

National Water Research Institute

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Now Available: Workshop Report on Managing Contaminants of Emerging Concern in California's Water Resources

A new workshop report is now available that discusses strategies to begin addressing contaminants of emerging concern (CECs) in California's water resources. The report provides a list of recommended steps that involve new and evolving approaches for prioritizing compounds to study, identifying monitoring goals and objectives, and assessing thresholds of human and ecological health concern.

This report was prepared by a consortium of nonprofit and university sponsors interested in water quality issues in California, including the California Ocean Protection Council, California Ocean Science Trust, NWRI, San Francisco Estuary Institute, Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, and Urban Water Research Center at the University of California, Irvine.

CECs are a group of mostly unmonitored and unregulated chemicals whose potential to impact the beneficial uses of water resources in California is largely unknown. They have been found at trace levels in wastewater discharges, ambient receiving waters, and drinking water supplies.

The 37-page report, entitled "Managing Contaminants of Emerging Concern in California: Developing Processes for Prioritizing, Monitoring, and Determining Thresholds of Concern," is based on a workshop held on April 28-29, 2009, in Costa Mesa, CA, that brought together scientists, water quality managers, and stakeholders to formulate a path toward developing an effective CEC management strategy that is protective of water quality.

Major findings included:

- The current chemical-specific risk assessment approach is neither feasible nor cost-effective for prioritizing and managing the vast majority of CECs.
- Because we are currently in the investigative phase, developing regulatory limits would be premature at this time.
- A flexible, multi-element prioritization framework is needed to identify those compounds of highest concern.
- The creation of a single master list of CECs that agencies could apply effectively across all applications is unlikely.
- The interpretation of monitoring data and subsequent decision making should be based on tiered, multiple thresholds.
- An adaptive management strategy is imperative to respond to rapidly changing knowledge.

In addition to these findings, the workshop report also includes the following recommended next steps toward developing a CEC management strategy for California:

- Fill in data gaps, which can be accomplished through investigative monitoring and targeted research.
- Synthesize current knowledge to select a proposed list of CECs for the purposes of monitoring.
- Identify and, as necessary, develop and test the most appropriate monitoring methods for these CECs.
- Incorporate measurements of proposed CECs into the design and implementation of existing and future planned studies.

Copies of the workshop report can be downloaded at the sponsors' websites, including NWRI's website at www.nwri-usa.org.

Utility Branding Resources Available Online

Interested in utility branding? Now you can access helpful resources, like branding manuals and case studies, from the Utility Branding Network at www.utilitybranding.net. These resources can help water and wastewater agencies better understand branding principles and build a strong, positive brand, with the ultimate goal of increasing community trust, support, and investment.

The Utility Branding Network website provides access to the following:

- **Branding case studies** featuring West Basin Municipal Water District's "Designer Water," Inland Empire Composting Authority's "SoilPro" soil amendment products, and more.
- **Branding Moments e-Messages**, with topics such as "Branding Finances and Efficiency" and "The Value of Branding in Tough Economic Times."
- **Publications** like "Building the Wastewater Utility Brand: Practical Advice for Increasing Trust, Support, and Investment" and "CCR Checklist: Using the Consumer Confidence Report to Build a Positive Brand."

More resources can be found at www.utilitybranding.net. For further information about the Utility Branding Network, please contact Jeff Mosher at jmosher@nwri-usa.org.

Deadline for Inaugural Imagine H2O Prize Is Nov. 16

The inaugural Imagine H2O Prize competition offers prizes of \$70,000 in cash and in-kind services to business plans that promise the greatest breakthroughs in the efficient use and supply of water. Entries will be accepted until November 16, 2009.

Areas of interest include solutions to improve water efficiency in agriculture, commercial, industrial, or residential applications, such as water demand reduction, improved water use, water recycling, and/or reuse.

RBC is a founding sponsor of the Imagine H2O Prize, and NWRI is one of the Prize's many partners. For more details and to participate, please visit www.imagineh2o.org.

SCSC Salinity Fact Sheet on Water Softeners Now Available

The Southern California Salinity Coalition (SCSC) has developed a Salinity Fact Sheet on "Salinity and Water Softeners" to help inform the discussion around Assembly Bill 1366, which is intended to restrict the use of self-regenerating water softeners to help control salinity in our water supplies.

The 2-page SCSC Fact Sheet provides information on what is salinity, the impacts of salinity, how salinity inhibits water recycling, how water softeners increase salinity, and possible options in changing or eliminating the use of residential self-regenerating water softeners.

The Fact Sheet can be downloaded at www.socalsalinity.org.

SCSC was founded in 2002 by a group of Southern California water and wastewater agencies to better manage salinity in our water supplies. SCSC's member agencies include the Eastern Municipal Water District, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Irvine Ranch Water District, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Orange County Sanitation District, Orange County Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, Santa Ana Project Watershed Authority, and West Basin Municipal Water District. NWRI administers SCSC on behalf of its members.

Upcoming Events

SWMOA Hands-On Membrane Operator Training Workshop (Nov. 4)

Join the Southwest Membrane Operator Association (SWMOA) on November 4, 2009, for a 1-day "Hands-On Membrane Plant Operator Training Workshop." Six (6) Contact Hours have been approved by the State of California for Water.

Co-sponsored by GE Water & Process Technologies, this workshop will be held at the Ventura Avenue Water Treatment Plant in Ventura, CA. Space is limited to 50 attendees.

For more information or to register, please visit www.swmoa.org or call SWMOA at 888-463-0830.

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