



San Clemente

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**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL**

Rick Loeffler
Mayor

Steve Knoblock
Mayor Pro Tem

Victor Cabral

Mark Enmeier

Zhen Wu

CITY MANAGER

Andy Hall

910 Calle Negocio
San Clemente, CA 92673
Phone: (949) 361-8200

*"The Spanish Village
by the Sea"*

August 11, 2026

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

Subject: Report of the Orange County Grand Jury - "Wildfires Hit Home"

Dear Presiding Judge Hanson,

The City of San Clemente (City) appreciates the time and effort the Grand Jury spent on the development of their report, "Wildfires Hit Home".

The City Council has reviewed the report and authorized the attached response to the findings and recommendations noted in the report. The City values the opportunity to respond to the report, share our perspective, and provide firsthand knowledge to each of the issues requested by the Grand Jury.

If the City of San Clemente can provide additional information or clarification of our response, please do not hesitate to contact City Manager Andy Hall at HallaA@san-clemente.org.

Sincerely,

Rick Loeffler, Mayor City of San Clemente

Enclosure: City of San Clemente's Response to Findings and Recommendations

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
City of San Clemente Council Members
Andy Hall, City Manager

Findings and Responses

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 inability to obtain insurance.

City's Response: **Agree in part.** The City agrees that more frequent and severe wildfires are occurring in the Orange County wildland-urban interface. However, the City lacks the insurance-market expertise to independently confirm that this finding establishes the cause of increased insurance premiums, nonrenewals, and inability to obtain coverage, as the City is not an expert in insurance markets.

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.

City's Response: **Agree**

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.

City's Response: **Agree**

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.

City's Response: **Agree in part.** The City agrees that 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, however, the City lacks the insurance-market expertise to independently confirm that achievement of community-level and property-level wildfire risk mitigation designations helps reduce insurance premium costs.

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.

City's Response: **Agree**

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.

City's Response: **Agree in part.** The City agrees that AB 888 provides financial assistance to eligible homeowners, cities, counties, and special districts for home hardening and defensible space measures and that applying for and using these grant funds will reduce wildfire losses and improve resilience of vulnerable communities. However, the City lacks the insurance-market expertise to independently confirm that applying for and using these grant funds will improve insurability of vulnerable communities.

Recommendations and Response

R2 By December 31, 2026, cities and fire service agencies, including 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]

City's Response: **The Recommendation has been implemented.** The City commits to participating in a county-wide annual wildfire prevention fair if such an event is established by the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

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]

City's Response: **The Recommendation has been implemented.** The City's adopted Emergency Management Strategic Plan includes planning activities for community-level wildfire risk reduction, including participation in the Fire Risk Reduction Community program and other wildfire preparedness initiatives.

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]

City's Response: **The Recommendation has been implemented.** The City provides wildfire preparedness information and resources to residents through its website and public outreach efforts. The City also maintains a designated staff contact to assist residents with wildfire preparedness information and resources.