

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT (Dylan Garner)
MEETING DATE: September 11, 2013

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: **2013 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Awards**—Presentation of Award to City of Palo Alto

CHRONOLOGY: 2007 - Awarded to Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group for dental mercury reduction education and to East Bay Municipal Utility District for collaborative projects with local advocacy groups
2008 - Awarded to City and County of San Francisco for FOG (fats, oil, and grease) to fuel program
2009 - Awarded to Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group for State and regional “No Drugs Down the Drain” campaign
2010 - Awarded to Wastewater Treatment Agencies of Marin County for their collaborative public education program
2011 - Awarded to City of Millbrae Water Pollution Prevention Program for its outstanding outreach
2012 - Awarded to Alameda County for Safe Drug Disposal Ordinance and to Thomas Barron in Recognition of Lifetime Achievements in Pollution Prevention

DISCUSSION: This item is to present the 2013 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award to the City of Palo Alto for its outstanding efforts in controlling emerging pollutants. The City operates a wastewater treatment plant that serves Palo Alto and surrounding communities including Mountain View and Stanford University. This mid-sized operation has a huge track record as a leader in the research, education, and measurable reduction of emerging pollutants.

Water quality monitoring studies indicate that chemicals from pharmaceuticals, personal care products, pesticides, and other consumer products are being detected more frequently in waterways including the Bay. These chemicals are often referred to as “contaminants of emerging concern” (CECs) because their risk to human health and the environment is not well understood. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove CECs. Examples include triclosan used in antibacterial soaps, flame retardants, perfluorinated hydrocarbons used in stain resistant products, hormone supplements, and nitro-musks used in fragrances.

The City has been highly proactive on the control of CECs by partnering with universities and the San Francisco Estuary Institute to conduct studies to understand the levels and fates of various CECs in the wastewater treatment process. These efforts have led to cutting edge publications, in some instances authored by City staff, and fact sheets to inform region-wide pollution prevention efforts.

The City gets the CECs pollution prevention message out through online social media, local newspapers, newsletters, workshops, booths at public events, inserts in utility bills, and programs with school kids.

Since 2002, the City has collected over 22 tons of pharmaceutical waste and is currently leading a regional hospice education and outreach project through the Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group. The City continues to look ahead by advocating for a long-term solution to controlling emerging pollutants by working alongside the California Product Stewardship Council and the Product Stewardship Institute on extended producer responsibility programs. These programs aim to require manufacturers to fund and manage the disposal of the products they produce.

The Water Board established this award in 2007 to honor the legacy of Dr. Teng-chung Wu, who worked for many years at the Board and was a pollution prevention advocate for decades before it became popular. The award recognizes innovation, excellence, effectiveness, and collaboration in pollution prevention. The timing of the award coincides with National Pollution Prevention Week, September 16-22, and precedes the State of the Estuary Conference in October that will focus on emerging contaminants.

**RECOMMEND-
ATION:**

No action is necessary