



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of SANITATION AGENCIES

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May, 7, 2007

The Honorable Diane Feinstein, Chairwoman
Senate Interior/EPA Appropriations Subcommittee
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Second St. & Constitution Avenue, NE
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Request for \$1 Million in EPA's FY 2008 Budget for the National Biosolids Partnership (NBP)

Dear Senator Feinstein:

The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) is a non-profit, statewide organization representing 115 public agencies that provide wastewater collection, treatment, disposal, water reclamation, and biosolids management services to over 90 percent of the sewered population in California. On behalf of CASA, I am writing to request your support for the National Biosolids Partnership (NBP) and for renewing its appropriation in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's fiscal year (FY) 2008 budget for \$1 million.

The NBP is an alliance of the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and the National Association of Clean water Agencies (NACWA), in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Partnership was created to implement a nonfederal and non-regulatory alternative to enhance the oversight and management of biosolids by-products produced by the nation's wastewater treatment plants. The NBP is the only national program helping communities handle sewage treatment by-products.

Biosolids are a natural by-product of the wastewater treatment process and when properly treated, can be safely recycled and used as fertilizer to maintain productive soil and plant growth, or they can be incinerated safely without fear of toxic air pollution. Recycling biosolids improves water quality and ensures a cleaner and healthier environment. Support for recycling biosolids has grown steadily in the U.S. over the last decade. According to EPA, wastewater treatment plants produce approximately seven million dry tons of biosolids annually, and recycle approximately 54 percent through land application practices.

Ensuring Clean Water for California

The NBP was founded by twenty-seven wastewater utilities in 1997 to promote best practices for biosolids recycling. The Partnership has created a unique voluntary standards program that enhances the oversight and management of biosolids. The program helps public agencies to *beyond* minimum regulatory compliance, optimizes operations to reduce odors and improve product quality, and increases public education and communication about the safety of biosolids products.

On average, almost 50 percent of operating costs for local municipal wastewater treatment plant goes toward biosolids management. The NBP is designed to support local efforts to manage biosolids efficiently and in the most environmentally friendly manner.

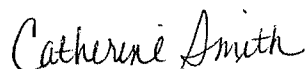
Federal funding allows the NBP to provide participating agencies with technical assistance, best practice training, and guidance on how to fully implement an environmental management system (EMS) for biosolids. In order to participate in the NBP EMS program, a public utility must commit to a Code of Good Practice, which provides a framework to guide the production, management, transportation, storage, and use or disposal of biosolids. Once a utility fully implements its EMS, the NBP works with an independent third-party auditor to certify that the utility's program meets NBP specifications.

Here in the State of California, there are eight utilities participating in the program. Due to Congressional support, 100 communities in 35 States plus the District of Columbia are currently participating in the program, and 16 utilities are fully certified, including the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, East Bay Municipal Utilities District, Orange County Sanitation District, and Encina Wastewater Authority. The program also manages the number one website on the Internet for biosolids information, www.biosolids.org, where over 4,000 registered users routinely receive the latest information on best management practices, regulatory and other developments regarding biosolids management.

The National Biosolids Partnership is a critical resource for publicly owned wastewater treatment plants. Continued federal support will allow the NBP to build on its solid track record of helping utilities manage biosolids in a cost-effective, environmentally sound manner.

I strongly urge your support for continued funding of this important federal program.

Most sincerely,



Catherine A. Smith, CAE
Executive Director