



TO: Orange County Sanitation District

FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors

DATE: April 26, 2024

SUBJECT: Local Legislative Report

The month of April has been highlighted by significant grants for various projects, management changes, and other noteworthy events in Orange County. Following is a few of the more notable developments and issues of the month:

- The County of Orange closed the application window for its Chief Executive Officer position. Current CEO Frank Kim, who has served in the position since 2015, announced his retirement last fall after nearly 30 years with the County.
- The Huntington Beach City Council voted 5-2 to increase water and sewer rates by 55% over the next five years to pay for major investments in the city's aging infrastructure. City staff had originally proposed a 74% rate increase across bills for both services, with the lower increase resulting in the deferral of roughly one-fourth of the planned projects.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officially set the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) for six PFAS chemicals; with these new MCLs in place, roughly 40 more wells within the Orange County Water District service area will be affected, bringing the total number of PFAS-impacted wells to approximately 100. Since early 2020, OCWD has constructed enough PFAS treatment plants to bring nearly 40 wells back online.
- The La Habra City Council voted to appoint City Planning Commissioner Carrie Surich to fill the Council vacancy created by the recent resignation of longtime Councilman Steve Simonian.
- U.S. EPA and the Biden Administration have requested that each state provide plans to deal with cybersecurity risks facing their water and wastewater systems. Central Valley Congressman John Duarte, together with Arkansas Representative Rick Crawford, has proposed a bill to create a governing body to develop cybersecurity mandates for water/wastewater systems and work with EPA to enforce new rules.

- The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) held a Public Consultation meeting for Proposed Rule 317.1, which was spurred by the U.S. EPA's revocation of the region's attainment of the 8-hour Ozone standard for 1997 and 2008. PR 317.1 will be heard at the SCAQMD's June 7 Governing Board; if adopted, it will establish annual penalty fees for 320 Title V permit facilities in the region, including Orange County Sanitation District's Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach facilities, as well as the Disneyland Resort, Hoag Hospital in Newport Beach, and Providence St. Joseph Hospital in Orange.

As part of its scope of work, Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors (WPAA) has monitored the various City Council agendas of each of the District's members and highlighted issues and items of relevance to OC San. WPAA also reached out to the City of Newport Beach regarding the Bay Bridge project and met with OC San regarding key initiatives for 2024-2025, such as the Orange County Waste Recycling initiative.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Whittingham".

Peter Whittingham