



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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August 2026

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

RE: Response to 2025-2026 Orange County Grand Jury Report "Wildfires Hit Home"

Your Honor:

On May 19, 2026, the Orange County Grand Jury issues a report entitled "Wildfires Hit Home" that examines the degree in which California Safer from Wildfires, California Fair Access to Insurance Requirements Plan, Assembly Bill 888 (2025), and California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (2025) home hardening and defensible space measures protect homes and communities, saving homeowners, local governments, fire authorities, and insurance companies from catastrophic loss, while also providing discounts for homeowners' insurance premiums.

At the conclusion of its analysis, the Grand Jury made six findings, with four recommendations, and required the City to respond to each of the six findings and three of the recommendations. In accordance with California Penal Code 933.05(a) and (b), the Orange County Grand Jury requires responses of the findings and recommendations. The City of Tustin responds as set forth below.

FINDINGS

Finding 1: 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 to Finding 1: The City of Tustin agrees in part with Finding 1. The City agrees that increasingly frequent and severe wildfires pose significant risks to communities but lacks the expertise and regulatory authority to evaluate homeowners' insurance premiums or market conditions.

Finding 2: 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 to Finding 2: The City of Tustin agrees with Finding 2. The City supports evidence-based wildfire mitigation measures, including home hardening and defensible space, through its partnership with OCFA.

Finding 3: *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 to Finding 3: The City of Tustin agrees with Finding 3. The City supports continued public education and community engagement in partnership with OCFA to improve wildfire preparedness and resilience.

Finding 4: *Achievement of community-level and property-level wildfire risk mitigation designation (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 to Finding 4: The City of Tustin agrees in part with Finding 4. The City supports community- and property-level wildfire risk reduction efforts but lacks the expertise to evaluate their effect on private insurance premium costs.

Finding 5: *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 to Finding 5: The City of Tustin agrees in part with Finding 5. The City supports educating residents about home hardening, defensible space, and available insurance-related benefits but lacks the expertise and regulatory authority to evaluate insurance premium requirements or discounts.

Finding 6: *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 to Finding 6: The City of Tustin agrees in part with Finding 6. The City supports the use of available grant funding to improve wildfire resilience but lacks the expertise to evaluate the impact on private market insurability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 2: *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 to Recommendation 2: This recommendation requires further analysis. The City of Tustin contracts with Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) for the provision of fire services and emergency medical services within City’s boundaries. The City will support OCFA and the County of Orange should the County elect to establish a county-wide annual wildfire prevention fair.

Recommendation 3: *By December 31, 2026, cities, unincorporated areas, special districts, and fire services 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 to Recommendation 3: This recommendation has been implemented. The City of Tustin adopted Ordinance No. 1568: An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Tustin Designating Moderate, High, and Very High Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Areas in Accordance with Government Code Section 51179 on June 17, 2025. The City continues to work in partnership with OCFA to advance the objectives of this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: *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 to Recommendation 4: This recommendation requires further analysis. The City of Tustin contracts with Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) for the provision of fire services and emergency medical services within City’s boundaries. The City will continue working with OCFA to provide residents with wildfire risk reduction information and resources through existing public outreach efforts.

Should you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Aldo Schindler at (714) 573-3010 or via email at CityManager@tustinca.org.

Sincerely,



Austin Lumbard
Mayor

cc: Orange County Grand Jury