



Message from Chairman Henry Abarbanel

As a longtime area resident, I have seen our region go through many changes and in some respects, I am familiar with a little-known chapter of history that involves the San Diego Metropolitan Wastewater Department, before the Metro Wastewater JPA was formed. Back in the old days, perhaps even good, as people like to say.

During the 1970s and the early 1980s a group of city engineers from various cities informally met on a regular basis to share information about issues relating to their early 1960s contract with the City of San Diego's Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant. It became apparent that the cities sharing the metropolitan wastewater sewage system would have to form a coalition in order to address their regional concerns.

The California Legislature formed the San Diego Area Wastewater Management (SAN) District. A group of 13 cities and agencies comprised this SAN District but consensus was lacking and many resigned. I attended those meetings as a representative from the City of Del Mar. This was my first regional assignment from the City of Del Mar, and, as usual, I was sent off with little preparation about the subject matter or the politics. Let's say it was quite eye opening! The SAN District floundered on issues of a "weighted vote" among the agencies (I was, of course, happy tiny Del Mar had one vote) and dissolved rapidly.

After the SAN District became dormant the agencies formed the Agencies for Fair and Objective Rate Determination (AFFORD). AFFORD took a leadership position to help craft an agreement between the participating agencies and the City of San Diego to replace the original 1960s sewage treatment agreement. The goal was to share sewer system costs and offer equitable rates for all customers in the region.

AFFORD was the predecessor to today's MetroTAC. Since the formation of the Metro Commission and the JPA in the late 1990s the participating agencies and the City of San Diego have experienced years of unprecedented cooperation.

Recently, discussions with the City of San Diego have reached a new level of participation, one I am very optimistic about; namely, the prospect of conducting a joint study of regional wastewater governance. We have met several times with staff members of the City of San Diego, and conducted discussions between participating agencies which may be interested in cost efficiencies that could be available through such a mechanism. We are in the process of preparing a scope of work for this study. This November we will officially present this proposal to City of San Diego staff for review and consideration. The study will offer us answers about the idea of forming a regional wastewater authority and address whether it will serve the region well and be a better governance structure. Even though the only the JPA participating agencies are committed to the study, we realize that every sewer customer of the City of San

Diego system should be the benefactor of reasonable sewer rates and a regional wastewater governance structure may be the best solution for the future.

Contaminants Threatening Water Quality Outlined

Pharmaceuticals and personal care products are fast-emerging types of pollutants threatening the quality of our water supply, Dr. Harold Bailey, director of operations and water quality, Padre Dam Municipal Water District, told Commissioners at the September Metro JPA meeting. He said that personal care products, such as perfume, deodorant, sunscreen and insect repellants have been identified as potential pollutants. Only half of the top 100 drugs commonly prescribed have been studied for environmental effects. And many antibiotics, he added, pass through humans into the waste stream and are increasingly resistant to treatment in biological treatment facilities.

Membrane and advanced oxidation processes are showing promise for removing some of the most harmful compounds. Bailey said that more regulation can be expected in the future and that the higher levels of treatment needed to satisfy those regulations will necessitate greater financial investment in water treatment facilities.

Next Commission Meeting Scheduled for November 3

Next meeting of the Metro JPA and Commission will be held at 12 noon, Thursday, November 3 in the Metropolitan Ops. Center (MOC II) auditorium at 9192 Topaz Way, Kearny Mesa. Lunch will be provided for Commissioners and staff.

Metro TAC will meet on October 19

The next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (Metro TAC) will be Wednesday, October 19 at 11 a.m. at MOC II.

Metro Commissioners

Councilmember Henry Abarbanel, Del Mar - Chair
 Councilmember Mayda Winter, Imperial Beach - Vice Chair
 Mayor Steven Padilla, Chula Vista *
 Councilmember Frank Tierney, Coronado
 Mayor Mark Lewis, El Cajon
 Councilmember Ernest Ewin, La Mesa
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 Councilmember Luis Natividad, National City
 Councilmember Merrilee Boyack, Poway
 Scott Tulloch, Director, MWWD, City of San Diego
 Supervisor Dianne Jacob, County of San Diego
 Mark Robak, Otay Water District
 Augie Scalzitti, Padre Dam Municipal Water District
 * Member of Metro Commission but not Metro JPA

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