



## CHARTER

**February 3, 2021**

### **I. Background**

Collection facilities O&M professionals and support staff in the state have always worked together at local and regional levels to share information and help each other. Changes in the workforce, ever tightening regulations, citizens lawsuits, difficult financial pressures, and aging infrastructure have made owning, operating, maintaining, and managing a wastewater collection system in California more challenging than ever. In late 2010 Christoph Dobson of the Sacramento Area Sewer District recognized the stressors and began developing a new collaborative plan to improve this situation. The concept was inspired in part by early collaborative successes of a group of seven collection system agencies known as the California Collection System Collaborative Benchmarking Group. They were very active in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Some of their best practice comparison efforts resulted in best practice manuals which were then provided to the California Water Environment Association for publication and use by collection facilities O&M professionals statewide. In 2011 he recruited a group of collection system agencies including many of the original seven to refocus and again work together to share knowledge, develop agreed best practices, and benchmark activities where possible. The California Alliance for Sewer System Excellence (CASSE) was formed and first met in September 2011 in Sacramento. It was initially made up of 24 agencies in California. Together, the charter members of CASSE were responsible for operating and maintaining over 36,000 miles of gravity and pressure sewer pipe and hundreds of pumping facilities. This represents nearly one-third of all the publicly owned and operated wastewater collection facilities in California. CASSE was created with a vision to reduce sanitary sewer overflows, protect surface waters, help further develop the workforce, and to drive performance up and costs down through implementing agreed best practices at any location.

## II. Mission

CASSE supplies expertise and facilitates collaboration to improve the efficiency of California wastewater collection utilities.

## III. Vision

- CASSE Member Agencies will work together to innovate, improve performance, reduce costs, and drive operational efficiencies in service to the residents and environment of the State of California.
- CASSE subject matter experts will be recognized as authorities on wastewater collection topics, and capture public trust in the wastewater collection industry.
- CASSE leadership will result in a more collaborative and productive relationship with regulators, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders.
- CASSE will make open and honest decisions aimed at producing optimum financial, environmental, and societal benefits.
- CASSE will review, recommend, test as needed, and implement best practices using safe, effective, and efficient processes.
- CASSE will help wastewater collection utilities develop their workforces by recommending appropriate certification, training, and education.

## IV. Membership

The original 24 "Charter Member Agencies" who agreed to participate in CASSE, in September 2011, are listed in alphabetical order below. As new agencies meet membership criteria and join CASSE they will become "Member Agencies." Member Agencies have all the same rights and privileges as Charter Member Agencies. The official list of CASSE members will be kept separately from the Charter, and shall be updated by the Chair whenever a member is added or removed.

### **CHARTER MEMBER AGENCIES**

<b>Agency Name</b>
City of Bakersfield
City of Berkeley
Central Contra Costa Sanitary District
Coachella Valley Water District
Eastern Municipal Water District
City of Folsom
City of Fresno

City of Huntington Beach
City of Long Beach
City of Los Angeles
Mt. View Sanitary District
City of Oakland
Orange County Sanitation District
City of Roseville
City of Sacramento
Sacramento Area Sewer District
City of San Diego
City of San Jose
City of San Luis Obispo
South Placer Municipal Utilities District
City of Stockton
Union Sanitary District
Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District
City of West Sacramento

Any CWIQS Enrollee is eligible for membership, and may obtain membership by contacting the CASSE Chair, signing the CASSE Charter Agreement, and paying any applicable annual dues. Although CASSE does not charge annual dues at this time, it may wish to establish a dues structure and charge dues in the future. Future dues structures should consider the size of Member Agencies in calculating their dues. In order to retain membership privileges the following requirements must be met:

1. At least one representative (employee, contractor, or consultant) of a member agency must attend at least one CASSE meeting per year, and
2. Stay current on any applicable annual dues, and
3. Sign the CASSE Charter Agreement

Failure to fulfill these requirements will result in automatic forfeiture of membership privileges. If membership privileges are forfeited, they may be re-obtained by meeting the requirements of membership, making a request to the CASSE Chair to have the privileges reinstated, and re-signing the CASSE Charter. Membership privileges include voting, participating in committees, and access to work products such as documents, BMP manuals, and benchmarking data.

## V. Scope of Activities

The following are the types of activities CASSE expects to engage in:

- Collaborate as a unique users and owners group to share experiences and accomplishments;

- Review, recognize, and recommend minimum best practices, while incorporating flexibility and accounting for site-specific needs.
- Help members to achieve high compliance levels with the statewide WDR Order for Sanitary Sewers and CA Title 8
- Monitor guidance documents, educational and training programs and manuals of practice produced by others.
- Publish new or edit existing manuals or documents recommending best practices for wastewater collection utilities.
- Provide written and/or verbal testimony regarding recommended best practices on behalf of wastewater collection utilities.
- Maintain a library of document templates for use by Member Agencies
- Conduct surveys and maintain records of the data collected for Member Agencies.
- Provide subject matter experts as a resource for wastewater collection utilities and the media
- Sign, edit, or provide comments for joint comment letters with other clean water agencies, but only when addressing topics which are within CASSE's expertise, and aligned with the CASSE Mission and Vision.

CASSE **does not** expect to engage in the following activities:

- Endorse products
- Duplicate the work of other groups
- CASSE generally will not engage in lobbying, although CASSE may choose to sign, edit, or provide comments for joint comment letters with other clean water agencies.
- Provide written and/or verbal testimony regarding wastewater collection utilities' compliance with best practices

CASSE joins a crowded field of organizations working on behalf of the wastewater industry. CASSE does not intend to compete with these agencies, nor to be duplicative, but rather to supplement their activities in areas where CASSE has expertise, and sees a need that isn't being filled. Some of the agencies that CASSE will seek to collaborate with include:

- Tri-TAC
- California Water Environment Association (CWEA)
- Water Environment Federation Collection System Committee (WEF CSC)
- Water Research Foundation (WRF)
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)
- California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA)
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)
- California League of Cities

- American Public Works Association (APWA)
- Southern California Alliance of Publicly Owned Treatment Works (SCAP CSC)
- Bay Area Clean Water Association Collection System Committee (BACWA CSC)
- Central Valley Clean Water Association Collection System Committee (CVCWA CSC)

CASSE's niches are innovation, efficiency, utility agency collaboration, and best practices.

## **VI. Organizational Structure**

CASSE is made up of its general membership and its committees. The general membership is made up of employees of the Member Agencies. There is no maximum number of employees who may participate in meetings or committees. However, each Member Agency is only allowed one vote when making decisions for CASSE.

The general membership must appoint a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Chair and Secretary roles may change with each general membership meeting, as described in Section VIII below. The general membership will select a Member Agency to serve as the lead for financial issues, and the Treasurer will be appointed by the selected Member Agency. The Treasurer role may remain unfilled unless and until CASSE becomes a separate legal entity, managing its own finances.

## **VII. Committees**

Committees should have a specialized purpose that aligns well with CASSE's Mission and Vision. Committees may be formed and dissolved by majority vote of the Member Agencies present. Once formed, committees must appoint a Chair who will lead the committee, and a Secretary who will prepare meeting minutes. Other roles may be assigned as needed to fulfill the purpose of the committee.

Committees must submit a proposal to the general membership outlining the scope of their work, schedule, budget (if applicable) and an indication of how they will measure the success of the committee prior to beginning their activities. Once a scope of work is approved the committee can proceed with activities necessary to complete their work product. Once drafted, the work product must be resubmitted to the general membership for comment and eventual approval.

Best practice manuals prepared by committees should incorporate as much flexibility as possible into their recommendations, recognizing the range of conditions that Member Agencies operate under. The purpose of this approach is to provide the best possible guidance for Member Agencies, without restricting Member Agencies' ability to make business decisions in the best interest of their constituents.

## **VIII. Meetings and Decision Making**

General membership meetings should preferably be held face-to-face three times per year, and in no case should there be less than one face-to-face meeting per year. Meeting locations should generally alternate between Northern California and Southern California, and over the long term efforts should be made to spread the burden of traveling as evenly as possible among the Member Agencies, while attempting to minimize the overall travel burden for all Member Agencies. The hosting Member Agency is responsible for supplying adequate resources to achieve a successful meeting, including adequate meeting space, facilitating ground transportation for those flying in, and providing lunch, or means for the attending members to get lunch.

Meetings of the general membership may be held at any time provided a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as the lesser of the following:

- 50% of the Member Agencies plus one, or
- 5 Member Agencies

Face-to-face meetings are preferred, but meetings may be held by telephone or video conferencing. A representative of a Member Agency may teleconference in to a face-to-face meeting, and retains all rights of participation of someone attending in person, including voting and counting towards the quorum.

Unless otherwise agreed to, general membership decisions are made by majority vote of Member Agencies present. Regardless of the number of representatives present, each Member Agency is only allowed one vote. E-mail votes may be held, but must be preceded by substantive effort to reach consensus.

Committee meetings should be held at least quarterly.

## **IX. Funding**

CASSE will not fund travel and other employee-related expenses of its members. However, from time to time Members may wish to fund projects or other activities that further the mission of CASSE, and to equitably distribute the associated costs among participating Member agencies. A separate agreement will be prepared and executed by Members to establish the necessary accounting mechanisms, and cost sharing responsibilities. Although the details of this arrangement are left to be clarified in the agreement, there is an expectation that funding responsibilities will be proportional to the size of the Member agency.

## **CASSE Charter Dated February 3, 2021**

The CASSE Charter is not intended to be a legally binding document, but rather a statement of the intent of the Member Agencies who make up CASSE. By signing below the representative of the Member Agency listed below is indicating the Member Agency's willingness to:

- Actively participate in the work of CASSE;
- Assist in achieving CASSE's Mission and Vision;
- Abide by the terms outlined in this Charter; and
- Support the improvement of sanitary sewer collection system agencies throughout California

Member Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_  
(printed name)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_