



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF  
PUBLICLY OWNED TREATMENT WORKS

# MONTHLY UPDATE

## A Message from the Executive Director...

May 2004

I love Science. In the world of Science, there are unending possibilities and few consequences to an action. I mean, did Edison consider the potential environmental consequences of that light bulb, or that it would lead to computers and carpal tunnel syndrome?

It is my belief that Science provides the average adult with the last vestiges of wonder about the natural world and belief in magic that we had as children.

This occurred to me as I perused the article, "Power Available from Poop?" Evidently, we have been missing out on an unending supply of renewable power that has been right under our, er...noses.

It seems that according to magazine *New Scientist* [Editorial Note: evidently this is not a magazine for scientists over 30], scientists at Penn State have developed the Microbial Fuel Cell, which uses bacteria to break down human waste, liberating electrons in the process. Hmm, sounds familiar.

### SCAP MEMBERS ONLY

We are creating membership accounts for each SCAP member to be used in the Members Only section of the SCAP website. SCAP representatives listed for your agency will be receiving an email message with their membership information during the month of May. When you receive this message, please take a few minutes to check your account profile and change your password by logging into the Members Only area at the SCAP website ([www.scap1.org](http://www.scap1.org)).

In the coming months, the Members Only area will be expanded to include specific information, a members only reference section, surveys, etc. available only to SCAP members.

### Upcoming Meetings

**Collection Systems Workshop** –  
Wednesday, May 12, 9-noon, Inland  
Empire Utilities Agency.

**Air Quality Committee** – Tuesday,  
May 25, 10:00-Noon, LACSD.

**Public Relations Committee** –  
Thursday, May 27, 10-Noon, Municipal  
Water District of Orange County.

**SCAP Board of Directors** –  
Thursday, June 24, 9:30-Noon, LACSD.

"The device consists of a sealed can, 15 cm long, containing a special arrangement of electrodes. Organic waste is pumped in and broken down by clusters of bacteria. By depriving the bacteria of oxygen, electrons are freed to set up a voltage between the electrodes.

Normally the electrons would power respiratory reactions in the bacterial cells and be combined with oxygen molecules. But the MFC wrestles the electrons away from the bacteria and uses them to power a circuit.

The article notes that the current design produces only a 10th of what the researchers calculate the potential power output of the system could be. Even so, if scaled up, the device would produce 51 kilowatts of power from the waste produced by 100,000 people."

Now, I'm not going to go on about the fact that 51 kilowatts would power my granddaughter's 1800 watt turbo hairdryer for about 29 hours, nor am I going to mention that the digesters, um, Big Microbial Fuel Cells that we operate at our plants also generate a bit of methane gas that we've had success using to generate power.

Let other engineers steal their dreams by mentioning these and other little petty obstacles to building the first Poop to Power Plant. I love Science. And, I love the fact that these guys are trying to come up with an efficient reuse plan for biosolids that will be embraced by the public.

In the meantime, we must go on with the reality of the fact that *our* efficient reuse plans for biosolids haven't exactly been embraced by the public. So the good folks on our Public Relations Committee have decided that perhaps we should talk about this.

The title for the Public Relations Meeting on Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, is actually, “Public Relations Medley: An Assortment of Information”, and the lineup for the meeting is excellent. Tish Berge from Encina is going to outline their highly successful Environmental Awards Program, where they recognize commercial and industrial businesses that have had perfect compliance with their pretreatment permits.

Our own Mary Jane Foley is going to present the details on how to set up a “Meet your Legislators” meeting with inside information on arranging it so that lawmakers and/or their staffs attend, and how to communicate your issues to them quickly and effectively.

For you biosolids fans out there, the presentations by Dan Noble of the Compost Producers Association and Sonja Wassgren of Orange County Sanitation District are geared to our industry and support the concept that we need to get a unified, positive message about biosolids out to the public. Sonja will focus on the exceptional efforts that OCSD has made to reach out to the public on this subject in a consistent and educational manner.

Dan is going to provide a historical perspective of how wastewater agencies have managed biosolids programs, the public’s reaction to those programs, and the impact those programs have had on the public’s acceptance of biosolids products. He wants to talk about branding – why isn’t the term “biosolids” being accepted? And, why we need to talk less about the material itself and what it does for the soil, etc.

Don’t miss this workshop – try to send someone from your agency even if you don’t perceive that you have any problems disposing of your biosolids or don’t plan on entertaining legislators anytime soon. There is a lot of good, practical information dispensed at these workshops and a lot of excellent questions are asked (and many are answered!).

Also, checkout Mary Jane Foley’s report on the SWRCB’s Water Quality Coordinating Committee Meeting (under the Water Section below) held just recently. Mary Jane attended this meeting between State and Regional Board Members and came back with some interesting information.

We’ve got a lot going on with collection systems, with our next regional meeting scheduled for May 12 at Inland Empire Utilities Agency. **This meeting should be a must to attend by collection systems operators.** Also, you may have heard about the City of Oakland’s receipt of an order from EPA giving the City six months to show how they are going to stop SSOs. Check out the Collection Systems section below and read about – as Paul Harvey says, “the rest of the story” - and a product that they’ve found very useful in dealing with tree roots. It’s a product that was developed to be environmentally friendly to anything except tree roots. I love Science.

Chemically yours,  
Ray Miller

## Public Relations Committee

### Annual PR Seminar Set for May 27<sup>th</sup>

The Public Information Committee has set May 27<sup>th</sup> for its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Public Information Seminar entitled “Public Relations Medley: An Assortment of Information” and includes:

Mary Jane Foley, SCAP: “How to Host a ‘Meet Your Legislators’ Meeting.” In an effort to boost awareness of wastewater issues among legislators, Mary Jane Foley will outline the steps necessary to arrange a meeting between federal, state and local legislators and SCAP member agencies to establish relationships and provide information about issues facing POTWs.

Tish Berge, Encina Wastewater Authority: "Environmental Awards Program – Recognizing Good Stewardship." A presentation on Encina's Environmental Awards Program that recognizes commercial and industrial businesses that have perfect compliance with their pretreatment permits.

Dan Noble, Association of Compost Producers: "Managing the Public's Perception of the Biosolids Brand." A historical perspective of biosolids programs, the public's reaction, and the impact those programs have had on the public's acceptance of biosolids products will be discussed. The positive message to convey is that biosolids are a component of healthy soil.

Sonja Wassgren or Carol Beekman, OCSD: "Proactive: Conducting a Biosolids Outreach Program." A look at the extensive outreach efforts OCSD is taking to bring the biosolids message to the public.

## Collection Systems

### Collection Systems Steering Committee Meets to Finalize Mission and Strategic Plan

On April 21, 2004, a Collection Systems Steering Committee meeting was held at OCSD to further define and finalize the Collection Systems Committee mission and strategic plan. Seven members and the SCAP Executive Director attended. The meeting included a review of events since the last meeting, including an overview of past meetings with the various regional boards' staff, the Regional Board 7 Area Workshop held at the City of Coachella on March 30th, and updates on the progress of the statewide electronic SSO reporting and status of the state SSO Guidance Committee and sub-committees. Additional topics discussed were the committee's interaction with other industry associations, i.e., Tri-TAC, CWEA, CASA, BACWA, CVCWA, League of Cities, and plans for additional upcoming regional workshops. Providing future guidance to private groups such as Home Owner Associations (HOAs) and mobile home park complexes was also briefly discussed. Product development for member cities and agencies will focus on value added products. The first product to be developed will focus on medium and large diameter sewers and their care and cleaning frequencies.

### Region 8 Workshop

The next regional workshop (Regional Board 8 area) will be held on May 12, 2004 at the Inland Empire Utilities Agency in Chino. Members of the SCAP Collection Systems Committee and regional board staff present these regional workshops. They include frank discussions on challenges facing Board staff and discussions on what is currently being required and what will be required in the future for collection systems owners and operators. Practical information using case studies is relayed on **how to meet the current and future regulatory requirements**, as well what may happen if the requirements are not met. This is timely information that every collection system owner and operator needs to know. To be part of this information exchange, please RSVP to Kris at the SCAP office by May 6, 2004.

### City of Oakland Tackles SSOs with Sewer Foam

The City of Oakland was recently issued an order by the EPA to provide a plan for reducing sewer overflows; the plan must be submitted within six months. SCAP extends our appreciation to David Ferguson, Manager of Sewer Maintenance, who has quickly provided us with some background on their situation and the steps that they have been taking – for some time – to correct their problems. We'd also like to thank Public Works Director Raul Godinez II for responding so rapidly to our request for information and providing us with access to David.

The City is geographically diverse, with a flat, lowland area by the San Francisco Bay graduating to the steep Oakland Hills. In 1996, the City became concerned that chemicals used to prevent tree root clogs were an unacceptable environmental risk and stopped using them, relying on hand rodding. This is a difficult and arduous task in the hills of Oakland, requiring crews to climb steep slopes to get to access points and also leaves them unable to use powerful equipment.

In 2002, recognizing that the root problem was increasing and that the life expectancy of their pipes was decreasing from 50-60 years to 20 years, the City began testing a variety of sewer foams and has identified one whose active ingredient, Diquat, is registered with EPA and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation; is exempt from Toxic Control Act regulation and complies with East Bay Municipal Utilities District requirements (EBMUD treats and disposes of the City's wastewater). The City is very pleased with the performance of this product over the last two years and is in the processing of renewing the contract with the firm that provides and applies it.

We will be posting information about sewer foam on the SCAP website as it becomes available.

## Water Issues

### Report on State Water Resources Control Board WQCC Meeting

Regulatory Consultant Mary Jane Foley filed this report on the WQCC Meeting of April 19, 2004:

*Background:* The State and Regional Water Boards meet together a few times a year to discuss issues that are of interest to all regions. These meetings are called Water Quality Control Coordinating meetings (WQCC). These meetings are publicly noticed and from time to time members of the public attend. I attended the recent meeting and this brief update provides some of the topics of discussion.

*New Direction of the Schwarzenegger Administration:* Terry Tamminen, Secretary, Cal/EPA and Jim Branham, Under-Secretary, Cal/EPA discussed the Governor's Action Plan and the California Performance Review. There were a lot of questions on the proposals for changes with the water board system but no answers. Issues that are being circulated around Sacramento range from abolition of the boards, to turning the boards into departments of the SWRCB. There is also discussion on the number of boards, number of members and restrictions on board member authority. The agency is waiting for the CPR to be complete to see what the outcome will be.

*Updates:* Celeste Cantu gave updates on the budget status, fees, prioritization of resources and anticipated improvements in grant processing. They are all waiting for the May revision. They are having difficulty with the water rights fees. On the topic of grants, Celeste wants the process reduced to 8-9 months from beginning to end.

*Legislative Update:* There are a number of bills that involved the water boards; most are two-year bills. There are bills on wetlands, ocean, water rights fees, etc. There was a reference to the large number of ocean bills and the national ocean policy on which the State is seeking comments. The SWRCB has no approved positions on any of the pending bills from the administration.

*Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs) and Mandatory Minimum Penalties:* The Los Angeles Regional Board and Gary Carlton gave presentations on this issue. LA showed how they have funded environmental projects with fines. Gary Carlton graphically displayed the downward trend in sending fine money to the Cleanup and Abatement Account. He explained the need for some money to go to the account for statewide emergencies. Some regions have an approved project list, some are case-by-case.

*The 303 (d) Listing Policy and TMDLs:* An overview of the major issues, ranging from structure of the 303 (d) list, reevaluation of existing listings, the relationship between water quality standards and the statistical approach was given. The statement was made that since the next 303 (d) lists are due to EPA now, the SWRCB will readopt the 2002 list in July.

*Perchlorate:* Nancy Sutley gave an overview on the recent public health goal of 6 parts per billion and the issues going on with the DOD and U.S. EPA and the NAS Review to assess the health implications of perchlorate

ingestion. The Santa Ana Water Board gave an overview of the situation in some of their communities and the perchlorate contamination. Handouts are available on perchlorate for anyone interested.

## **SWRCB Proposes to Increase Some Permit Fees**

On May 4, the SWRCB will consider changes to their permit fee schedule; however, they are not proposing to increase POTW NPDES permit fees. SCAP submitted a comment letter commending the Board for sustaining their pledge during last year's increase to seek no further increase in 2004 from POTWs.

In concert with Tri-TAC and CASA, SCAP also asked the Board to work with interested parties to identify a more equitable approach to paying the ambient water-monitoring surcharge, recognizing that many POTWs are already devoting significant resources to regional ambient monitoring programs. We also repeated our request made last year, that the SWRCB oversee an initiative to review and revise discharge Monitoring and Reporting Programs to determine how these monitoring programs can be designed more cost-effectively.

## **Ocean Policy Commission Releases Preliminary Report**

On April 20, the U.S. Commission for Ocean Policy released their Preliminary Report calling for a new national ocean policy that balances use with sustainability, is based on sound science and educational excellence, and moves toward an ecosystem-based management approach.

The Commission which began its work in September 2001, heard testimony from 440 experts, including many of the nation's top ocean scientists and researchers, environmental organizations, industry, citizens and government officials, as well as receiving written testimony from countless others. This report is the first comprehensive effort to address ocean policy issues since 1969's Stratton Report, which led to the establishment of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and significant changes in federal law.

The Preliminary Report can be viewed at: <http://oceancommission.gov>.

## **"California Ocean Summit" Scheduled for May 6 in Sacramento**

Cal/EPA and the California Resources Agency have announced that they will hold the "California Ocean Summit" on May 6. The meeting is intended to allow ocean experts and representatives from industry and the public a chance to comment on the U.S. Commission for Ocean Policy's Preliminary Report.

Among those scheduled to provide input is Steve Weisburg of the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (an ocean research agency funded by several ocean discharging SCAP members). Wastewater associations, including SCAP, will be monitoring the meeting and providing comments on the report.

For further information on this issue, please contact Brian Baird, Ocean Program Manager, by e-mail at [Brian@resources.ca.gov](mailto:Brian@resources.ca.gov) or by phone at 916-657-0198.

## **California Ocean Plan Triennial Review Public Hearing Scheduled**

During the Scoping Meeting that the SWRCB held on February 3, the Board asked staff to reopen the Triennial Review to all the issues that had been identified in the 1999-2002 Triennial Review Workplan, instead of limiting it to the four issues staff identified as a priority.

The Board has scheduled a public hearing to hear comments on this issue for May 24, at 10:00 a.m. Written comments are due by May 12<sup>th</sup>. For more information, go to: [http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/plnspols/oplans/docs/052404op\\_tirev\\_not.pdf](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/plnspols/oplans/docs/052404op_tirev_not.pdf).

### USEPA Proposes New, Updated Analytical Methods

The EPA is seeking comment by June 7 on a proposed rule to approve dozens of new and updated analytical methods for both drinking water and wastewater. Touted by USEPA as promoting consistency between water and wastewater compliance monitoring programs and providing analysts increased flexibility in selecting methods, the rule also proposes to approve alternate test procedures for detecting cyanide in water and wastewater samples and assessing acute toxicity of wastewater samples.

The two methods for detecting total cyanide include a microdistillation method from Lachat Instruments and an automated procedure developed by Kelada Automated Test Methods. The Microtox acute toxicity test, a Whole Effluent Toxicity alternate method developed by Strategic Diagnostics, assesses toxicity by measuring the bioluminescent reaction of a dosed bacteria. USEPA is proposing to approve the method to screen wastewater discharges to freshwater for acute toxicity.

Also, with regard to the approved tests published in *Standard Methods*, the rule notes that online distribution of such methods has forced USEPA to adopt a new numbering system to track approved test versions rather than simply referencing the publication.

## Air Quality

### New SCAQMD Rule Prompts “RED ALERT”

SCAP issued a “Red Alert” due to the passage of South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 1470, which limits the operation of stationary diesel engines near public or private elementary schools. Every SCAP agency that operates stationary diesel engines within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAQMD) should immediately inventory the location of their engines to determine if they are within 500 feet of a K-12 school – again, public or private.

**Any stationary diesel engine located within 500 feet of a school cannot be operated for non-emergency purposes during the school hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on school days. This becomes effective June 2, 2004.**

Additionally, SCAQMD Rule 431.2 requires that effective **June 1, 2004, only low sulfur (less than 15 ppm by weight) diesel fuel may be purchased for use in stationary and portable equipment** (including, but not limited to stationary and portable compression ignition engines). Note: If your agency’s portable engines are registered with the State’s Portable Equipment Registration Program (PERP), this requirement doesn’t apply.

Rule 1470 has other limitations and requirements that are not as time sensitive, but may have significant ramifications for your agency. It is important that all potentially affected agencies read the rule and evaluate the implications.

Should you have any questions regarding this rule, please contact Air Quality Committee Chair Dan McGivney at (909) 928-3777 ext. 6329 or Frank Caponi at (562) 699-7411 ext. 2460. The Rule can be viewed at: <http://www.aqmd.gov/rules/recentrules.html>.

### Supreme Court Overturns SCAQMD Diesel Fleet Rule (courtesy Inside ATA, US Supreme Court)

In an 8-1 decision April 28, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a 9th Circuit ruling that found the SCAQMD could legally ban the purchase of certain new vehicles in fleets (<http://www.truckline.com/insideata/litcenter/>).

In 1999, the SCAQMD adopted six rules requiring owners of fleets (defined as 15 vehicles or more) to gradually retrofit vehicles with clean-fuel technologies or replace them with low-emission vehicles. The fleet rules, in effect, prohibit covered fleet operators from purchasing anything other than natural gas-fueled vehicles when purchasing new vehicles. Under the rules, a broad array of vehicles certified by the California Air Resources Board, including all diesel-fueled vehicles, are barred from purchase.

The SCAQMD may, however, request that the State seek EPA approval of appropriate rules governing vehicle fleet operations through Section 209(b). In addition, the State of California may be entitled to place restrictions on the types of new public vehicles that the State and its local governments purchase for their own use.

## **Biosolids**

### **Arizona Department of Environmental Quality**

On March 31, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) was granted regulatory authority over biosolids management by the United States Environmental Protection Agency,

The approval from EPA gives ADEQ the authority to regulate and administer the production and disposal of biosolids. The ADEQ Biosolids Management Program will administer requirements for wastewater treatment plants, composters, land applicators, and operators of biosolids disposal sites. ADEQ will also be responsible for issuing permits, enforcing standards and providing guidance to those involved in the production or disposal of sewage sludge. The state requires any parcel of land where biosolids will be applied to register with the department before application takes place.

EPA will retain biosolids management regulatory authority on tribal lands within the state.

### **City of Los Angeles Receives Environmental Engineering Award** *(courtesy of WaterWorld)*

The American Academy of Environmental Engineers (AAEE) commended the City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, Bureaus of Engineering Sanitation, and Contract Administration in Playa Del Rey, California for being named the "First Major Biosolids Facility in the USA to Achieve Pathogen-Free Standards."

The prestigious award was presented to the agency during the AAEE's annual Excellence in Environmental Engineering Awards celebrated on Earth Day, April 22, 2004.

The purpose of the Academy's Excellence in Environmental Engineering competition is to recognize and promote quality environmental engineering. Each entry is evaluated by an independent panel of judges based on criteria that define what it takes to achieve excellence: a holistic environmental perspective; innovation; performance and client satisfaction; and contribution to an improved quality of life and economic efficiency.

### **Joint SCAP/Tri-TAC meeting**

On May 13, there will be a joint SCAP/Tri-TAC meeting in Ontario at the Ayres Suites, 1945 East Holt Blvd., Ontario, CA. The SCAP Biosolids Committee will be meeting in conjunction with Tri-TAC. Contact Diane Gilbert for additional information.

### **California Integrated Waste Management Board**

On April 13, IWMB staff provided a presentation to their Board Members on biosolids practices in California. Information was provided on the tons of biosolids produced annually and a break down was given on the management options currently being used in California. The Board asked questions concerning reuse options, the NRC report findings, and the projects that are currently underway by the U. S. EPA to address the health issue

concerns. Board members requested that staff work closely with the State Water Resources Control Board on biosolids issues.

## **Ideas Wanted**

The Biosolids Committee is planning to have a workshop in September or October 2004. If you have any workshop ideas or topics of interest, please forward them to Karen Vargas, Biosolids Committee Co-Chair at [kvargas@lacs.org](mailto:kvargas@lacs.org) or call 562-699-7411, extension 2829.

## **Non Sequitur**

Irrigation of the land with seawater desalinated by fusion power is ancient. It's called rain.

- Michael McClary