

Collection Systems Committee

Report to BACWA Board

Committee meeting on 11/13/2025

Executive Board Meeting Date: 12/12/2025

Committee Chairs: Dana Lawson (Central San) and Tracy Heidersbach (EBMUD)

Committee Request for Board Action: None

48 attendees from 25 member agencies, including a guest speaker and attendees from the Regional Water Board

Sanitary Sewer System Priorities:

Perspective from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Board

[Link to Slides](#)

James Parrish, Sr. Environmental Scientist with the Regional Water Board, shared perspectives on compliance with the [General Order for Sanitary Sewer Systems](#) for the 130 systems enrolled in the General Order in the San Francisco Bay Region (Region 2). The most important aspect of compliance is eliminating sanitary sewer spills. James shared the Regional Water Board's approach to audits, inspections, and enforcement. The Regional Water Board looks at public complaints, spill reports, and spill response times to determine which agencies should be prioritized for a formal inspection. Timeliness of reporting – such as meeting due dates for spill reports, SSMP updates and annual reports – is also a factor in prioritizing agencies for inspections.

Prior to inspections, the Regional Water Board aims to provide agencies with 4-6 weeks' notice.

Agencies should plan to fill out a [pre-inspection checklist](#). Inspections may be conducted in-person or virtually, since most of the inspection involves reviewing reports and other documentation.

During inspections, the Regional Water Board likes to hear about new technologies as well as agencies' capital and O&M programs, budgets, asset management programs, and Sanitary Sewer Management Plans (SSMPs). BACWA has provided guidance for updating SSMPs ([Link](#)).

James also discussed rationale for enforcement, which could include informal enforcement (phone call or email), a Notice of Violation, or an Administrative Civil Liability (which comes with a penalty amount). A Cease and Desist Order is an option for agencies with complex issues that need time to come into compliance. Overall, the Regional Water Board's key message was that agencies can "show you care" by developing, implementing, and updating your SSMP, and by providing timely spill response, notification, and reporting. Agencies should also strive to keep CIWQS contact information up-to-date.

BACWA Announcements

[Link to Slides](#)

- Re-enrollees in the [Sanitary Sewer Systems General Order](#) must submit a service area boundary map to the State Water Board by December 31, 2025.
- In December 2025, the State Water Board plans to roll out a new tool for electronic reporting of plant bypasses.
- The Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, a BACWA committee, has developed new graphics for a November 2025 FOG digital advertising campaign. Agencies are free to use them ([Link](#)).
- Region 2 spill statistics available from [CIWQS](#) show a significant decline in spills over the last 17 years, especially for small spills (<50 gallons) that are typically due to blockages. These "Category 4" spills are no longer included in public spill rate statistics.
- In early 2026, DWR plans to circulate a survey to collection systems to evaluate the impacts of water conservation ([SB 1157](#)). Please plan to participate!
- On November 5th, BACWA held a webinar on the potential operational benefits to wastewater agencies from Advanced Quantitative Precipitation Information (AQPI), which improves radar, rainfall estimates, and rainfall forecasts. [Link to Webinar Slides](#).
- The [California Underground Safety Board](#) is working on draft requirements to record and map GIS locations for new underground installations (e.g., sewer pipelines). The proposed regulations would implement [SB 865](#) (2020). An informal draft of the regulations with a requirement to geolocate utilities within 100 mm was circulated in summer 2025. Formal rulemaking will begin at a later date.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 5th - Virtual