



TO: Orange County Sanitation District

FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors

DATE: March 20, 2026

SUBJECT: Local Legislative Report

Following are a few of the more notable developments and issues that have transpired in Orange County over the last several weeks:

- The Cypress City Council recently announced the appointment of Shannon DeLong as City Manager. Ms. DeLong previously served as Assistant City Manager for the City of Whittier, a role she has held since June 2018, and prior to that she spent more than a decade with the City of Downey. She will begin her role as the 10<sup>th</sup> City Manager, and first woman, in the City's history on March 30.
- Anaheim's Assistant City Manager, Greg Garcia, has been serving as Interim City Manager since the resignation of former City Manager Jim Vanderpool in early February.
- The Board of Supervisors may consider extending the contract of current CEO Michelle Aguirre beyond its current June 30, 2026, terminus while an outside search firm continues the search to find a potential successor. Ms. Aguirre has served as CEO since June of last year after a nine-month tenure as Interim CEO.
- The Board of Supervisors recently approved Phase II of Orange County's Climate Action Plan (CAP), a comprehensive roadmap outlining projects and programs aimed at reducing greenhouse gases and other emissions from a variety of sources.

Key initiatives include expanding stormwater capture and infiltration, reducing organic waste sent to landfills by 75 percent while increasing edible food recovery by 20 percent, and exploring the feasibility of regional anaerobic digestion and conversion technology facilities.

A completed CAP is required for the County to apply for and secure Proposition 4 grant funding to support these and other targeted programs—many of which are designed to benefit disadvantaged and environmental justice communities.

- The Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission (OC LAFCO) leadership participated in a meeting on March 24 with counterparts from Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego County LAFCOs. This initial meeting of the Alliance of Local Agency Formation Commissions (Alliance) was focused on relevant legislation and other matters of interest to the four agencies, which formed the Alliance in 2025 to provide better coordination on common issues and priorities than was offered through the California Association LAFCO.

County Supervisor Don Wagner was recently reappointed as the sole Board representative to OC LAFCO. Yorba Linda City Council member Peggy Huang's spot will come before the City Selection Committee this Spring; Derek McGregor's spot as Public Member will be voted upon by the other LAFCO Commissioners; and the election of two Special District Commissioners, currently held by Doug Davert, East Orange County Water District, and Alternate Commissioner Kathryn Freschley, El Toro Water District, was initiated by the OC LAFCO on March 9 with notification letters emailed to each Special District. Nominations and declarations for interested candidates for the special district seats are due by April 13, and ballots will be emailed to each special district presiding officer by May 4 and will be due back to OC LAFCO by June 8.

- The County deferred a scheduled virtual community meeting on the proposed increase of the Prima Deshecha Landfill's daily maximum trash intake from 4,000 tons to 8,000 tons. The California Environmental Quality Act process for this proposed expansion began in 2023 and the project is necessitated by the planned closure in several years of Olinda Alpha Landfill near Brea.
- As of the date of this report, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has issued nine Notices of Violation (NOVs) to Orange County Waste and Recycling's Frank R. Bowerman Landfill in Irvine. Since the start of the year, SCAQMD inspectors have been responding to several hundred public complaints of "rotten, sour, garbage-type odors" in the area. The inspectors confirmed the odors with community members and traced them back to operations at the landfill and subsequently issued three initial NOVs in January and another six in February and early March for violations of the public nuisance rules. In addition, the Prima Deshecha Landfill has been issued two NOVs, and SCAQMD staff have visited the Olinda Alpha Landfill several times but have not yet issued any NOVs regarding that facility.
- The Board of Supervisors recently approved the official establishment of the South Orange County Beach Coalition as a decision-making body designed to protect the coastline between Newport Beach and San Clemente. A major component of the Coalition's emphasis will be sand replenishment, with the Sand Compatibility and Opportunistic Use Program, or SCOUP, streamlining sand placement permits for all cities and jurisdictions with beaches from various agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the State Lands Commission.

- An audit report commissioned by the Board of Directors of CalOptima Health found no evidence of impropriety related to actions taken by former County Supervisor and Board Chair Andrew Do, who is currently serving a five-year sentence in federal prison for accepting bribes to direct more than \$10 million in COVID-19 funding to a charity affiliated with his daughter.

A separate audit commissioned by the Board of Supervisors in 2025 found that former Supervisor Do did steer contracts and payments to allies and campaign contributors well beyond the \$10 million he was convicted of diverting. The audit, conducted by a Houston-based accounting firm, also identified approximately \$800,000 in payments to a firm that may have double-billed the County for COVID-19 testing and directed funds to campaign contributors involved in a Tet Festival event sponsored by Do's office.

- The operator of the Balboa Island Ferry reached a deal to receive more than \$10 million from the CA Air Resources Board and SCAQMD to convert its three-ship fleet into zero emission technologies. Seymour Beek, whose father began operating the ferry in 1919, signed an agreement with the two agencies to replace each of the three existing diesel-powered ferries with electric battery-powered vessels that will include a replica smokestack. It is possible that the first new ferry could be in operation by the end of 2026; the existing ferries have been in operation since the mid-1950's.
- The Newport Beach City Council recently authorized spending more than \$700,000 to cover the cost of repairs to the city's two piers ahead of the summer tourism season. Maintenance on the Newport Pier, which was built in 1939 and is registered as a California Historic Landmark, and the Balboa Pier, was built in 1906 as the sister project to the Balboa Pavilion.

As part of our scope of work, Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors has continued to monitor the various City Council agendas and highlighted issues and items of relevance to OC San. We also continue to monitor activities at the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Orange County Water District, and South Orange County Wastewater Authority.

It is a pleasure to work with you and to represent the Orange County Sanitation District.

Sincerely,



Peter Whittingham