

# ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

## EXTERNAL MEMO

**To:** Leon Page, County Counsel  
**From:** Michelle Anderson, County Emergency Manager *MLA*  
**Date:** June 19, 2025  
**RE:** Status Report, Item 64 for June 24, 2025 Agenda: Review the Need for Continuing the Local Emergency



The Airport Fire began on September 9, 2024 and was deemed 100% contained on October 5, 2024.

### County Proclamations and Ordinance Status

- The Orange County Board of Supervisors proclaimed a Local Emergency on September 10, 2024, and continued the local emergency proclamation at the November 5, December 17, February 11, and April 8, and May 14<sup>th</sup> meetings.
- The Orange County Health Officer proclaimed a Local Health Emergency on September 13<sup>th</sup> and renewed it on 20<sup>th</sup>; the Orange County Board of Supervisors ratified the health emergency proclamation on September 24, 2024, and continued the local health emergency on November 5, December 3, December 17, January 14, February 11, March 11, April 9, May 6, and May 20. The continuation of the local health emergency is be considered by the Board of Supervisors on the June 24<sup>th</sup> agenda as Item 54.
- On October 8, 2024, the Orange County Board of Supervisors adopted an Urgency Ordinance for the Airport Fire Debris Removal Program.

### Costs

The costs in the table below will increase in the future as debris removal activities continue. Estimated response costs and damages for public agencies include:

| City/District                            | Estimated Response<br>Costs & Damages<br>Reported 4/3/25 | Estimated Response<br>Costs & Damages<br>Reported 05/14/25 | Change |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Orange County Fire Authority* (OCFA)     | \$1,130,000                                              | \$1,130,000                                                | 0      |
| Orange County CEO                        | \$45,640                                                 | \$45,640                                                   | 0      |
| Orange County Community Resources (OCCR) | \$19,269                                                 | \$19,269                                                   | 0      |
| OCCR - OC Animal Care                    | \$42,840                                                 | \$42,840                                                   | 0      |
| OCCR - OC Parks                          | \$152,825                                                | \$152,825                                                  | 0      |
| Orange County Counsel                    | \$47,778                                                 | \$47,778                                                   | 0      |
| Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA)   | \$51,412                                                 | \$51,412                                                   | 0      |
| Orange County Public Works (OCPW)        | \$20,533,449                                             | \$20,533,449                                               | 0      |
| Orange County Sheriff-Coroner (OCSD)     | \$1,934,877                                              | \$1,934,877                                                | 0      |
| Orange County Social Services Agency     | \$46,657                                                 | \$46,657                                                   | 0      |
| Orange County Waste and Recycling        | \$6,592                                                  | \$6,592                                                    | 0      |
| Rancho Santa Margarita                   | \$36,338                                                 | \$36,338                                                   | 0      |
| Trabuco Canyon Water District            | \$1,001,000                                              | \$1,001,000                                                | 0      |
| Operational Total                        | \$25,048,677                                             | \$25,048,677                                               | 0      |

\* OCFA entered into a cost share agreement with the United States Forest Service (USFS), the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), and the Riverside County Fire Department for costs related to this incident. Because they are a separate government entity, no additional information is included here; it can be obtained through a request to OCFA.

In June, the Director of the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) responded to the April letter from the OCFA Fire Chief and Sheriff-Coroner regarding the Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) support. The letter communicated that the information previously provided did not establish that the Airport Fire was threatening destruction that would constitute a major disaster.

The County continues to facilitate the submission of County costs and supporting documentation to the Cal OES Recovery Unit in pursuit of FMAG-alternative funding through the California Disaster Assistance Act or Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance. No eligibility determination has been made at the time of this status report submission. On May 14<sup>th</sup>, Cal OES advised that no eligibility determination has been made at the time of this status report submission.

### **Recovery Efforts**

Phase 1 (Hazardous Debris Removal): Completed; no change from previous report.

Phase 1.5 (Watershed Protection): Completed; no change from previous report.

Phase 2 (Private Property Debris Removal [PPDR]): Direct assistance was not available through Cal OES so the County has proceeded with County resources, including contractors and coordinating with volunteer organizations. Below please find an update as of June 19<sup>th</sup>.

- **OC Debris Removal**

- Long Canyon debris removal has been completed. Confirmation Soil Sampling will be completed this week with lab results in approximately 2 weeks. Final site walks and sign-off forms to be completed after receipt of soil confirmation data.
- Holy Jim debris removal pending asbestos testing and reopening of Trabuco Creek Road. Asbestos Testing Contractor, Geocon, schedule to be confirmed within a week. DRC will mobilize once asbestos testing is completed.
- El Cariso debris removal pending asbestos testing. Asbestos Testing Contractor, Geocon, schedule to be confirmed within a week. DRC will mobilize once asbestos testing is completed.

- **Riverside County (RC) Debris Removal**

- Pre-job property walkthroughs still ongoing.
- Tetra Tech has assessed 38 parcels, 8 properties are clear of asbestos.
- DRC plans to start debris removal of asbestos cleared properties on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Coordination and status updates between Orange and Riverside Counties is going well and initial public opinion is positive overall.

- **Trabuco Creek Road**

- Operations and Maintenance crews continue working on re-grading the road through early-July. Anticipated completion date July 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Road is accessible to maintenance, emergency and cabin owners only.
- Security guard continues road closure enforcement for non-residents/owners.
- Access gate installation has been completed.

**Post Fire Debris Flow Planning**Watershed Emergency Response Team Report (WERT; private lands)

CalFire and the California Geological Survey published the Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) 2024 Airport Fire (CA-ORC-127883) on October 25, 2024. This report presents the results of a rapid evaluation of post fire geologic and hydrologic hazards to life-safety and property (i.e., collectively known as “Values-at-Risk” or “VARs”) for private lands affected by the Airport Fire. These threats can include flooding, debris flows, erosions, and other hazards. The report includes preliminary emergency protective measures needed to avoid or minimize threats to life-safety and property. The full report is available to the public at:

<https://app.box.com/s/11tq7s11ogov37ceshxa5kbdhxi pfmu/file/1683004722491>

**Recommended Action**

Approve continuation of Local Emergency for the Airport Fire; and order review to determine need for continuing local emergency for August 12, 2025, 9:30 a.m. and every 60 days thereafter until terminated.

cc: County Executive Officer Michelle Aguirre  
Clerk of the Board Robin Stieler  
Undersheriff Jeff Hallock, Sheriff-Coroner Department