



ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Report

Headquarters
18480 Bandilier Circle
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
(714) 593-7433

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Agenda Item No: 13.

FROM: Robert Thompson, General Manager
Originator: Laura Maravilla, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT:

ADOPTION OF THE 2025 ORANGE COUNTY WATER AND WASTEWATER MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt Resolution No. OC SAN 25-05 entitled: "A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sanitation District Adopting the 2025 Orange County Water and Wastewater Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan".

BACKGROUND

Hazard Mitigation

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) to establish a framework for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments to engage in hazard mitigation planning as a prerequisite for receiving certain types of non-emergency disaster funding assistance. The requirements and procedures for implementing hazard mitigation planning provisions are outlined in Title 44, Chapter 1, Part 201 (44 CFR Part 201) of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Since the passage of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, additional legislation has further shaped hazard mitigation policy, including:

- The Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA) of 2013
- Amendments to the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968
- The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016

To be eligible for certain federal grant programs, an approved and adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan is required. Grant programs include:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Public Assistance Grant Program (PA)
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)
- Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund Program
- Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAG)
- Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dam Grant Program (HHPD)

2025 Orange County Water and Wastewater Multi-Jurisdiction Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) Update

In January 2024, the Water Emergency Response Organization of Orange County (WEROC) initiated the update of the Orange County Water and Wastewater MJHMP to ensure continued eligibility for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hazard mitigation funding. Water and wastewater agencies are required to maintain a current and approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). The existing Orange County Water and Wastewater MJHMP remained valid through March 9, 2025.

The purpose of the plan is to recognize vulnerabilities from human-made and natural disasters that pose a threat to critical infrastructure and identifies strategies to mitigate or manage risk with the goal of protecting lives, infrastructure, property and the environment, while also minimizing damage and economic losses.

WEROC's mission for this project was to provide project management and guidance to ensure compliance with FEMA's 2023 Hazard Mitigation Requirements. A key change in the 2023 guidelines emphasized public outreach, participation, and engagement as essential components for plan approval. One of the project's main challenges was ensuring that all participating agencies understood these changes and adhered to required timelines and milestones. WEROC provided direct assistance to agencies facing challenges to ensure successful compliance.

To facilitate comprehensive community input, WEROC incorporated regular feedback from key stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- The Costa Mesa Sanitary District's Citizens Advisory Committee
- The Orange County Emergency Management Organization
- The Orange County Operational Area Executive Board
- Additional community meetings and events (as outlined in the MJHMP)

Participating Agencies in the 2025 MJHMP

The 2025 MJHMP includes the following agencies:

- Costa Mesa Sanitary District
- El Toro Water District
- Irvine Ranch Water District
- Laguna Beach County Water District
- Mesa Water
- Moulton Niguel Water District
- Municipal Water District of Orange County
- Orange County Sanitation District
- Orange County Water District
- Santa Margarita Water District
- Serrano Water District
- South Coast Water District
- South Orange County Wastewater Authority
- Trabuco Canyon Water District
- Yorba Linda Water District

Plan Submission & Approval Process

WEROC submitted the MJHMP to the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) on December 3, 2024, in accordance with the project milestones. The submission included all

necessary documentation for compliance.

CalOES completed its review on January 16, 2025, and provided revision requests for every agency annex. In response, WEROC collaborated with the project contractor to implement the required changes and resubmit the plan for final CalOES approval.

On February 14, 2025, CalOES approved the required changes and transmitted the plan to FEMA for final review, a process that typically takes approximately 45 days.

On April 14, 2025, WEROC received communication from FEMA that they have completed their review of the 2025 MJHMP and have determined that the plan is eligible for final approval, pending its formal adoption by the Municipal Water District of Orange County and all participating jurisdictions.

Plan Adoption Process

One of FEMA's requirements is that all participating agencies must formally adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan by resolution. In a Multi-Jurisdictional Plan, the process is slightly different:

- The regional base plan serves as a foundation, containing public outreach efforts, overall strategy, and key descriptions.
- Each agency annex includes details specific to its jurisdiction.

To expedite FEMA approval, WEROC has requested FEMA to approve the plan pending adoption. Given past experiences, this approach ensures a smoother process.

During the 2018 plan revision, all agencies initially adopted the plan in 2019, but FEMA later required modifications, resulting in agencies re-adopting the revised plan in late 2019. When the new Director of Emergency Management joined WEROC in January 2020, resolving this issue became a priority, and the plan was fully adopted by March 2020. Based on these lessons, WEROC has implemented an improved adoption process for the 2025 update to minimize delays and ensure efficiency.

Ongoing Mitigation Planning

The Hazard Mitigation Plan is a living document that will evolve alongside the needs of participating agencies and communities. Agencies may identify new priorities or shift their goals based on emerging risks, updated data, or evolving circumstances.

To accommodate these changes:

- Adjustments will be documented throughout the plan implementation process.
- Formal plan updates will be conducted every five years, as required by FEMA.

By maintaining an active and adaptive approach to hazard mitigation planning, participating agencies can effectively reduce risks, enhance resilience, and ensure compliance with federal and state mitigation policies.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

- Protect OC San assets
- Protect public safety
- Commitment to safety & reducing risk in all operations

PROBLEM

The MJHMP has been updated, replacing the 2019 document, which requires approval and adoption by the Board of Directors.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Approve the updated MJHMP.

TIMING CONCERNS

Adoption by all participating agencies must occur within one year or the plan must be resubmitted.

RAMIFICATIONS OF NOT TAKING ACTION

OC San will not be eligible to receive certain federal grant programs from FEMA without an adopted MJHMP.

PRIOR COMMITTEE/BOARD ACTIONS

September 2019 - Adopted Resolution No. OCSD 19-17 entitled, "A Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Orange County Sanitation District Approving and Adopting the 2019 Orange County Regional Water and Wastewater Hazard Mitigation Plan," in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Action (DMA) of 2000.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A

CEQA

N/A

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENT

The following attachment(s) may be viewed on-line at the OC San website (www.ocsan.gov) with the complete agenda package:

- Resolution No. OC SAN 25-05
- Orange County Sanitation District Hazard Mitigation Plan
- April 14, 2025 FEMA Approval Letter Adoption