

## Agenda Report

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**FROM:** Robert Thompson, General Manager

**SUBJECT:**

### **PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2023**

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

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of April 2023.

### **BACKGROUND**

Included in this report are recent activities of interest managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of April 2023.

### **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 (OC San) is well-recognized within the water/wastewater industry; however, within our service area, as we do not have direct communications through a billing method, there may be limited knowledge by our customers of the important work we do to protect public health and the environment. In general, the customers we serve may 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 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 OC San's 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**

If OC San does not inform the community, local agencies, and area businesses about OC San, we may not have the support necessary to deliver our mission.

## **PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS**

July 2022 - Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2022-2024 approved.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Activities for the month of April 2023:**

#### **Outreach Report**

An outreach report that includes tours, website, social media posts, construction notifications, speaker engagements, and more is attached to this Agenda Report.

#### **Social Media**

OC San messaging, announcements, and program updates were posted across OC San's social media platforms.

- Facebook: 17 posts reaching 4.8k people
- Twitter: 10 posts reaching 1.1k people
- Instagram: 32 posts reaching 6.4k people
- LinkedIn: 7 posts and reaching 7.4k people

#### **Media Coverage**

During the month of April, OC San was mentioned in the Orange Coast Magazine, OC Register, and ABC 7 News for the Expansion of the GWRs. There were also articles on the new Supercritical Water Oxidation project in Yahoo Finance, the announcement of the new Director of Finance, and Congressman Correa presenting OC San with \$3 million for the PFAS contamination cleanup. These and other articles can be found in the Outreach Report.

#### **Presentations**

During the month of April, employees participated in eight tours and five speaking engagements including the Costa Mesa Earth Day, Villa Park City Council meeting, California Water Environment Association Conference, Cal State Long Beach Women's Conference, No Dig Show, and others. Details can be found in the Outreach Report.

#### **Construction Outreach**

Outreach efforts continue for OC San construction activities throughout the service area. Projects are ongoing in Fountain Valley, Seal Beach, Westminster, Buena Park, Anaheim, and within both of the treatment plants. Website updates, email text alerts, and direct notifications continue to be distributed as the projects progress. In April, over 4,500 notifications were distributed in Seal Beach, Los Alamitos, Rossmore, Fountain Valley, and Anaheim.

### **OC San Video Contest**

OC San launched its 2023 Video Contest offering high school and college students who live or attend school within OC San's service area an opportunity to create an educational video. This year's theme is "Find Yourself at OC San" and is intended to highlight careers in wastewater. The winning videos will be showcased on our social media platforms and our website. Video submittals are due May 19. Details can be found on OC San's website.

### **Neighborhood Connection Newsletter**

The spring issue of OC San's community newsletter was distributed in April. The issue includes updates on infrastructure projects throughout the service area and both plants, Supercritical Water Oxidation project and an introduction to OC San's Community Liaisons. The newsletter is distributed electronically to approximately 4,500 readers and shared on OC San's social media platforms.

### **GWRS Final Expansion Event**

OC San and the Orange County Water District hosted a dedication event for the final completion of the GWRS on April 14. Over 350 dignitaries attended the event which received news coverage from various outlets.

### **Wastewater 101 Citizens Academy**

The last two workshops of the spring Citizens Academy took place in April, culminating in a tour of the plant and a graduation at the April Board meeting. This session had a record number of graduates with 30 attendees receiving completion certificates.

### **Internal Communication**

Internal communication is a key component of the Public Affairs Office. In April, there were 45 posts on the employee intranet - *The San Box*, four weekly emails distributed on hot topics for the week, and the employee newsletter, *The Pipeline*, was also published.

### **Awards**

OC San won first place for the California Water Environmental Association Community Engagement and Outreach: Project of the Year - Large for OC San's partnership with the Heritage Museum. This partnership allows OC San to deliver messaging on What 2 Flush to 4,500 visitors of the museum thus expanding our reach. Staff accepted the award at the annual conference in April.

### **Upcoming Activities for May:**

#### **Honor Walk Recognition**

The Honor Walk Recognition Program nominations for former employees were approved by the Executive Management Team and are agendaized for the Steering Committee. The Honor Walk celebration will be held on Wednesday, June 28 at 4 p.m. at OC San's Plant No. 1.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2022-2024 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 - April 2023