



CITY OF

NEWPORT BEACH

City Council Staff Report

July 28, 2026
Agenda Item No. 22

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Mark Vukojevic, Utilities Director - 949-644-3011,
mvukojevic@newportbeachca.gov

PREPARED BY: Mark Vukojevic, Utilities Director

TITLE: Response to 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report "PFAS and Public Awareness, A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water"

ABSTRACT:

For the City Council's consideration is the approval of a response letter to the 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report "PFAS and Public Awareness, a Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water" pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05 (a) and (b). The City of Newport Beach (City) is required to comment on certain findings and recommendations by September 7, 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) Determine this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this action will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- b) Approve the City's response to the 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report "PFAS and Public Awareness, A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water" and authorize the Mayor to submit the letter to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Orange County pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05(a) and (b).

DISCUSSION:

The 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) report, "PFAS and Public Awareness, A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water" (Attachment A) focuses on Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) that can be found in water supplies. The report provides an overview of the current responses by water agencies and the Grand Jury's recommendations. The report was issued on June 9, 2026, and responses are due by September 7, 2026 from affected agencies.

The Grand Jury's report includes an overview of how PFAS have affected the safety of local water supplies. PFAS are a large group of man-made chemicals used since the 1940s in common household and commercial products. PFAS chemicals were often used to keep food from sticking to cookware and food packaging. They were also added in

making fabrics, clothes, carpets, and furniture resistant to water and stains. Firefighting foams used to extinguish fuel and oil fires have also historically contained PFAS. Chemical manufacturers are the original source of PFAS chemicals. As a result of their widespread use and persistence, PFAS are commonly found in water, air, soil, wildlife and in humans.

The Grand Jury's report identifies and describes PFAS levels detected by Orange County drinking water agencies. It evaluates how these agencies have responded to recent PFAS regulatory requirements. It also examines the progress of PFAS treatment facility planning and installation, along with implementation of public education programs related to PFAS in drinking water. This report's findings and recommendations aim to expand public outreach by Orange County drinking water agencies. The report provides a total of eight findings and six recommendations. Per California Penal Code 933.05 (a) and (b), the City is requested to respond to four of the findings and to three of the recommendations as outlined in the report.

In general, the City of Newport Beach and its groundwater agency partner, the Orange County Water District (OCWD), concur with the Grand Jury's recommendations. In fact, the City and its partners have worked for many years to make local water supplies safe by testing, educating and removing PFAS in source water. Utilities Department staff has been closely monitoring and testing for PFAS over the last several years. The water served by the City, delivered to homes and businesses, meets all Federal and State water quality and safety standards. The City also maintains comprehensive PFAS information on the City's website, including quarterly test results from the City's water system. The City and OCWD have worked for many years on the installation of large scale PFAS removal systems, their testing programs, and their efforts to hold manufacturers accountable.

Staff from the Utilities Department prepared the City's proposed responses to the Grand Jury with assistance from OCWD. Attached is a letter for the Mayor's signature and the City's proposed responses for submittal to the Presiding Judge (Attachment B).

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this item.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff recommends the City Council find this action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTICING:

The agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the City Council considers the item).

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Orange County Grand Jury Report "PFAS and Public Awareness, A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water"

Attachment B – Letter and Proposed Response to the Grand Jury