



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# City of San Diego Recognized for Assistance in COVID-19 Monitoring in Wastewater

STUDIES ARE IN COOPERATION WITH BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

SAN DIEGO – Two state agencies have formally recognized the City of San Diego’s Public Utilities Department for its assistance in monitoring wastewater in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City’s Public Utilities Department was one of five California utilities that participated in the Center for Disease Control’s National Wastewater Surveillance System program in cooperation with the State Water Quality Control Board.

In addition, Public Utilities and other organizations were recognized by the California Water Monitoring Council for their wastewater monitoring efforts, including participating in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services pilot studies to investigate the logistics of implementing wastewater-based epidemiology nationally.

**“The monitoring of wastewater can provide key information that is helpful in understanding and preventing the spread of COVID-19,” said Shauna Lorange, Director of the Public Utilities Department. “We are very proud to continue providing assistance to state and federal agencies with these efforts.”**

Public Utilities and several other California agencies and institutions pioneered an approach that better assesses the spread of COVID-19 through testing wastewater, according to the State Water Quality Control Board. This approach yields information about the prevalence of the diseases in populations several days sooner than individual testing and hospitalization records, the board stated.

Both the State Water Quality Control Board and the California Water Monitoring Council expressed their appreciation for the City’s assistance in separate resolutions last month.

The City has been voluntarily involved with multiple studies for COVID-19 monitoring of wastewater since the beginning of the pandemic. City staff efforts predate the development of federal and state epidemiology programs, and data collected were critical in helping to understand the spread, movement and control of the virus in our communities. When the studies are completed, the information will be shared with the public.

The City also has participated in other studies of its wastewater related to COVID-19, including those by San Diego State University, the University of Arizona and the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project.

The City's collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater are carefully monitored and meet all regulations ensuring the health and safety of our employees, community members and the environment. While the presence and viability of COVID -19 in wastewater is still being examined by the scientific community, the City's wastewater treatment process has proven to be very effective in removing other commonly found viruses and bacteria.

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