

August 22, 2023

The Honorable Maria Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Steve Jones
Mayor

George S. Brietigam
Mayor Pro Tem - District 1

John R. O'Neill
Council Member - District 2

Cindy Ngoc Tran
Council Member - District 3

Joe DoVinh
Council Member - District 4

Stephanie Klopfenstein
Council Member - District 5

Kim Bernice Nguyen
Council Member - District 6

RE: Response to the 2022-23 Orange County Grand Jury Report re Historic Rain, Yet Drought Remains

Dear Judge Hernandez,

In accordance with Penal Code 933.05(a) and (b), the City of Garden Grove submits the following response to the report, findings, and recommendations of the 2022-23 Orange County Grand Jury Report entitled, "Historic Rain, Yet Drought Remains".

FINDINGS

F1. Future water supplies are impacted by climate change and current supplies will not meet future demands.

Response: The City of Garden Grove disagrees with the above finding. The City of Garden Grove is actively committed to water resource planning through partnerships with the Municipal Water District of Orange County and the Orange County Water District. The City of Garden Grove's water portfolio is comprised of approximately 70-80% groundwater supplies and 20-30% imported water. Therefore, this places the City of Garden Grove in a better position for water supply reliability for facing climate change with its lessened dependence on import supplies from the Colorado River and Northern California Water Project. At this point in time, the Orange County Water District has a well-managed supply of groundwater to meet future demands.

F2. Climatologists predict future extended periods of low moisture with occasional wet years.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding. The City of Garden Grove relies on climate predictions from the Orange County Water District and Municipal Water District of Orange County.

F3. Climate change is inevitable and is exacerbated by human behavior.

Response: The City of Garden Grove partially agrees with the above finding. The City of Garden Grove agrees climate change is a long-term shift in global or regional climate patterns.

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The City of Garden Grove does not have expertise to comment on the impact of human behavior on the climate.

F4. South Orange County relies primarily on the importation of water.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F5. Local water suppliers recognize that enhanced stormwater capture and storage, wastewater recycling, and infrastructure improvements will not be sufficient to address the long-term forecast of drought and its effects on supply.

Response: The City of Garden Grove does not agree with the above finding. At this point in time, the City of Garden Grove's existing water portfolio is sufficient for addressing the long-term forecast of drought and its effects on supply.

F6. There is significant water infrastructure planning, but inadequate implementation.

Response: The City of Garden Grove does not agree with the above finding. The Municipal Water District of Orange County and the Orange County Water District has implemented numerous projects to improve on long-term water supply reliability.

F7. The review and approval process for major water capital projects is cumbersome and overly restrictive.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F8. Failing to find solutions to water shortages will have significant impact on the Orange County economy.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F9. Continued development in Orange County creates additional water supply needs.

Response: The City of Garden Grove does not agree with the above finding. Since 1997, total water demands within the City of Garden Grove have declined by 36% while the population has increased by over 18,400 people.

F10. Conservation and efficient use of water is essential.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

F11. Increased outreach and public education are necessary.

Response: The City of Garden Grove agrees with the above finding.

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F12. Desalination has proven to be technologically and environmentally feasible and is slowly being embraced as a drought-resistant source of water.

Response: The City of Garden Grove partially agrees with the above finding. The City of Garden Grove agrees that desalination is a drought-resistant source of water. The City of Garden Grove does not have expertise to comment on the technological and environmental feasibility of desalination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R2. Orange County water agencies should expedite the planning, development, and construction of desalination plants over the next five years to insure a sustainable and reliable drought-resistant source of water. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F11, F12)

Response: The City of Garden Grove does not agree with the above finding. The City of Garden Grove's existing water portfolio are sufficient sources for addressing the long-term forecast of drought and its effects on supply.

R3. The County of Orange and all Orange County cities should formulate an emergency development moratorium plan for anticipation of the Colorado River water supply being constrained. The emergency moratorium plan should be developed by the end of the calendar year 2023. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12)

Response: The City of Garden Grove partially supports this recommendation with the intent to develop an emergency moratorium plan for anticipation of the Colorado River water supply being constrained. The County of Orange does not have the technical knowledge and expertise to develop an emergency moratorium plan for water supply reliability. The Municipal Water District of Orange County and Orange County Water District are better suited to serve as the lead planners on behalf of all the Orange County cities to develop this type of plan.

R4. Orange County water agencies should update their public communication strategies, by calendar year end 2023, to inform the public of lifestyle changes if additional water sources are not developed. (F10, F11, F12)

Response: The recommendation is being implemented. The State has adopted Water Use Objective regulations to Make Conservation a California Way of Life, which has prompted cities to develop public outreach plans to inform the public of lifestyle changes.

Respectfully Submitted,



Steve Jones
Mayor