



County of Orange

County Executive Office

August 29, 2018

Honorable Charles Margines
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report, "Orange County Landfills: Talking Trash"

Dear Judge Margines:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. The respondents are the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive Office.

If you have any questions, please contact Lala Oca Ragen of the County Executive Office at 714-834-7219.

Sincerely,

Frank Kim
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

cc: FY 2017-18 Orange County Grand Jury Foreman
Lala Oca Ragen, Assistant Deputy Chief Operating Officer, County Executive Office



Responses to Findings and Recommendations 2017-18 Grand Jury Report:

“Orange County Landfills: Talking Trash”

SUMMARY RESPONSE STATEMENT:

On June 19, 2018, the Grand Jury released a report entitled: “Orange County Landfills: Talking Trash.” This report directed responses to findings and recommendations to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, which are included below.

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES:

F.1. The Orange County waste disposal system is efficient, well balanced, geographically distributed, and works to mitigate disturbance to nearby neighborhoods.

Response: **Agrees with finding.** OC Waste & Recycling effectively operates some of the nation’s largest landfills, geographically located to best serve the needs of Orange County.

F.2. The Orange County landfill system would be disrupted by the closure of any one of the landfills.

Response: **Agrees with finding.** Closure of any one region within the system would require modifications in operations and planning to ensure the long-term service needs of the County of Orange (County) are met. However, at current disposal rates, the overall landfill system has sufficient capacity to meet the County’s waste disposal needs until 2102.

F.3. The Olinda Alpha Landfill is a possible candidate for closure in 2021 if negotiations with City of Brea prove unsuccessful.

Response: **Disagrees partially with the finding.** While the current Solid Waste Facility Permit (SWFP) estimates Olinda Alpha Landfill (Olinda) will close in 2021, this date was identified based on engineering estimates of when the landfill would reach its design capacity. Due to fluctuations in tonnage received, there is currently an estimated 10 years of airspace remaining. OC Waste & Recycling intends to seek a revision of its SWFP so that it more accurately reflects the date Olinda will reach its design capacity.

F.4. Importing trash from outside of the County, initiated to help the County survive the 1994 bankruptcy, continues even though the bankruptcy bonds were retired as of July 2017.

Response: **Agrees with finding.** The County has Importation Agreements to help augment landfill disposal rates. This continued revenue source contributes to lower-than-average disposal rates for County residents and businesses.

F.5. Continued importation of trash tends to decrease Orange County landfill life.

Response: **Agrees with finding.** Any waste disposed at landfills decreases landfill capacity. However, at this point and at current disposal rates there is capacity in County landfills to extend solid waste disposal until 2102. With the current and pending legislation from CalRecycle, the governing body of the waste industry, demands for increased recycling and diversion from landfills continue to reduce the amount of disposal further extending the estimated closure date based on fill/design.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES:

R.1. By December 30, 2018, the County of Orange and the City of Brea should initiate formal negotiations to ensure identification and resolution of potential issues with the Olinda Alpha Landfill Memorandum of Understanding. (F1, F2, F3)

Response: **The recommendation has been implemented.** Negotiations began in 2016 with several meetings and a request being submitted by the City. Subsequently, due to key personnel transitions, discussions occurred in 2017 and 2018 and will resume formally by December 30, 2018.

R.2. By June 30, 2019, Orange County Waste and Recycling should update and publish a cost/benefit analysis on the imported trash revenue stream surplus and the future costs associated with earlier closures in the landfill system. (F4, F5)

Response: **The recommendation has not yet been implemented,** but will be implemented in the future. OC Waste & Recycling intends on developing the recommended cost/benefit analysis by June 30, 2019.