

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

**STAFF SUMMARY REPORT: D'Andre Alejandro
MEETING DATE: October 14, 2026**

ITEM: 5

**2026 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award – Presentation of Award to
the City of San José**

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2026 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award – Presentation of Award to the City of San José

DISCUSSION:

This item is the presentation of the 2026 Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award to the City of San José (City) in recognition of its multifaceted and programmatic approach to preventing a diverse range of conventional and emerging pollutants from entering wastewater and to reducing trash generation and accumulation. The award recognizes the City's pollution prevention effects across its wastewater and stormwater programs, both of which are part of the City's Environmental Services Department.

The Board established the Dr. Teng-chung Wu Pollution Prevention Award in 2007 to honor the legacy of Dr. Wu, who worked for many years at the Board and was an early visionary in pollution prevention. He believed the best way to keep the Bay clean was to keep pollutants from entering waterways and waste streams, rather than constructing expensive treatment works or organizing extensive cleanup projects to remove them downstream. The spirit of Dr. Wu's belief remains pivotal today as we encourage incentives to reduce the generation of pollutants. The annual award in his name recognizes and celebrates innovation, effectiveness, and collaboration in pollution prevention.

Wastewater

Serving 1.5 million residents and 17,000 commercial and industrial facilities with wastewater collection and treatment at the San José-Santa Clara Regional Wastewater Facility, the City advances wastewater pollution prevention through:

- Creative public outreach
- Comprehensive source control, and
- Sustained support for research on emerging contaminants.

The City utilizes a colorful variety of in-person pollution prevention outreach events and campaigns — including flea and tick pesticide outreach with the San José Sharks hockey team; participation in cultural events like Christmas in the Park, Lunar New Year Festival, and Bark in the Park; and an extensive social media presence across multiple platforms.

Year after year, the City continues to set a high standard in pollution prevention and consistency, including nearly 100 percent installation of mercury amalgam separators at dental practices and over 1,600 fats, oils, and grease inspections at food service establishments in Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

For decades, the City has remained a significant contributor to the advancement of research on contaminants of emerging concern, allowing its wastewater facility to be a sandbox for continued investigations for the San Francisco Estuary Institute and its Regional Monitoring Program. Recent investigations over the past five years have focused on PFAS, microplastics, bisphenol, sunscreens, and quaternary ammonia compounds. These investigations have identified previously unknown sources of these contaminants to the sanitary sewer system and have helped characterize temporal trends within its region.

Stormwater

The City's recent efforts to use a human-centered approach to address discharges of trash associated with unsheltered homelessness, and to address trash discharges from illicit dumping, are significant, beginning with the creation of a Direct Discharge Control Plan (Plan) and the reorganization of City government to support collaborative work across City departments. The Plan is cross-collaborative — pooling resources and engaging ideas across municipal service departments, agencies, and local government — to control trash and improve water quality while taking a human-centered approach to supporting the City's unsheltered homeless communities.

The Plan employs a five-step approach that:

- 1) *Engages* communities within 500 feet of a waterway,
- 2) *Shelters* and supports unsheltered people while they work towards permanent housing solutions,
- 3) *Clears* encampments while also providing supplementary trash collection events and removal programs,
- 4) *Preserves* future water quality by establishing cleared zones as “no encampment zones,” and
- 5) *Restores* water quality by partnering with local stakeholders to remove debris and prevent future trash accumulation and discharge to local waterways.

Notably, the City has provided targeted outreach and housing assistance to unsheltered residents in encampment areas. Through its collaboration with Valley Water, the City provides interim housing facilities at Cherry Avenue, a site that Valley Water leases to the City at no cost. As of June 2025, these efforts have transitioned 96 clients into interim housing, with the City providing health and human services through its Emergency Interim Housing Program to help transition unsheltered residents to permanent shelter. The program supports the resolution and restoration of a federally- and state-mandated watershed protection area located near Cherry Avenue in San José. The City also supports the Taylor Street Navigation Hub, which provides emergency housing and services until interim housing becomes available at a facility

such as Cherry Avenue. Supplemental to reducing trash generation, the City also provides free junk pickup days through its BeautifySJ Program to discourage illegal trash dumping or trash accumulation areas.

APPENDIX

A. Past Pollution Prevention Award Recipients

Appendix A

Past Pollution Prevention Award Recipients

Past Pollution Prevention Award Recipients

Year	Recipient	Achievement
2026	City of San José	Creativity, innovation, and cross-collaboration in wastewater and stormwater pollution prevention
2025	Union Sanitary District	Exceptional School Outreach Program satisfying NGSS State science standards with significant reach to multiple cities
2024	Napa Sanitation	Public outreach and education activities
2023	Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group Pesticides Subcommittee (Stephanie Hughes, Kelly Moran, and Tammy Qualls accepting on behalf of the committee)	Pesticide source control via advocacy and outreach
2022	San Francisco Department of the Environment	Polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) reduction efforts
2021	California Association of Sanitation Agencies	Advocacy of AB 818: “Do Not Flush” labeling on disposable wipes
2020	City of Berkeley	Single Use Foodware and Litter Reduction Ordinance
2019	Geoff Brosseau	Reducing stormwater pollution throughout California
2018	Ann Joseph	Promoting integrated pest management in retail
2017	Melody LaBella and Karin North	Numerous projects to reduce wastewater pollution
2016	City of San José	Innovative outreach campaigns
2015	Central Contra Costa Sanitary District	Leading a campaign against flushing disposable wipes
2014	Phil Bobel	Lifetime achievement in pollution prevention
2013	City of Palo Alto	Research and outreach efforts on contaminants of emerging concern
2012	Alameda County	Safe Drug Disposal Ordinance
2012	Thomas Barron	Lifetime achievement in pollution prevention
2011	Millbrae Water Pollution Prevention Program	Outstanding public outreach

Year	Recipient	Achievement
2010	Wastewater Treatment Agencies of Marin County	Collaborative public education program
2009	Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group	“No Drugs Down the Drain” campaign
2008	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission	“Fats, Oils, and Grease to Fuel” program
2007	Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group	Mercury reduction education
2007	East Bay Municipal Utility District	Collaboration with local groups