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**Board of Directors**

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October 28, 2019

Board of Directors  
Triunfo Water & Sanitation District  
Ventura County, California

**DISCUSSION OF ORCA FOOD DIGESTER AT MEDEA CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

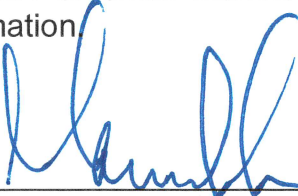
**Recommendation**

The Oak Park Unified School District (OPUSD) installed the ORCA Food Digester (ORCA) at the Medea Creek Middle School. The project assumed that the ORCA would take cafeteria food waste and utilizing a bacteria based treatment process would convert it into a liquid effluent that would be disposed through the Triunfo Water & Sanitation District (District) sewer system. Once the District was made aware of the ORCA installation at Medea, staff conducted sampling to insure that the system was compliant with District waste discharge limits and would not create an adverse impact on the District's sewer system. Based on the sampling results, staff made a determination that the effluent generated by the ORCA treatment system failed to meet the District's requirements. As a result, OPUSD was directed to immediately cease operations and discharge of the ORCA to the District's wastewater system.

OPUSD officials and the ORCA manufacturer have made several requests for the District to reconsider this position. Staff currently maintains its position to not allow the ORCA Food Digester to discharge into the District's wastewater system based on the following; 1) the School District's grease interceptor is not designed or intended to receive the type of waste or flow generated by the ORCA, 2) the ORCA's inability to operate within the District's discharge standards. The District supports innovative uses of emerging technology, however, effluent testing that was performed by the District does not support the claims made by the ORCA manufacturer. Staff is requesting the Board discuss these issues and provide direction to respond to the requests by the Oak Park Unified School District.

Please contact me at 805-658-4621 or email [marknorris@vrsd.com](mailto:marknorris@vrsd.com) if you have any questions or need additional information.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:



Mark Norris - General Manager

Attachments: Letters to Oak Park Unified School District on ORCA Digester



**Board of Directors**  
 Janna Orkney, Chair  
 Susan Pan, Vice Chair  
 Leon Shapiro, Director  
 Raymond Tjulander, Director  
 James Wall, Director

*Providing Outstanding Service Since 1963*

August 28, 2019

Oak Park Unified School District  
 5801 Conifer Street  
 Oak Park, CA 91377

**NOTICE TO CEASE OPERATIONS OF THE ORCA FOOD DIGESTER AT MEDEA CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The Oak Park Unified School District installed the ORCA Food Digester (ORCA) at the Medea Creek Middle School (Medea) in XXX 2019. The project assumed that the ORCA would take cafeteria food waste and utilizing a bacteria based treatment process would convert it into a liquid effluent that would be disposed through the Triunfo Water & Sanitation District (District) sewer system. The District provides sanitary sewer services for the Oak Park area. The District has established waste discharge limits for various constituents in the wastewater to prohibit discharges that could interfere with the operation or performance of the District’s sewer system. Once the District was made aware of the ORCA installation at Medea, staff conducted sampling to insure that the system was compliant with District waste discharge limits and would not create an adverse impact on the District’s sewer system.

District staff inspected the grease interceptor at Medea on Wednesday, May 15, 2019. The inspection included sampling from the grease interceptor to obtain a visual example of the amounts of fats, oil, grease, and settleable solids accumulated in the interceptor. In addition, samples were collected from the grease interceptor sample box and sent to a laboratory for analysis. The laboratory results are as follows:

Constituent	Results (milligram/liter – mg/L)	District Limit
BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand)	4,500 mg/L	
TSS (Total Suspended Solids)	4,100 mg/L	
Oil and Grease	125 mg/L	100 mg/L

Based on the sampling results, the District has made a determination that the effluent generated by the ORCA treatment system fails to meet the District’s requirements. As a result, you are directed to immediately cease operations and discharge of the ORCA to the District’s wastewater system.

Please contact me at 805-658-4648 or via email at [Richardjones@vrzd.com](mailto:Richardjones@vrzd.com) if you have any questions or need further information.

RICHARD JONES – OPERATIONS MANAGER

Attachments: Lab Results



**Board of Directors**  
Janna Orkney, Chair  
Susan Pan, Vice Chair  
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James Wall, Director

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October 3, 2019

Oak Park Unified School District  
5801 Conifer Street  
Oak Park, CA 91377

**NOTICE TO CEASE OPERATIONS OF THE ORCA FOOD DIGESTER AT MEDEA CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The Triunfo Water & Sanitation District (District) maintains its position to not allow the ORCA Food Digester to discharge into the District's wastewater system. The District's position is based on the following; 1) the School District's grease interceptor is not designed or intended to receive the type of waste or flow generated by the ORCA, 2) the fact that the Ventura County Environmental Health Department requires relocation of the ORCA outdoors due to its H<sub>2</sub>S generation, which calls into question the claim that the system provides aerobic biological treatment, and 3) the ORCA's inability to operate within the District's discharge standards. The District certainly supports the School District's commitment to innovative uses of emerging technology, however, effluent testing that was performed by the District does not support the claims made by the ORCA manufacturer.

Please contact me at 805-658-4648 or via email at [Richardjones@vrzd.com](mailto:Richardjones@vrzd.com) if you have any questions or need further information.

RICHARD JONES – OPERATIONS MANAGER

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