



**San
Clemente**
THE SPANISH VILLAGE BY THE SEA

**CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

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Mayor**
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August 21, 2024

The Honorable Michael J. Verrengia,
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Report of the Orange County Grand Jury - "Emerging Opportunities in South County Water/Wastewater Systems"

Dear Presiding Judge Verrengia,

The City of San Clemente (City) appreciates the time and effort the Grand Jury spent on the development of their report, "Emerging Opportunities in South County Water/Wastewater Systems."

The City Council has reviewed the report and authorized the attached response to the findings and recommendations noted in the report. The City values the opportunity to respond to the report, share our perspective, and provide firsthand knowledge to each of the issues requested by the Grand Jury.

If the City of San Clemente can provide additional information or clarification of our response, please do not hesitate to contact City Manager Andy Hall at HallaA@san-clemente.org.

Sincerely,

Victor Cabral,
Mayor, City of San Clemente

Enclosure: City of San Clemente's Response to Findings and Recommendations

CC: City of San Clemente Council Members
Andy Hall, City Manager

The City of San Clemente's responses to findings and recommendations in the 2023-2024 Orange County Grand Jury " Emerging Opportunities in South County Water/Wastewater Systems " Report are as follows:

Findings and Responses

F3 SOCWA's member agencies have widely diverse populations, requirements, and revenues. This has led to conflicts over governance, facility operation, and control, affecting the evolving potential for wastewater reuse.

Staff Recommended Response:

Agree.

F4 There is currently no unified strategy for the future of water/wastewater provision in South Orange County.

Staff Recommended Response:

The City of San Clemente disagrees partially with this finding. In general, most agencies are planning to have supply reliability in the event of a 60-day water outage as recommended by Metropolitan Water District. South Orange County is highly reliant on imported water and historically agencies have worked collaboratively to make regional improvements to supply reliability through participation in projects, such as, Irvine Water District Interconnection to the Joint Regional Water Supply System for emergency use, Baker Treatment Plant, and Upper Chiquita Reservoir to name a few. There are other regional projects currently being planned to lower south county demand for imported water, such as, addition recycled water system expansion, interconnection/supply of recycled water to neighboring agencies, Cadiz, Doheny Desalination, and direct and indirect potable water reuse. While there is no one size fits all approach for the region, each agency evaluates its needs, resources, impacts to operating costs to implement and maintain projects, and future rate impacts to its customers.

With regard to wastewater, there are differing opinions and needs amongst the agencies regarding governance, operation, and reuse of wastewater. There is one common goal related to the continued operation and maintenance of the Aliso Creek and San Juan Creek Ocean Outfalls since they are needed by all south county agencies. Some agencies will have minimal to possibly no discharge to the ocean outfalls when their systems are functioning properly and during dry weather. There will continue to be a need for maintenance and use of the outfalls during plant outages, maintenance of the reuse systems, and during periods of wet weather.

Recommendations and Responses

R2 The OCGJ recommends that by January 1, 2025, LAFCO form a task force comprising representatives of affected water agencies to study the transformation of

SOCWA and prepare a report on the future of the water/wastewater in South Orange County.

Staff Recommended Response:

The recommendation will not be implemented by the City of San Clemente because the recommendation is for another agency (LAFCO) to perform a study and prepare a report. If a task force is formed with representatives of affected water agencies regarding the transformation of SOCWA, the City of San Clemente will participate in the process.