



TO: Orange County Sanitation District

FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors

DATE: February 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 County Board of Supervisors engaged in a lengthy discussion at their February 10 meeting regarding the proposed expansion of Prima Deshecha Landfill's capacity. A planned virtual community meeting regarding the project was cancelled after numerous calls and emails were received from residents near the landfill, which is adjacent to Avenida La Pata just south of San Juan Hills High School. The proposed increase in the cap on tonnage at Prima Deshecha, which was originally established in 1976, is necessary to meet demand with the imminent closure of the County's Olinda Alpha Landfill east of the 57 Freeway above Brea.
- 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 were approved by the Board of Supervisors at its meeting on January 27. Each jurisdiction will now work to complete their respective Prop 218 hearings prior to the new fees going 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 Year four.
- Phase II of Orange County's Climate Action Plan, (CAP) a comprehensive roadmap detailing potential projects and programs to reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions from various sources, will now come before the Board of Supervisors on February 24. 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 these targeted programs.

- The Board of Supervisors voted to reelect 4th District Supervisor Doug Chaffee to serve as Chair for 2026, with 5th District Supervisor serving as Vice Chair for a second consecutive year. Chair Chaffee is termed out of office at the end of the year and there are currently four candidates seeking the seat: Fullerton Mayor (Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Orange County Water District Board Member) Fred Jung, Buena Park Mayor Connor Traut, La Habra Councilmember Rose Espinosa, and OC Board of Education Trustee Tim Shaw.
- Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission (OC LAFCO) reorganized its leadership at its January 14 meeting, unanimously selecting Mission Viejo Mayor Wendy Bucknum to serve as Chair and Mesa Water District Board member Jim Fisler as Vice Chair for 2026.
- In addition, a number of OC LAFCO Commissioners will be up for reelection this year. County Supervisor Don Wagner (who is currently the only County Supervisor serving on LAFCO) is expected to be reappointed by the Board of Supervisors at its January 27 meeting; Yorba Linda City Council member Peggy Huang as one of the two City representatives (the election of which is handled by the City Selection Committee); Derek McGregor as the Public Member (appointed by the other LAFCO Commissioners); and Special District Commissioners Doug Davert (East Orange County Water District), and Alternate Commissioner Kathryn Freshley of El Toro Water District. OC LAFCO will be emailing notification letters to each Special District by March 9, with nominations and declarations for interested candidates due by April 13; ballots will be emailed to each special district presiding officer by May 4, with ballots due back to OC LAFCO by June 8. Results will be announced on June 15, and the Oath of Office will be administered at the July 8 OC LAFCO meeting.
- CalOptima Health CEO Michael Hunn, who oversees the County’s \$4 billion health care plan that serves nearly one in every three Orange County residents, announced he will be retiring at the end of the year. Hunn assumed the CEO role in 2021 and has navigated the agency through a number of controversies related to the former Chair of the CalOptima Board of Directors, Andrew Do, who is currently serving a five-year federal prison sentence.
- The Orange County Power Authority (OCPA) is suing the county for nearly \$1 million in costs it says are associated with the Board of Supervisors’ decision to withdraw from the agency. The OCPA lawsuit alleges the county failed to pay \$913,360 in expenses incurred by its exit from the authority, and that OCPA purchased electricity for “anticipated customers within the unincorporated area of the county for November and December in 2023.” Amidst state and local audits into OCPA’s contract management and pricing strategies, the Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 in December of 2022 to remove the county’s unincorporated areas from the authority. The Board had voted to join the OCPA’s community choice aggregation program only a year earlier.

- The Newport Beach City Council voted to rescind a General Plan Amendment (GPA) approved last October related to the proposed redevelopment of a portion of the Newport Beach Golf Course to allow construction of the Snug Harbor Surf Park. A Newport Beach resident had submitted a petition containing the required number of signatures to force either the rescission or a public vote on the GPA, which would have allowed an increased density on the parcel; the surf park is still expected to move forward under entitlements approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council, albeit with a smaller clubhouse and facilities.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Whittingham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peter" being more prominent than the last name "Whittingham".

Peter Whittingham