



# CALIFORNIA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION

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October 22, 2002

Celeste Cantú  
Executive Director  
State Water Resources Control Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

RE: Discontinuation of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Program

Dear Ms. Cantú:

The California Water Environment Association (CWEA) has just been informed that the State Water Resources Control Board intends to discontinue the Operator Certification Program as of October 18, 2002. CWEA is very concerned about the short and long-term effects this will have on the wastewater industry, the public, and the environment. CWEA is interested in taking over the Operator Certification Program and to work with the SWRCB to ensure a smooth transition.

The loss of the Operator Certification Program would have a profound, and adverse, impact on the California wastewater industry. The current quality of wastewater treatment plant operation is a direct result of having an effective operator certification program. Wastewater treatment plant staffing structures at approximately 3,500 public agencies are based on mandated certification. Loss of the program would cause significant public expense in restructuring the existing staffing structures. CWEA has continuously administered successful professional wastewater certification programs for over 66 years and has the unique infrastructure and resources required to take over the Operator Certification Program. CWEA founded the Operator Certification Program in 1937 and administered it until it was turned over to the State in 1973. CWEA currently administers a complex set of 21 validated certifications for wastewater personnel other than plant operators. CWEA is staffed with a full time Certification Director, Program Coordinator, and support staff with expertise in wastewater certification test development and administration. We also have a vast amount of expertise and experience in our training and certification committees representing a diversity of wastewater treatment facilities throughout the State.

The CWEA Board of Directors has approved the resources to work on the transition of the Operator Certification Program immediately, and I have appointed a team to work with your office to establish the details of a transition plan. They will contact your office within the next few working days to establish the next steps in this process. Meanwhile, I am available for further discussion at (760) 753-0155 x3010 or at [dpollak@lcwd.org](mailto:dpollak@lcwd.org).

Sincerely,

Denis Pollak  
President, California Water Environment Association

cc: CWEA Board of Directors  
Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification and Training Advisory Committee  
Elizabeth Allan, CWEA Executive Director