



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF
PUBLICLY OWNED TREATMENT WORKS

MONTHLY UPDATE

A Message from the Executive Director...

February 2004

In 1982, social forecaster John Naisbett provided us with a book that detailed America's shift from industrial production to providing services and information, and what that shift would mean to America. The book, *Megatrends, Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*, was a best seller, and was a surprisingly prescient look at the cultural shockwave that would occur because of the coming of "high technology."

Megatrends was a business school must-read – it offered us a window on the future, and the sense that with this knowledge, we would avoid the problems that had plagued the Industrial Revolution and seamlessly move into this brave new world.

I'm not going to go into any social commentary about whether or not the average American did a good, bad or indifferent job of integrating high technology into his life, *Megatrends* or no *Megatrends*. It was just that it occurred to me that we did have a unique opportunity to anticipate fundamental change, and perhaps because of that, we achieved a sort of cultural solidarity – we were all on the same page, so to speak, about the rapidity of change. People who used to drive a car for 10 years and had the same refrigerator for 20 years, thought nothing of dumping their outdated 2-year-old computer.

We didn't get that opportunity to peek into the future with September 11th. Our culture changed fundamentally that day, and the repercussions are still sorting themselves out. I don't know about you, but my peek into the future alternates between a sense that the other terrorist shoe is going to drop as soon as I let my guard down, and a sense that whatever the Office of Homeland Security is doing, it's doing a pretty effective job and our biggest worries are back to being of a more domestic nature. If there is any national cultural solidarity out there, it seems to be a pervasive wish/hope that there would be a magical recovery of the collective stock market losses that have occurred over the past three years.

In an attempt to build organizational solidarity, last month we released the "SCAP Alert Policy." If you are a devoted reader of this publication, you know that SCAP issues "Alerts" periodically (usually on at least a monthly, if not weekly, basis). These Alerts fill a gap that the esteemed Monthly Update cannot – among other things, they provide detailed information on hot button items that need fast action by our membership. These Alerts are usually emailed and/or faxed to the general managers of our member agencies, who then distribute them to their appropriate personnel.

Unfortunately, an Alert was an Alert was an Alert. There was no real way to differentiate between something that was critical, and something that was sent out as a "heads' up." Borrowing heavily from the Office of Homeland Security, we have now instituted a color-coded system that provides an intuitive sense of the importance of an Alert.

For example, say the Air Quality Committee needs to inform the membership that the Air Resources Board has just released a proposed regulation banning the operation of portable engines within 1,000 feet of a school; something they had proposed as being within 300 feet of a school only days before. The hearing on the regulation will be held in three days. Depending upon your system, this may severely impact your ability to operate and maintain your system. This would qualify as a "Red" (Critical) Alert due to the potential operational impediments

Upcoming Meetings

Air Quality Committee –
Tuesday, February 10, 10:00-Noon,
LACSD.

Water Issues Committee – To
be announced.

Biosolids Committee – To be
announced.

Collection Systems Committee
– To be announced.

posed by this and cost to comply. In this event, members would be asked to submit comments immediately and would be advised as to the specifics on how to do this.

Conversely, if the Air Quality Committee wanted to inform its members that the CARB was considering strict new (but undefined) regulations on portable engines, and would be promulgating them in the coming months, this would be sent out as a "Green" (Information) *Alert*.

Before anyone suggests that by cultural solidarity I mean to say that we march lock-step together on every issue and this new Alert System dictates a uniform response, allow me to disabuse you of that notion. This system is intended to provide a potential ranking of importance to issues for which many of our members may not have the ability to dedicate staff to follow. Now when the email subject line says "Alert," it also lets the recipient know the relative importance of the correspondence and that they may want to look at it ASAP – or not.

There are more new items coming out of the SCAP think tank. We'll soon be asking you to fill out a short survey (no groans now, it's only 10 questions) on specific issues – consider it SCAP's performance review. We're also putting the finishing touches on the Annual Report; something we hope will be shared throughout our member organizations and the public. There are a lot of issues out there and the Annual Report summarizes the most compelling.

By the way, some night when you can't fall asleep, pull out that old dog-eared copy of *Megatrends* and turn to page 167. The discussion concerns the change from representative democracy to participatory democracy, focusing on the failure of nuclear power. While Naisbett concludes that nuclear failed because it was too expensive to build, he noted something interesting. "[In 1978], 61 experts convened by the National Academy of Science were unable to agree about the technical superiority of various energy options, however they seemed to favor nuclear. Writing about the effort, the scientists concluded: "*The public will have to choose* [emphasis added] between energy sources based on individual values and beliefs about social ethics – not on the advice from technical experts." Physicist Edward Teller, speaking before the Atomic Industrial Forum, echoed the sentiment about the nuclear debate. He said, "*It isn't technology, it's politics. It isn't facts, it's perception.*" [Emphasis added].

Gee, somehow I missed that the first time I read it.

Trendily yours,
Ray Miller

Water Issues

Ocean Plan Draws Lots of Testimony

The State Water Resources Control Board held a public scoping meeting on January 23rd to gather input for rewriting the California Ocean Plan. This workshop begins the process to revise the Ocean Plan to include mandated changes required by recent legislation and for the Plan to reflect current conditions in California. Testimony was presented by Jim Colston of Orange County Sanitation District on behalf of Tri-TAC, CASA and SCAP.

Environmental groups were concerned about changes to Areas of Biological Significance/State Water Quality Protected Areas regarding the allowance for continuing storm water discharges into these areas. One concern is the loss of a zero discharge standard under consideration by the SWRCB.

Committee Chair Contact Info

Air Chair: Dan McGivney -
dmcgivney@emwd.org

Biosolids Chair – Diane
Gilbert - dxg@san.lacity.org

Water Chair – Roger Turner
– turnerr@emwd.org

Collection Systems Chair
– Nick Arhontes –
narhontes@ocsd.com

Municipal, building and business interests also spoke vigorously about the stormwater discharge issues. While many spoke in favor of portions of the proposal, there were many concerns about its implementation and the partial ban on some new discharges (in the absence of an existing discharge point). There were calls for addressing this through a comprehensive stormwater program, as supported by the SWRCB. In particular, numerous speakers called for California Water Code sections 13241 and 13242 economic analyses for these types of discharges. In their opinion, the cost to treat these previously nonpoint sources of pollution as point sources needs to be evaluated before moving forward.

Another issue involves the State's proposal to add another indicator organism for water contact bacterial standards to the existing two (total and fecal coliform): specifically enterococcus. While the addition of enterococcus provides consistency with DHS beach sanitation standards and LARWQCB Basin Plan, many agencies are concerned about implementation and the costs of monitoring using a new indicator, as well as the proposed daily resampling for exceedances of standards. We have asked the State to provide a thorough alternatives analysis that evaluates the appropriate level of monitoring necessary to demonstrate whether or not a waterbody consistently achieves standards. This document should address whether or not all three indicators are necessary for monitoring at all times, or can one or more of the indicators be used under some circumstances.

We were also supportive of establishing a fecal coliform standard for shellfish harvesting areas with the caveat that the period of reporting for the standard be clarified, such as 30 day average. We do not support a single sample standard. Also, the SWRCB staff should identify areas impacted by this proposal and it should not use blanket designations of waterbodies, but instead use specific areas and seasons within a waterbody for application of the standard.

We were also generally supportive of a "Reasonable Potential" standard (i.e., determining the likelihood that the concentration of a pollutant would cause or contribute to an exceedance of water quality standards). Wastewater agencies noted that we would make detailed technical comments on this issue.

Orange Alert Issued on 303(d) Draft Listing Policy Public Hearing

The SWRCB will hold a public hearing on their Draft 303(d) Listing Policy (the policy that determines how a water body will be placed on the 303(d) List) on February 5 in Torrance. SCAP member agencies were requested to comment on five issues that were identified in the December 2003 draft policy.

While the proposed policy would standardize listing practices throughout the state, making them less subjective between the different Regional Boards, the State has moved away from several positive proposals that were contained in an earlier version.

Watershed-Based NPDES Permitting Implementation Guidance Now Available

A guidance document describing EPA's recommendations for watershed-based permitting under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program is now available online. This approach is aimed at achieving results through the NPDES program. The watershed approach to permitting provides a process for considering all stressors within a hydrologically defined drainage basin, rather than addressing individual pollutant sources on a discharge-by-discharge basis. The Guidance is available online at: www.epa.gov/npdes/watersheds.

Air Quality

CARB Diesel Engine Air Toxic Control Measures Update

The ATCMs for stationary engines and portable engines are going before the ARB governing Board for adoption on February 26. Also, revisions to the ARB Portable Equipment (read portable engines) are going before the Board on February 26 as well. All of these are to implement new controls and emissions reductions (health risk reductions)

on diesel engines. Our biggest remaining issue is operation of these engines near schools. Late changes are being prepared for presentation at the public hearings to implement some kind of operating restrictions.

SCAQMD Proposed Rule 1470

The SCAQMD has begun its process to develop a local rule to implement the ARB engine ATCMs as well as add additional restrictions. The first workshop is on the morning of Wednesday, February 11. The draft rule and associated staff report is available at: http://www.aqmd.gov/ceqa/documents/2004/aqmd/draftea/1470_appa.pdf.

A preliminary scan indicates that they will be requiring additional emissions reductions on engines located near schools and will be deleting current ARB provisions for interruptible load contracts.

Biosolids

UUStatus of Statewide Biosolids EIR Revision

On December 15, the draft administrative document were completed by the consultant and forwarded to the State Board for review and comment. A schedule for completing the EIR revisions and adoption of the General Order (GO) is shown below.

01/30/04	Revised draft EIR to be completed and circulated for 45-day public comment
03/02/04	Public workshop in Sacramento
03/15/04	Public comment period ends
04/21/04	Release final revised EIR
05/20/04	Adoption of final revised EIR
06/04/04	Court deadline for adopting General Order

The EIR is being revised to address two project alternatives that were not discussed in the original EIR/GO that was adopted in 1999. Comments are being considered on the alternatives: (1) Class A only and (2) food crop limitation. Please review the document and provide comments to Diane Gilbert by March 1 in order to use them in developing a comment letter for SCAP. Please forward comments to DXG@san.lacity.org. You may download the draft EIR from this link: http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/hearings/biosolids_peir.html.

Solano County Sees Reduction In Biosolids Application (courtesy of The Daily Republic)

The Solano County Board of Supervisors released their annual biosolids report indicating that there was a 56 percent reduction in 2003 in the amount of biosolids applied in the county as compared to 2002. The reduction was attributed to the implementation of two-mile buffer zones around permitted sites.

All but one sample met the Class A biosolids federal standards for heavy metals, the report said. The exception was lead in a sample from Union Sanitary District, it said. That lead reading still met the less-strict standards for Class B biosolids. The county is also testing 16 biosolids samples for dioxins, PCBs and flame-retardants, all non-regulated chemicals. It has yet to receive the results from the laboratory, the report said.

However, the San Francisco public utility district tested samples of its biosolids for various non-regulated chemicals. The results showed lower concentrations than those permitted for homes to be built on a cleaned-up hazardous waste dump, the report said.

Arizona Court Denies Summary Judgment Request Against Biosolids Company (courtesy TSN)

La Paz County Superior Court Judge Michael Burke denied the county's motion for summary judgment against the Yakima Compost Company in the county's effort to vacate the contract between the two parties. The county has sought a court ruling that Yakima has not fulfilled the terms of the contract and thus is seeking a termination. Meanwhile, Yakima filed a \$22.5 million notice of claim against the county, after the Board of Supervisors rejected Yakima's \$1 million security bond.

Collection Systems

The Collection Systems Committee is planning its first regional workshop to be held in the Palm Desert area in the spring. Announcements will be sent out when details are finalized.

Non Sequitur

Chimes
Dawn
Golden
Hush
Lullaby
Luminous
Melody
Mist
Murmuring
Tranquil

-Dictionary Maker Wilfred Funk's List of the 10 Most Beautiful English Words