meeting.

#### **Inside the Outdoors**

Inside the Outdoors has continued to reach out to our community to help spread the Sanitation District's messaging. Over the 2019-2020 school year a total of 2,550 students were reached: 944 elementary students for our *Scientist of the Sewers* program and 1,606 high school students for our *Drip Drop* program. Most of the participating schools are in Anaheim, Buena Park, Garden Grove, Newport-Mesa, Orange, Santa Ana, and Westminster.

#### **Volunteer Incentive Program Virtual Event**

In September we celebrated our employees who volunteer their time and effort to support the Sanitation District's educational mission through the Volunteer Incentive Program (VIP). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to gather in person as we typically do for the annual luncheon, however, we held a virtual celebration to recognize our VIPs. The Board Chair and Vice

Chair participated in the celebration to help recognize our staff. We had over 800 hours of volunteer time dedicated to support 112 tours, eight community events, and 20 speaking engagements. Through these efforts, it is estimated that the Sanitation District reached 3,690 people in fiscal year 2019/20.

### **The Sanitation District Has a New Logo**

In September, the Board of Directors approved a new logo and name for the Sanitation District. We will officially be referred to as OC San and discontinue using OCSD. The new logo and name will be more reflective of the modern agency that we are and allow us to continue to stand out from the crowd. The new logo is easy to recognize and the revised branding and imaging will slowly be rolled out over the next two years.

### **Member Agency Outreach Toolkit**

To continue spreading our messaging, the third outreach toolkit was distributed to our member agencies to use in their communication platforms. This toolkit highlights the Sanitation District's general focus on FOG (Fats, Oils and Grease). A series of videos, graphics, and fact sheet were provided that can be used on social media, websites, and local cable channels.

### **Awards:**

- **Excellence in Management Award**

The Sanitation District was recently given the Excellence in Management Gold Recognition which acknowledges the significant achievements of agencies in the utility management arena. The program honors member agencies that are implementing management practices that address a range of challenges.

- **Utility of the Future**

The Sanitation District has once again been recognized by various national water sector organizations including the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) as a "Utility of the Future Today". The Utility of the Future award highlights the progress and exceptional performance of achievements of water utilities that transform from the traditional wastewater treatment system to a resource recovery center and leader in the overall sustainability and resilience of the communities they serve.

- **Excellence in Procurement Award**

The Sanitation District has received the 2020 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement (AEP) Award from the National Procurement Institute. The AEP Award is earned by public and non-profit agencies that demonstrate a commitment to procurement excellence and recognizes organizations that embrace innovation, professionalism, productivity, leadership, and e-procurement.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

*The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OCSD website ([www.ocsd.com](http://www.ocsd.com)) with the complete agenda package:*

- Outreach and Media Summary Report September-October 2020