



City of Mission Viejo

Office of the Mayor and City Council

Wendy Bucknum
Mayor

Brian Goodell
Mayor Pro Tem

Trish Kelley
Council Member

Robert Ruesch
Council Member

Cynthia Vasquez
Council Member

August 11, 2026

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

**Subject: City of Mission Viejo Response to 2025-26 Orange County Grand Jury Report,
"Wildfires Hit Home"**

Dear Judge Hanson,

The City of Mission Viejo has reviewed the Orange County Grand Jury *Wildfires Hit Home* report. In compliance with California Penal Code section 933.05(a) and (b), the City has responded to each of the findings and recommendations directed to the City in this report. Each finding and recommendation are listed below, followed by the City's response.

FINDINGS

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the findings.

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 respondent agrees with the findings.

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 respondent agrees with the findings.

- 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) lessons wildfire risk and helps reduce insurance premium costs.

Response: The respondent agrees with the findings.

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

Response: The respondent agrees with the findings.

- F6 AB888, 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 respondent agrees with the findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Response: The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

By way of background, each year, the City of Mission Viejo hosts the South Orange County Disaster Preparedness Expo, co-sponsored by the County Board of Supervisors District 3. The event, which typically attracts over 2,000 people, dedicates a large section of event space to fire safety and response. At the Expo, OCFA showcases their response capabilities and provides fire safety education to the public. At this year's event, scheduled for October 17, 2026, the City will work with OCFA and the County Emergency Management Bureau to enhance wildfire safety education.

Additionally, as part of this recommendation, the City will reach out to the County to participate in the Orange County Board of Supervisors wildfire prevention fair by December 31, 2026.

- 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: The recommendation has been implemented.

In 2025, the City of Mission Viejo initiated the planning process to complete the necessary steps to become a Fire Risk Reduction Community. In July 2026, the City was notified by the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection that it had been placed on the 2026 list.

- 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: The recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

As an OCFA member, the City will implement its own wildfire community outreach program utilizing various social media platforms, city webpages and special events to reach residents. Finally, the City will establish direct staff contacts to facilitate access for the public. All components will be in place by December 31, 2026.

The City of Mission Viejo extends its appreciation to the Grand Jury for investigating this pressing and relevant matter. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Emergency Operations Manager, Paul Catsimanes at pcatsimanes@cityofmissionviejo.org or 949-470-3017.

Sincerely,



Wendy Bucknum
Mayor

Orange County Grand Jury 2025-2026 Report

cc: Orange County Grand Jury, 700 Civic Center Drive West, Santa Ana, CA 92701
City of Mission Viejo City Council
Elaine Lister, City Manager
Jerry Hill, Assistant City Manager
Tarquin Preziosi, City Attorney