

June 14, 2012



THE INTERNET NEWSPAPER: NEWS BLOGS VIDEO COMMUNITY



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Why Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Cares About Your Sewage

Posted: 06/13/2012 7:02 pm

The pursuit of successfully turning waste into something of value has been the 'white whale' of the sustainability world for decades. [Recycling](#) has long been the clear example of how this lofty goal can... sort of... be achieved. But the constantly evolving green and cleantech worlds are now looking for stronger, more innovative examples.

The problem is, often times these types of brilliant innovations aren't easily explained or understood by the average Joe. It's time to shed some light on the subject with one strong example that has surfaced over the past several years.

This particular company tackles waste water. Yeah, yeah, we recognize waste water may not sound like the flashiest of industries, but the challenges that come along with properly managing it are enormous, with significant impact on the environment and our resources. In these challenges also lie significant business opportunities. [Ostara Nutrient Recovery Technologies Inc.](#), backed by [VantagePoint Capital Partners](#) and [Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.](#) among other notable investor groups, is a company that is making a real difference in this space -- and doing so with huge growth potential.

Ostara is a clean water company that recovers [phosphorus](#) and nitrogen from industrial and municipal wastewaters. So why does Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. care about your sewage? Well, phosphorus, typically mined from the phosphate rock is a non-renewable resource that is vital to the global agriculture industry, and happens to be found in abundance in wastewater.

Its mineral deposits, however, also are unfortunately harmful on wastewater treatment machinery -- an issue whose removal costs municipalities and treatment facilities an extraordinary amount of money.

Enter Ostara. They not only utilize cutting edge technology to safely remove the phosphorus -- a chore that would burden municipalities anyway -- but they take it multiple dimensions further. Ostara's process extracts naturally built-up phosphorus to be reused into an extremely effective fertilizer called [Crystal Green](#), turning a

(literal) waste stream into a value stream and saving the environmental drain (and cost) of virgin mining of this non-renewable resource in the process. The real kicker is that today's oftentimes budget-strained municipalities and water treatment facilities will save significant costs in partnering with Ostara, as well as share in the revenue stream the Crystal Green product creates.

In fact on May 8 the company opened the world's largest municipal nutrient recovery [facility](#) at Clean Water Services' Rock Creek Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility in Hillsboro, Oregon. What's even more impressive is that the income from selling the fertilizer pellets combined with wastewater treatment cost savings are projected to pay for the facility in just six years. That's less time than it takes to pay off some car loans.

The company also reported recently that it has just raised an additional \$14.5 million to launch a major expansion. According to Phillip Abrary, Ostara President & CEO, the company's focus will now be to expand the application of its proprietary nutrient recovery technology into industrial markets. "In addition to growing our worldwide municipal customer base," said Abrary, "these funds will be used to commercialize a significant industrial opportunity that we've been developing for the past 24 months."

Ostara has managed to successfully turn a burdened waste into a resource that is both sustainable and profitable -- an ideal type of innovation that this world could use some more of. Goes to show you that one man's waste (water) really can be another man's treasure.