

August 11, 2026

Honorable Sheila F. Hanson  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California  
Orange County Grand Jury  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**RE: City of Buena Park Response to Grand Jury Report – “Wildfires Hit Home”**

To Whom it May Concern:

The City of Buena Park City Council Members have reviewed the Orange County Grand Jury’s report entitled “Wildfires Hit Home.” Below are the City of Buena Park’s responses to the aforementioned report:

**FINDINGS:**

**F1** **More frequent and severe wildfires driven by increasingly hotter, drier, and windier conditions in the Orange County wildland-urban interface are escalating impacts on financial and non-financial resources. Among the financial costs are dramatic increases in homeowners’ insurance premiums, nonrenewals, and inabilities to obtain insurance.**

**Response:** **The City of Buena Park partially agrees with this finding.** Wildfires are becoming a more common occurrence and continue to impact Orange County as a whole. However, the City does not have the required expertise, analysis, or firsthand experience to comment on the effect of wildfires on homeowners’ insurance costs or non-renewals.

**F2** **Actions that address conditions in the home ignition zone to significantly reduce ignition potential can prevent a community wildland-urban interface fire disaster or suburban conflagration.**

**Response:** **The City of Buena Park agrees with this finding.** Fire behavior research shows that ensuring the residents create and maintain defensible space within their home ignition zone is one of the most effective strategies in preventing wildfire disasters.

**F3** **Expanded engagement with the community to raise awareness and provide support regarding home hardening and defensible space will increase effectiveness of wildfire risk mitigation and insurance risk reduction efforts.**

**Response:** **The City of Buena Park agrees with this finding.** Ensuring that residents, particularly those in or near high-risk areas, are informed about home hardening and defensible space is advantageous for wildfire mitigation. The City will continue to partner with the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) to promote robust public education programs, provide home assessment tools, and distribute other relevant materials and outreach resources.

**F4**            **Achievement of community-level and property-level wildfire risk mitigation designations (such as Firewise USA Site, Fire Risk Reduction Community or Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety certification) lessens wildfire risk and helps reduce insurance premium costs.**

**Response:**    **The City of Buena Park partially agrees with this finding.** The City agrees that community-level and property-level mitigation programs reduce wildfire risk. However, the City does not have sufficient expertise to evaluate the impact of these types of programs on homeowners' insurance premiums.

**F5**            **All county residents should be made aware that Safer from Wildfire regulation requires insurers to provide discounts to homeowners and communities that implement home hardening and defensible space measures, regardless of whether a property is located within a Fire Hazard Severity Zone.**

**Response:**    **The City of Buena Park agrees with this finding.** Increased efforts must be made to make residents aware that efforts such as home hardening and defensible space measures can result in discounts to homeowners, regardless of their location to a designated FHSZ. However, it should be noted that the City does not have the subject matter expertise to know the full impact of these efforts on insurance premiums.

**F6**            **AB 888, California Safe Homes Grant Program, provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners, cities, counties, and special districts for home hardening and defensible space measures. Applying for and using these grant funds will reduce wildfire losses and improve insurability and resilience of vulnerable communities.**

**Response:**    **The City of Buena Park partially agrees with this finding.** The City of Buena Park agrees that the use of these grant funds can promote community-level mitigation and reduce fire risk. However, the City lacks the expertise to evaluate the overall impact on insurability.

It should also be noted that the California Safe Homes Grant Program requires residents to live within a High or Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) and qualify as low-income. Buena Park only has one very small portion of a neighborhood in the north part of the City that is within a Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). These 173 affected parcels reside within an affluent neighborhood near the City's private golf course. Therefore, the City believes there would be few to no residents that would qualify for the program.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**R2**            **By December 31, 2026, cities and fire service agencies, including the Orange County Fire Authority, should commit to participation in a county-wide annual wildfire prevention fair planned by the Orange County Board of Supervisors to showcase wildfire prevention outreach programs. [F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6]**

**Response:** This recommendation will be implemented by December 31, 2026. The City of Buena Park welcomes the opportunity to participate in an annual county-wide fire prevention fair planned by the Orange County Board of Supervisors that highlights wildfire prevention outreach programs. However, the ultimate timing of this endeavor will rely on the planning and timing established by the County of Orange, not the City of Buena Park.

**R3** By December 31, 2026, cities, unincorporated areas, special districts, and fire service agencies in High and Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zones should initiate planning activities to achieve community-level wildfire risk mitigation designations and/or establish a local Fire Safe Council within one year. [F4, F5, F6]

**Response:** This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented by December 31, 2026. Prior to July 2025, the City of Buena Park did not have any areas of the City that were included in a High or Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). As of today, there are approximately 173 parcels within a FHSZ. Due to this relatively new designation, the City plans to initiate wildfire planning activities that could include community meetings, public outreach, or community-level wildfire risk mitigation designations such as those listed above.

**R4** By December 31, 2026, to ensure city residents are engaged and aware of wildfire risk reduction resources, OCFA member and non-member cities should provide information, develop their own outreach program, and establish a direct contact person(s) for their residents. This is in addition to whatever referrals or references made to OCFA outreach programs. [F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6]

**Response:** This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented by December 31, 2026. While the City of Buena Park has created a dedicated webpage that includes information related to the new FHSZ maps and their location, the City of Buena Park plans to enhance the website to include additional wildfire prevention information and specific contact information for a designated City staff member. Additionally, the City plans to work with OCFA to develop a marketing outreach campaign to engage Buena Park residents living within the FHSZ, and those around them, about the dangers of wildfires, home hardening techniques, and information about evacuation procedures in the event of wildfire.

Thank you for providing the City of Buena Park the opportunity to respond to this report.

Sincerely,



Aaron France  
City Manager

cc: Buena Park City Council  
Christopher G. Cardinale, City Attorney