



Media Release

San Francisco Water Board honors advocacy group for legislation that will help limit sewage overflows

Annual Pollution Prevention Award given in memory of visionary board employee

December 15, 2021

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Oakland –The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) has been named the winner of the 2021 [Pollution Prevention Award](#) for leading efforts to pass state legislation in October that will require “Do Not Flush” warnings on packaging for baby wipes, cleaning wipes and cosmetic wipes, and will compel manufacturers to educate the public on the harmful impacts of flushing wipes.

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board presents the award annually in memory of Teng-Chung Wu, a former Water Board employee and early advocate for pollution prevention. He believed many pollutants can be more effectively eliminated by controlling their sources rather than relying on end-of-pipe treatment.

Preventing wipes from being flushed will help keep sewage and microplastics out of California’s waters, including Bay Area creeks and San Francisco Bay. Since wipes don’t break down in water like toilet paper does, they have been linked to numerous clogged sewer pipes and equipment malfunctions that can cause sanitary sewer overflows.

Reducing sewer overflows is one of the San Francisco Water Board’s highest priorities because untreated sewage contains pathogens, viruses, metals and other chemicals that can threaten human health and water quality. Nearly all wipes contain plastic and shed fibers that wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove.

“Pollution prevention is successful when we work together,” said Water Board Executive Officer Michael Montgomery. “CASA sets a great example by effectively collaborating with diverse stakeholders statewide to pass legislation that should dramatically reduce the impact these wipes have on clogging pipes.”

For three years, CASA collaborated with wastewater representatives, product stewardship groups and wipes manufacturers to get the Assembly Bill 818 passed, and CASA advocates for similar legislation nationwide. CASA continues to collaborate with wipes manufacturers on public education efforts and encourages the industry to meet stringent international flushability standards for so-called “flushable” wipes not covered by AB818.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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The mission of the San Francisco Bay Water Board is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper water resource allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.