

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SANITATION AGENCIES

STRATEGIC PLAN



Ensuring Clean Water for California

January 2008

Message from the President

The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) has been a fore runner in the nation in addressing issues impacting the wastewater industry. Our service to our membership could not have reached its current level of excellence without the thorough strategic planning efforts of CASA's Executive Board over the past years.

In 2007, the Executive Board followed the customary tradition of convening with its staff and consultants for two days at the East Bay Municipal Utility District facilities at Pardee Reservoir. This annual session was spent reviewing CASA's past strategic plans and consolidating our continuing programs into a revised plan that provides a clear vision into the future. In addition to focusing on various strategic planning goals and initiatives, the Board concluded by modifying CASA's vision and mission statements to highlight our membership as clean water agencies commissioned to protect public health and the environment. Our message would also emphasize our members' thorough engagement in managing several natural resources such as production of recycled water that alleviates the demand on potable water supplies, generation of energy, developing biosolids as a good soil enriching product and the reduction of carbon emissions to mitigate global warming trends. These efforts of managing our natural resources have elevated our industry to a higher level of performance well beyond the delivery of wastewater service to the public. *This is an important message that we all need to communicate to our public.*

It is with such awareness that CASA's Executive Board directed its strategic planning discussion this year to communicate the true value of our service to California communities. Members of the Executive Board, staff and consultants engaged in a very productive dialogue to update prior strategic plans as summarized in the six major strategic goals listed in the plan. The Board along with staff, consultants and many volunteers from CASA's member agencies will exert the necessary effort to implement and achieve the developed strategic goals in the future.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Executive Board, staff and consultants for their patience, diligence and thoroughness in developing CASA's revised strategic plan. Rest assured that as CASA moves into the future its strategic plan will need to be modified and adjusted to respond to the ever changing nature of our communities and thus our industry.



Kamil S. Azoury
President 2007-2008

I. List of Attendees

Executive Board

Kamil Azoury, President
Harry Price, 1st Vice President
Ron Young, 2nd Vice President
Mike Dunbar, Immediate Past President
Gary Darling
John Hoagland
Barbara Hockett
Steve Hogg
David Williams
Bruce Presser

Staff/Consultants

Catherine Smith, Executive Director
Mike Dillon, State Lobbyist
Greg Kester, Biosolids Program Manager
Bobbi Larson, Director of Legal and Regulatory Affairs
Eric Sapirstein, Federal Legislative Advocate
Debbie Welch, Executive Assistant/Conference Coordinator

II. The Strategic Plan

CASA's strategic planning process is a conscious and planned effort to lead and manage our organization in a thoughtful, comprehensive and integrated manner. This section provides an overview of the goals, timeframe and key definitions or terms included in our strategic plan.

A. Definitions:

1. **Vision and Mission Statements** - Our vision and mission statements describes a picture of the Association's future that we wish to attain. It defines what we want to be known for, why we exist, what services we offer, and who benefits from our Association.
2. **Strategic Goals** - Strategic Goals describe the specific areas of focus that, if reached, will enable the Association to achieve our vision and mission. They address the challenges and opportunities on the horizon for the Association and its membership.
3. **Initiatives** - Strategic initiatives are the core initiatives or projects that if successfully implemented, will enable CASA to achieve its goals.
4. **Action Items** - Constitutes specific tasks to be implemented for achieving the defined initiatives under each identified strategic goal.

B. Goals of the Strategic Planning Process: The goals of CASA's strategic planning process include the following:

1. Develop enhanced clarity and consensus about our mission, membership, strategic goals, and key strategies for achieving them.
2. Identify challenges and opportunities CASA sees on the horizon.
3. Establish the framework to guide our priorities and decision-making in the future.
4. Provide direction and focus to our current and future Boards.
5. Serve as a catalyst for decision-making on issues the Association is facing.
6. Serve as a communication tool to the members and stakeholders.

This plan was prepared following a two-day planning session and Executive Board meeting with the Board, staff and consultants on November 6 & 7, 2007 at the East

Bay Municipal Utility District's Pardee reservoir facility. The workshop was facilitated by Chuck Beesley, Special District Consulting, who prepared advance materials, interviewed CASA leadership and assisted in the preparation of the final report.

III. Vision Statement

On November 6, 2007 CASA Executive Board adopted the following vision statement:

CASA will be a leader in promoting clean water and beneficial reuse of resources while protecting public health and the environment in a sustainable manner.

IV. Mission Statement

The CASA mission statement was amended on November 6, 2007 to read:

The mission of the California Association of Sanitation Agencies is to provide leadership, advocacy and information to our members, legislators, and the public, and to promote partnerships on clean water and beneficial reuse issues that protect public health and the environment.

Participants were in consensus that the wastewater industry needs to go beyond traditional services and that resource management was a natural progression of the industry and appropriate future for CASA.

V. Strategic Goals and Initiatives

Strategic Goal 1: Good Laws, Balanced Regulations and Well-Informed Legislators and Regulatory Bodies

CASA's highest priority is to ensure that state and federal lawmakers and regulatory agencies adopt laws, regulations and public policies that support the needs of our members. Our advocacy and education efforts increase the legislators' and regulatory agencies' understanding, awareness and support of wastewater issues.

Initiative 1: Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy

Action items:

1. Establish a more proactive planning agenda by conducting annual goal setting forums.
2. Consider expanding membership in CASA to include all public agencies in the State to strengthen our voice on public policy issues.
3. Establish priority regulatory issues to focus CASA work effort.

4. Advocate our members' interests before all identified state and federal regulatory agencies.
5. Sponsor attendance and presentations by key policy officials at conferences.
6. Encourage the membership to be more involved with legislation and regulatory advocacy by participating in CASA committees and in grassroots advocacy in their home districts.

Initiative 2: Proactive Involvement in Legal Affairs

Action items:

1. Develop a philosophy and method to fund necessary litigation that will substantially benefit all members of the association.
2. Attorney and Legislative Committee members will continue to cultivate their relationships with legislators and regulatory staff and offer support on issues important to our members.
3. Explore the establishment of an Emergency Legal Fund to use on special occasions to pay for consulting and advocacy purposes.

Initiative 3: Education

Action items:

1. Disseminate educational information or "fact sheets" to CASA members to use with legislators, regulatory agency staff and member agencies.
2. Convene conferences annually that serve as forums for professional growth and development and discussion of important wastewater industry issues.
3. Convene technical seminars as needed that addresses and considers changes in regulatory and operation issues for managers and personnel of public agencies responsible for wastewater operations.

Strategic Goal 2: The Most Respected, Credible and Influential Clean Water Association

CASA wants to build upon its recognition as the leading legislative and regulatory advocate for California wastewater agencies and the preeminent source of scientifically based information on wastewater-related issues. CASA achieves this strategic goal by being the largest association dedicated to wastewater issues, by providing leadership, innovative solutions and timely information to lawmakers, our members and the public.

Initiative 1: Membership

Action items:

1. Conduct a formal membership campaign annually to ensure maximum membership to the Association.
2. Complete annual membership satisfaction surveys to continue CASA's high retention rate and ensure we are providing valuable benefits to our members.
3. Explore expanding into new member markets, including affiliated associations in other states and industries, wastewater consulting firms and municipal governments.

Initiative 2: Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy

Action items:

1. Complete the Action items listed under Strategic Goal 1/Initiative.

Strategic Goal 3: Partnerships

CASA has a strategic goal to develop and maintain partnerships working on common issues related to environmental sustainability as well as other priority CASA issues. Together, our partnerships create leadership, innovation and proactive solutions that influence, educate and inform our members, the public, and federal and state legislators as well as state and federal government bodies.

Action items:

1. Identify, educate and develop environmental sustainability solutions such as energy and water management.
2. Develop opportunities to expand the role of wastewater agencies to address watershed issues.
3. Need to link the CASA mission with environmental groups and other non-point source dischargers.
4. Continued Tri-TAC partnership to represent members before the State Water Resources Control Board.

Strategic Goal 4: Association Services

The Association continues with membership growth efforts and anticipates increasing the size of our membership, which increases our capacity to enhance membership services and our influence with legislative and regulatory agendas.

Initiative 1: Excellent Member Services

Action items:

1. CASA will continue to enhance the education and advocacy services described in Strategic Goals 1 through 3 of this document.

Initiative 2: Business Meetings and Conferences

Action items:

1. Ensure all programs are timely and on point to provide high-quality education at all conferences and seminars.
2. Expand member participation of the Program Committee planning meeting scheduled at conferences to assist in developing conference programs which are informative on current industry issues.
3. Identify presenters who are leaders in their fields.

Initiative 3: Communication

Action items:

1. Continue to expand and enhance CASA's website to make it a valuable resource for both industry and association related information.
2. Prepare an annual communications program for CASA developed in cooperation between staff and the CASA Communications Committee forwarding the goals and initiatives of this plan.

Strategic Goal 5: Environmental Sustainability, Resources and Resource Management

CASA is committed to elevating the role of clean water providers as one of the key solutions to environmental changes and challenges categorized under climate change. As well, CASA recognizes that the services provided by clean water agencies are vital to continued environmental protection and sustainability and it is our role to ensure our members are visible and understood, in this role, to legislators, regulators and the public.

Initiative 1: Environmental Resources and Management

Action items:

1. Develop action plans and then educate member agencies on the opportunities and advocate their responsible use to the media and public.
2. Advocate for reasonable regulations that promote the reuse of POTW resources such as biosolids, recycles water and bio-gas (waste to energy).
3. Development or identify best management practices with science-based regulations to promote sustainability.

Initiative 2: Climate Change

Action items:

1. Identify wastewater factors and their impact on climate change; based on the development of subsequent action plans.
2. Mitigation measure will need to be developed with subsequent action plans.
3. Monitoring/measurement approaches will need to be developed with subsequent action plans.

Initiative 3: Advocacy

Action items:

1. Develop action plans for advocacy and supporting activities to secure funding for legislative initiatives and regulatory actions that support resource management and climate change issues as related to clean water agencies.

Strategic Goal 6: Personnel Recruitment/Education

CASA will support and identify educational opportunities to ensure a qualified and capable workforce for our industry as we face a wave of retirements by “baby boomer” professionals.

Initiative 1: Participation in Industry Employment Issues

Action items:

1. Survey members annually on their workforce issues.
2. Develop an “Employment Opportunities” section on CASA website.
3. Provide website links to educational programs that focus on operator training.
4. Hold discussions on workforce issues at the Managers Meetings during conferences.

5. Support regional educational efforts of members to encourage entering professionals.
6. Continue to support the Clean Water Summit's collaborative dialogue with the State Water Control Board's rewrite of the operator certification regulations.

VII. Implementation of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan is an important policy document that has helped CASA's executive board to think strategically about leading the Association in the 21st century. CASA's strategic plan provides a clear direction of where we want to go and how we want to get there. The plan describes CASA's vision for the future and the key goals and initiatives we will focus on for success.

Implementation of the plan requires the commitment of the CASA Executive Board, committee chairpersons, staff, and our members. Our focus during the next few years will be on achieving the six strategic goals.

XIII. Conclusion

The CASA Strategic Plan is a significant policy document that will help the Board and staff successfully achieve the organization's vision, mission and goals. The plan describes the Association's efforts to increase its regulatory and legislative efforts, enhancing member services and involvement and identifies the key approaches and next steps for success.