

CASA CONFERENCE AUG 9-11, 2023 SAN DIEGO
REPORT BY DWIGHT MERRILL

1. POTWs are now WRRF (Waste Resource Recovery Facilities). Also, "waste water" is better than "sewage."
2. CSRMA Board Meeting.
 - a). The captive investment company has been formed. Hopefully this will allow the float to generate more income. On a float of \$33,000,000, they only made \$600,000 last year, and current investments, if liquidated would only generate 1.9% earnings. They went up to a 3.5 year duration just at the wrong time.
 - b). There is a new claims administrator for the Worker's Comp Program. Apparently the old company generated complaints and 3 (10%) of the Districts in the WC Program left, so they got a new claims administrator.
 - c). All three programs (Pooled Liability Program, Property, and Worker's Comp) were profitable last year, but no dividends are being issued due to the need to build capital.
 - d). Property and Liability insurance rates are going up and the value of the insured base is increasing too. Look for a 10% increase in the pooled program and 36% in the property insurance.
3. Regulatory hot topics. The list is scary—almost all may impact us; even if they only affect the WRRF, we are still in trouble. Air quality—our vehicles may not qualify after 1/1/2024, since they are not zero emission. SRF (State Revolving Loan Fund) is being cut back—a long story. New SSS WDR (sanitary sewer system waste discharge requirements) are now in force --Tessa can report on these, hopefully staff is on top of it. Microplastics. PFAS. Aquatic toxicity (whole effluent toxicity) is a big concern, since distilled water is deadly, and lots of false positives are being generated, creating enormous costs even when after there is no toxicity found on retesting. Exfiltration. And, direct potable reuse rules are coming out.
4. Advanced Treatment in the Decade Ahead. The highlight of this segment was a presentation by the head of the water reuse program in San Diego. San Diego still does no secondary treatment(secondary treatment reduces biological oxygen demand); they are using ozone & activated carbon treatment before microfiltration and RO. They have no room for secondary treatment at their treatment plant on Point Loma—behind is the US Navy and beside them is the Cabrillo National Monument. As long as they can discard the RO brine to the ocean, they're good. Within a few years and a couple of billion dollars they will be recycling more than half their effluent, and drinking water quality will rise, since the Colorado River water is worse than the recovered treated water.
5. Fed Leg Committee. A shut down of the Federal Government Oct. 1st is a growing possibility, after the Republicans reneged on their agreement with Biden on the debt limit cap. SRF money is under attack. WOTUS rules will be rewritten after the latest SCOTUS ruling on "clear nexus." Don't expect a great change.
6. The main session segment on biosolids highlighted the continuing problems with biosolids. The state rules continue to make land fill disposal more and more difficult, and farm application is always under fire, even though studies continue to show that land application is beneficial. Now PFAs are being used as a hammer against land application of biosolids. Suddenly the debate begins to sound like the climate change debate.
7. State Leg Committee.

a). AB 759 (Grayson) has passed and been signed by the Governor, so we can change our check signing procedures—president’s signature no longer required. This is good for big agencies like Central San, but I don’t think we should change our procedures.

b). Prospects for a Natural Resources Bond (this will be helpful for many kinds of water issues) are limited. It would have to pass out of the legislature by Sept 14th to make the Mar. ballot; with time this short it may have to wait until the fall when it would have to compete with other bond issues.

c). More ADU mischief is on going. Preventing Special Districts from charging connection fees for ADUs is being promoted as a solution to our housing “crisis.” The law already prevents us from recovering costs for new connections from our existing customers, so we are being sold down the creek.

8. Last but not least, we heard from Jimmy Dang, new manager of Oro Loma. Oro Loma had a flood on Dec. 31st 2022. (That day was a fifty-year event for us and we had some overflows) The Oro Loma plant was completely awash. The plant was receiving up to 140 million gallons/day rate for a nine hour period; normal dry weather flows are around 20 million gals per day. The 140 MGD rate was extrapolated, because the meter was pegged at 100 MGD, its limit. Electrical panels were flooded, causing loss of power to many pumps, and other pumps at lower levels were inundated. Many gallons of untreated sewage flowed into the bay. Crisis management was able to get everything up and running in 11 days. They are hoping for 7 million in FEMA funds. Dang said he hadn’t heard anything yet from the Water Quality Control Board about fines. I wish them luck.