



Tell the "World's Greenest Mayor" to Stop Poisoning His City

In 2008, *Organic Style Magazine* called San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom the World's Greenest Mayor, complementing his initiatives on recycling, green building, low-emission vehicles, and energy audits, among many unique innovations he has brought to the city.

But the true test of a green city may be what happens to its toxic sewage sludge. San Francisco contracts with a sewage sludge disposal company (Synagro) to take its sludge away. Now that it can't be dumped in the oceans, most of it is dumped on farmland. The law actually allows toxic sewage sludge to be used to grow food! It's so common and accepted, in fact, that the OCA had to fight hard to keep toxic sludge out of federal organic standards (this was back when Obama's favorite pesticide lobbyist, Islam Siddiqui, proposed organic standards for the Clinton administration).

The thing that distinguishes San Francisco from other cities dumping sludge on farmland is that it is the first and only city to launch an aggressive PR offensive around getting their citizens to take some of their toxic sludge back. They manage to do this by giving it away to gardeners, claiming that it is "high-quality, nutrient-rich, organic Biosolids Compost." If the World's Greenest Mayor can get away with this, watch out, because there's no telling what the toxic sludge industry will do in your town!

That's why we're putting out a call to all of our members and readers to encourage organic consumers across the country to help us stop San Francisco's toxic sewage sludge giveaways. Please take action today: www.is.gd/7HRc4 and go to the OCA's Toxic Sludge Page to learn more: organicconsumers.org/sludge.cfm

Horror Story of the Week

Excerpt from first-person accounts posted to *Sludge News*: "Our government says its safe, my body says its not. The sludge trucks are coming now in 2009. Class B sludge, no less. After moving into my new home in 2008, having no idea that sludge is surrounding my home. To the northwest of my home a farmer gets sludge in some kind of holding tanks that stinks like something truly ungodly. To the east, two other big fields get sludged in summer months. Next to my home, 1240 tons of Class B Sludge, (that's approx 54 tractor trailers) started dumping on 8/4/2008. So now I'm getting ready for the nosebleeds to start, the headaches are starting, I'm hoping I don't get paralysis and chest pains like last year. You can talk to anyone in government and it's not in their back yard, so they don't care. And most pass the buck and say they have no control. Or its the law. Well, laws are changed everyday in this country... I am really disgusted with the lack of ethics and political will of our so called leaders... No wonder some mid easterners refer to us as infidels, we just spread our shit all over the planet."



Who Wants You to Believe Toxic Sludge Is Good for You?

Members of the OCA staff went undercover to a meeting of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission employees and the toxic sludge industry last week. What we found surprised us. We figured, in such a green city, that SFPUC employees would keep an arms length distance from for-profit sludge companies like Synagro that make their money dumping city sludge on rural lands. We thought that they would be trying to figure out green alternatives to flushing waste away with clean drinking water.

Little did we know. SFPUC, Synagro and CASA, the state lobbying group for all of California's city sewer commissions, are mounting a coordinated effort to salvage the business-as-usual practice of flushing household and industrial waste away with clean water and then contaminating farmland with toxic sludge leftover when the water is removed. They see San Francisco's sludge giveaway program as an essential component of their national campaign to build public acceptance for the disposal of toxic sewage sludge on yards, gardens and farms. They will fight any effort to shut the program down, and specifically named OCA allies the Center for Food Safety and RILES, who filed a legal petition with the San Francisco to stop the sludge giveaway, as enemies of their campaign.

This public-private trifecta is well resourced and unscrupulous. The Synagro rep boasted of earning the support of a local university for a toxic sludge project by promising a \$25,000 yearly donation. The CASA rep talked about using "Congressional funny money" to fund studies that would provide science that backed-up the industry. And, the SFPUC rep, the public employee, stood by them smiling and nodding as they applauded her for not backing down in the face of public opposition to the contamination of San Francisco's green space with toxic sludge. www.is.gd/7HSNs

Book: The Big Necessity by Rose George

In 2010, when surgery can be done microscopically and human achievement seems limitless, 2.6 billion people lack the most basic thing that human dignity requires. Four in ten people in the world have no toilet. They must do their business instead on roadsides, in the bushes, wherever they can. Yet human feces in water supplies contribute to one in ten of the world's communicable diseases. A child dies from diarrhea—usually brought on by fecal-contaminated food or water—every 15 seconds.

The Big Necessity—as one Mumbai toilet builder called the toilet—is the account of travels through the profoundly intriguing but stupidly neglected world of the disposal of human waste, which houses characters like Jack Sim, founder of the World Toilet Organization; Wang Ming Ying, who is attempting to alleviate environmental devastation and deforestation in China by persuading rural Chinese to install biogas digesters, which produce cooking gas from human feces; Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, whose NGO Sulabh has built half a million toilets in India, as well as the world's only museum of toilets; and the flushers of London and New York's sewers, who scoff at roaches but hate rats nearly as much as they hate congealed cooking fat and tri-ply toilet paper.

Human "waste" is full of nutrients. It is a rich, valuable, inexhaustible material, as rich as the world of people who work with it. *The Big Necessity* is an overdue exploration of a hidden world and of the world's biggest unsolved public health crisis. It is a cultural, colorful travelogue around a fact of life that is common to everyone, as necessary as breathing, and a source of endless fascination, if only we dare to look.

Break the Chains on Valentine's Day

More than 20 million Americans will be buying sweets and flowers for their loved ones on Valentine's Day. Unfortunately, these tokens of love aren't as sweet or pure as they may appear. Over 40% of the world's conventional chocolate comes from Africa's Ivory Coast, where the International Labor Organization and us State Department have reported widespread instances of child slavery. Meanwhile, commercial flowers, most of which are produced in countries such as Colombia, are the most toxic and heavily sprayed agricultural crops on earth. Supplying the global market, poorly paid workers in Third World countries put in up to 18 hour work days for poverty wages during peak flower buying times such as Valentine's Day. Don't let the bad news squelch your Valentine's plans. Show your love by choosing Fair Trade and organic flowers and chocolate for your Valentine's Day gifts.

Please visit OCA's Valentines Campaign page to take action: organicconsumers.org/valentines/