



2021 In Review: Message to the Membership

As 2021 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.

CASA's **state legislative advocacy program** was exceptionally active this year. CASA sponsored two successful bills and actively tracked more than 90 bills, including engagement on almost 30 priority pieces of legislation. We are excited that our wipes legislation (AB 818) made it across the finish line and was signed by the Governor! This was a multi-year effort to move the needle on wipes labeling and product stewardship, and its passage makes California the national leader on this issue. CASA is also supporting a Congressional proposal to enact the California standard throughout the U.S. Our other sponsored legislation (SB 273), relating to stormwater project authorizations, was also signed by the Governor. We were proud to partner on these bills with environmental groups Coastkeeper Alliance and the National Stewardship Action Council, continuing our commitment to prioritize source control measures and work collaboratively with NGOs on issues of mutual interest.



CASA's advocates were also instrumental in getting a \$650 million allocation specifically for wastewater projects in the state budget, and we continue to be active in the State Water Board process to determine how this money will be spent. We also fought to ensure that wastewater agencies were eligible for nearly \$1 billion in funding to help local agencies address shortages due to customers not paying their utility bills during the pandemic. We were successful on this front and the program to address wastewater arrearages is set to kick off in early 2022.

Our **federal program** was similarly active this year, with much work being done to ensure wastewater was adequately represented in the large-scale Build Back Better infrastructure package. We were also involved in addressing all manner of eligibility requirements and opportunities related to COVID relief funds flowing to states and localities. PFAS was still a major priority, as a wave of legislation was introduced that could impact wastewater and biosolids management, and CASA continued to advocate for the use of sound science in PFAS policy making. While we were not able to host our Washington D.C. Policy Forum this year, we look forward to seeing everyone back in the U.S. Capitol in February of 2022!





Our **regulatory program** has never been more active, as the sheer volume of clean water regulatory issues has grown exponentially in recent years. Highlights include our advocacy efforts on water quality and permitting issues such as toxicity, microplastics, ocean acidification, nutrients, recycled water, and collection systems. Climate change, resiliency and adaptation have also been front and center, including SB 1383 implementation and organics diversion, biosolids management issues, clean fleet and electrification, and emissions challenges. Our [Regulatory and ACE workgroups](#) remain exceptionally active as do our [LISTSERVs](#), [newsletter](#) and subgroups dedicated to solving complex technical challenges facing your agencies.

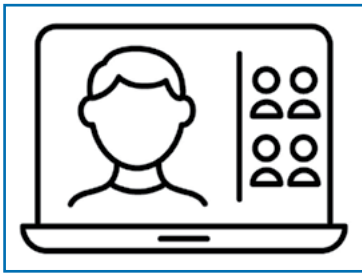
In 2021, CASA provided written comments and testimony on dozens of regulatory proposals and worked closely with diverse agencies such as the Ocean Protection Council, Water Quality Monitoring Council, State and Regional Water Boards, CalRecycle, Public Utilities Commission, California Energy Commission, and the California Air Resources Board. We have built strong and effective relationships with all of these agencies thanks to our dedicated and knowledgeable staff, and supported by the input and efforts of our member agencies and associates.

This year we were proud to launch our CASA **[Leadership, Education, Advancement and Development \(LEAD\) Program](#)**, a comprehensive, multi-year effort to engage emerging leaders in the clean water sector and get the next generation more involved with CASA. CASA LEAD launched the professional development [LISTSERV](#), a go to source for upcoming workshops, webinars, and events that contribute to professional growth. We also launched the inaugural mentorship program, which paired young professionals with veterans in the CASA membership ranks in an effort to foster important relationships that last for years to come. LEAD programs are open to all CASA member agencies, and we encourage you to take advantage of them to help grow the emerging leaders at your agencies and companies.



As agencies are well aware, there is a growing focus on succession planning and addressing large-scale retirements within the clean water community, and as part of the CASA LEAD program we hope to feature an increased focus on workforce development in the coming years. One initiative already underway is our engagement with the **[CASA Education Foundation](#)**, which has distributed \$127,500 in scholarships since its inception, and continues to grow and expand our efforts to attract the best and brightest students to the wastewater sector. CASA also continued our **[partnerships](#)** with the California African American Water Education Foundation, Water Education for Latino Leaders, and Public Policy Institute of California on a series of webinars, workshops and events that helped connect the wastewater sector's message to a broad and diverse audience.

CASA also developed a whole host of materials and **[fact sheets](#)** designed to support our members in their messaging to ratepayers and their communities on issues such as PFAS, wipes, microplastics, biosolids, and more. This is just one component of our expanding **[communications program](#)**, supporting our mission to be a go to resource for member agencies on important issues. Our [CASA Connects newsletter](#), social media activity, and member engagement program are continually evolving to suit our members' needs.



Adapting quickly to the pandemic, CASA expanded our **virtual workshop and meeting** options this year and saw remarkable success and interest. In 2021 we hosted several PFAS specific workshops in collaboration with the Clean Water Summit Partners that saw more than 400 people attend. CASA and CWEA also continued our popular COVID-19 webinar series, focusing on wastewater based epidemiology, workplace issues, and responding to COVID related questions throughout the year. Our PFAS Roundtable series allowed

wastewater stakeholders, NGOs, and others gathered together to address specific PFAS issues, and may produce beneficial legislation in 2022. We again held our advanced technology workshops in the fall, which were well attended. Finally, our recent advanced treatment seminar provided a unique opportunity to gather key legislative staff, regulatory decision makers, and the NGO community to discuss both the challenges and opportunities associated with advanced wastewater treatment.

We have truly missed seeing you in person regularly over these last two years. While we hosted a very successful virtual Winter **Conference** and a large number of virtual workshops throughout the year, we were excited to get back to hosting in-person events as we once again held our Annual Conference in San Diego. This event was educational, informative and very well attended. Perhaps most importantly, it was a safe event for all participants. We look forward to our 2022 Winter Conference being a similarly successful event.



The **CASA Team** was able to accomplish all of this in the shadow of the pandemic. We are proud to be your representatives and the face of California's clean water community in the state and in Washington D.C. We know how important your input and participation is to our effectiveness, and we are continually looking for ways to add more value for our members. CASA has a whole host of **LISTSERVs**, workgroups, and **committees** that we encourage you to join and participate in. Our team of experts is always here to answer questions and get your perspective. Together, we have a strong voice. We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you all in the coming year!

Sincerely,



CASA 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



As 2021 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 some of our key achievements with you.



AB 818

CASA sponsored wipes legislation (AB 818) that was signed by the governor.



Member Retention

CASA maintained a 99% member renewal rate, welcomed two new agency members and nine new associate members.



Events

CASA hosted a virtual winter conference, in-person annual conference, advanced technology seminars, advanced treatment workshop and much more!



Allocated for Wastewater

CASA advocated for significant state funds dedicated to wastewater in this year's budget.



New Programming

CASA launched a [Leadership, Education, Advancement, and Development program](#) which included a new professional development Listserv and mentorship program.



Communications

CASA developed a host of materials and [fact sheets](#) to support our members in public outreach.



Arrearages Program

CASA secured nearly \$1 billion in funding for water and wastewater agencies to help address shortages due to the pandemic.



Regulatory Advocacy

CASA staff monitored dozens of regulatory meetings and submitted countless regulatory comment letters and testimony.



Committees and Workgroups

CASA has nine [committees](#) and [workgroups](#) that collectively met and collaborated over 50 times.



Wastewater Based Epidemiology

CASA hosted several workshops and initiatives related to wastewater based epidemiology.

If you want to learn more about any of these programs visit our website: casaweb.org