



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

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Agenda Item No: 7.

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

SUBJECT:

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2026

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Directors to:

Receive and file the Public Affairs Update for the month of May 2026.

BACKGROUND

Included in this report are recent activities of interest, managed by the Public Affairs Office for the month of May 2026.

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 recognized leader in the water/wastewater industry. Despite our industry recognition, awareness among our customers may be limited regarding the pivotal role we play in protecting public health and the environment. The absence of direct communication through a billing method may contribute to this gap in knowledge.

It is our responsibility to ensure that our ratepayers understand 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 by the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS). By enhancing communication channels and fostering understanding, we aim to bridge this 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 key programs 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, as well as public knowledge and understanding of wastewater treatment.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

Failing to inform the community, local agencies, and businesses about OC San may result in insufficient support for our mission and hinder our effectiveness.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

December 2025 - Received and filed the Public Affairs Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026 Mid-Year Update.

July 2025 - Received and filed the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Year-End Update to the Public Affairs Strategic Plan (FY 2024-2026).

December 2024 - Received and filed 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 Years 2024-2026.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activities for this Reporting Period (April 21 - May 20):

Outreach Report

An outreach report summarizing metrics for tours, website updates, social media posts, construction notifications, speaking engagements, and other activities is attached to this Agenda Report.

Social Media

OC San messaging, announcements, and program updates are posted across OC San's social media platforms. Our social media handle is @OCSanDistrict.

- Facebook: 17 posts reaching 9.2k people
- X: 14 posts reaching 436 people
- Instagram: 22 posts reaching 12.8k people
- LinkedIn: 3 posts reaching 1.9k people
- Nextdoor: 3 posts reaching 16.4k people

Presentations & Outreach

OC San had 18 tours during the reporting period. We welcomed a variety of groups including Council Members from the Cities of Irvine, Newport Beach and Los Alamitos, OC Department of

Education, Water Utility CEO, and students from Cal State Fullerton Nursing, Costa Mesa High School, Golden View Elementary, University of California Santa Barbara, University of California Irvine, Servite High School, Santiago Canyon College, University of California Riverside, and many more. Staff also participated in the La Palma Festival of Nations and provided a presentation to Goldenwest College engineering students and the American Council of Engineering Companies. For the first time, we had the opportunity to participate in the *Titan Takeover* with California State University, Fullerton to host a student to shadow staff for an entire day and learn what it takes to work at OC San. The student also received a tour of Plant No. 1.

Internal Communication

Over the reporting period, there were 25 posts on the employee intranet -*The San Box*, and four emails were distributed to staff on relevant weekly topics through our *Three Things to Know* email.

Celebrating Public Works Week

The third week of May is nationally recognized as Public Works Week. To celebrate, OC San recognized employees across its facilities with special messages and activities. A message from the General Manager was also shared on the intranet, social media posts highlighted staff contributions, and employees were invited to participate in an opportunity drawing for OC San swag bags. Public Works Week provides an opportunity to recognize the many departments across the agency and the essential services they provide to the community.

Awards

OC San won the 2026 Excellence in Public Information and Communications (EPIC) Award in the category of Internal Communications for our Take Your Kid To Work Day event held in 2025. The EPIC Awards recognize outstanding public agency communications programs that rise above through innovation, creativity, and meaningful community impact. OC San was honored for creating an engaging and memorable experience that highlighted the important work of public service while connecting employees' families to the agency's mission.

OC San was awarded the Platinum Peak Performance Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), which recognizes member agencies for achieving 100 percent water discharge permit compliance over a consecutive five- year period. OC San has received Platinum status for 13 straight years. The award is for both Plant Nos. 1 and 2.

Construction Outreach Update

Outreach efforts for OC San construction activities are ongoing throughout the service area. Printed notifications were distributed in Cypress and Orange alerting the community about new construction activities. Updates were shared for projects taking place in the cities of La Palma, Los Alamitos, Costa Mesa, Newport Beach, Huntington Beach and Santa Ana through our website, email alerts and text alerts. OC San also works with the respective cities to share construction updates via city publications and social media. For details on each project, visit www.ocsan.gov/construction <<http://www.ocsan.gov/construction>>.

Activities for next Reporting Period:

Social Media

OC San continues to share messaging across the various social media platforms. This messaging aligns with OC San's overall communications and includes timely, relevant content, such as Public Works Week, Construction Safety Week, current job openings, and also shares What 2 Flush messaging and highlights the different roles at OC San.

Presentations & Outreach

OC San has 16 scheduled tours for the next reporting period. We hope to welcome groups from Costa Mesa High School, Yorba Linda Water District, Victor Valley Wastewater Reclamation, Clean Water SoCal, City of Fountain Valley, Industrial Tech Services, a home school group, and more. OC San will be presenting and participating in a round table discussion at the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) Strategic Communication Conference on Wastewater 101, sharing actionable items with other agencies to start their own Academy.

OC San All Hands Meeting

On June 16 and 18, staff will gather for an in-person All Hands meeting. General Manager Rob Thompson will highlight organizational achievements, the budget, various strategic initiatives, upcoming efforts, and more.

Community Newsletter

The summer issue of the OC San Connection newsletter is scheduled to be published in late June featuring various informative articles for the over 3,500 subscribers.

OC San Library Program

OC San is launching a new library program, *Beyond and Below*, with the first session scheduled for late June in Anaheim Hills. The program features two distinct workshops; a storytime, along with a *Clog Buster* activity aimed towards those below 10 years of age, and the second workshop, *Tools of the Trade*, focuses on careers at OC San where staff will discuss career paths and share what tools they use on a daily basis to perform work tasks.

Construction Outreach

OC San will continue to share construction project updates through a variety of communication channels to keep the community informed. Details on all active construction projects are available at www.ocsan.gov/construction <<http://www.ocsan.gov/construction>>.

CEQA

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All items mentioned are included in OC San's FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26 Budget.

ATTACHMENTS

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

- Outreach and Media Report for April 21-May 20, 2026