



TO: Orange County Sanitation District

FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors

DATE: March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: Local Legislative Report

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

- At its March 12 meeting, the Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission (OCLAFCO or Commission) received the final draft Municipal Service Review of Orange County Water District's application for an analysis of potential consolidation with Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC). The Commission unanimously voted to receive and file the report, and MWDOC Board member Al Nederhood, General Manager Harvey de la Torre, and OCWD Board President Denis Bilodeau provided brief remarks with President Bilodeau terming the analysis a "great reference document" if at some future time both agencies agree to pursue potential consolidation.
- Unlike most quarterly convenings of the Orange County Waste Management Commission, the March 13 meeting saw a full-house of officials from various public agencies and industry representatives who were present to hear OC Waste & Recycling staff provide an update on the Waste Infrastructure System Enhancement (WISE) Agreement negotiations. A number of cities have expressed concerns regarding the proposed landfill tipping fees and the costs of compliance with SB 1383. The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 12.
- A new multi-million-dollar trash interceptor has been deployed in Newport Beach, the aim of which is to collect floating trash before it enters and contaminates the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve, Newport Harbor and area beaches. The \$5.5 million Newport Bay Trash Interceptor will supplement other city trash-reduction efforts including trash booms, catch basin collection systems and floating skimmers. Every year, hundreds of tons of floating trash enters Newport Harbor via San Diego Creek; the Trash Interceptor is expected to catch up to 80 percent of this floating debris.

- Huntington Beach City Councilmember Tony Strickland received 51.3 percent of the vote in the February 25 special election and was sworn in March 11 to succeed new 1<sup>st</sup> District Supervisor Janet Nguyen as State Senator representing the 36<sup>th</sup> District. Senator Strickland successfully surpassed the 50 percent+1 threshold to defeat three other candidates and avoid a runoff election.
- A 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court ruling issued March 3 which was roundly criticized by environmental groups may have considerable impacts on the next MS4 permit issued for Orange County and the Inland Empire. The Court found that some regulations imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency against the city of San Francisco, which has sent raw sewage into creeks that feed into San Francisco Bay because the city's antiquated sewage system has been pushed beyond its limits during the bigger storms of recent winters, were too broad. The Court's ruling pointed to the Clean Water Act's requirement that fines or punishments imposed on a polluter must be based on a specific link to the pollution being discharged. Orange County Coastkeeper is applauding this component of the ruling, as the organization has argued during negotiations regarding the new MS4 permit that regulations that track and measure specific pollutants are required by law.

As part of our scope of work, Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors has continued to monitor the various City Council agendas of each of OC San's members and highlighted issues and items of relevance to OC San. We also continue to monitor activities at the South Coast Air Quality Management 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