



ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

Legislative and Public Affairs Committee

Regular Meeting

Agenda

Wednesday, January 15, 2025
12 noon

Orange County Fire Authority
Regional Fire Operations & Training Center
Classroom One
One Fire Authority Road
Irvine, CA 92602

Committee Members

Katrina Foley, Chair • Connor Traut, Vice Chair
Joe Kalmick • Donald Wagner

NOTICE REGARDING PUBLIC ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

This meeting is open to the public. Committee members will participate in person. There are several alternative ways to make comments including:

In Person Comments at Meeting: Resolution No. 97-024 established rules of decorum for public meetings held by the Orange County Fire Authority. Resolution No. 97-024 is available from the Clerk of the Authority.

Any member of the public may address the Committee on items within their subject matter jurisdiction, but which are not listed on this agenda during PUBLIC COMMENTS. However, no action may be taken on matters that are not part of the posted agenda. We request comments made on the agenda be made at the time the item is considered and that comments be limited to three minutes per person. Please address your comments to the Committee and do not engage in dialogue with individual Board Members, Authority staff, or members of the audience.

If you wish to speak, please complete a Speaker Form identifying which item(s) you wish to address. Please return the completed form to the Clerk of the Authority prior to the item being considered. Speaker Forms are available at the entryway of the meeting location.

E-Comments: Alternatively, you may email your written comments to coa@ocfa.org. E-comments will be provided to the Committee members upon receipt and will be part of the meeting record as long as they are received during or before the Committee takes action on an item. Emails related to an item that are received after the item has been acted upon by the Committee will not be considered.

This Agenda contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. Except as otherwise provided by law, no action or discussion shall be taken on any item not appearing on the following Agenda. Unless legally privileged, all supporting documents, including staff reports, and any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Committee members after the posting of this agenda are available for review at the Orange County Fire Authority Regional Fire Operations & Training Center, 1 Fire Authority Road, Irvine, CA 92602 or you may contact the Clerk of the Authority at (714) 573-6040 Monday through Thursday, and every other Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and available online at <http://www.ocfa.org> under Board & Committee Agendas/Minutes.



In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and [Board of Directors policy](#), if you need reasonable accommodations to participate in this meeting, please complete the [ADA Reasonable Accommodation Form](#) available on the Agency's website and email to COA@ocfa.org, or you may contact the Clerk of the Authority at (714) 573-6040 during regular business hours to submit your request orally. Please notify us at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to enable the Authority to make reasonable arrangements to assure accessibility to the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Foley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Director Kalmick

ROLL CALL by Clerk of the Authority

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please refer to instructions on how to submit a public comment on Page 1 of this Agenda.

1. PRESENTATION

No items.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters on the consent calendar are considered routine and are to be approved with one motion unless a director or a member of the public requests separate action on a specific item.

A. Minutes for the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee Meeting

Submitted by: Maria Huizar, Clerk of the Authority

The record will reflect that any Director not in attendance at the meeting of the Minutes will be registered as an abstention, unless otherwise indicated.

Recommended Action:

Approve the Minutes for the October 16, 2024, Regular Meeting as submitted.

3. DISCUSSION CALENDAR

A. Proposed 2025-26 Legislative Platform

Submitted by: Robert C. Cortez, Assistant Chief/Business Services Department and Olina Wibroe-Benson, Legislative Affairs Program Manager

Recommended Action

Review the proposed agenda item and direct staff to place the item on the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting on January 23, 2025, with the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee's recommendation that the Board of Directors approve OCFA's Legislative Platform for 2025-26.

B. Quarterly Public Affairs Update

Submitted by: Matt Olson, Director of Communications

Recommended Action:

Receive and file the report.

REPORT

None.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT – The next regular meeting of the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.

AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

I hereby certify under penalty of perjury and as required by the State of California, Government Code § 54954.2(a), that the foregoing Agenda was posted in the lobby and front gate public display case of the Orange County Fire Authority, Regional Training and Operations Center, 1 Fire Authority Road, Irvine, CA, not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting.

Maria D. Huizar, CMC
Clerk of the Authority

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – THREE-MONTH OUTLOOK:

- Legislative Quarterly Update
- Public Affairs Quarterly Update
- Election of Chair and Vice Chair

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Executive Committee

Thursday, January 23, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

Board of Directors

Thursday, January 23, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Human Resources Committee

Tuesday, February 4, 2025, 12 noon

Budget and Finance Committee

Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 11 a.m.

Operations Committee

Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 12 noon.

MINUTES ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

**Legislative and Public Affairs Committee
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 16, 2024
12:00 Noon**

**Regional Fire Operations and Training Center
Classroom One
1 Fire Authority Road
Irvine, CA 92602**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee was called to order on Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. by Chair Foley.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director Chun led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Katrina Foley, County of Orange, Chair
Connor Traut, Buena Park, Vice Chair
Ross Chun, Aliso Viejo
Joe Kalmick, Seal Beach
Donald P. Wagner, County of Orange (12:04 p.m.)

Absent: Chris Duncan, San Clemente

Also present were:

Deputy Chief Lori Zeller	Assistant Chief Robert C. Cortez
Assistant Chief Jim Ruane	Assistant Chief Stephanie Holloman
Director of Communications Matt Olson	Assistant Chief Tim Perkins
Interim Assistant Chief Baryic Hunter	Assistant General Counsel Michael Daudt
Clerk of the Authority Maria D. Huizar	

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

1. PRESENTATION

No items.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Director Chun and second by Vice Chair Traut, approved 4-0 Agenda Item Nos 2A-2B (Directors Wagner and Duncan absent).

A. Minute for the Legislative & Public Affairs Committee Meeting. (FILE 12.02E2)

Action: Approve the Minutes for the July 17, 2024, Regular Meeting as submitted.

B. Quarterly Public Affairs Update (FILE 12.02E5)

Action: Receive and file.

Director Wagner arrived at 12:04 p.m.

3. DISCUSSION CALENDAR

A. Legislative Quarterly Update (FILE 12.02E5)

Legislative Affairs Manager Olina Wibroe-Benson presented the update.

On motion of Director Wagner and second by Vice Chair Traut, approved 5-0 (Director Duncan absent) to receive and file the Legislative Quarterly Report.

B. Preliminary Review of the 2025-26 Legislative Platform (FILE 12.02E5)

Legislative Affairs Manager Wibroe-Benson presented the Legislative Platform and introduced State Lobbyist John Moffatt, and Geoff Neill of Nielsen Merksamer Parrinello Gross & Leoni, LLP, who provided updates on legislative policies and initiatives.

The Committee approved 5-0 (Director Duncan absent) by consensus to review the proposed 2025-26 Legislative Platform with the addition of the following items of concern:: support of undergrounding of utilities to prevent fire, support fire insurance for homeowners, energy storage facilities in high wildfire risk zones, United States Forest Service to support federal funding for additional USFS firefighting position and the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) into the draft version to be presented at the January 15, 2025, Legislative and Public Affairs Committee meeting.

REPORTS

No items.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

Director of Communications Olson noted OCFA Community Relations/Education Specialist Cheryl Whitney was recently acknowledged by members of the public for her exceptional work representing OCFA.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Foley adjourned the meeting at 12:35 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.

Maria D. Huizar, CMC
Clerk of the Authority



Orange County Fire Authority
AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Legislative and Public Affairs Committee
January 15, 2025

Agenda Item No. 3A
Discussion Calendar

Proposed 2025-26 Legislative Platform

Contact(s) for Further Information

Robert C. Cortez, Assistant Chief robertcortez@ocfa.org 714.573.6012
Business Services Department

Olina Wibroe-Benson
Legislative Affairs Program Manager olinabenson@ocfa.org 714.573.6048

Summary

This item is submitted for the Committee’s review, prior to seeking the Board of Director’s approval and adoption of the proposed 2025-26 Legislative Platform.

Prior Board/Committee Action

The draft platform was presented to the Committee on October 16, 2024, and staff was directed to incorporate edits, as approved by the Committee, finalize, and return on January 15, 2025, for consideration.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S)

Review the proposed agenda item and direct staff to place the item on the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting on January 23, 2025, with the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee’s recommendation that the Board of Directors approve OCFA’s Legislative Platform for 2025-26.

Impact to Cities/County

Not Applicable.

Fiscal Impact

Not Applicable.

Background

The OCFA Joint Powers Agreement authorizes the Authority to “prepare and support legislation related to the purposes of the Agreement” (Article 1, Section 4, subsection L). The OCFA 2025-26 Legislative Platform establishes a framework for the organization’s advocacy efforts, approved by the OCFA Board of Directors and implemented by OCFA staff and lobbyists. The platform allows staff to communicate OCFA’s positions or concerns on pending legislation, categorized as support, opposition, or monitor as bills advance through the legislative process.

The recommended positions outlined in the platform were based on past legislative history, anticipated legislation, prior OCFA stances, and discussions with Executive Management. In addition, the recommended positions now reflect the feedback that the Committee provided on October 16, 2024, as shown in the redlined tracked changes identified in the Attachment. Throughout the legislative year, as new bills are introduced, OCFA will analyze them using the

Platform for guidance and recommend positions on legislation, regulations, or budget proposals for Executive Committee approval.

Attachment(s)

OCFA 2025-26 Legislative Platform

2025-26 Legislative Platform

Operations and Community Safety

Wildfire Prevention & Suppression

- Support increased state funding of CALFIRE, Contract Counties, and other sources of funding for staffing and pre-positioning of resources during high threat periods (winds, drought, flooding)
- Support funding of aerial resources for both suppression and incident awareness and assessment (IAA)
- Support use of technology to forecast high fire risk conditions, wildfire progression (modeling), and monitoring (cameras, sensors, IAA)
- Support funding for education, fuel reduction, and planning to reduce fire ignitions and loss of life during wildfires
- Support undergrounding of powerlines for the purpose of wildfire mitigation
- Support funding and legislation for improved state and federal land management to reduce fuel levels

Building & Development

- Support funding, tax incentives, and educational programs that encourage home hardening to reduce building ignition during wildfires from embers
- Oppose legislation or efforts to eliminate local discretion and input on developments (housing and commercial) in the Wildland Urban Interface
- Monitor legislation impacting the fire code and related topics (i.e., high-rise buildings, hazardous materials, home hardening, etc.)
- Monitor legislation that mandates the use of solar energy in new developments and mobile fueling expansion
- Monitor proposals for energy storage systems (ESS) in high fire severity zones and their impacts on fire and health safety codes

Community Safety

- Support legislation and budget proposals that streamline enforcement, licensing, and disposal of fireworks or explosive material
- Support legislation and funding for fire safety programs, drowning prevention, and child car seat safety

Arson

- Support stronger penalties and efforts to prosecute arson crimes

Disaster Recovery & UASI

- Support funding for Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and other Department of Homeland Security grants that address regional or national threats, emergency preparedness, and communication

Insurance

- [Support legislation and proposals that support fire insurance for homeowners with fire mitigation requirements](#)

Emergency Medical Services and 911 System

BLS/ALS & Transport

- Support measures that increase Medi-CAL reimbursement to fire departments for ambulance transport and paramedic treatment
- Support measures that increase county and city authority to exercise local oversight and administration of the EMS system, including the design of service areas and contracting for service
- Support funding and the adoption of standards that improve firefighter safety
- Oppose mandated training or services by local EMS agencies without funding or cost recovery mechanisms

Alternate Destination & Alternative Transport

- Support legislation that encourages local agencies, either through funding or regulatory reforms, to treat patients by transporting to appropriate alternate destinations

Paramedic Licensing

- Monitor measures that revise paramedic licensing processes and impact OCFA hiring or promotional processes

911 Dispatch

- Support measures that reduce false or abusive use of 911 requests for services
- Support legislation and funding for the improvement or expansion of 911 dispatch centers, and establishing back-up systems and locations for continuity of operations

Homeless and Behavioral Health

- Support legislation that provides resources and alternative avenues of health care to adequately address behavioral health issues

Administrative

Revenues, Fees, & Taxes

- Support the use of state and federal funds for wildfire mitigation, defensible space, and suppression efforts (i.e., California State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds, Federal Forestry, and other land management agencies)
- Oppose the diversion of local revenues, fees, and taxes by the state (i.e., State takeaways, property tax and sales tax “borrowing, etc.)
- Support legislation to increase cost recovery responding to emergency incidents at institutional facilities that are exempt from contributing to local tax base
- Support legislation to increase cost recovery responding to emergency incidents resulting from illegal activity

Employee Benefits/ Risk Management

- Support measures that limit OCFA’s legal or insurance liabilities (i.e., improving efficiency of workers compensation review or settlement of claims)
- Monitor expansion or addition of new presumptive injuries or illnesses that force local agencies to provide benefits without considering if the injury or illness is related to employment
- Support measures that enhance or promote fire service employee safety

JPA Agreement

- Oppose efforts to restrict local control of JPA governance and any restriction on local design of JPA authority

Pensions

- Support measures that reduce liability and increase rate stability for local agencies

Logistics

- Monitor legislation that impacts design/construction of emergency buildings, fire vehicles, or 911 technology systems
- Support legislation that funds fire station construction or assists our member agencies in securing land for station construction
- Support legislation that funds or streamlines planning and installation of electric vehicle charging stations on secured public facilities and infrastructure for the use of essential and public safety employees

2025-2026 Federal Priorities

I. National Urban Search and Rescue Team (US&R)

OCFA is a sponsoring agency of California Task Force 5, one of 28 Task Forces across the country. These are Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) supported Task Forces that provide a federal response capability to nationally declared disasters. The system provides FEMA with a first responder capability using local agencies and personnel to administer and oversee the program. OCFA is responsible for administering federal funds to train and maintain local personnel and equipment that is deployed to national incidents.

In 2016, authorizing legislation was passed to address Task Force concerns with worker compensation, licensing of civilian members, and employment issues. The Task Forces have since then focused on increasing federal appropriations. Congress has for the last several years provided \$38 million annually.

OCFA will work with our national task force partners to advocate for additional funding for the US&R program. Additional funding is needed to replace critical equipment, enhance training, and fund capital replacement/improvement (vehicles, US&R warehouse).

II. Homeland Security & FEMA Grant Programs

OCFA will work with other national groups to support increased federal funding of Fire Act grants from FEMA (SAFER, AFG), Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding from Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Fire Administration. Santa Ana and Anaheim receive UASI funds and work with OCFA and other fire/law enforcement agencies to address regional equipment and training needs.

III. Wildfire & Forest Management

OCFA will support increased federal funding and efforts to address vacancies and staffing concerns at the United States Forest Service (USFS) to ensure our federal partners can support state and regional incidents. In addition, we will continue to support additional grant funding for the USFS to administer awards at the local level for community level vegetation removal, defensible space, and wildfire prevention/planning.

OCFA may submit requests through our Representatives or US Senators for congressionally directed spending on infrastructure and capital improvements throughout our service areas. Other projects identified through OCFA's budget or capital outlay plans may be considered if eligible based on congressional priorities.

[Additionally, OCFA will support policy updates that reflect the agency's ability to operate the Quick Reaction Force program at night.](#)

2025-2026 State Priorities

I. Wildfire Mutual Aid Resources

In 2022, OCFA secured a historic level of state funding (\$16.95 million) for the construction of a new Wildland Hand Crew Facility thanks to Senator Dave Min (D-Costa Mesa). An additional \$4.2 million in State budget funding was also secured for OCFA as one of six contract counties to expand our hand crew. This funding allowed OCFA to add a second year-around crew. The \$4.2 million is intended to be ongoing as a permanent increase to OCFA's contract county agreement with CALFIRE.

However, the State's 2025/26 fiscal situation appears delicate. OCFA will work with our contract county partners and labor representatives to ensure budget funding is provided.

OCFA will also seek support for our Air Operations, including plans to support and augment our helicopter fleet, and the continuance of funding provided by Southern California Edison to OCFA and others for increased aerial firefighting resources. Legislation in support of this program may be required and staff is researching options.

II. Fire Based Ambulance/Paramedic EMS Local Control

Over recent years there have been various efforts to supersede local municipal control of fire-based EMS/ambulance/paramedic service delivery. The California Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) is the state authority responsible for establishing standards for the training and scope of practice for EMS personnel. However, over the last several years the State EMSA has begun considering the establishment of new regulations that will intrude into local control in the design and level of service provided by fire-based municipal EMS agencies.

This effort was opposed by city and fire service leaders across the state, and the EMSA has now paused to allow for a workgroup to meet and discuss with fire service representatives. The OCFA will work with our local member agencies and statewide partners such as the League of Cities, California Fire Chiefs Association, and labor representatives to oppose any underground regulations imposed by EMSA on local agencies. Decisions on the design and level of service must continue to be made by local municipal fire-based EMS agencies that have been providing and funding those services.



Orange County Fire Authority
AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Legislative and Public Affairs Committee
January 15, 2025

Agenda Item No. 3B
Discussion Calendar

Quarterly Public Affairs Update

Contact(s) for Further Information

Matt Olson
Director of Communications

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714.573.6028

Summary

This item is submitted to provide a preliminary update of current OCFA public affairs programs and analytics that will be presented to the committee.

Prior Board/Committee Action

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S)

Receive and file the report.

Impact to Cities/County

Not Applicable.

Fiscal Impact

Not applicable.

Background

Over the past year, Corporate Communications has implemented various innovative strategies to engage, educate, and inform the communities we serve. This includes the launch of the agency's first secondary social media accounts, the largest Open House in agency history, the Second Annual Wildland Media Training Day, Spark of Love Toy Drive, and various other endeavors that resulted in thousands of community events, news articles, radio spots, social media campaigns, and TV clips that garnered millions of impressions, views, and engagements. These and various other 2024 Public Affairs points of pride will be shared via a year-end recap "Sizzle Reel," followed by a short presentation on a handful of our upcoming 2025 projects.

Attachment(s)

None.