

Attachment B

Letter and Proposed Response to the Grand Jury



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

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July 28, 2026

Mayor

Lauren Kleiman

Mayor Pro Tem

Noah Blom

Council Members

Michelle Barto

Robyn Grant

Joe Stapleton

Sara J. Weber

Erik Kenneth Weigand

Honorable Sheila F. Hanson
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Central Justice Center, Dept. C1
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

and

Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

SUBJECT: JUNE 9, 2026, GRAND JURY REPORT “PFAS and Public Awareness, A Closer look at Orange County Drinking Water”

Dear Judge Hanson:

As requested by the Grand Jury, the City of Newport Beach has reviewed the June 9, 2026, report titled “PFAS and Public Awareness, A Closer Look at Orange County Drinking Water” and is formally responding to specific Findings and Recommendations. The City Council of the City of Newport Beach (City) has authorized me to submit the City’s response.

The City of Newport Beach supports the Grand Jury’s efforts to investigate and report on water supply and quality issues. In general, the public may not fully understand the complicated issues with water and, rightfully so, rely on its elected officials and associated water agencies to properly manage and address that there is sufficient water supplies and that they are safe. This report will help inform the community of those issues, especially in the promotion of awareness, education and the efforts to remove PFAS. From the City’s standpoint, there are dedicated and professional water leaders and agencies working for our community, with a driven focus on water reliability and safe water.

The Grand Jury report has researched the extent of PFAS detection issues and evaluated the response by water agencies. They found that Orange County has a thorough and comprehensive PFAS testing, education and removal program, one of the largest programs in the State. In fact, the Orange County Water District (OCWD) coordinated a massive regional response to PFAS contamination in partnership with its member agencies. To date, OCWD and

the partner agencies have invested over \$600 million on capital costs to remove PFAS from groundwater. It is worth noting, the City is a producer and contributing partner agency with OCWD, which is a worldwide leader in the reclamation and reuse of wastewater to create additional local water supplies. The Groundwater Replenishment System purifies 100% of the reclaimable wastewater received by the Orange County Sanitation District. The project creates 130,000 acre-feet per year of water for the local community which is approximately 1/3 of the total water demands within the OCWD service territory

Newport Beach concurs with the Grand Jury's recommendation. Our partner agencies especially Orange County Water District (OCWD) have worked for many years to make local water supplies safe. This also reduces the areas reliance on imported water from Northern California and the Colorado River.

The City has been requested to respond to Findings F2, F4 F6 & F8 and to Recommendations 2, 4 and 5. The original Findings and Recommendations are provided below along with the City's response in **bold** type.

FINDINGS

- F2 PFAS is widespread, and contamination has been detected in Orange County groundwater sources. Community water systems are required to report PFAS monitoring results in their annual Consumer Confidence Reports.

The City of Newport Beach concurs with this finding. The City is required to report PFAS monitoring results in their annual Consumer Confidence Reports if the concentration is above a state set Report Detection Level, consistent with requirements established by the state Division of Drinking Water. Currently there are no detectable PFAS in the City water system. Therefore the City posts all its quarterly PFAS testing data on the City's dedicated PFAS webpage.

- F4 OCWD has taken a proactive leadership role in addressing PFAS in the Orange County Groundwater Basin, though PFAS treatment implementation varies across local cities and water districts.

The City of Newport Beach concurs with this finding. OCWD, the City of Newport Beach and the other 18 water producers provide safe and reliable drinking water that consistently meets all state and federal drinking water standards. Despite playing no role in releasing PFAS into the environment, OCWD developed a comprehensive capital improvement program to assist agencies in the construction of PFAS removal systems. OCWD and local water agencies have invested over \$600 million in these systems.

- F6 Orange County drinking water meets or exceeds state and federal standards and is safe for consumption without additional home filtration.

The City of Newport Beach concurs with this finding.

- F8 There are limited online PFAS education and outreach programs among Orange County water retailers. Most retailers rely on OCWD for PFAS education and outreach. PFAS advisories were included in approximately 55% of the Orange County water retailers' annual water quality reports in 2025.

The City of Newport Beach does not concur with this finding. PFAS information is plentiful. The City maintains a comprehensive PFAS webpage, including frequently asked questions, detailing testing information and specific information related to Newport Beach's water. The webpage is easily found/accessible and is combined with other water quality information.

Also, OCWD maintains a detailed PFAS section on its website www.ocwd.com, which contains a PFAS Fact Sheet and a Quarterly PFAS Update.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R2 By July 1, 2029, OCWD and its member agencies should monitor PFAS in groundwater and surface water sources and promptly implement PFAS treatment when response levels are exceeded. [F2, F4]

The recommendation has been implemented. The City of Newport Beach and OCWD both continue to maintain a proactive and comprehensive monitoring and testing program for PFAS. The City has been monitoring PFAS levels for many years and posting all testing information on its website and PFAS has not been detected in the City's water distribution system. OCWD provides the specific testing for PFAS and has and maintains communication with the City and all other local water agencies and regulatory agencies to share PFAS monitoring results and related information. The City of Newport Beach's drinking water meets or exceeds state and federal standards and is safe.

It is worth noting, OCWD has also performed multiple phases of pilot testing of PFAS treatment media to help agencies determine the best treatment options. OCWD has implemented a PFAS treatment policy to fund 100% of the design and construction, and

50% of the operation and maintenance costs for Producer drinking water well treatment facilities. OCWD and the Producer water systems have worked closely and collaboratively to develop this PFAS treatment policy and maintain PFAS agreements in support of the policy resulting in implementation of treatment throughout OCWD well in advance of much of the rest of the country.

- R4 By July 1, 2029, all Orange County water retailers should consistently include a PFAS advisory, treatment facilities status, and compliance information in consumer confidence reports and on agency websites, using clear and understandable language for the public. [F2, F8]

The website recommendation has been implemented. The consumer confidence report recommendation will be implemented within the required timeline.

- R5 By September 30, 2026, OCWD and all Orange County water retailers should enhance coordinated public education efforts to reassure their customers about drinking water safety. [F6, F8]

The recommendation has been implemented. The City of Newport Beach has and will continue providing the public with educational PFAS information, resources, and updates posted on our website. The City will continue to maintain links with OCWD and its detailed website information.

The City of Newport Beach continues to be advocate for water reliability and water quality through a proactive and coordinated approach with our water industry partners for the benefit of our community. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Grand Jury report.

Sincerely,

Lauren Kleiman,
Mayor, City of Newport Beach