

COVID-19 clues in wastewater

Researchers have long known that wastewater can provide a window into the health of the community. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, researchers across the country quickly mobilized and partnered with wastewater agencies including EBMUD.

Whereas a typical coronavirus test provides results for one person, sampling wastewater for the presence of COVID-19 provides an assessment for a larger community. The results are a leading indicator of the status of the pandemic because infected individuals shed the virus in poop even before they show symptoms.

In March 2020, EBMUD began providing wastewater samples and related data to Stanford University, UC Berkeley and the University of South Carolina. These samples were instrumental in helping researchers develop ground-breaking detection methods to monitor the novel

coronavirus for thousands – or even hundreds of thousands, of people at a time.

Since its start, EBMUD has been part of “Wastewater Epidemiology for the Bay Area,” a group which brings together wastewater utilities, public health officers, and laboratories to analyze Bay Area wastewater samples. EBMUD, along with wastewater utilities nationwide, contributes to a US Department of Health and Human Services sampling program, which provides weekly results to public health officials. This data helps public health and medical experts make important logistical and policy decisions regarding public health resources, shelter-in-place orders and educational outreach.

► *Melissa, a Research Microbiologist, tests the samples for COVID-19.*

Collaborations, such as these, provide critical information at a time when we must all work together to beat this pandemic. EBMUD is a proud partner in this effort, which takes our mission to protect public health to a whole new level.



Wastewater Inspectors Kiley (left) and Cheryl (right) extract samples.



Like water, justice and equality are essential

In the same way that we strive to serve communities with high-quality water and wastewater services, we're putting forth a plan, full of hard work and vision, to be the change we want to see in our society.

We're building on a long-standing commitment to advocate for diversity, racial equity and inclusion in how we hire, support employees, contract and engage with the community.

Two women on our Human Resources team are leading the way. Jaisha and Sophia are bringing fresh eyes and their personal experiences as women of color to these crucial conversations.

Jaisha is helping to implement a strategic plan including developing cultural competency training, examining recruitment processes, con-

ducting employee listening sessions and diversifying career pathways.

"I believe that inclusion begins with 'I.' This means that every employee, regardless of title, plays a vital role in creating a work environment that is conducive to inclusion and belonging," says Jaisha. "I want to create an environment where people feel, see, and value each other's humanity."

Sophia coordinates the internship program, introducing students to the world of water and public service.

"Leadership requires us to act on the local level," says Sophia. "What drives me is being able to move the dial forward."

As a public agency with nearly 100 years of history in the East Bay, EBMUD is committed to serving our diverse community and workforce, and advancing equity in all of the work we do.



HR team members: Jaisha (top) and Sophia (bottom) are helping to coordinate diversity and inclusion efforts.



MARCH MARKS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Everyone knows about Rosie the Riveter, but do you know about the women of water who served as meter readers during World War II?

As we celebrate Women's History Month, we salute the past and present contributions of women in our workforce.

Meter readers in 1945: Teo Maggie Lohr (left) and Pearl Hafner (right).



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Careers

EBMUD is seeking qualified candidates to represent our diverse community.

Visit: ebmud.com/jobs

Board Meetings

The EBMUD Board of Directors are guiding actions to advance racial equity.

Tune in: ebmud.com/board-meetings

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EBMUD Mission Statement

To manage the natural resources with which the District is entrusted; to provide reliable, high-quality water and wastewater services at fair and reasonable rates for the people of the East Bay; and to preserve and protect the environment for future generations.

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