

November 1, 2023

I have had the pleasure of working with Ben Lavender, the Community Affairs Representative for the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, for many years as the Science Specialist for Mt. Diablo Unified Schools and with Sustainable Contra Costa

Ben and his teaching staff supported and engaged with hundreds of students and teachers in many classrooms to learn about wastewater, recycling, STEM, STEM careers and much more. They developed and shared many exciting, and innovative, hands-on activities and lessons to our students in grades tk-12 on a regular basis, with no fees or charges!

Our high school students and teachers have benefitted and learned a great deal from the "Sewer Science" program, over multiple years in a variety of Chemistry and other science classrooms. Many of our teachers attended a variety of professional learning opportunities with Ben and his staff, at their school sites and at the Central San facility. Summer institutes provided high quality teacher training, opportunities to meet with scientists, engineers, and other critical employees. In addition, site visits included bird watching on the settling ponds, plant identification and great outdoor experiences.

I have enjoyed watching the programs at the Sanitary District improve and grow under Ben's direction. His knowledge of science and science education are evident in the units and lessons he has developed and in his interactions with students and teachers. For many of our teachers and students their engagement with these programs helped them to better understand and implement the Next Generation Science Standards, and to find joy and excitement in learning.

Sincerely,
Jan Robertson, MS