

Agenda Report

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FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager

SUBJECT:

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2024

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Legislative Affairs Update for the month of May 2024.

BACKGROUND

The Orange County Sanitation District's (OC San) legislative affairs program includes advocating for OC San's legislative interests; sponsoring legislation (where appropriate); and seeking Local, State, and Federal funding for projects and programs.

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

PROBLEM

Without a strong advocacy program, elected officials may not be aware of OC San's mission, programs, and projects and how they could be impacted by proposed legislation.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Continue to work with Local, State, and Federal officials to advocate for OC San's legislative interests. Help to create and monitor legislation and grants that would benefit OC San, the wastewater industry, and the community. To assist in relationship building efforts, OC San will continue to reach out to elected officials through facility tours, one-on-one meetings, and trips to Washington D.C. and Sacramento.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

If OC San does not work with Local, State, and Federal elected officials, legislation could be passed that negatively affects OC San and the wastewater industry. Additionally, a lack of engagement may result in missed funding opportunities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities in May:

- **Federal Update:**

In early May, OC San sent a letter of support to the Orange County Delegation regarding the Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act (H.R. 7944). This bipartisan legislation provides critical liability protections for public water and wastewater agencies from liability associated with PFAS chemicals being designated as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

The Senate is continuing efforts to develop a PFAS CERCLA liability exemption for passive receivers, including wastewater treatment. The Committee on Environment and Public Works staff are reportedly working on an approach to deliver a statutory exemption from liability under CERCLA.

- **State Update:**

On May 10, Governor Newsom released his 2024-25 State Budget May Revise, ahead of the May 14 deadline. The May Revise reflects an update to the Governor's proposed Budget in January 2024, which reflects changes to tax returns, inflationary pressures, and federal monetary policy that could result in additional spending cuts or the restoration of spending programs.

On May 16, the Assembly and Senate Appropriations Committees considered legislation that originated in the first house that had a fiscal impact to the State.

Activities in June:

- **Federal Update:**

During the month of May and June, OC San staff, lobbyist, and associations continued to work closely with passive receivers to advance commonsense liability protections for the water and wastewater sector. We anticipate the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works will be providing a revised draft proposal to review by the end of June or early July.

- **State Update:**

The Budget Bill must be passed by June 15.

The last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the November 5 General Election ballot is June 27.

ATTACHMENT

The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OC San website (www.ocsan.gov) with the complete agenda package:

- Federal Legislative Update
- Federal Matrix
- State Legislative Update
- State Matrix
- H.R. 7944 Letters of Support - Representatives: Porter, Sanchez, Correa, Steel, and Kim