

making WAVES

NATIONAL
PUBLICATION OF
THE SURFRIDER
FOUNDATION



VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 4
AUGUST 2002

IN THIS ISSUE:

HUGE SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA VICTORY

VICTORY AT RINCÓN,
PUERTO RICO

CHAPTER ECO-
ACTIVISM REPORTS

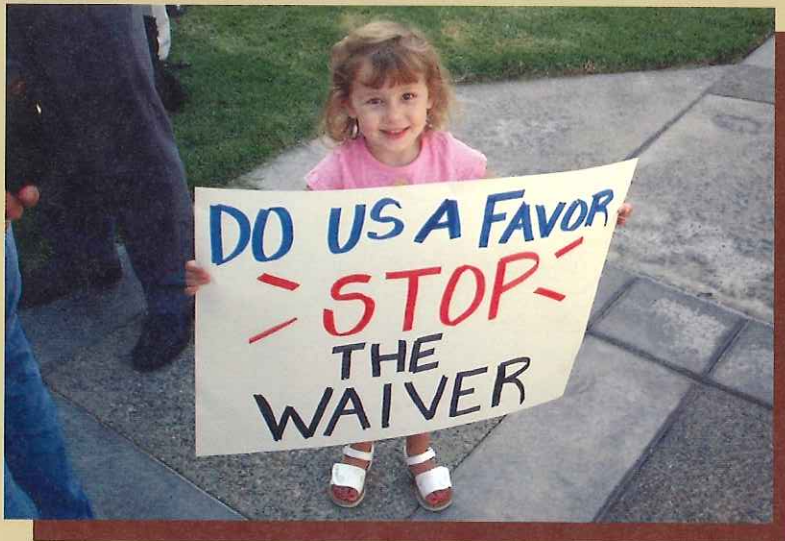
SANTA CRUZ SURF
SPOT VALUE STUDY

BEACH PRESERVATION
HAWAIIAN STYLE

SURFRIDER BEACH
SAND REPORT PART I

SF MEMBERSHIP
DRIVE UPDATE





VICTORY IN CALIFORNIA

Orange County Sanitation District Persuaded to Vote Down Sewage Waiver

Nearly ten years of effort on behalf of the Surfrider Foundation culminated July 17th with a narrow 13 to 12 vote by the Orange County Sanitation District Board to discontinue operating under the controversial 301(h) waiver, which has allowed them to discharge partially treated sewage into the channel off Huntington Beach for nearly 20 years. The Board's vote cleared the way for the agency to initiate full secondary treatment of sewage as mandated in the 1972 federal Clean Water Act.

The campaign to stop the waiver, was initiated by the Surfrider Foundation's Huntington Beach Chapter nearly 10 years ago. Under the waiver the OCSD dumps approximately 240,000,000 gallons per day of partially treated wastewater 4 miles offshore of Huntington Beach. Surfrider's efforts along with the tremendous work of the Ocean Outfall Group and other environmental groups, which had been gaining tremendous momentum leading up to the vote, were spurred by near continuous beach warnings and closings along Huntington and Bolsa Chica State Beaches over the last few years.

Activist turnout the night of the vote was strong, with over 350 people turning out to show their support of stopping the waiver. Inside, it was standing room only as several Surfrider members, including former World Champion Surfer Shaun Tomson, made impassioned pleas during the public comment period prior to the OCSD Board's vote. Outside the building, several hundred citizens waived signs and signed petitions as they waited nearly five hours for the Board to make its decision.

The OCSD Board has until November to change their vote and apply for the waiver. The Surfrider Foundation and the Ocean Outfall Group will continue to apply pressure on the Board to do the right thing and eliminate the waiver.

Photo top: Surfrider activists of all ages attended the Orange County Sanitation District Board of Directors meeting in Orange County to show where they stood on the Waiver issue.



What is a 301(h) waiver?

The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1972 requires publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) or wastewater treatment facilities, to treat their sewage to full secondary treatment capability. Secondary treatment is a level of treatment that produces removal efficiencies of bacteria and suspended solids of about 85%.

When the CWA was initiated, some treatment agencies argued that full secondary treatment might be unnecessary since some POTW's discharged wastewater into deep waters with large tides and substantial current which it was argued, mitigated the impact to the ocean. In response, Congress added Section 301 (h) to the Act. This section allows for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to, upon request from a POTW, grant a 301(h) waiver and, potentially waive the Act's secondary treatment requirement. The waiver is renewable every five years. In 1990 approximately 60 sanitation agencies across the nation of about 16,000 agencies, held permits with waivers. Today about 36 such permits remain.

Other POTW's still operating under 301(h) waivers are located in San Diego, California; San Luis Obispo, California; Goleta, California, Maine; Massachusetts; Hawaii; New Hampshire as well as several other coastal states.

For a full list of 301(h) holders, visit the address below and contact the Surfrider Foundation to see how you can help eliminate all 301(h) waivers.

<http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/oceans/discharges/301list.html>