



CITY OF LAGUNA HILLS

Public Services

September 9, 2009

Honorable Kim Dunning
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Judge Dunning,

The City of Laguna Hills hereby responds to the 2008-2009 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Paper Water – Does Orange County Have a Reliable Future?", in accordance with instructions issued on June 15, 2009, by James R. Péres, Foreman of the Grand Jury. The City Council of the City of Laguna Hills, on September 8, 2009, approved of the following responses to the Findings and Recommendations of the Grand Jury that relate to City operations.

Findings

F.1 There is inadequate coordination between local land use planning agencies and local water supply agencies, resulting in a process that fails to fully engage the issues. Response: Disagree.

F.1(a) Water agencies have tended to avoid interfering with or participating in growth management decisions. Response: Disagree.

F.1(b) Cities in the County have tended to not critically evaluate the limitation of the water agencies supply projections. Response: Disagree.

Narrative Response

The above Findings suggest that the City and our two local water agencies, El Toro Water District and Moulton Niguel Water District, do not communicate, coordinate, and evaluate land use decisions within the City. The City of Laguna Hills Community Development Department does, indeed, coordinate with these water agencies on all land use development decisions in which new water supply is required. The City's own environmental assessment form requires appropriate consideration of water supply for new developments and each water agency is required by State law to evaluate their water supply

capabilities in accordance with the Urban Water Management Plan. The local water agencies provide a copy of the Urban Water Management Plan to the cities for critical evaluation during each five year update of that Plan.

F.2 California's looming water supply crisis receives very little, if any, expressed concern from the public in comparison to the numerous other environmental issues presented during development project reviews. Response: Disagree.

F.2(a) Orange County's citizens and interest groups do not appear to grasp the seriousness of the water supply situation or the complexity and urgency of the necessary solutions. Response: Disagree.

F.2(b) Several recent, substantial water supply awareness efforts are underway (e.g. the OC Water Summit) that show promise but appear targeted to audiences that are already informed. Response: Disagree.

Narrative Response

The City of Laguna Hills fully complies with legally required public notices of development proposals including public hearing notices that are published and posted. The City's Planning Agency invites public participation with all projects. The City of Laguna Hills is not responsible for the public's attendance at public hearings about development proposals. However, the City does encourage water conservation efforts, has published articles about the need for water conservation within its quarterly newsletter issued to all households and businesses in the community, and coordinates closely with both the El Toro Water District and Moulton Niguel Water District on water conservation efforts.

Recommendations

R.1 Each Orange County Municipal Planning Agency, in cooperation with its respective water supply agency, should prepare for adoption by its City Council, a dedicated Water Element to its General Plan in conjunction with a future update, not to exceed June 30, 2010... Response: Disagree.

Narrative Response

The City of Laguna Hills General Plan, updated in 2009, is a comprehensive planning document that intertwines the need for water supply with all resources required for the successful future of the community. It would be inappropriate to have a stand-

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alone Water Element in the General Plan as water is already addressed in the Land Use Element, Community Services and Facilities Element, Conservation and Open Space Element, and Housing Element. Establishing a separate Element for a singular utility supply would not be an integrated approach to determining there are adequate resources of all types for the future of the community.

Sincerely,



Kenneth H. Rosenfield, P.E.
Director of Public Services

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