



TO: Orange County Sanitation District

FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors

DATE: January 23, 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 proposed Waste Infrastructure System Enhancements (WISE), Organic Services, and Disposal Fees and Rates Agreements between the County of Orange and a coalition of cities and sanitation districts will come before the Board of Supervisors at the January 27 meeting. Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors, each jurisdiction will work to complete their respective Prop 218 hearings prior to the new fees going, which goes into effect July 1, 2026. The tiered rates for the WISE agreements will start at \$67/ton in FY 26-27, increasing to \$74/ton in 27-28, \$81/ton in 28-29, and \$81 + Consumer Price Index in the fourth year.
- Phase II of Orange County's Climate Action Plan (CAP), a comprehensive roadmap detailing potential projects and programs to reduce greenhouse gases and other emissions from various sources, will also come to the Board of Supervisors on January 27. Key initiatives within the CAP included increasing stormwater capture and infiltration, reducing the amount of organic waste going to landfills by 75 percent and improving edible food recovery by 20 percent, and exploring the feasibility of regional anaerobic digestion and conversion technology facilities. The County is required to have a completed CAP in order to apply for and secure Proposition 4 grants for the targeted programs.
- The Cypress City Council voted 3-1 to appoint resident Rachel Strong to the at-large council seat vacated by former Council Member Scott Minikus. The appointment came after the individual first selected to the seat withdrew from the process. This prompted the City Council to convene on November 30, 2025, with a publicly noticed special meeting, which was the legal deadline to fill the vacancy. Council Member Strong will fill out the remainder of the District 5 seat term, through November 2026. Former Irvine City Manager Sean Joyce continues to serve as the City's Interim City Manager as they continue their recruitment process.

- The new year brought several city leadership changes across Orange County. The Costa Mesa City Council officially appointed Cecilia Gallardo-Daly as City Manager. Bob Wingenroth—formerly the Anaheim City Manager and Finance Director for Huntington Beach—was unanimously selected as City Manager of Laguna Hills after most recently serving in Surprise, Arizona. In addition, Seimone Jurjis and Kelly Reenders assumed City Manager roles in Newport Beach and Dana Point, respectively.
- The Moulton Niguel Water District Board of Directors appointed Laguna Niguel resident Brian Parker to fill the vacancy created by the resignation in late November of longtime Board member Duane Cave. Mr. Parker has a long career in the petrochemical industry and most recently served as a member of the 2023-2024 Orange County Grand Jury, co-authoring the report, “Emerging Opportunities in South County Water/Wastewater Systems.”
- Seal Beach city officials have taken a key step to finding a solution to the river of trash from urban inland cities that flows down the San Gabriel River every time it rains, onto the beach and into the ocean where Orange County and Los Angeles County meet. The City of Seal Beach has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Los Angeles County, and a study performed by an outside consultant provides a variety of potential solutions and the related costs. The use of trash interceptors with floating booms got the highest scores but would also be the most expensive option, according to the report, with an estimated cost to install one between \$4-\$7 million, with an annual maintenance and operating cost of \$400,000 to \$750,000.
- Aliso Viejo City Manager Mitzi Ortiz passed away suddenly on December 22. Ms. Ortiz served as the City Clerk for roughly ten years before being appointed to the City Manager in August of 2024. City Finance Director Ann Eifert will serve as Acting City Manager pending City Council determination on the path forward.
- Paul Mesmer, longtime member of Surfside Colony Community Services District Board of Directors and the Independent Special Districts of Orange County Executive Committee, passed away suddenly in early January.

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