



September 3, 2026

Via Email: grandjurysupport@occourts.org

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

Subject: Response to the 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report, “Wildfires Hit Home”

Dear Presiding Judge Hanson,

On behalf of the City of Brea, this letter provides the City’s response to the 2025–2026 Orange County Grand Jury report titled, *Wildfires Hit Home*. The City appreciates the Grand Jury’s review of wildfire risk, home hardening, defensible space, public education, insurance impacts, and community-level wildfire risk reduction efforts.

The City of Brea recognizes the importance of wildfire preparedness, particularly in areas of the City located within or adjacent to the wildland-urban interface, including Carbon Canyon and other hillside/open-space areas. The City remains committed to reducing wildfire risk through prevention, inspection, public education, code adoption, interagency coordination, and continued evaluation of community risk-reduction opportunities.

RESPONSES TO 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 inability to obtain insurance.*

Response: The City of Brea agrees with this finding.

Cecilia Hupp
Mayor

Marty Simonoff
Mayor Pro Tem

Christine Marick
Council Member

Blair Stewart
Council Member

Steven Vargas
Council Member

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 Brea agrees with this finding.

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 Brea agrees with this finding.

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 Brea agrees with this finding.

F5. *All county residents should be made aware that Safer from Wildfires 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 Brea agrees with this finding.

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 Brea agrees with this finding.

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

R2

Recommendation: *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.*

Response: This recommendation will be implemented upon development and scheduling of the county-wide event by the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

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The City of Brea supports the concept of a county-wide annual wildfire prevention fair and is prepared to participate if such an event is developed and scheduled by the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Participation would allow the City to share information regarding wildfire preparedness, defensible space, home hardening, evacuation readiness, insurance-related wildfire mitigation resources, grant opportunities, and local programs applicable to Brea residents.

The City currently conducts wildfire prevention and preparedness efforts through the Fire Department's prevention activities, Brush Clearance Program, public education and outreach, Fire Safe Council coordination, wildfire preparedness workshops, and community risk-reduction efforts. The Brea Fire Department has also been approved for inclusion on the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's 2026 Fire Risk Reduction Community List, effective July 1, 2026, which further supports the City's ability to contribute meaningful information and best practices to a county-wide wildfire prevention event.

The City anticipates participation by appropriate City staff, including the Fire Department and other personnel involved in emergency management, public education, community outreach, code enforcement, defensible space, and wildfire preparedness.

Timeframe for implementation: On or before December 31, 2026, contingent upon the County's development and scheduling of the county-wide event.

R3

Recommendation: *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.*

Response: This recommendation has been implemented and will continue to be maintained and enhanced.

The City of Brea supports the goal of improving community-level wildfire risk mitigation and has already taken significant steps consistent with this recommendation. The Brea Fire Department submitted an application to the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection for inclusion on the Fire Risk Reduction Community List and was approved for inclusion on the 2026 list, effective July 1, 2026.

In addition, the City has an active local Fire Safe Council through the Carbon Canyon Fire Safe Council. The Brea Fire Department participates in these meetings on a monthly basis through Fire Prevention staff involvement, allowing for ongoing coordination with community members regarding wildfire preparedness, defensible space, brush clearance, home hardening, evacuation readiness, and other wildfire risk reduction efforts.

The City's existing wildfire mitigation efforts also include defensible space and weed abatement activities, the Brush Clearance Program, public education and outreach, wildfire preparedness workshops, code adoption, inspections, interagency coordination, and continued evaluation of wildfire-risk reduction infrastructure and grant opportunities.

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These efforts were included as part of the City's Fire Risk Reduction Community List application, which documented the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, hazardous fuels reduction efforts, public outreach, and Fire Safe Council coordination.

Timeframe for implementation: This recommendation has been implemented. The City will continue to participate in the Carbon Canyon Fire Safe Council, maintain its wildfire mitigation and outreach efforts, and support continued compliance with the Fire Risk Reduction Community List requirements.

R4

Recommendation: *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 are made to OCFA outreach programs.*

Response: This recommendation has been implemented and will continue to be enhanced.

The City of Brea agrees with the importance of providing residents with clear, locally available wildfire-risk information and direct City contact person(s) for questions regarding defensible space, home hardening, inspections, Fire Hazard Severity Zones, evacuation readiness, and available mitigation resources.

The City currently provides wildfire prevention and preparedness information through Fire Department prevention activities, the City's Brush Clearance Program, community meetings and public education efforts, defensible space and weed abatement outreach, public safety messaging, and coordination with regional and community partners. The City's ongoing outreach efforts include wildfire preparedness workshops, brush clearance education, and coordination with the Carbon Canyon Fire Safe Council.

In addition, the Brea Fire Department was approved for inclusion on the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's 2026 Fire Risk Reduction Community List, effective July 1, 2026. This designation reflects the City's ongoing wildfire mitigation, planning, hazardous-fuels reduction, public education, and community outreach efforts.

The City will continue to enhance its wildfire outreach program by maintaining and improving public-facing wildfire preparedness information, coordinating messaging related to defensible space, home hardening, evacuation readiness, insurance-related mitigation resources, and available state or regional grant opportunities, and identifying appropriate City contact person(s) for residents seeking wildfire risk reduction information.

Timeframe for implementation: This recommendation has been substantially implemented. The City will continue to update public-facing wildfire preparedness information, and the Fire Prevention Division will serve as the direct contact for residents seeking wildfire risk reduction information.

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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 Brea can provide additional information or clarification of our responses, please contact Fire Chief Daniel Mielke at danielmi@breafire.gov or by phone at (714)990-7644.

Sincerely,



Kristin Webster
City Manager
City of Brea

cc: City of Brea City Council
Daniel Mielke, Fire Chief, Brea Fire Department
Victoria Popescu, Brea City Clerk
Hugh Nguyen, Orange County Clerk-Recorder

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