

# 2024 in Review

A Message for Our Members



As we approach the end of 2024, CASA is proud to reflect on this year's achievements and celebrate some of our successes. We have continued to provide excellent value to our members through a variety of initiatives, reinforcing our role as the trusted voice of the clean water community in California.

## A Year of Collaboration and Partnerships

In 2024, CASA focused on strengthening the voice of the clean water community through collaboration with partners in the water, local government and association sectors. Some of those highlights include partnering with the California Water Environment Association (CWEA) for the Innovative Tech seminars, which are always at full capacity, and provide members with a look at some of the latest renewable energy and biosolids management technologies. We supported the Water Education for Latino Leaders (WELL) in their leadership program and are working with the California African American Water Education Foundation (CAAWEF) on a joint event for the upcoming 2025 CASA Winter Conference. CASA also continues to serve on the steering committee for the High-Road Training Partnership grant program led by the California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA).



This year, we again joined with our partners in the NGO community to sponsor PFAS legislation and remained active in the national PFAS "passive receivers" coalition. We also partnered with our friends at CAPIO to host a webinar on PFAS communications. In collaboration with our partners at the California Stormwater Quality Association (CASQA), CASA developed a joint roadmap for stormwater and wastewater agencies. We also partnered with our friends at the Danish Water Technology Alliance to develop, promote and present on nutrient removal approaches and air quality driven projects in a series of workshops, as well as provided the wastewater sector's perspective during a seminar focused on decarbonization of the water sector. All the while, we continue to collaborate as a partner in the California Center of Excellence (CoE) initiative alongside the CDPH, Stanford, SFPUC, CDC, and others to advance the wastewater community's utilization of Wastewater Based Epidemiology (WBE).

In the upcoming year, CASA has planned several joint conference opportunities with our national partners at NACWA, and we continue to work with our friends at the Responsible Flushing Alliance on a coordinated wipes outreach. Finally, we look forward to launching the CASA Research Collaborative in 2025 in conjunction with the State Water Board, CASA Associates Committee, as well as academic and research institutions across the country. Partnerships and collaboration are core to everything we do here at CASA and help us build valuable relationships for the benefit of our members.

## State Legislative Advocacy: Making Progress on PFAS and Other Issues

CASA has continued to be the most trusted advocate on behalf of the clean water sector, working on a variety of legislative issues this year. Our co-sponsored bill, SB 903 (Skinner), which proposed a program through the Department of Toxic Substances Control to ban non-essential uses of PFAS in commerce, was ultimately held up in the Senate Appropriations Committee, but we will continue to engage with this effort moving forward. This bill presented a unique opportunity to join with other environmental stakeholders to educate members, regulators, and key Capitol staff about the importance of PFAS source control. CASA also served as the lead stakeholder in lengthy negotiations on AB 805 (Arambula), a two-year bill which provides a temporary interim authority to the State Water Resources Control Board to appoint an administrator to oversee a failing sewer system serving a disadvantaged community. CASA was able to advocate for substantial provisions to be incorporated into the bill that require due process for both the failing systems and the appointed administrators. In addition to these efforts, CASA took active positions on twenty-nine bills and tracked more than one hundred others throughout the year. We provided input on legislation relating to microplastics, wastewater-based epidemiology, the Surplus Land Act, workforce development, developer fees including connection and capacity fees, green hydrogen, the Advanced Clean Fleets rule, the Brown Act, and many other pieces of legislation that could impact the clean water sector. As a coalition builder and unified voice for the clean water sector, CASA continues to play a pivotal role in shaping policy and advocating for the sector's interests in Sacramento.

## Representing the Clean Water Community at Conferences and Events

CASA's subject matter experts are some of the most highly respected and knowledgeable in the state and across the country. This year our amazing team presented to a myriad of fellow associations at conferences, workshops, and events. Just a few of these include national forums with the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and NACWA, conferences and workshops with our state and regional partners at CWEA, CVCWA, BACWA, and Clean Water SoCal, and events with our state partners at CASQA. We also presented to the PFAS Receivers Coalition, Northwest Biosolids, and the W5170 group on the biosolids front.



## Federal Advocacy: Representing our Members in Washington D.C.

Our federal advocates Eric and Sarah Sapirstein continue to track important developments in Congress and keep the CASA membership up to speed on the latest happenings in Washington D.C. From federal funding opportunities to committee assignments, your agency's interests are covered. This year we supported and advanced legislation related to microplastics, wipes, low-income household water assistance programs, and more. CASA continued to lead a multi-stakeholder effort to advance federal "Do Not Flush" labeling requirements for non-flushable wet wipes in the form of the bipartisan WIPPES Act (H.R. 2964/S.1350) that reflected California's "Do Not Flush" labeling requirements. Working successfully with our fellow national and state water stakeholders, as well as wipes industry companies and associations, H.R. 2964 passed the U.S. House of Representatives on a bipartisan basis. While final passage of H.R. 2964 was stymied in the Senate due to end-of-year legislative calendar challenges, we look forward to pursuing this issue next year. We also tracked several developments at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, primarily related to PFAS, and worked with the "passive receivers" coalition to clarify misconceptions about wastewater and PFAS. In partnership and coordination with our counterparts at NACWA, CASA is ably representing California's clean water community at the federal level.

## PFAS, PFAS and More PFAS

PFAS remains an issue of tremendous concern to the clean water community, and CASA continues to be at the forefront of providing our members with information and advocacy on this topic. For a more comprehensive look at all CASA has been doing related to PFAS over these last few years, we prepared a separate [reference sheet](#) for our members. Our efforts include supporting member communications, advocating for CERCLA exemption and producer responsibility in Washington D.C., supporting an "essentiality" approach and product-specific bans here in California, and generally defending the continued use of land application of biosolids for our members. We are exceptionally active in monitoring and commenting on the development of biosolids risk-assessment standards to protect continued use of biosolids in an environmentally protective manner and advocating for source control to keep PFAS out of the stream of commerce.

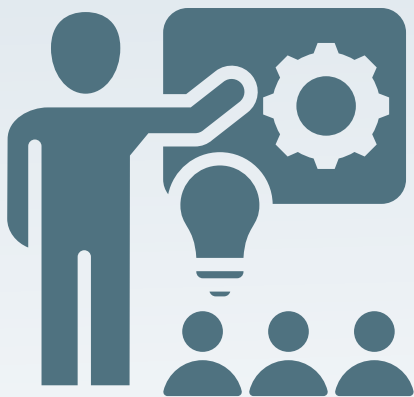


## Looking to the Future: CASA Mentorship Program and the CASA Education Foundation

CASA is always looking to the future of our sector and finding ways to support our future leaders. Our two flagship programs are the CASA LEAD Mentorship program and the CASA Education Foundation. The CASA Mentorship connects emerging leaders with our experienced members to create relationships that support the whole community and is now in its fourth year. The CASA Education Foundation provides scholarships annually (including the Bruce Wolfe Scholarship) to four students who express interest in entering the water sector. These scholarships support bright and engaged students who we hope will work alongside us in the years to come!



## Networking, Learning and Collaborating Through CASA Events and Workshops



Nearly every month of the year, CASA hosts a conference, event, or webinar designed to inform our membership on important topics while encouraging networking and discussion on the issues critical to the clean water community. We continue to break attendance records at our in-person events, including the Winter Conference, Annual Conference, Partnering for Impact Event, and Innovative Tech Seminars. We also hosted webinars on PFAS Communications, CASA Awards of Excellence winners, and wastewater-based epidemiology this year, and supported a series

of nutrient and air quality-focused webinars across the state in conjunction with the Danish Water Technology Alliance. Our Committees and Workgroups continued to meet regularly, including our Collections Workgroup, Regulatory Workgroup, Air, Climate and Energy Workgroup, as well as our State and Federal Legislative Committees, Communications Committee, Attorneys Committee and numerous issue specific subgroups.

## Changes at CASA

As we help prepare our members for an impending wave of retirements, we at CASA are working to address the same realities! In anticipation of the upcoming retirement of CASA's long-time Director of Renewable Resource Programs Greg Kester in early 2025, we are very excited to welcome Maile Lono-Batura to the CASA Team! Maile will be an amazing resource for CASA and our partners in the years to come. This year, we welcomed Sarah Deslauriers, CASA's long-time consultant for air, climate change, and energy (ACE) issues, into our team full-time as our Director of Air, Climate and Energy Programs. We also celebrated the promotion of Jared Voskuhl to Director of Regulatory Affairs and, are excited that our Manager of Association Services Shacara Gamboa celebrated her first full year with the CASA team!

## Get Engaged with CASA Workgroups and Committees!

CASA has more committees, workgroups and topic-specific groups than ever before, and we want all our members to participate! Is your agency concerned with HR and workforce development issues? CASA has an HR and workforce development workgroup that meets quarterly to discuss new opportunities. Are you interested in federal and state programs and funding for your agency's projects, or sharing your knowledge and best practices for project financing with your peers? We are launching our funding and agency financing workgroup and will host our first meeting in 2025! Our stalwart regulatory and ACE workgroups meet monthly to discuss important issues, and our topic specific subgroups meet throughout the year. Our State and Federal Legislative Committees are always looking for input and feedback on CASA's priorities and policy proposals, our Program Committee is interested in hearing your ideas on how to improve our conferences and events, and our Communications Committee would love to get your agency's PIO involved with the group! We encourage all our members to get more involved by joining our workgroups, committees, Listservs, as well as attending our conferences, webinars, and workshops. Most workgroup and committee meetings are virtual throughout the year, making them accessible to all! Please reach out to one of our CASA team members to join a future meeting. Our advocacy would not be possible without the dedication and contributions from our agencies and their amazing teams, and we thank you for your continued support!

