

**State of California  
California Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Santa Ana Region**

**July 22, 2022**

**STAFF REPORT**

**ITEM: 7**

**SUBJECT: Wastewater Surveillance Study and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**DISCUSSION:**

The [California Department of Public Health](#) (CDPH) and the State Water Resources Control Board together are coordinating with several wastewater utilities, local health departments, universities, and laboratories in California on wastewater surveillance for SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19. Data collected from this network of participants, called the California Surveillance of Wastewater Systems Network, are submitted to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the [National Sewershed Surveillance System \(NWSS\)](#).

Monitoring municipal wastewater and sludge for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes the disease COVID-19, along with clinical data on infections and virus shedding rates can provide valuable information to inform COVID-19 epidemiology and the State's and local health officials' response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Studies have shown that SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) variants of concern can be identified in wastewater samples 1-2 weeks prior to being detected in clinical samples from the same area, making wastewater surveillance useful for detecting and monitoring SARS-CoV-2 at the population scale.

The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) is participating with this study and will be providing an overview of the study and its application in the pandemic. SCCWRP is an aquatic sciences research institute that works to improve management of aquatic systems in Southern California and beyond. Founded as an intergovernmental public agency in 1969, SCCWRP has been developing strategies, tools and technologies that the region's water-quality management community relies on to more effectively protect and enhance the ecological health of Southern California's coastal ocean and the watersheds that drain to it. As an R&D agency, SCCWRP's reputation is built on conducting research and translating this science into actionable guidance and recommendations that inform management decision-making and policy development.

As an information item, no voting or formal action will take place.