



CITY OF ORANGE

Office of Mayor

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August 12, 2026

The Honorable Sheila F. Hanson
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Response to the 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report “PFAS and Public Awareness – A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water”

Dear Honorable Judge Hanson:

The following is the City of Orange’s response to the findings and recommendations contained in the Orange County Grand Jury Report, “PFAS and Public Awareness – A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water.” The City of Orange is required to respond to Findings F-2, F-4, F-6, and F-8, and Recommendations R-2, R-4, and R-5.

FINDINGS:

F-2. PFAS is widespread, and contamination has been detected in Orange County groundwater sources. Community water systems are required to report PFAS monitoring results in their annual Consumer Confidence Reports.

City's Response: The City agrees with this finding.

PFAS are human-made chemicals that have been used in consumer products such as carpets, clothing, fabrics for furniture, paper packaging for food, fire-fighting foams, and other materials designed to be waterproof, stain-resistant, or nonstick. PFAS has been detected in water throughout the United States and has been detected in Orange County groundwater sources. Orange County has led the nation in PFAS testing and treatment to remove PFAS from its groundwater.

Beginning in 2027, community water systems must include applicable PFAS monitoring and compliance information in their Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR). The City of Orange currently includes its PFAS test results in its CCR.

F-4. OCWD has taken a proactive leadership role in addressing PFAS in the Orange County Groundwater Basin, though PFAS treatment implementation varies across local cities and water districts.

City's Response: The City agrees with the finding.

The City of Orange agrees that the Orange County Water District (OCWD) has taken a proactive leadership role in addressing PFAS in Orange County and has done so in a collaborative manner with water retailers, regulatory agencies, and industry experts. OCWD has been committed to ensuring that the Orange County community is knowledgeable about PFAS and that the local water agencies have the resources to address PFAS contamination. OCWD implemented a PFAS treatment policy that enables constructing treatment facilities for impacted water agencies, including the City of Orange, by funding 100% of design and construction costs, with operation and maintenance costs shared 50/50 with the retail water agency. The resulting treatment program has been systematic, coordinated, and consistent between water retailers and OCWD for the benefit of Orange County communities.

F-6. Orange County drinking water meets or exceeds state and federal standards and is safe for consumption without additional home filtration.

City's Response: The City agrees with the finding.

The City of Orange agrees that the drinking water provided by the City to its customers meets applicable state and federal drinking water standards and is safe for consumption. The City continuously monitors its water supplies and conducts thousands of water quality tests each year throughout the service area to ensure the water we serve to our community is of high quality and safe without additional home filtration.

F-8. There are limited online PFAS education and outreach programs among Orange County water retailers. Most retailers rely on OCWD for PFAS education and outreach. PFAS advisories were included in approximately 55% of the Orange County water retailers' annual water quality reports in 2025.

City's Response: The City partially disagrees with this finding.

Specifically, the City disagrees with the characterization that there are limited PFAS education and outreach efforts among water retailers, as applied to the City of Orange. Like many water agencies, the City collaborates with other water utilities and OCWD to synthesize a uniform, concise message about PFAS contamination and potential health effects for the public. The City regularly responds to questions from our customers related to PFAS and other contaminants in drinking water.

Regarding the inclusion of PFAS advisories in the annual water quality report in 2025, the City's 2025 CCR contains test results, sampling dates, notification levels, ranges of detections, and the public health goals for various PFAS compounds. The City's CCR is posted online,

and customers are informed about the report on their utility bills. Additionally, the City advertises the availability of the water quality report in the local newspaper to reach a wider audience.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R-2. By July 1, 2029, OCWD and its member agencies should monitor PFAS in groundwater and surface water sources and promptly implement PFAS treatment when response levels are exceeded.

City's Response: The recommendation is being implemented and will be complete by July 1, 2029.

The City is currently monitoring all its groundwater sources for PFAS as required by the State Water Resources Control Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. PFAS treatment systems have been installed at 8 groundwater wells. These systems are in operation and the selected ion exchange technology has been effective in removing PFAS. An additional four wells at three different locations are in design with construction scheduled to begin in early 2027. When response levels are exceeded, Orange has removed the well from operation immediately and implemented treatment for PFAS before the well can be brought back into service.

R-4. By July 1, 2029, all Orange County water retailers should consistently include a PFAS advisory, treatment facilities status, and compliance information in consumer confidence reports and on agency websites, using clear and understandable language for the public.

City's Response: The recommendation is being implemented and will be complete by July 1, 2029.

By July 1, 2029, the City will include the appropriate PFAS advisory, when such advisory is required, and compliance information in its CCR and on its website, using clear and understandable language for the public. Orange will include an advisory in its CCR if it has a detection for PFAS, as defined by federal and state regulations. Regarding the treatment facilities status, our wells will have PFAS treatment systems operational when they are in service.

R-5. By September 30, 2026, OCWD and all Orange County water retailers should enhance coordinated public education efforts to reassure their customers about drinking water safety.

City's Response: The recommendation is being implemented.

The City has made consistent efforts to promote drinking water safety through public outreach and education. Orange plans to continue engaging the public through social media, tours, community events, and student engagement to enhance awareness and educate customers about drinking water safety.

Thank you for your service and efforts on behalf of the City of Orange. We hope this response will be helpful.

Sincerely,

Dan Slater
Mayor, City of Orange

cc: The Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

BCC:
Jarad L. Hildenbrand, City Manager
Nathalie Adourian, City Attorney