



County of Orange
California

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

June 24, 2008

Honorable Nancy Wieben Stock
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Paradise
Lost: If a Tsunami Strikes the Orange County Riviera"

Dear Judge Stock:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, enclosed please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Stanberry at (714) 834-3727 in the County Executive Office who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Very truly yours,

Thomas G. Mauk
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

TGM/tts

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2007-08 Grand Jury Report
“Paradise Lost: If a Tsunami Strikes the Orange County Riviera”
Responses to Findings and Recommendations

Response to Finding:

F-2 Signage: Existing tsunami signs along roadways are small, difficult to read and, in at least one city, not visible to visitors driving into the tsunami hazard zone.

Response: Disagrees wholly with the finding.

Emergency Management signage, including color, shape, size and placement, is governed by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Chapter 21. The Tsunami Hazard zone signage currently posted in the areas cited in the grand jury report complies with the standards set forth in the MUTCD. However, the MUTCD also states that larger signs may be used when appropriate.

The unincorporated beachfront community of Sunset Beach is entirely surrounded by adjacent incorporated Cities of Huntington Beach and Seal Beach. Highway access is provided by roads under the jurisdiction of the State of California (Pacific Coast Highway) or the City of Huntington Beach (Warner Avenue). The entire Sunset Beach community is within the area identified as the “Tsunami Run Up Area” on the City of Huntington Beach’s Tsunami Signs Map, and is thus afforded appropriate emergency signage.

Should improvements to existing “Entering Tsunami Hazard Zone” signage on surrounding highways be recommended, it would be the responsibility of the agency having jurisdiction over those streets, i.e. the State of California or the City of Huntington Beach.

Responses to Recommendations:

R-2a. Signage: All beach cities and the County on behalf of Sunset Beach: Replace all small and medium sized tsunami signs with the largest tsunami signs authorized by Caltrans.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

The MUTCD, which governs emergency signage, designates three sizes for the Tsunami Hazard Zone sign EM-1E (CA) sign: small, medium and large. The MUTCD states that the size of the Standard Conventional Highway sign is medium. Smaller sign sizes are designed for use off road or for facilities such as bike trails; large sign sizes are for use on freeways or high speed facilities. As stated before, the MUTCD also allows the use of larger signs as appropriate.

Twenty-nine Tsunami Hazard Zone signs were recently installed within Sunset Beach by the OC Sheriff. These signs are located off-road at all pedestrian access points to the beach, such as the dead-ends of alleys and streets within Sunset Beach. According to current standards, these signs are appropriately sized for the intended pedestrian viewing audience and are readily visible to motorists on the adjacent one lane, low speed, local street. No nearby high-speed highways are within the jurisdiction of the County of Orange.

R-2b Signage in Areas: All beach cities and the County on behalf of Sunset Beach: Post the largest tsunami hazard zone signs visible to inbound traffic on major roads and on Pacific Coast Highway if tsunami hazard signs are not already posted there.

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

As stated in the response to Finding F.2, the County has no jurisdiction over the areas cited; however, OC Road and Flood shared the grand jury report and findings with Caltrans for its consideration.

In addition, all “ENTERING/LEAVING TSUNAMI HAZARD ZONE” signs are currently located on facilities under the jurisdiction of the State of California or the City of Huntington Beach. The City of Huntington Beach has addressed the need for signs by placing them on Pacific Coast Highway entering the Tsunami impact area. This roadway then leads into the Sunset Beach area (unincorporated Orange County). An additional sign could be placed on westbound Warner Avenue, entering the lower Tsunami zone area. However, this would be at the City’s discretion, as the County has no jurisdiction in this location.