



# AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Control: 26001365

**MEETING DATE:** 06/23/2026

**LEGAL ENTITY TAKING ACTION:** Board of Supervisors

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT(S):** District 3

**SUBMITTING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** County Executive Office

**DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSON(S):** Thomas Miller, 714-834-6019  
Brian Bauer, 714-834-5663

**SUBJECT:** Amended and Restated License Agreement with James Productions, Inc.

CEO CONCUR	COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	CLERK OF THE BOARD
Concur	Approve agreement to form	DISCUSSION 4/5 Vote

<b>Budgeted:</b> Yes	<b>Current Year Cost:</b> N/A	<b>Annual Cost:</b> N/A
<b>Staffing Impact:</b> No		<b>Sole Source:</b> No
<b>Current Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Funding Source:</b> N/A	<b>County Audit in Last 3</b>
<b>Revenue:</b> See Financial Impact Section		<b>years:</b> No
<b>Levine Act Review</b>		
<b>Completed?</b> Yes		

**Prior Board Action:** 5/20/2025 #44, 5/21/2024 #32, 1/23/2024 #28, 3/14/2023 #34

**RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):**

1. Find that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Class 1 (Existing Facilities) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15301.
2. Approve and authorize the Chief Real Estate Officer or designee to execute the Amended and Restated License Agreement with James Productions, Inc. for operation of a public fishing concession and development of other public recreational activities at Irvine Lake, for a five-year term effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2031, renewable for one-year extensions on a year-to-year basis, in substantially the form attached with minor modifications that do not increase the risk or financial obligations to the County with approval by County Counsel.
3. Authorize the Chief Real Estate Officer or designee to approve extensions and execute future amendments to the Amended and Restated License Agreement provided those amendments result in minor, non-substantive changes which do not create or increase financial obligations or liabilities on the part of the County by more than \$75,000 annually.

**SUMMARY:**

Approval of an Amended and Restated License Agreement with James Productions, Inc. establishes an interim framework that maintains free public shoreline fishing and recreational access at Irvine Lake, while Irvine Ranch Water District completes the Santiago Creek Dam spillway and outlet tower improvement project.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In 1993, The Irvine Company (TIC) licensed use of its privately-owned land adjacent to Irvine Lake, then known as the Rancho de Santiago Picnic Area and now known as Oak Canyon Special Event Facility (Oak Canyon), to James Productions, Inc. (James Productions) pursuant to a license agreement (License). Since that time, James Productions has continued to operate and maintain the Oak Canyon area pursuant to the License, which allows James Productions to host picnics, barbecues, weddings, charitable and corporate events, group parties, rope courses and concerts at Oak Canyon.

On November 18, 2014, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the acceptance of a donation of 2,500 acres of open space land from TIC, which included Oak Canyon and other land surrounding Irvine Lake, also known as Santiago Reservoir. As a result of that transaction, TIC assigned the License to the County, which continues today on a month-to-month basis. On June 11, 2019, the Board approved acceptance of a 29-acre parcel (Recreation Parcel) at the entrance to Irvine Lake that was included as part of the original donation from TIC as a future conveyance and has historically been used to facilitate fishing and other recreational purposes. Since 2019, James Productions has provided services for fishing operations at Irvine Lake through a sole source contract with the County, which includes ongoing maintenance and operations to support public shoreline fishing, trash removal, maintenance and operations personnel, monitoring and inspections, public restrooms, utilities and limited insurance costs.

Irvine Lake, including its underlying land and water supply is owned by Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD). Previously the property was jointly owned equally with the Serrano Water District (SWD) until December 12, 2024, when IRWD assumed full ownership. As the owner and operator of the Santiago Creek Dam and the associated facilities, IRWD has embarked upon a construction and improvement project (IRWD's Construction Project). This project will replace the spillway and outlet tower at Irvine Lake to restore water capacity and will include embankment improvements to enhance the overall safety of the dam. IRWD's Construction Project will require dewatering, or full draining, of Irvine Lake prior to the start of construction. IRWD has indicated dewatering of the lake could take approximately 30 days from the day it initiates the draining. Consequently, shoreline fishing operations are anticipated to cease when the lake's water levels can no longer support recreational fishing or fish habitat and will not resume until after the completion of IRWD's Construction Project, for which the active construction period is anticipated to last approximately four years. The exact timing and duration of lake draining, the active construction period, and lake refilling are currently unknown and subject to change by IRWD, but draining is anticipated to begin before the end of the year.

On March 14, 2023, the Board approved a Cooperative Agreement with IRWD and SWD which defined each party's respective roles, rights and responsibilities for the preparation, solicitation and evaluation of a joint Request for Proposals (RFP) and the negotiation, preparation and execution of a subsequent mutual option to lease and master ground lease involving properties owned at and adjacent to Irvine Lake. On January 23, 2024, the Board made Surplus Land Act findings and approved and authorized the release of the joint RFP.

On May 6, 2024, County Executive Office (CEO) Real Estate, in conjunction with OC Parks, SWD and IRWD, issued the joint RFP to solicit proposals for expanded park and recreational opportunities at Irvine

Lake, including the continuation of the public fishing concession. On May 21, 2024, the Board approved a sole source Contract MA-012-24010833 (Fishing Contract) with James Productions to provide shoreline fishing services at Irvine Lake while a long-term ground lease was being pursued under the joint RFP. The joint RFP closed on October 7, 2024, and two proposals were received.

On December 12, 2024, IRWD and SWD entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) pursuant to which SWD agreed to transfer to IRWD its right, title and interest in Irvine Lake. Per the PSA, SWD assigned, and IRWD accepted, all contracts related to the operation, maintenance or ownership of Irvine Lake. Consequently, SWD is no longer a party to the Cooperative Agreement, the joint RFP or future master ground lease.

On January 27, 2025, a six-member evaluation panel comprised of staff from IRWD, CEO Real Estate and OC Parks completed an evaluation of the two written proposals submitted to the joint RFP and recommended that CEO Real Estate begin option and lease negotiations with James Productions as the highest ranked proposer. Based upon the evaluation and selection criteria outlined in the joint RFP, the evaluation committee scored the Proposers as follows (see Attachment C for Rating Summary):

<b>Proposer</b>	<b>Evaluator 1</b>	<b>Evaluator 2</b>	<b>Evaluator 3</b>	<b>Evaluator 4</b>	<b>Evaluator 5</b>	<b>Evaluator 6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Max Total</b>	<b>Final Rank</b>
<b>James Productions, Inc.</b>	265	295	365	340	310	365	<b>1940</b>	3000	1
<b>EBR Motorsports, LLC</b>	185	165	225	125	205	215	<b>1120</b>	3000	2

On May 20, 2025, the Board renewed the Fishing Contract through June 30, 2026, ensuring uninterrupted shoreline fishing at Irvine Lake while negotiations toward a long-term master ground lease continued with James Productions, IRWD and the County (the Parties).

However, given the uncertainty, impacts, and constraints created by IRWD’s Construction Project, including the draining of Irvine Lake, potential noise, dust and access restrictions negatively impacting James Productions’ operations, it was determined and agreed by the Parties that development of a long-term improvement plan, and consequently a long-term master lease, was infeasible at this time. The Parties agreed that an interim agreement between James Productions and the County alone was the best short-term solution to maintain free public fishing and recreational access. To this end, CEO Real Estate has negotiated an Amended and Restated License Agreement (Amended License) with James Productions to amend the existing License.

The Amended License includes an initial five (5) year term, effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2031, corresponding to the approximate anticipated duration of IRWD’s Construction Project. Due to the uncertain timing of IRWD’s Construction Project and to ensure continued fishing after IRWD’s Construction Project and lake refilling, the term may be extended on a year-to-year basis by one-year increments to provide flexibility for delays and other conditions, including potential delays in negotiating a subsequent long-term master ground lease. In consideration of James Productions performing approximately \$500,000 in site improvements, the Amended License may be terminated by County upon thirty (30) days’ written notice only during the extended term(s) beyond the initial five-year term. Within

the first three (3) years of the term, James Productions must submit a proposal for a new long-term master ground lease, including a capital improvement plan commensurate with the proposed new term. By that time, there will likely be greater certainty regarding the conclusion and impacts of IRWD's Construction Project. The County and IRWD will review the long-term proposal and negotiate the terms of a long-term master ground lease with James Productions. If negotiations are successful, the long-term master ground lease will be brought to the Board for consideration. If negotiations are unsuccessful, the County would have the option to solicit another joint RFP with IRWD.

The Amended License expands the licensed premises, as depicted in Attachment B, to include a portion of the County's Recreation Parcel, which is used to facilitate shoreline fishing. Under the Amended License, James Productions will provide management and operation of the shoreline public fishing concession, including fish stocking at its discretion and parking administration. To keep shoreline fishing free for the public, the Amended License will allow James Productions to deduct its fishing concessions operating expenses from monthly rent due, capped at one-twelfth of the \$375,000 minimum annual rent. The fishing concession will be open to the public as long as water levels and the aquatic ecosystem support fishing.

In addition, during the Amended License term, James Productions will contribute at least \$500,000 in capital improvements to the premises, which may include the construction of a new BMX facility, glamping campgrounds, an interim RV/boat storage lot during IRWD's Construction Project, and additional Oak Canyon facility upgrades for events and recreational uses consistent with other uses at and around Irvine Lake. James Productions and CEO Real Estate have agreed that the amount of James Productions' capital improvement contribution and the improvement plan may be subject to change based on the unknown impacts, interference, restrictions, and circumstances resulting from IRWD's Construction Project.

James Productions has operated most of the premises for over 30 years and has hosted a multitude of successful events. The Amended License will continue to provide a popular space for both public and private entertainment and recreation. Approval of the Amended License is recommended to provide interim operation of the events facility and fishing concession by the current licensee and current operator, James Productions, and to provide the Parties additional time to negotiate a long-term master ground lease, while IRWD's Construction Project is completed. The Amended License is being presented for Board approval less than 30 days before the effective date due to extended negotiations with James Productions to ensure the fishing concession remains free of charge to the public. Under Government Code Section 25536(a), the Board has the authority to enter into lease agreements or other contracts for park or recreational uses on County-owned property with a four-fifths vote.

**Compliance with CEQA:** The proposed project is Categorically Exempt (Class 1) from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301, because it provides for operation of existing public facilities involving negligible or no expansion of the existing use.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Approval of the Amended License will provide at least \$1.86 million in license revenue over the initial five-year term. James Productions will deduct fishing expenses from rent owed, but at no point will there be a direct payment from the County to James Productions to operate the fishing concession, including fish stocking and parking administration, which cost the County nearly \$640,000/year combined. The longer the lake continues to support recreational fishing, the lower license revenue projections will be as James Productions is able to deduct fishing expenses from rent due. Approval of the Amended License will also result in James Productions paying a one-time processing fee of \$5,000 to the County. Cost savings and revenues would benefit OC Parks Fund 405 and be used to offset other costs related to the management and

operation of the County’s regional park system including the Irvine Ranch Open Space. Revenues received from the Amended License will be included in the OC Parks Fund 405 FY 2026–27 Budget and will be included in the budgets for future fiscal years. In consideration of James Productions performing approximately \$500,000 in site improvements, the Amended License may be terminated by County upon thirty (30) days’ written notice only during the extended term(s) beyond the initial five-year term.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

N/A

**REVIEWING AGENCIES/DEPARTMENTS:**

OC Community Resources

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A - Amended and Restated License Agreement

Attachment B - Premises Map

Attachment C - Rating Summary

Attachment D - Government Code Section 25536