

To: Leon Page, County Counsel
From: Michelle Anderson, County Emergency Manager *MLA*
Date: January 7, 2026
RE: Status Report, Item 20 for January 13, 2026, 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 on November 5 and December 17, 2024; and February 11, April 8, May 14, June 24, August 12, September 23, 2025, and November 18, 2025.
- The Orange County Health Officer proclaimed a Local Health Emergency on September 13th and renewed it on the 20th; 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, 2024; and January 14, February 11, March 11, April 9, May 6, June 24, July 15, August 12, September 9, September 23, October 14, November 4, December 2, and December 16, 2025. The continuation of the local health emergency will be considered by the Board of Supervisors on the January 13, 2026 Agenda.
- On October 8, 2024, the Orange County Board of Supervisors adopted an Urgency Ordinance for the Airport Fire Debris Removal Program.

Costs

There have been no changes to the previously reported costs incurred by the majority of agencies listed. Orange County Public Works continues to implement private property debris removal under contracts approved by the Board of Supervisors.

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 January 2, 2026.

- **OC Debris Removal**
 - Long Canyon (100% complete)
 - Holy Jim (0% complete)
 - National Forest Service (NFS) has not yet approved the work plan. Primary NFS reviewer remains on leave until 12/29/25.
 - AQMD P5 Work Plans submitted on 12/12/25 and minor comments were received. Expected to be approved first week of January.
 - Once start date is secured, work will take approximately 3-4 weeks to complete.
 - No new issues

- El Cariso (Orange County side) (100% complete)
- New Issue: No new issues but Contractor continues to be behind schedule
- Overall: 75% complete
- Estimated Completion Date: January 2026

- **Riverside County (RC) Debris Removal**
 - Vehicle abatement and hazard tree removal continues with 90% of vehicles removed.
 - OCPR continues to process Final Sign Offs (SFO) as they become available.
 - Contractor intends to demobilize by end of January.
 - Estimated Completion Date: Major debris removal completed on 12/18/25. Rescrapes possible depending on test results with only minor work remaining.

- **Trabuco Creek Road**
 - The road remains closed to the public and repairs appear to be performing as intended.
 - Contractor continues to be behind schedule.

Post Fire Debris Flow Events

A winter storm from December 22 through 24, 2025 triggered the activation of the Airport Fire Post Fire Debris Flow Plan. The Unified Command (UC)—comprised of Orange County Public Works, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, and the Orange County Fire Authority - and the Director of Emergency Services (DES) for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) held discussions based on National Weather Service data and field conditions. The Phase Two and Phase Three plan actions for public notification, Evacuation Warnings and Order, and care and shelter were implemented.

Recommended Action

Approve continuation of Local Emergency for the Airport Fire; and order review to determine need for continuing local emergency for March 10, 2026, 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