Recycled Water Committee –
Report to BACWA Board

Recycled Water Committee Meeting on: 04/16/2024
Executive Board Meeting Date: 06/21/2024
Committee Chairs: Stefanie Olson, Reena Thomas

Committee Request for Board Action: None

24 attendees participated remotely and in-person at EBMUD and included representatives from 11 member agencies, the Regional Water Board, and one guest speaker.

Sewer Mining for Decentralized Water Reuse

Allison Good (Sherwood Design Engineers) presented on the benefits and challenges of decentralized water reuse projects using "sewer mining." In these systems, the source water is raw wastewater from a sewage main instead of treated water from a publicly-owned wastewater treatment plant. Important design details include:

- Clear delineation of public vs. privately-owned assets (e.g., separate manholes) at the point of diversion.
- Use local wastewater quality data from the proposed project site, not textbook values for wastewater quality. There is significant variability in the quality of raw sewage for analytes such as BOD and TSS.
- Consider seasonality of the operation – will it be operated year-round? Seasonal operations require supplemental food and nutrients during the acclimation period.
- Solids handling (trucked or routed back to sewer for handling at the wastewater treatment plant); these projects typically do not have on-site solids treatment, although technological innovation could change that assumption.

Several states now have programs for these systems, including Colorado and Washington. In California, the State Water Board anticipates beginning rulemaking on the Regulations for Onsite Treatment and Reuse of Nonpotable Water around June 2024. All three states are using a risk-based framework based on log reduction targets for pathogen inactivation. Once the regulations are finalized, local jurisdictions such as a City or County would need to opt-in by establishing local program rules for onsite non-potable reuse. An important consideration during the establishing of local program rules – which greatly impacts whether these decentralized projects can move forward – is how to handle sewer connection fees for such projects.

Funding Opportunities

Sachi Itagaki (Kennedy Jenks) reported that the Bureau of Reclamation has upcoming funding application deadlines for Title XVI and WIIN on September 30th (link). Large-scale state funding is difficult due to the limited availability of Clean Water State Revolving Funds and the challenging budget situation. However, planning grants continued to be available from the State Water Board for up to $500,000 (link).

Legislative and Regulatory Updates

Reena Thomas (EBMUD) shared that SB 903 (Skinner) banning non-essential uses of PFAS is advancing through the state senate. Also, two possible climate bonds with funding for water recycling – SB 867 (Allen) and AB 1567 (Garcia) – are being considered for the November ballot. More information will become available with the May 2024 revise of the Governor's budget.

BACWA Updates

- The draft Nutrient Watershed Permit is now available (link) and is slated for reissuance in June 2024. The draft permit contains mass-based limits for Total Inorganic Nitrogen during the dry season for wastewater discharged to the Bay. Interim performance-based limits go into effect for the 2025 dry season, while much lower final limits go into effect for the 2035 dry season. The draft permit requires agencies to work quickly to identify potential recycled water projects that could be used for compliance with the final limits.
- The BACWA Annual Members Meeting will be held in Berkeley on Friday, May 3rd (link).

Announcements

- Volumetric Annual Reports are due to Geotracker by April 30th.
- Region 2 Annual Reports (per General Order) are due to the Regional Water Board by April 30th.
- The State Water Board held a stakeholder meeting on Water Recycling Fees on April 18th (Meeting Notice).
- Abstracts for WateReuse California Annual Conference due June 14th

Remaining Meetings in 2024

July 16 (virtual only), and October 15 (in-person option)