



July 21, 2026

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

**Re: City of Laguna Beach Response to Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report:
"Wildfires Hit Home" (2025-2026)**

Dear Judge Hanson,

At the July 21, 2026 Laguna Beach City Council meeting, the City Council reviewed the 2025–2026 Orange County Grand Jury report entitled *California Housing Mandates, The Unintended Reshaping of Orange County Neighborhoods* ("Report"). In the Report, the Grand Jury required the City of Laguna Beach to respond to Findings F1, F2, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10, F11, and F12 ("Findings"), and to Recommendations R7, R8, R9, R11, R12, R14, R15, and R16 ("Recommendations"). (See Report, p. 44.)

Pursuant to California Penal Code sections 933(c) and 933.05 (a) and (b), I hereby submit the attached responses to the Findings and Recommendations on behalf of myself and my City Council colleagues.

If you or any members of the Grand Jury have questions about our response, please contact Kirsten Gallacher, Senior Administrative Analyst, at 949-464-6683 or kgallacher@lagunabeachcity.net.

Respectfully submitted,


Mark Orgill
Mayor, City of Laguna Beach

CC: Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center West
Santa Ana, California



Responses to Findings

Finding 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 Laguna Beach agrees that frequent and severe wildfires driven by increasingly hotter, drier, and windier conditions in the Orange County wildland-urban interface are escalating impacts of financial and non-financial resources. Wildfire mitigation and measure to remediate the impacts of wildfires continues to take up a larger and larger portion of the City's budget as well as its operational mindset. Further, the City has heard from constituents about issues in the insurance market such as increases in premiums, nonrenewals, and inability to obtain insurance.*

Finding 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 Laguna Beach generally agrees with this finding. Conditions in the home ignition zones play a major role in preventing a community wildland-urban interface disaster or suburban conflagration. However, depending on the weather conditions and severity of the fire, these actions may not be enough to totally prevent a community wildland-urban interface fire disaster or suburban conflagration.*

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 Laguna Beach generally agrees with this finding. Having individuals throughout the community take ownership of their home hardening and defensible spaces (with City support) increases the effectiveness of wildfire risk mitigation. Further, the City is hopeful that these efforts would also lead to fewer instances of policy nonrenewals and minimal premium increases (if not decreases); however, that is the purview of the various insurance entities responsible for these decisions.*



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 Laguna Beach generally agrees with this finding. Achievement of community-level and property-level wildfire risk mitigation designations lessens wildfire risk. As explained above, having community buy-in via these types of programs is critical as local municipalities like the City simply do not have the resources to address every single property in its jurisdiction alone. Regarding the reduction in insurance premiums costs, the City is hopeful that this would be the case after the achievement of certain community-level and property-level wildfire risk mitigation designations but the City cannot guarantee this as it is beyond the purview of the City.*

Finding 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 Laguna Beach agrees with this finding. This financial benefit in the form of insurance discounts may increase the overall number of properties in the City that implement certain home hardening and defensible space measures in the City. This is nothing but a positive effect that could contribute to the City's overall wildfire mitigation plan.*

Finding 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 City of Laguna Beach agrees with this finding.*

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 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.



Response: *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented by December 31, 2026. The City of Laguna Beach will 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 and will take any required action necessary to participate (i.e., City Council approval, etc.)*

Recommendation 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.

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented. The City has initiated and continues planning activities toward community-level wildfire risk mitigation designations. This includes our ongoing Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) program and defensible space ordinance, which require property owners in high-risk areas to maintain compliant defensible space and vegetation management zones around structures. We also maintain robust evacuation zone planning, featuring clearly defined zones, publicly accessible mapping tools, and regular updates integrated with our citywide emergency management systems.*

The Laguna Beach Fire Department conducts community preparedness workshops on home hardening, defensible space, wildfire safety, and evacuation preparedness. We actively promote and support Firewise Communities principles and designations for neighborhoods. Additionally, we have implemented an outdoor warning system to enhance public alerts during emergencies along with other alerting technologies. These efforts align with and exceed the intent of achieving community-level mitigation designations, and the City will continue to evaluate and expand its efforts to be most effective.

Recommendation 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.

Response: *The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The residents of the City have been provided information about the wildfire risk reduction resources and the City continues to provide this information. The City has its own outreach program that is always being evaluated and adjusted for effectiveness. The City does not have a singular contact person for their residents as it really is a team approach with multiple City staff members responding to resident inquiries and*



providing outreach and guidance. This holistic approach demonstrates the City's commitment to proactive wildfire risk reduction, community education, and collaboration with regional partners to enhance public safety and resilience, The City will look into the possibility of a dedicated direct contact person(s) or perhaps a dedicated email address that is managed and checked by various City staff to ensure the most appropriate and time sensitive response.

The City appreciates the Grand Jury's thorough analysis, findings, and recommendations.