

2022 in Review

A Message for Our Members



As 2022 draws to a close, it is a good time to reflect on our accomplishments and celebrate the successes of the past year. We are pleased to share a brief summary of our key activities, and hope you agree that CASA continues to provide excellent value to our members in a wide variety of ways.

In High Demand and on the Road

CASA's subject matter experts were in high demand this year and returned to presenting at in-person events, including the Annual W4170 Meeting, Northwest Biosolids, WEF Residuals and Biosolids Conference, NACWA Law Conference, WEFTEC, WWEMA Annual Conference, Sewer Summit 2022, and several other events. Our staff also prominently featured on several webinars throughout the year, addressing topics such as the Clean Water Act, wastewater-based epidemiology, biosolids, PFAS, and more. In addition, CASA staff authored several articles for Clean Water Magazine, contributed to a special feature in Water Conditioning & Purification International, prepared op-eds on a variety of topics, and were quoted in numerous local and national news stories on wipes and other issues.



CASA engages in all these forums to advance the priorities of the clean water community, and our members have access to these dedicated experts all year long.

CASA's Pursuit of Major State Legislative Initiatives



After another busy year in the California Legislature, our co-sponsored bill dealing with PFAS disclosure made it through the legislative process but unfortunately was vetoed by the Governor due to cost concerns. However other important PFAS source control bills that CASA supported were signed by the Governor. We successfully negotiated language in the indoor water use conservation legislation that requires the Administration to examine impacts on wastewater systems from increasingly low flows, and we weighed in on numerous bills that would impact renewable energy projects, rate setting, local government transparency, and other priorities of wastewater agencies. Finally, CASA was highly successful in procuring funds for wastewater agencies through the State Budget process, including funds for state match of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan program which should help increase capacity in future years.

Representing the clean water community in Sacramento continues to be one of our most essential roles, and we have never been stronger in this arena.

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Expansion of ACE Programs and a Heavy Lift on Collections Systems

The exceptional breadth and depth of our regulatory advocacy was on display this year. CASA played a lead role in negotiations with the State Water Board and our partners on one of the most important regulatory documents for collection systems in the last decade: the sanitary sewer system waste discharge requirements (SSS WDR) update. This effort has been in development for many years, and thanks to the hard work and tireless efforts of the CASA team and our Collections System Workgroup, it was adopted with most of our suggested modifications.

CASA celebrated the successful expansion of our air, climate change and energy (ACE) programs this year, extending our subject matter expertise and advocacy on issues that include clean fleet rules, toxic air contaminants, and several other proposals before the California Air Resources Board and local AQMDs. These initiatives have the potential to impact all CASA member agencies, and the active participation of the wastewater community was critical in securing needed changes. Our biosolids program continues to be one of the most respected in the nation, with CASA Director of Renewable Resource Programs Greg Kester serving as a USEPA Science Advisory Board Expert panel member and lending his expertise to several other prestigious review committees for projects involving biosolids.



We remain committed to advocating on complex water quality issues, including microplastics, ocean acidification, nutrient issues, toxicity testing, and of course PFAS. We also continued efforts to streamline the Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan process, which is an important priority that ensures vital infrastructure money is distributed to important projects, and we successfully advocated for record funding to be awarded to recycled water and other clean water projects. The CASA team constantly testifies on behalf of the clean water community before the State Water Board, Air Resources Board, Ocean Protection Council, and other regulatory agencies with a significant impact on our membership.

State and federal regulatory proposals have the potential to significantly impact CASA members for years to come, and CASA's active participation in these proceedings has been essential to protecting the interests of the wastewater community.

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California's Clean Water Voice in Washington D.C.

As part of a broad coalition of water and wastewater agencies at the national level, CASA pursued funding through the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Our efforts were highly successful, and California saw the largest increase in allocations to the State Revolving Fund Loan program in recent memory and opportunities for significant funding of renewable energy projects at POTWs. We are also pursuing modifications to the Build America, Buy America that will ensure minimal disruption to major infrastructure projects that rely on federal funding.



In Congress and at USEPA, we continued our efforts to address one of the biggest issues of the last few years: PFAS. CASA worked diligently in pursuit of federal exemptions for wastewater agencies under CERCLA and worked with several water and wastewater agencies, as well as a coalition of PFAS receivers, to ensure producers and manufacturers of these “forever chemicals” are held responsible for cleanup costs. Additionally, CASA was instrumental in helping introduce legislation on both flushable and non-flushable wipes and microplastics during this Congressional Session. Our Washington D.C. Policy Forum was also a resounding success, and we look forward to hosting again in 2023!

The voice of California wastewater agencies continues to be heard in Washington D.C.

Professional Programs Connecting Peers

In lieu of our Winter Conference this year, CASA hosted an incredibly successful “Ask the Experts” webinar series covering several different topic areas with more than 500 attendees. We also featured our popular webinars on wastewater-based epidemiology, and we co-sponsored the Partnering for Impact Event in June. More recently, we marked an auspicious return to in-person conferences with our August Annual Conference in Lake Tahoe. Our Committees and Workgroups meet regularly, bringing together our members who engage in our Collections Workgroup, Regulatory Workgroup, ACE Workgroup, as well as our State and Federal Legislative Committees, Communications Committee, Attorneys Committee and numerous issue-specific stakeholder groups.



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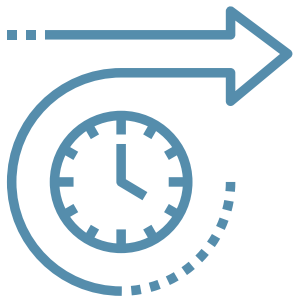


Professional Programs Connecting Peers (Cont.)

The CASA Attorneys Committee took a comprehensive approach on legal front, hosting four meetings in 2022 and developing amicus briefs and other supporting letters and tracking developments in the state courts as well as the Supreme Court for our members. Touching on all of CASA's core programs is the very active Communications Committee, which developed critical fact sheets and informational materials that convey our message in concise terms for use with regulators and members of the public.



Focus on the Future



Founded in 2014, the CASA Education Foundation granted four college scholarships this year to deserving students who plan to pursue careers in the water and environmental field. The inaugural Bruce Wolfe Memorial Scholarship is sponsored by BACWA and EBDA and helps a San Francisco Bay Area High School student with their tuition. We successfully completed the first year of our CASA LEAD (Leadership, Education, Advancement, and Development) mentorship program and kicked off our second year of the program with a full cohort in September. CASA joined Baywork as an associate member and we featured Baywork at our Annual Conference where they participated on a panel focused on workforce retention and recruitment. CASA continues to be part of a coalition seeking funding from the High Road Training Partnership to specifically address water and wastewater workforce needs for the future.

We understand retirements and workforce challenges are top of mind for many CASA agencies, and we look forward to helping address those concerns in the coming years.

Get Involved!

Are you particularly interested in any of the programs, issues, or events highlighted above? We anticipate accomplishing even more in 2023 and encourage all CASA members to get involved by joining one of our workgroups, committees, and LISTSERVs, as well as attending our conferences, webinars, and workshops.



Our advocacy would not be possible without the dedicated contributions of our member agencies and their amazing teams. Thank you for your continued support!