



TO: Orange County Sanitation District
FROM: Whittingham Public Affairs Advisors
DATE: June 19, 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 Garden Grove manufacturing facility of GKN Aerospace, a global aerospace company that serves more than 90 percent of the world’s aircraft and engine manufacturers, remains a focus of local news coverage.

Officials from local, regional, state, and federal agencies continue to review facility records and operating procedures. In addition, U.S. Department of Justice agents visited the site to collect documents and records.

The Garden Grove City Council recently held a special meeting where a GKN representative provided an update on the situation. The representative highlighted the company’s \$3 million donation to the Orange County United Way, which supported more than 50,000 residents from Stanton, Garden Grove, and neighboring communities who were evacuated over Memorial Day weekend. GKN also reaffirmed its commitment to hosting a town hall meeting once additional information becomes available.

The United Way relief fund remained open for approximately two weeks before closing after all available funds were distributed.

- The Orange County Board of Supervisors approved a \$10.8 billion budget for fiscal year 2026–27. The budget is approximately \$300 million lower than the current year’s budget and includes a \$75 million shortfall that will be covered with one-time funds.

County officials cited inflation and several legal settlements—including a major settlement related to the Airport Fire—as key factors contributing to the budget gap. To date, the County has avoided layoffs by implementing a hiring freeze and eliminating more than 400 vacant positions.

- The Board of Supervisors also appointed County Chief Information Officer KC Roestenberg to serve as Interim Chief Executive Officer, succeeding Michelle Aguirre. Ms. Aguirre had announced her plans to retire at the end of her current contract, which concludes June 30, after a 35-year career at the County.
- Amid growing public concern over the use of herbicides in local waterways, the Orange County Board of Supervisors voted to permanently stop using herbicides to control vegetation in San Juan and Trabuco Creeks.

Fifth District Supervisor Katrina Foley had proposed extending the ban to all waterways maintained by County Public Works. However, a majority of the Board chose to focus first on the two creeks while gathering additional information about potential impacts in other areas.

Much of the discussion centered on glyphosate, a common ingredient in many herbicides and pesticides. While glyphosate is widely used for weed control, it has faced ongoing scrutiny over potential health risks, including cancer. Several Orange County cities have already banned glyphosate and similar chemicals, although a watchdog group has raised concerns about enforcement and alleged continued use despite those bans.

- The 2026 Orange County Grand Jury took aim at the Board of Supervisors, highlighting how each Supervisor receives \$2.5 million annually to both manage staffs of up to a dozen people and provide discretionary funding to organizations and projects in their respective districts. One of the six findings in their new report, entitled “Growing Political Appointees and Discretionary Spending within the OC Board of Supervisors,” detailed a “...widening distance between Supervisors and the Executive Team (which) undermines the value of the County Executive Team and complicates coordination, slows policy implementation, and contributes to fragmented decision-making.” Recommendations include limiting or eliminating the discretionary fund practice, establishing criteria for Supervisorial staff members, and realigning the Board’s engagement with the County Executive Team and department heads on policy matters to enhance collaboration.
- The Grand Jury also released a report entitled, “PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) and Public Awareness: A Closer Look at Orange County’s Drinking Water,” which seeks to provide a clear and current understanding of the response by water agencies countywide to PFAS. The Jurors conducted interviews with a number of elected and appointed officials and reviewed published water quality reports and other records from all Orange County water retailers and relevant agencies. The recommendations of the report include enhanced public education and awareness, and the pursuit of cost recovery from PFAS manufacturers “...to offset treatment, monitoring, and long-term remediation costs incurred by local water agencies and ratepayers.”

- Orange County's coastline experienced record swells for several days in early June, which contributed to dangerous conditions at beaches, including the tragic passing of a five-year-old girl in Laguna Beach, who was swept into the ocean along with her mother and brother, the latter two being rescued by onlookers. King tides led to flooding in Newport Beach and other coastal areas.
- As results from the June 2 election continue to be updated as signatures are verified and ballots are reviewed, it is expected that two of the three County Board of Supervisors seats on the ballot will move on to a runoff election this November. Second District Supervisor Vicente Sarmiento overwhelmingly defeated three challengers and will retain his seat for another four years, but in the 4th Supervisorial District, Buena Park Mayor Connor Traut and Orange County Department of Education Board member bested two other candidates and will move on to a runoff in November. In the 5th Supervisorial District, incumbent Katrina Foley received several hundred more votes than Assemblymember Diane Dixon, but neither was able to secure more than 50 percent due to a third candidate who received roughly 6 percent of the vote, forcing a runoff for this seat.
- Communities across the country are weighing the potential benefits and challenges of data centers, prompting several Southern California cities to adopt moratoriums on new facilities. Concerns raised during these discussions have also extended to battery energy storage system (BESS) projects, with some opponents linking the two and citing potential fire risks.

Despite these concerns, the Westminster Reliability Project continues to move forward. The battery energy storage facility, which received unanimous approval from the Westminster City Council in 2025, is currently under construction next to the Southern California Edison Shawnee substation and is expected to begin operations in October.

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