



TO: Orange County Sanitation District

FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors

DATE: July 31, 2024

SUBJECT: Local Legislative Report

The month of July has been highlighted by a variety of noteworthy events in Orange County. Following is a few of the more notable developments and issues of the month:

- A coalition that includes Mesa Water® and the Orange County Water District, along with the cities of Newport Beach and Huntington Beach, have received \$250,000 in federal money to examine the possibility of converting brackish water to potable, similar to what is currently being done in Torrance and parts of Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The Supply Improvement Project (SIP) is slated to begin this month and the first phase should be concluded in April 2025.
- County of Orange Chief Financial Officer Michelle Aguirre was appointed interim Chief Executive Officer by the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Longtime CEO Frank Kim officially retired July 11; the Board of Supervisors meets next on August 13, at which time they are expected to determine the path forward to determining the next CEO, who will oversee 16,000 employees and a \$9.3 billion budget.
- A number of cities countywide, in the face of significant structural budget deficits, have placed local sales tax measures on the November ballot. The Orange City Council voted earlier in July to place a one-half cent local sales tax measure before voters in the city, and the Seal Beach and Buena Park City Councils have similarly placed one cent sales tax measures before their respective voters in November. The San Clemente City Council will consider placing a three-quarters cent measure before its voters on August 6 after a motion to place a one cent sales tax increase failed to get support from a majority of the Council.
- The County of Orange conducted several public input meetings and finalized the Draft Preliminary Climate Action Plan (CAP), which is slated to come before the Board of Supervisors in September. More information about the CAP may be found here - [Title \(oclandfills.com\)](https://oclandfills.com).

As part of our scope of work, Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors (WPAA) has monitored the various City Council agendas of each of OC San's member agencies and highlighted issues and items of relevance to OC San. We also monitored activities at the South Coast Air Quality Management District, including the announced award of a \$500 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant and a working group meeting dealing with Proposed Rule 1405, which will impact wastewater treatment facilities.

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". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping tail.

Peter Whittingham