



SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA ITEM AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Control: 26001441

MEETING DATE: 06/09/2026
LEGAL ENTITY TAKING ACTION: Board of Supervisors
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT(S): Board of Supervisors
SUBMITTING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Vice Chair Foley
DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSON(S): Nick Anas, 714-834-3550
Anthony Nguyen

SUBJECT: Direct Staff to Implement Countywide Phaseout of Routine Herbicide Use and Updat

CEO CONCUR	COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	CLERK OF THE BOARD
N/A	No Legal Objection	DISCUSSION
		3 Votes Board Majority

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Direct the County Executive Office, OC Public Works, OC Parks, and all relevant County departments to develop a formal plan to phase out routine herbicide use in County operations within one year.
2. Direct staff to update the County's Integrated Pest Management practices to prioritize prevention, monitoring, manual removal, mechanical removal, native planting, erosion control, habitat restoration, and lower toxicity alternatives before any chemical application.
3. Direct staff to inventory all herbicide use by department, location, product type, contractor, cost, purpose, application frequency, and proximity to waterways, parks, trails, neighborhoods, schools, and sensitive habitat.
4. Direct staff to identify areas where vegetation should remain or be restored to support erosion control, slope stability, water quality, habitat protection, and native plant recovery.
5. Direct staff to allow targeted treatment of invasive species only when staff documents that nonchemical methods cannot reasonably address a specific public safety, flood control, wildfire prevention, infrastructure, habitat restoration, erosion control, or legal compliance need.
6. Direct staff to require the lowest toxicity effective treatment when chemical treatment becomes necessary, with written justification, site specific limits, and public reporting.
7. Direct staff to work with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Boards, and other relevant state and regional agencies to develop safe and effective vegetation management alternatives.
8. Direct staff to review Los Angeles County and San Diego County policies related to Integrated Pest Management, herbicide use, pesticide reporting, lower toxicity alternatives, and chemical use restrictions.
9. Direct staff to inventory policies from Orange County cities, school districts, special districts, and other local jurisdictions related to herbicide and pesticide use in their public operations.

10. Direct staff to develop public noticing requirements for any proposed herbicide or pesticide application during the transition period, including advance notice on the County website, posted notice at affected public sites where feasible, identification of the product proposed for use, purpose of application, application area, date range, contact information, and explanation of why non chemical alternatives cannot reasonably address the documented need.
11. Direct staff to return to the Board within 90 days with an initial phaseout framework, inventory of current herbicide use, peer county policy review, local jurisdiction policy inventory, proposed public noticing requirements, preliminary fiscal analysis, proposed exceptions, and draft updates to County contract language and Integrated Pest Management practices.
12. Direct staff to return within 180 days with a final implementation plan to phase out routine herbicide use in County operations within one year.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The County of Orange manages flood control channels, parks, trails, roadsides, landfills, public facilities, and open space areas that require regular vegetation management. This work protects public safety, flood control, wildfire prevention, infrastructure, habitat, and erosion control.

Recent public reporting, community concern, and comments from multiple Board offices make clear that the Board of Supervisors should act. The public deserves a clear vote, a clear timeline, and clear accountability.

This item directs staff to develop a formal countywide plan to phase out routine herbicide use in County operations within one year and update the County’s Integrated Pest Management practices. The goal does not involve abandoning vegetation management. Vegetation can protect against erosion, stabilize soil, improve habitat, and support healthier waterways. Staff should preserve and restore vegetation where appropriate, while actively managing invasive species, blocked access, fire hazards, and flood control needs.

The County should move away from routine chemical applications and toward prevention, monitoring, manual removal, mechanical removal, native planting, erosion control, habitat restoration, and lower toxicity alternatives. Targeted chemical treatment should occur only when necessary, narrowly applied, noticed to the public, documented in writing, and limited to specific public safety, flood control, wildfire prevention, infrastructure, habitat restoration, invasive species, erosion control, or legal compliance needs. This local action also comes as Congress continues debating pesticide and herbicide regulation, including recent efforts to shield pesticide manufacturers from certain lawsuits through Farm Bill language. Orange County should not wait for Washington to decide how much accountability chemical manufacturers should face.

The Board should direct a formal policy shift that protects public infrastructure, public health, waterways, habitat, and public trust.

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A