

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Linda Rao)
MEETING DATE: MARCH 8, 2006

ITEM: 11

SUBJECT: **Water Quality Excellence Awards** – Recognition for Exceptional Achievements in Pollution Prevention in the San Francisco Bay Area

DISCUSSION: The Bay Area is home to some of the most proactive and effective pollution prevention programs in the nation. This item recognizes the excellence and achievements of pollution prevention (P2) programs implemented by five publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) in our region.

Background

The goal of the Water Board's P2 program is to reduce the mass of pollutants that reach the environment by way of the sewer, the storm drain, biosolids, or solid waste and threaten beneficial uses. For POTWs, the program emphasizes pollutant source reduction "upstream" of POTWs. Under a 1986 Board policy, Water Board staff first began requiring P2 for South Bay cities in 1988. In 1990, we formed the Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group (BAPPG), a partnership with permittees, to encourage regional collaboration and develop and implement waste minimization measures. Since then, significant pollutant mass reductions have been achieved.

Presently, about 40 Bay Area POTWs operate P2 programs tailored uniquely to the water quality concerns of each POTW's service area. These programs commonly aim to achieve the following:

- Implement short and long-term programs that will reduce or eliminate pollutants of concern, thereby protecting San Francisco Bay;
- Respond to existing water quality concerns as required in each POTW's NPDES permit;
- Educate businesses, the public, and schoolchildren about where pollutants come from, how they enter the environment, and how changes in behavior (product use, substitution, and recycling) will reduce pollution;
- Issue permits to businesses to achieve source reductions as needed;
- Monitor the effectiveness of P2 actions and programs using effectiveness performance measures;
- Coordinate regionally among agencies to share knowledge, experience, and outreach materials to achieve regional successes (e.g., through BAPPG); and

- Address emerging pollutants (e.g., pharmaceuticals) based on new science, environmental conditions, and emerging water quality initiatives of local, state, and federal agencies.

In December 2005, we distributed an informational document, “Pollution Prevention Reporting for POTWs with NPDES Permits,” to assist POTWs in reporting P2 results and to define excellence in P2 programs. This item supports that document by recognizing the excellence and achievements of some of the best P2 programs and presenting those programs with Water Quality Excellence Awards.

Top Pollution Prevention Achievement

- **San Francisco Public Utilities Commission**

San Francisco was the first large municipality in California to develop and implement a dental mercury reduction program. Through its initial outreach to state and national dental associations, its investigation of amalgam separators and best management practices (BMPs), and its development of outreach materials, San Francisco has paved the way for other municipalities to pursue similar programs. In just 18 months, San Francisco permitted all 539 dental clinics in its jurisdiction. All permittees chose to install amalgam separators and implement BMPs, with essentially 100% compliance within the first year of the program. San Francisco reports significant reductions of mercury in its collection system and biosolids for both its wastewater plants, according to preliminary monitoring data.

Heroic Multimedia Pollution Prevention

- **City of San Leandro**

San Leandro is a small city with an extensive variety of P2 programs that seek pollutant reductions to the environment across various media (i.e., surface water, land, and air) through such conveyances as sewers, stormdrains, biosolids, and solid waste. San Leandro implements P2 and source control for mercury, copper, pesticides, fats, oil, grease, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and “techno waste” (computers, cell phones, etc.). San Leandro operates as a green business through its environmental purchasing policy and green building practices in public and private construction projects.

Outstanding Public Outreach

- **Mt. View Sanitary District**

Mt. View Sanitary District, which serves the City of Martinez and surrounding areas, is a leader in developing educational programs and teaching manuals to educate children about pollutants and how they enter the environment. The District collaborates with a local wildlife museum to conduct an extensive county-wide educational P2 outreach

program to over 1,500 third-fifth graders each year. The program is incorporated into the local standard science curriculum and is partially conducted in a marsh wetland. The District has developed model educational references about local marsh ecology, aquatic and terrestrial field guides for children, sewer science, and pollution prevention alternatives for the home. In addition, for the last six years, the District has posted public billboards along I-680 promoting pollution prevention messages that are seen by up to 69,000 drivers per day.

- **Delta Diablo Sanitation District**

The Delta Diablo Sanitation District implements an extensive public outreach program to reduce mercury through an exemplary fluorescent bulb collection program, which has exceeded its NPDES permit requirement to collect 3,000 pounds of fluorescent tubes per year by 1000 pounds. Additionally, the District sponsors a unique Delta field study program for over 1,200 fifth graders each year that teaches about the San Francisco Bay and Delta ecosystem, watersheds, sewer science, pollution prevention, and proper disposal alternatives. For over 10 years, the District has consistently surveyed public awareness of P2 through its popular public festivals and adjusts its programs based on this feedback.

“The World is My Oyster”- Global P2 Solutions

- **Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant**

Palo Alto pursues solutions extending well beyond its service area and the requirements of its NPDES permit. It has spearheaded legislative initiatives related to mercury, copper, and pesticides; pursued product bans related to zinc floor waxes, copper roofing, and copper root killers; coordinated successful agency collaboration to reduce regulatory gaps, lead policy initiatives related to pharmaceuticals, pesticides, water treatment chemicals, and corrosion; provided staff and resources for outreach and coordination of regional source control efforts related to mercury, copper, fats, oil, grease, and pharmaceuticals; and funded research and pilot projects related to brake pads, polybrominated flame retardants, endocrine disrupting compounds, and triclosan (the active ingredient in antibacterial soaps).

RECOMMEND-
ATION:

Present Water Quality Excellence Awards to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, City of San Leandro, Mt. View Sanitary District, Delta Diablo Sanitation District, and Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant.

File No. 1210.58.

Appendix A: Water Quality Excellence Awards