

Winter Conference 2026
Pipelines for Progress
Preliminary Program (12/12/25)
Subject to Change

Tuesday, January 13

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. CSRMA Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 14

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. CSRMA Training Seminar (Separate Registration Required)

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. CASA Education Foundation Board Meeting
The CASA Education Foundation helps ensure clean water for Californians by awarding scholarships to promising students on a path to serving the environmental community. The Foundation relies 100% on individual and organizational donations. This meeting is open to all attendees.

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CASA Board of Directors Meeting
CASA's Board of Directors meets in-person at both the Annual and Winter Conferences to conduct business and discuss high-level issues on behalf of the organization. Stop by and meet the Board of Directors and the CASA Team. This meeting is open to all attendees.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Women of Wastewater Meeting
Meet and connect with fellow women of wastewater during this networking event. Female leaders will gather to get to know each other and share ideas and experiences. Join your colleagues to explore ways to uplift and inspire one another. . This meeting is open to all attendees.

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Associates Committee Meeting

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Lunch on Your Own

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. CSRMA Board of Directors Meeting

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tour of Valley Sanitary District (VSD): *Valley Sanitary District owns and operates a 12.5 MGD treatment facility that serves the City of Indio, parts of Coachella, La Quinta, and unincorporated Riverside County. Attendees will have the unique opportunity to explore the recently upgraded activated sludge treatment plant and get an update on the District's Recycled Water Project and the Innovative Biosolids Management Project. Bus transportation will be provided for those who registered in advance.*

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Concurrent Sessions

Track 1A: ACE in Focus Part 1: Policies and Initiatives	Track 2A: Directors Track: Understanding and Navigating the Brown Act and the Conflict of Interest Codes	Track 3A: Nutrient Management
Moderator: Sarah Deslauriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Rothbart (Clean Water SoCal), Statewide Wastewater Pooled Source Testing Program Payal Sarkar (San Jose-Santa Clara RWF), 	Moderator: Spencer Saks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicholas Norvell, Best Best & Krieger 	Moderator: Jared Voskuhl <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Thomas, The Freshwater Trust (Jared) Lorien Fono / BACWA (Jared) Adam Schneibers, Iowa

Wastewater Surveillance & Laboratory Programs		
Track 1B: ACE in Focus Part 2: Agency Energy Resilience Projects and Drivers	Track 2B: Cutting Red Tape: The Future of Federal Deregulation and Permitting Reform	Track 3B: Biosolids Regionalization Efforts
Moderator: Sarah Deslauriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ali Chehrehsez & Tony Pastore (TerraVerde Energy) ▪ Yaniv Scherson & William Colsey (Anaergia) ▪ Paul Fukumoto (FuelCell Energy) 	Moderator: Sarah Sapirstein <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scott Berry, Sr. Advisor, Policy & External Affairs, US Water Alliance ▪ Melissa Thorme, Stoel Rives LLP 	Moderator: Maile Lono-Batura <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kevin Stewart, San Bernardino Municipal Water Department, SoCal Regional Biosolids Program Feasibility Study ▪ Rashi Gupta, Carollo, SoCal Regional Biosolids Program Feasibility Study ▪ Lorien Fono, BACWA ▪ Nitin Goel, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District ▪ Jonathan Boitano, Brown & Caldwell

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Track 1A, 2A, 3A

Track 1A: ACE in Focus Part 1: As California unveils its updated strategy for adapting to climate change, the wastewater sector must navigate adapting infrastructure while facing increasingly restrictive regulations. This track provides an overview of the state's climate adaptation strategy priorities, the status of the wastewater sector's pooled source testing to better manage air toxics emissions as we work to reduce GHG emissions, and the latest in wastewater surveillance and development of an early warning system for harmful algal blooms to bolster community resilience.

Track 2A: New laws updating the Brown Act are bringing significant changes to many public agencies' meetings starting in 2026. SB 707 is intended to diversify and increase public engagement in local government, and also modernize the Ralph M. Brown Act in the face of technological advancements. This track helps agencies stay on top of updates to the Brown Act and will also provide a discussion on the authority and purpose behind the Conflict of Interest Code.

Track 3A: Nutrient Management: Nutrient management will be an increasingly important issue for California agencies in the coming years. Hear from a panel of experts on innovative nutrient strategies including alternative compliance pathways, collaborative projects, as well as actions that other states and regions have taken to address nutrient issues.

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Track 1B, 2B, 3B

Track 1B: ACE in Focus Part 2: Agency Energy Resilience Projects and Drivers: As communities contemplate strategies to adapt to climate change, essential public service providers (including wastewater agencies) are seeking ways to ensure energy resilience. This panel will showcase strategies members are taking to ensure they have the power needed to provide reliable services while also supporting the state achieve its carbon neutrality mandate.

Track 2B: Cutting Red Tape: The Future of Federal Deregulation and Permitting Reform: In recent years, there has been growing momentum within the federal government to reduce bureaucratic barriers, accelerate infrastructure development, and modernize the federal permitting

process. This panel explores ongoing and proposed efforts to streamline regulations, strengthen interagency coordination, and make federal decision-making more efficient and transparent.

Track 3B: Biosolids Regionalization Efforts: Effective biosolids management continues to be a top priority for clean water agencies, and regionalization efforts have been a hot topic in recent years. Hear from leaders in both Southern California and Bay Area on their regionalization efforts, as well as information on a national research effort tied to regionalization that CASA is involved with.

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Federal Legislative Committee Meeting
Meet the CASA Federal Legislative Committee and hear from CASA's federal advocates Eric Sapirstein and Sarah Sapirstein about the latest happenings in Washington D.C., including the status of WIFIA funding, PFAS legislation, the non- flushable wipes bill, and more. This meeting is open to all attendees.

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Welcome Reception

Thursday, January 15

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Breakfast

7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Registration

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. State Legislative Committee Meeting
Meet the CASA State Legislative Committee and learn more about one of CASA's core programs. The SLC is where we take positions on pending legislation, determine our legislative priorities, and discuss what is happening in the current legislative session. This meeting is open to all attendees.

9:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Morning Sessions

9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Welcome Address
Tony Trembley, CASA President

9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Opening Keynote: Jennifer Tabanico, Action Research
Community Based Social Marketing: Changing Consumer Behavior Related to PFAS and Microplastics Exposure and Promoting Product Stewardship
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Hear from renowned expert Jennifer Tabanico on how agencies can leverage behavioral science research to develop behavior change programs that contribute to safe, healthy, and sustainable communities. Jennifer is an expert in applying behavioral science and community-based social marketing to foster a wide range of environmental behavior changes, including those impacting wastewater, water, air quality, biodiversity, and energy. She has worked with federal, state, and local government agencies as well as community organizations across the globe on these initiatives. You won't want to miss this!

10:45 am – 11:30 am Antoine Walter, (don't) Waste Water
A consistent challenge across the water resource recovery sector is engaging beyond our typical audiences and elevating the conversation on the critical role these systems play in human health, particularly as it relates to water accessibility. Recently #TeamWater's social influences set out to raise \$41.5 million to enable access to safe drinking water for 2 million people for 20 years through creative livestream fundraising. While the main goal was to raise funding for the project, it raised broad awareness, to the order of 40% higher search volume for "water reuse" according to Google Trends. Antoine will impart his analysis on this unique strategy and how bridging the gap between water access and social media can help to normalize the conversation surrounding resource recovery, sanitation, and circular water, and how we can take a more active role in owning this narrative.

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Networking Break

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Luncheon
CEF Presentation
Jessica and Eric Federal and State Legislative Updates

1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Networking Break

1:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Afternoon Sessions

1:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Agency Funding and Project Financing Opportunities from A to Z
Moderator: Alexandra Gunnell

- Richard Harmon, Woodard and Curran
- Tahne Corcutt, Jacobs
- Alexandra Gunnell, SFPUC
- Cameron Weist, CalMuni Advisors
- Sylvia Ornelas, Elsinore Valley MWD

This unique, full-afternoon panel will focus on the topic that CASA agencies frequently cite as their number one priority: capital project funding and project financing. Our panel of experts will cover existing and new funding opportunities, formation and utilization of pools and JPAs, best practices for Proposition 218 rate outreach, as well as the agency perspective on how all these pieces can fit together to successfully fund essential projects. If your agency has a significant project that requires funding in the coming years, this session is absolutely essential!

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Engineering and Research Group Meeting
The Engineering and Research Group meeting is a subgroup of the Associates Committee that is focused on two core initiatives: the Partnering for Impact (PFI) event that occurs in the early summer and the CASA Research Collaborative. Join this meeting to hear about both initiatives and provide your input. This meeting is open to all attendees.

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Communications Committee Meeting
Meet the CASA Communications Committee and connect with your fellow public information officers and communications professionals to discuss best practices, resources, and new initiatives. This meeting is open to all attendees.

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Reception

Friday, January 16

8:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Registration

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Breakfast

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Statewide Biosolids Meeting
Join us for the always popular statewide biosolids meeting led by Director of Renewable Resources Maile Lono-Batura. We will be discussing regional coalition efforts, national PFAS and biosolids risk assessment issues, circular water economy initiatives, and more. This meeting is open to all attendees.

9:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Closing Session

9:15 – 10:00 a.m. Closing Keynote: Will Sarni, Practice Lead, Water and Nature at Earth Finance, Founder and CEO of Water Foundry

10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Workforce Development in Focus: Connecting With the Emerging Labor Force
Moderator: Gregorio Estrada

- Ryan Green, Leucadia Wastewater District
- Jenn Jones, CWEA

Workforce development is a critical concern for CASA agencies, and the wide variety of methods agencies are utilizing to engage the next generation of water leaders is truly impressive. Hear from a Southern California agency about how they are engaging local high-schools to share the value of a clean water career. CWEA will also provide some insights into their latest training programs, not only for operators but also for those looking to move into and through the management ranks.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. President's Closing Remarks

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. General Managers Meeting
This meeting is only open to the General Managers of CASA agency members

11:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Attorneys Committee Meeting
This meeting is only open to members of the CASA Attorneys Committee which consists of general and special counsel for CASA member agencies and Associate legal firms.