

**RESOLUTION APPROVING STATEMENT OF OWASA'S
SUSTAINABILITY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

WHEREAS, OWASA recognizes that water is essential for all life and an adequate supply of clean water is essential for our health, quality of life and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, OWASA recognizes that our customers, other citizens and our natural environment are affected by our services and projects, and that our programs and services are paid for by our customers through rates and fees; and

WHEREAS, OWASA's *Mission and Values Statement* emphasizes the importance of environmentally, economically and socially sustainable facilities, practices and services; and

WHEREAS, it is our challenge to proactively plan, design, construct, operate, maintain and finance water and wastewater services in a manner that balances this "triple bottom line" of sustainability; and

WHEREAS, OWASA has already begun to demonstrate the importance of and our commitment to integrating environmental stewardship, economic strength and social integrity as interdependent components of our comprehensive sustainability ethic and philosophy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Orange Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors approves the attached *Statement of OWASA'S Sustainability Goal and Objectives*.
2. That this policy shall become effective upon adoption.
3. That the Executive Director is authorized and directed to implement and interpret this Sustainability Goal and Objectives policy statement.

Adopted this 26th day of April, 2007.


Michael A. (Mac) Clarke, Chair

ATTEST:



Gordon Merklein, Secretary

ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

SUSTAINABILITY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

OUR COMMITMENT

OWASA recognizes that water is essential for all life, and an adequate supply of clean water is essential for our health, quality of life and economic well-being. We also recognize that our customers, other citizens, and our natural environment are affected by our services and projects, whether in construction of a new water or sewer pipeline or facility, the management of our watershed lands, or the recycling of biosolids from our wastewater operations.

We recognize that our programs and services are paid for by our customers and that our rates and fees have the potential to affect our customers' financial health and well-being, particularly for those who have low incomes or face other financial difficulties.

Our challenge is to proactively plan, design, construct, operate, maintain, and finance water and wastewater services in a manner that balances environmental, social, and economic performance – the “triple bottom line” of sustainability. Our organization and our employees are committed to continual improvement in meeting this challenge, and to making the highest and best use of our finite and essential resources. Fundamental to this is the promotion of practices which achieve cost-effective conservation of water, energy, and other natural resources.

This *Statement of OWASA's Sustainability Goal and Objectives* sets forth our sustainability values and approach. It is intended as a living, breathing document – one that will be periodically reviewed and improved to better reflect our evolving commitment and efforts.

OUR SUSTAINABILITY GOAL

Our Sustainability Goal is set forth in our Mission Statement:

“We will proactively plan, construct, operate, maintain, and finance the water and wastewater system in a manner consistent with the principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. We will work hard to meet the needs of our current and future customers, community, and environment without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. We will strive to make the highest and best use of our local water resources and we will adopt practices which encourage conservation of water, energy and other natural resources.” [emphasis added]

OUR SUSTAINABILITY OBJECTIVES

The following sections describe our organizational objectives for the three main components of sustainability.

ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Environmental protection and conservation of natural resources are the elements of sustainability most commonly addressed by business, government and industry. Natural resources are no longer abundant. They are being depleted faster than they can be replaced. Waste streams are polluting and compromising our environment and its ability to regenerate natural resources. This is not a sustainable condition, as we are compromising the ability to meet our own needs and the needs of future generations. Although OWASA takes a more comprehensive approach to defining sustainability (environmental, social and economic), this section focuses on the development and implementation of policies and practices that preserve natural resources; maintain or restore natural systems; conserve energy, water, and other natural resources; minimize waste and pollution emissions, and reduce our environmental impacts.

WATER

Water is essential for all life, and an adequate supply of clean water is essential for our community's quality of life and economy. We are committed to identifying and implementing strategies to achieve the following objectives:

- ✓ Maximize the quality and sufficiency of our local water resources.
- ✓ Maximize cost-effective opportunities to increase water use efficiency in our service area.
- ✓ Maximize the use of highly treated reclaimed water to meet non-drinking water needs.
- ✓ Protect drinking water supply watersheds.
- ✓ Minimize and where feasible eliminate negative impacts of our operations on surface water and groundwater resources.

ENERGY

All living things need energy for everything they do. We recognize that our use of energy, particularly non-renewable energy, impacts land, water and air resources across geographical scales. We acknowledge that our use of fossil fuel contributes to increased greenhouse gas emissions, which in turn leads to climate change which threatens human and environmental health on a global scale. Our use of energy is also a major direct expense to our customers.

We will identify and, where feasible, implement strategies to achieve the following objectives:

- ✓ Maximize cost-effective energy efficiency in our operations, including buildings, vehicles and equipment. We will take into account environmental, non-dollar costs in evaluating cost effectiveness.
- ✓ Incorporate energy efficiency measures into the design of new and renovated facilities.
- ✓ Reduce our use of non-renewable fuels and increase the portion of our energy needs met with renewable fuels and energy sources.
- ✓ Provide information to our customers about the energy-saving benefits of water conservation.

WATER, LAND, AIR and BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Our water, land, air and biological resources provide life-sustaining services. Waste streams can have profound and sometimes irreversible affects on those resources and services. Our goal is to mimic the state of natural systems, in which there is no waste – where by-products from one natural process become beneficial resource inputs for other processes. We will strive to minimize our emissions from a project or activity so that they are within the assimilative capacity of the environment, and do not degrade the environment’s absorptive capacity.

We will do this through the following objectives:

Water/Wastewater

- ✓ Treat all water to exceed regulatory standards.
- ✓ Maintain an effective pretreatment program and sewer use ordinance to minimize the introduction of toxic substances into the sewer system.
- ✓ Proactively maintain and rehabilitate our wastewater collection system to minimize the potential for wastewater overflows.

Air/climate change

- ✓ Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.
- ✓ Eliminate off-site odors from our Mason Farm Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Solids

- ✓ Beneficially recycle solids produced during the drinking water treatment process.
- ✓ Beneficially recycle biosolids produced during the wastewater treatment process.

- ✓ Beneficially recycle materials such as paper, glass, aluminum, scrap metals, electronic equipment and batteries, plastics, cardboard, and fluorescent lights.

Land and Biological Resources

- ✓ Permanently protect critical lands in our drinking water supply watersheds.
- ✓ Minimize land-disturbing activities and mitigate the effects of those activities on the environment.
- ✓ Restore or enhance the natural quality of land under our control that has been degraded by our operations or by others.

MATERIALS USE

Many non-renewable resources are being depleted at an increasing rate, and many renewable resources are being used at a rate that cannot be sustained. To be more sustainable in our use of materials, we will strive to meet the following objectives:

- ✓ Make efficient use of resources.
- ✓ Purchase and use environmentally-friendly products.
- ✓ Use recycled products.
- ✓ Reduce our dependence on use of non-renewable resources, taking into account overall cost-effectiveness.
- ✓ Minimize and when feasible eliminate the use of toxic materials, metals, etc.

SOCIAL PERFORMANCE

Our operations and facilities affect the well-being of the people, businesses, institutions and the community we serve. We will address the needs of and enhance our relationships with our customers, the whole community, our employees, the local governments and other public agencies that we work with.

We are committed to being more socially sustainable through the following objectives:

OUR CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITY

- ✓ Inform and educate our customers about our services, operations, needs, challenges, the value we add to the community's quality of life and our investments to improve current and future service quality.
- ✓ Provide meaningful and timely opportunities to be involved and to participate in decisions important and of interest to them.
- ✓ Be respectful, honest, responsive and fair to our customers and citizens.

- ✓ Evaluate and minimize where possible, within cost-of-service pricing, the financial hardship that our rates, fees and charges may present.
- ✓ Support the community through our participation in the United Way campaign, supporting blood drives and food drives, etc.
- ✓ Build and strengthen partnerships with other organizations to develop cost-effective strategies to achieve a more sustainable future.

OUR EMPLOYEES

- ✓ Provide an effective safety program.
- ✓ Treat employees at all times with respect and sensitivity.
- ✓ Sustain an outstanding “destination” workplace that attracts and retains diverse, highly talented and skilled people to serve the community.
- ✓ Provide competitive compensation and benefits.
- ✓ Promote education, creativity, growth and development of our employees.
- ✓ Inform new and incumbent employees about our mission, values, and services and the value we add to the community’s quality of life.
- ✓ Provide meaningful and timely opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- ✓ Develop and implement a knowledge management, sharing and retention plan.
- ✓ Develop and implement a workforce succession plan.
- ✓ Have emergency response plans and in-house emergency spill response capabilities.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Financial strength is a key to achieving sustainability. OWASA is a public, community-owned non-profit agency, and does not levy taxes. We manage our operations and services using revenues generated from service rates, fees and charges. We are required to set these rates and fees according to “cost of service” principles. Our customers and our community depend upon our delivering very high quality water and sewer services that promote public health, protect the environment and support economic well-being. Economic sustainability will continue to be a defining characteristic of OWASA as we strengthen our planning and decision-making with a comprehensive approach to sustainability.

We will maintain and enhance financial sustainability through the following objectives:

- ✓ We will continue to use cost-of-service principles with regards to our rates, fees, and charges, and to operate the water and sewer systems at the lowest rates consistent with our obligation to provide proper and efficient services, now and in the future, *and consistent with our sustainability goal and objectives.*

- ✓ Complete life-cycle cost analyses for key decisions.
- ✓ Consider the value of natural resource and public health protection.
- ✓ Price our services based on cost-of-service, taking into account the life-cycle costs and resource protection costs.
- ✓ Use and update a comprehensive long-term financial plan and 15-year capital improvements plan.
- ✓ Establish a sustainable program to meet long-term asset rehabilitation and replacement needs.
- ✓ Work with local governments within our service area to provide adequate services to complement and support their respective land use and growth management plans.

THE CHALLENGE OF BALANCING OBJECTIVES

To be a sustainable utility, we will do more than reduce waste, protect natural resources and recycle. We will continuously increase our understanding of the natural systems and how they work, and recognize that everything we do can affect these systems. We recognize that each choice we make has a “cost.” True costs are a combination of the environmental, economic, and social costs balanced against the desired, or expected and actual benefits to our community, its economy and the natural environment.

To become a more sustainable utility, we must acknowledge, consider and balance these important, but oftentimes competing values when we must make important decisions. To achieve this we will:

- ✓ Operate and maintain our facilities to maximize value, service quality, social equity, community-building and environmental performance.
- ✓ Incorporate sustainability principles and commitments into decision-making, service and capital improvements planning, consultant and contractor selection, purchasing of materials and supplies and use of service/construction contractors.
- ✓ Incorporate true cost principles into our rate schedules.
- ✓ Consider non-traditional benefits and costs in our decisions.
- ✓ Reflect our sustainability philosophy in requests for consultants’/contractors’ qualifications and proposals or bids.
- ✓ Evaluate and report on our progress on sustainability initiatives, and pursue continual improvement in our services.