



ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

LEGISLATIVE & PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

Agenda

Wednesday, January 21, 2026
12 noon

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

Committee Members

Donald Wagner, Chair • Janet Nguyen, Vice Chair
Phil Bacerra • David Burke • Victor Cabral • Kelly Jennings • Chi Charlie Nguyen

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 Wagner

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Director Burke

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 & Public Affairs Committee Meeting

Submitted by: Maria D. 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 15, 2025, Regular Meeting as submitted.

3. DISCUSSION CALENDAR

A. Legislative Update

Submitted by: Robert C. Cortez, Deputy Chief/Administration & Support Bureau, Sara Kennedy, Assistant Chief/Business Services Department and Kenneth Piguee, Legislative Affairs Program Manager

Recommended Action

Receive and file the Legislative Update.

B. Draft 2026 Priority Projects List for State and Federal Funding

Submitted by: Robert C. Cortez, Deputy Chief/Administration & Support Bureau, Sara Kennedy, Assistant Chief/Business Services Department and Kenneth Piguee, Legislative Affairs Program Manager

Recommended Action

Receive and file the draft 2026 Priority Projects list.

C. Quarterly Public Affairs Update

Submitted by: Matt Olson, Chief of Staff/Assistant Chief of Corporate 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 18, 2026, 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

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Executive Committee | Thursday, January 22, 2026, 5:30 p.m. |
| Board of Directors | Thursday, January 22, 2026, 6:00 p.m. |
| Human Resources Committee | Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 12 noon |
| Operations Committee | Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 12 noon |
| Budget and Finance Committee | Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 12 noon |

MINUTES ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

**Legislative and Public Affairs Committee
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 15, 2025
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 15, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. by Chair Wagner.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Director C. Nguyen led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Clerk of the Authority Maria D. Huizar

Present: Donald P. Wagner, County of Orange, Chair
Janet Nguyen, County of Orange, Vice Chair
Phil Bacerra, Santa Ana
David Burke, Cypress
Kelly Jennings, Laguna Niguel
Chi Charlie Nguyen, Westminster
Victor Cabral, San Clemente

Absent: None.

Also Present were:

Fire Chief Brian Fennessy
Assistant Chief Matt Olson
Assistant Chief Stephanie Holloman
Assistant Chief Jim Ruane
Assistant General Counsel Michael Daudt

Deputy Chief Robert C. Cortez
Deputy Chief TJ McGovern
Assistant Chief Rob Capobiano
Clerk of the Authority Maria D. Huizar

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

1. PRESENTATION

No items.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Director Bacerra and second by Director Burke approved 7-0 Agenda Item Nos. 2A-2B.

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

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.

Action: Approve the Minutes for the July 16, 2025, Regular Meeting as submitted.

B. Quarterly Public Affairs Update (FILE 12.02E5)

Action: Receive and file the report.

3. DISCUSSION CALENDAR

A. Legislative Report (FILE 11.10F1)

Deputy Chief Cortez presented the Legislative Report. He introduced John Moffatt and Geoff Neill of Nielsen Merksamer Parrinello Gross & Leoni, and Lisa Barkovic of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP who provided both State and Federal legislative updates, respectively.

On motion of Director Wagner and second by Director Jennings, approved 7-0 to review the proposed Legislative Report and direct staff to place the item on the agenda for the Executive Committee meeting of October 23, 2025, with the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee recommendation to receive and file the Legislative Report and adopt the recommended support positions for state SB 581, and federal bills S 1462 and HR 4072, in alignment with the Board-adopted Legislative Platform.

REPORT

None.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT – Chair Wagner adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Legislative and Public Affairs Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 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 Meeting
January 21, 2026

Agenda Item No. 3A
Discussion Calendar

Legislative Update

Contact(s) for Further Information

Robert C. Cortez, Deputy Chief
Administration & Support Bureau robertcortez@ocfa.org 714.573.6020

Sara Kennedy, Assistant Chief
Business Services Department sarakennedy@ocfa.org 714.573.6012

Kenneth Piguee
Legislative Affairs Program Manager kennethpiguee@ocfa.org 714.573.6048

Summary

This item is submitted to provide an update on legislative activities at the State and Federal level.

Prior Board/Committee Action

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S)

Receive and file the Legislative Update.

Impact to Cities/County

Not applicable.

Fiscal Impact

Not applicable.

Background

The Legislative Update provides an update on legislative activities at the State and Federal level. Items include a preview of the second year of the two-year State legislative session, update on the State budget outlook, Federal appropriations actions, and other relevant legislative and budgetary activities taking place at the State and Federal level. Oral reports from OCFA's State and Federal advocates will be available during the Legislative & Public Affairs Committee meeting.

Position recommendations on new or amended legislation, proposed regulations, or other relevant items will be presented to the Legislative & Public Affairs Committee for consideration at future meetings. Attachments 1 and 2 include a summary of bills that staff and OCFA's State and Federal advocates are currently tracking.

Attachment(s)

1. State Report – January 2026
2. Federal Report – January 2026

ATTORNEY WORK PRODUCT
PRIVILEGED & CONFIDENTIAL

VIA PDF E-MAIL

TO: Kenneth Piguee
Legislative Affairs Program Manager
Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA)

FROM: John Moffatt, Partner
Geoff Neill, Senior Legislative Advocate

DATE: January 12, 2026

RE: Monthly Legislative Report

Second Year of 2025-26 Session Begins

January 5 was the beginning of the second year of this legislative session. Bills that did not get out of their house of origin have until the end of the month to do so or they are dead. Legislators have also begun introducing new bills; they will introduce about 2,000 bills between now and February 20.

Senate Pro Tem Assigns Committee Chairs and Members

The newly installed Senate President pro Tem Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara) announced new committee chairs and assignments in December. Orange County senators are chair of Judiciary, Military and Veterans, and Environmental Quality, as well as the Select Committee on Hydrogen Energy. Delegation members are vice chair of many other committees, including Appropriations, Labor, Local Government, and Public Safety.

Governor's January Budget

The Governor released his January Budget today, reflecting increased revenue projections and a wait-until-May approach for most major new initiatives. The Administration pegs the budget deficit at \$2.9 billion, compared to the LAO's recent projection of a \$17.6 billion shortfall. The difference is driven mostly by the LAO's inclusion of a modest recession and revenue decline. Out-year deficits grow to about \$22 billion. The January Budget does not include

any significant cuts, though a number of one-time programs are not proposed to be renewed.

As presented, the budget would refill various reserves, to end the 2026-27 fiscal year with \$14.4 billion in the Rainy Day Fund, \$4.5 billion in the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties, and \$4.1 billion in the public school rainy day fund.

Notably, the budget does not propose new funding for HHAP or Prop. 36 implementation and barely reacts to the massive cost shifts of health and human service programs from the federal government, simply recognizing new state costs of \$1.4 billion for administration and cost sharing and proposing no backfills for cuts to the Medi-Cal or SNAP programs that are primarily affected. While these do not affect OCFA directly, there will be significant pressure on the Legislature to increase state funding for these programs, to the tune of several billion dollars.

Some areas of particular interest:

Cap-and-Invest

The budget maintains last year's commitment to use the entire \$1 billion of discretionary auction revenue for previous commitments (\$250 million) and to backfill CAL FIRE General Fund costs (\$750 million). It also maintains the \$500 million CAL FIRE backfills in the two outyears.

Proposition 4

The budget proposes to allocate an additional \$2.1 billion of the 2024 resources bond, including the following:

- Wildfires
 - o \$58 million for wildfire prevention and hazardous fuels reduction projects in and near wildfire threatened communities.
 - o \$19.6 million to help homeowners in wildfire-vulnerable areas to implement defensible space mitigations.

- \$15.2 million for grants to reduce wildfire risk related to electricity transmission.
- \$221 million for other, unspecified wildfire and forest resilience projects and programs.

- Extreme Heat
 - \$137.4 million to fund community-led development and infrastructure projects that achieve major environmental, health, and economic benefits in the most disadvantaged communities.
 - \$55.3 million to construct and upgrade neighborhood-level resilience centers that provide shelter and resources during emergencies, as well as year-round services and programming.
 - \$22.8 million for CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forest Grant Program.
 - \$25.5 million in other, unspecified extreme heat projects and programs.

CAL FIRE and CA Conservation Corps

The budget proposes \$66.5 million ongoing to support contract cost increases for fixed wing pilots and mechanics. The Governor also proposes \$6.2 million and 31 positions ongoing to meet the state's goal of 250,000 annual parcel inspections within the State Responsibility Area. He proposes \$11.7 million ongoing to implement a 7-day year-round operation schedule for CCC hand crews.

Ballot Measures

The 2026 ballot is shaping up to have a significant number of ballot measures. Below is a non-exhaustive list:

- Tax on billionaires to fund health services
- Extension of Proposition 30 income taxes
- Reversal of the Upland decision on local tax initiative thresholds
- ACA 13, imposing higher vote thresholds on initiatives that impose higher vote thresholds
- SCA 1, Changes to procedure for state-level recalls
- SB 42 (public funding of state and local elections)

- Competing measures to restrict AI development and use
- Rideshare insurance/liability
- Limits on healthcare union spending
- Limits on compensation for healthcare executives
- Requiring 90% of community health clinic funding to be spent on program services
- Home/property insurance availability and affordability
- Voter ID

Procedures approved by voters several years ago gave the Legislature an opportunity to negotiate with initiative proponents, which often takes the form of convincing proponents to withdraw their initiative from the ballot in exchange for the Legislature passing or placing on the ballot an alternative measure.

Bills of Interest

As the legislative session continues and OCFA takes positions on bills, we will provide a matrix of those bills in these reports. In the meantime, here are a few bills of potential interest. These are all 2-year bills with hearings this month.

- [SB 828 \(Cabaldon\)](#) - Fireworks licenses and permits: disqualifying conditions: storage facilities: local jurisdictions – New requirements for fireworks licenses, in response to the explosion in Esparto last year.
- [AB 874 \(Ávila Farías\)](#) – Mitigation Fee Act: development impact fees: qualified residential ownership and qualified rental projects – Requires local agencies to provide low-income housing projects with either \$0 development impact fees or a 30-year or 50-year development impact fee loan.
- [AB 1439 \(Garcia\)](#) – Prohibits CalPERS and local pension systems from investing in development projects in California unless those projects meet certain labor standards, including prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements, skilled and trained workforce or project labor agreement, and labor peace commitments.

2026 Legislative Deadlines

K. Piguee
January 12, 2026
Page 5 of 5

*ATTORNEY-CLIENT COMMUNICATION
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January 31 – Last day to pass bills introduced in that house in the odd-numbered year
February 20 – Bill introduction deadline
March 26 – Spring recess begins
April 24 – Policy committee deadline for fiscal bills
May 1 – Policy committee deadline for nonfiscal bills
May 15 – Appropriations Committee deadline
May 29 – House of origin deadline
June 15 – Budget passage deadline
June 25 – Last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the November election
July 2 – Second house policy deadline; summer recess begins upon adjournment
August 3 – Return from summer recess
August 14 – Second house Appropriations Committee deadline
August 31 – Bill passage deadline; final recess begins upon adjournment
September 30 – Sign/veto deadline
December 7 – The 2027-28 legislative session begins



To: Orange County Fire Authority
From: Manatt, Phelps & Phillips LLP
Re: Federal Update, December 2025 through early January 2026

Lawmakers Continue Work on FY2026 Appropriations Legislation

- Congress ended 2025 without a deal to move forward on government funding. Disagreements over earmarks, policy riders, and funding levels contributed to the delay in floor action for the Senate's appropriations bills.
- Despite the House and Senate's inability to advance appropriations legislation in December, House Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole (R-OK) announced that he and Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) reached an agreement on final total spending limits for the remaining nine appropriations bills, a key milestone required for the funding bills to pass.
- In addition, the Senate Appropriations Committee finally released their FY 2026 [Homeland Security Appropriations bill report](#) on December 23, 2025. This report was released by the majority without the support of minority. Typically, the Committee releases them as bipartisan measures. Of note, the Senate proposes to fund FEMA's Urban Search & Rescue at \$34.832 million. This proposed funding level is much lower than the House proposed level of \$56 million. During conference, we expect the final number will land around the average of the two.
- When Congress returned from the holiday break on January 5, House and Senate Appropriations Committee leadership released [a 3-bill minibus appropriations package](#) containing the Commerce-Justice-Science, Interior-Environment, and Energy and Water bills. The House passed this minibus 397-28 and now moves onto the Senate for consideration. Of note, this minibus provides:
 - \$1 million for the Forest Service to utilize an existing partnership with a public research university in a fire prone, western state with proximity to the National Interagency Fire Center to develop AI-based wildfire activity forecasting and modeling tools.
 - Funding to support wildland firefighter pay to protect communities from catastrophic wildfires.
 - \$1.52 billion for Wildland Fire Management and includes \$370 million for fire suppression cap adjustment as authorized.

- With an impending January 30 deadline of when the next continuing resolution (CR) expires, Congress continues to make progress to finalize the remaining appropriations bills.
- On Sunday, January 11, [appropriators introduced](#) a second, two-bill minibus encompassing Financial Services-General Government and National Security-Department of State appropriations bills. House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) had indicated that the Homeland Security appropriations bill might have been included in this tranche but disagreements on ICE funding are unresolved. The House Rules Committee will meet on Tuesday, January 13 to advance this minibus to the House floor for a vote later in the week.
- House and Senate appropriators continue to finalize the other remaining appropriations bills including Transportation-HUD, Defense and Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bills. The Senate earmarked their Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill while the House did not and are aiming to keep them in the final package by attaching it to Transportation-HUD, which carries the most earmarks.
- If Congress finalizes all the appropriations bills this month, we will expect to see the process for FY 2027 open rather quickly with requests for new community project funding, programmatic funding and report language.

FEMA Review Council Cancels Meeting and Delays Final Report

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Review Council abruptly canceled its final meeting scheduled for December 11, where the Council was set to present its policy recommendations to the Trump Administration and Congress. The Council, made up of state and local officials, including members of the Trump Administration, was tasked with presenting a comprehensive report on how FEMA could be reformed to better address the disaster response needs of the United States.
- Potential sticking points that could have led to the report and meeting's cancellation are over the Council's reported proposal being parred back from 160 pages to about 20 twenty pages. It was also reported that the proposal called for rolling out a new block grant system designed to get aid to communities faster and with less bureaucratic hassle.
- Neither the Council nor the Trump Administration has provided an updated timeline or indication of when the Council could release its report. The Council's authority/charter ends on January 24, 2026. It is unclear whether President Trump will extend it.

- Congress was waiting for the Council’s recommendation before taking the House’s FEMA Reform legislation to the House floor.

Gregg Philips Tapped to Lead FEMA Office of Response & Recovery

- On December 10, Gregg Philips was announced as the new head of FEMA’s Office of Response & Recovery. The Office of Response and Recovery plays a central role in coordinating federal efforts to support communities affected by disasters and emergencies across the United States.
- Before joining the Trump Administration, Phillips held roles in the public and private sectors. According to public records, Phillips held roles in human services in the state governments of Texas and Mississippi. However, Phillips holds no relevant disaster response experience. Phillips is known most prominently for his advocacy in favor of President’ Trump’s claim about the 2020 presidential election.

House Homeland Security Committee Holds Hearing on Worldwide Threats to the Homeland

- On December 11, the House Homeland Security Committee held a [hearing](#) entitled “Worldwide Threats to the Homeland.” Testifying on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was Secretary Kristi Noem. Also testifying before the committee was Joseph Kent, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, and Michael Glasheen, Operations Director of the FBI’s National Security Branch.
- During the hearing, witnesses and members discussed counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) investments made by Congress and the Trump Administration. The Secretary noted that the Trump Administration is particularly focused on addressing UAS threats during large events such as the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics.
- Members also questioned the Secretary on formula allocations for disaster preparedness. Secretary Noem defended the Trump Administration’s cut to New York City’s counterterrorism allocation, claiming that the City had hundreds of millions of dollars in reserves.

President Trump Signs Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act

- On December 17, President Trump signed the [Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act](#). Included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the bill makes key reforms sought by firefighting groups.

- The Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act updates the federal Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program to recognize occupational cancer as a line-of-duty death. The bill extends death and educational benefits to survivors and presumes certain cancers are job-related, removing the requirement to pinpoint a specific exposure.
- The NDAA received overwhelming bipartisan support, with 312 votes in the House and 77 votes in the Senate.

Senators Padilla and Sheehy Introduce Legislation to Create New Community Wildfire Resilience Grant Program

- On January 7th, Senators Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Tim Sheehy (R-MT) introduced the [Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act](#). This bill would create a new program within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help communities defend themselves against community wildfires.
- The bill specifically authorizes \$1 billion annually to empower communities to implement science-based methods, such as home hardening, to mitigate wildfire damage by funding new Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Plans. The bill calls for these plans to be developed in coordination with community members, first responders, and relevant state agencies.
- While the program is similar to the one funded in the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA), it is meant to be separate from it with FEMA leading with input from the US Fire Administration & Chief of Forest Service.
- Reps. Jared Huffman (D-CO-02) and Jay Obernolte (R-CA-22) have introduced companion legislation in the House ([H.R. 582](#)). A summary of the Senate bill can be found [here](#).

DHS Establishes New Office to Support Drone and Counter-Drone Technologies

- On Monday, January 12th, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [announced](#) the launch of a new office – the Program Executive Office for Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems – dedicated to rapidly procuring and deploying drone and counter-drone technologies.
- DHS also announced that the new office added that it is finalizing \$115 million in investments this week for counter-drone technologies that will be critical in securing America250 and the 2026 FIFA World Cup venues.

House Natural Resources Committee to Hold Hearing on Wildfire Legislation

- On Wednesday, January 14, the House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold a legislative hearing on several bills including two wildfire-related bills: H.R. 3922, The Cross Boundary Wildfire Solutions Act sponsored by Rep. Neguse and H.R. 4038, The Wildfire Response and Preparedness Act of 2025 sponsored by Rep. Young Kim.
- Congresswoman Kim’s “Wildfire Response and Preparedness Act of 2025” addresses the escalating forest health and wildfire crisis by creating standardized, measurable response times to wildfires, which will protect communities and advance President Trump’s Executive Order on “Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response.”
 - Specifically, the bill would direct the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, in coordination with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), to establish a standard response time to any wildland fire on federal land. Specifically, this standard response time would require agencies to respond to wildfire within 30 minutes and deploy fire suppression assets within three hours of an ignition. By setting a uniform metric across federal agencies, the bill seeks to improve accountability, speed interagency coordination, and secure the nationwide, year-round, and timely availability of federal firefighting resources.
- Congressman Neguse’s bill, the “Cross Boundary Wildfire Solutions Act”, directs the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study of wildfire mitigation efforts across federal and non-federal lands. GAO has already conducted similar studies in the past, releasing a report entitled “Wildland Fire Risk Reduction: Multiple Factors Affect Federal-Nonfederal Collaboration, but Action Could Be Taken to Better Measure Progress” in 2017.
 - Specifically, the bill would require an examination of federal programs, rules, and authorities that either facilitate or hinder wildfire mitigation across jurisdictional and ownership boundaries. The study will assess whether policy changes to such programs could expand capacity for more active forest management. GAO must report its findings and recommendations from the study to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources within two years of the bill’s enactment.



Orange County Fire Authority
AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Legislative and Public Affairs Committee Meeting
January 21, 2026

Agenda Item No. 3B
Discussion Calendar

Draft 2026 Priority Projects List for State and Federal Funding

Contact(s) for Further Information

Robert Cortez, Deputy Chief
Administration & Support Bureau robertcortez@ocfa.org 714.573.6020

Sara Kennedy, Assistant Chief
Business Services Department sarakennedy@ocfa.org 714.573.6012

Kenneth Piguee
Legislative Affairs Program Manager kennethpiguee@ocfa.org 714.573.6048

Summary

This item is submitted to provide a draft 2026 Priority Projects list to be discussed with OCFA's State and Federal delegation for potential State and Federal funding.

Prior Board/Committee Action

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S)

Receive and file the draft 2026 Priority Projects list.

Impact to Cities/County

Not applicable.

Fiscal Impact

Not applicable.

Background

The draft 2026 Priority Projects list, once finalized, will assist OCFA's State and Federal delegation when identifying projects for potential State and Federal funding. The Priority Projects list are typically projects that State and Federal legislators can show tangible results from and are also projects that are one to two (1-2) Fiscal Years (FY) away. In prior years, OCFA has worked with OCFA's State and Federal delegation to pursue key projects that would benefit from State and Federal funding. OCFA will continue to refine the draft 2026 Priority Projects list with Executive Management, OCFA's State and Federal advocacy consultants, and with OCFA's State and Federal delegation.

State Budget Earmarks

The State legislature often includes specific project funding in the State budget as part of the final budget bill or trailer bills, depending on the health of the State budget. Any funds for projects

earmarked in the State budget are typically not transmitted to the recipient until Q3/Q4 of that year.

- **FY 2023/2024:** OCFA received a \$250,000 allocation in the State budget for hand crew equipment.
- **FY 2022/2023:** OCFA received a \$16,950,000 allocation in the State budget for the construction of a new Wildland Hand Crew Facility through former State Senator Dave Min.
- **FY 2021/2022:** OCFA and other contract counties received a \$14,298,000 allocation in the State budget for hand fuel reduction activities.
- **FY 2019/2020:** OCFA received a \$4,500,000 allocation in the State budget for the Fire Integrated Real-Time Intelligence System (FIRIS) pilot program.

Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)/Community Project Funding (CPF)

Starting with the Federal fiscal year 2022 appropriations process, Members of Congress (Members) began a new process for Members to request funds for specific projects and established requirements to help ensure transparency and accountability. While directed funds were previously referred to as “earmarks,” under this new more transparent process this funding is referred to as “Congressionally Directed Spending” in the Senate and “Community Project Funding” in the House of Representatives. Having a project selected by a Member is an achievement in itself, but the project must survive committees, negotiations, and ultimately be included in a final appropriations bill. Given the volatility of the Federal appropriations process, the timeline to actually receive funds is never certain.

- **FY 2026:** \$1,000,000 through Congresswoman Young Kim for Fire Station 9 upgrades (project is included in the [Department of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies appropriations bill](#) that is likely to be considered in January 2026)
- **FY 2025:** \$1,000,000 through Congresswoman Young Kim for Fire Station 9 upgrades (not successful due to no Member projects being included)
- **FY 2023:** \$1,000,000 through former Congresswoman Michelle Steel for Fire Station 2 upgrades (not successful due to election changes)

Attachment

Draft 2026 Priority Projects List

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|---|-----------|----------------|--|--|--|
| Electronic Kiosk for Agendas, Public Records, Plans, Job Board etc. | \$TBD | Clerk | OCFA currently posts public information on a static display near the entrance of RFOTC. A new electronic kiosk/display will allow agendas, access to public records, plan requests, job postings etc. to be much more publically accessible and easy to update. | TBD | All (could be specific since it's RFOTC) |
| Board Room Improvements & Translation Software (SB 707) | \$TBD | Clerk | Due to the passage of SB 707, improvements to the Board of Directors meeting room will be needed to allow for more virtual public participation. Translation services will also be needed to comply with the requirements of SB 707. | TBD | All (could be specific since it's RFOTC) |
| Kitchen Trailers (Support) Addition | \$90,000 | Fleet Services | This project is to purchase two kitchen trailers for use by Property Management to provide temporary kitchen facilities at fire stations during renovation projects. Currently, the lack of portable temporary kitchen facilities presents logistical challenges at stations while facilities are inaccessible during construction. Each of the two trailer units would be deployed to stations as needed to enable station crews to continue normal daily operations during kitchen renovation projects. Acquisition of the units vs. use of rental trailers will ensure availability and will be more cost effective over time. | Purchases to occur in FY 2027/28 | All |
| Transport Tractor (Emergency) Replacement | \$200,000 | Fleet Services | The transport tractor is used by support personnel to move utility and equipment trailers to various locations, including command centers during emergency events. | Purchase to occur in FY 2027/28 | All |
| IT Help Desk Management Application | \$250,000 | IT | This project will provide a unified, consolidated solution for the processing and management of Information Technology requests. Currently, multiple non-integrated systems are used by OCFA to receive and track end-user support requests, depending on the source and nature of the request, resulting in inefficient management of IT support services and challenges for end users. The project scope will include the purchase of software, supporting hardware, implementation and training services which will result in the provision of a single source solution for end user support requests, request routing and prioritization, tracking, and help desk services management tools. | Project scheduled to commence in FY 2027/28. | All (could be specific since it's RFOTC) |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|--|---|-----------|
| Property Management Application | \$350,000 | IT | This project is for the purchase and implementation of an application for use by Property Management. The expectation is to purchase a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) technology solution specifically developed for facility maintenance departments with modules for work order processing and management, preventative/recurring maintenance management and scheduling, budgeting, vendor management and procurement, as well as fixed asset and equipment management, and integration with OCFA's existing implementation of AssetWorks. The project objective is to develop and sustain a highly strategic approach to managing OCFA's numerous facilities and equipment, including fire station buildings, HVAC systems, emergency power generators, and major appliances, to name a few. This will result in the optimized procurement of contract services and replacement equipment. | Purchase to occur in FY 2026/27 | All |
| Starlink Communications Equipment | \$400,000 | IT | This project provides Starlink mobile communications equipment for the Operations Command and Wildland Fire units to ensure mobile communications and network connectivity while in the field. Currently, field communications may be limited or unavailable in areas with limited or no cellular signal. Additional satellite communications capability via the Starlink network will provide an additional network to ensure uninterrupted communications and data transmission while operating in the field. This project will provide 50 Starlink mobile communications packages for Division and Battalion Command vehicles, as well as Wildland Fire units. | Purchase of the equipment will begin in FY 2025/26 with additional units added annually through FY 2029/30. | All |
| Motor Grader 4x4 (Support) Addition | \$600,000 | Fleet Services | This Motor Grader will complement OCFA's heavy equipment fleet of dozers and skip/front loaders used by Fire Crews & Equipment for fire prevention operations and support during fire emergencies. The addition of this grader will improve OCFA's implementation of high-priority fuel reduction projects to protect communities from wildfire and participate in prescribed fire projects to achieve more resilient landscapes. | Purchase to occur in FY 2028/29 | All |
| Dump Truck (Support) Replacement | \$700,000 | Fleet Services | The project replaces the dump trucks used by Wildland Operations Fire Crews & Equipment for fire prevention operations and support during fire emergencies. This project is to replace one unit in FY 2026/2027 and two units in FY 2028/2029. | Purchases to occur in FY 2026/27 and FY 2028/29. | All |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|--|---------------|----------------|---|---|--|
| Air Utility Vehicle (Emergency) Replacement | \$725,000 | Fleet Services | The air utility vehicle brings to the fire scene a cache of self-contained breathing apparatus and air cylinders. It also provides on-scene lighting. This apparatus has a built-in compressor that can fill the self-contained breathing apparatus cylinders at the emergency scene. This project is for the replacement of one air utility vehicle in FY 2026/27. | Purchase to occur in FY 2026/27. | All |
| Emergency Communications Center (ECC) Dispatcher Console Replacement | \$750,000 | IT | The Emergency Communications Center (ECC) at the RFOTC serves as the primary workplace for all of the OCFA's emergency dispatch staff. Each dispatcher is stationed at a workstation console, which houses the computer and communications technology needed for the performance of dispatcher duties. This project will replace the aging dispatcher consoles in the ECC, and complete any necessary modifications to the ECC to accommodate the replacement consoles. | The project is anticipated to be completed in FY 2026/27. | All (could be specific since it's RFOTC) |
| Heavy Wrecker (Emergency) Addition | \$830,000 | Fleet Services | The Heavy Wrecker is a specialized apparatus for use during significant or "over the side" traffic collisions. The unit is equipped with a boom lift, and carries vehicle accident rescue and extraction equipment. | Purchases to occur in FY 2027/2028. | All |
| Paramedic Squad Vehicle (Emergency) Replacement | \$915,000 | Fleet Services | This unit carries a full complement of advanced life support (ALS) paramedic equipment. This project is for the replacement of three paramedic squads in FY 2026/2027. | Purchases to occur in FY 2026/27. | All |
| Fire Station 41 (Air Operations)and Aircraft Landing Facilities Improvements | \$1,000,000 | Property Mgmt. | This project will provide modifications and improvements to the dorm facilities, restrooms, living quarters and office space to accommodate current Air Ops personal staffed 24/7. The project will also incorporate a new emergency backup generator to maintain station operations in the event of a power outage. | The project is currently in the design phase with construction projected to start in late 2025. | AD-67, SD-34, CD-46 |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|--|-------------|----------------|---|---|---|
| RFOTC Infrastructure Security Enhancements | \$1,100,000 | Property Mgmt. | <p>This project is comprised of multiple components to implement various security measures at RFOTC based on a report by a staff security advisory panel, and a security vulnerability assessment performed by the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center (OCIAC) in November 2021. Security enhancements provided through this project will add to existing features and systems which assist in safeguarding the OCFA staff and critical infrastructure. The Board-appointed Ad Hoc Security Committee report of recommendations, which took into account the OCIAC security assessment and recommendations from staff, included various security related minor building modifications at RFOTC, upgrade of the Control Access/Video Surveillance system, and as funding becomes available, expansion of the system to fire stations. Funding and implementation of these components of the infrastructure security enhancements project were initiated in FY 2020/21 and are planned to continue through FY 2029/30. Separate but related projects completed or in process include enhanced contract physical security services at RFOTC, and a phone system upgrade with alerting capabilities.</p> | <p>This project began in FY 2020/21 and will continue through FY 2029/30.</p> | <p>All (could be specific since it's RFOTC)</p> |
| Urban Search & Rescue Warehouse HVAC System | \$1,200,000 | Property Mgmt. | <p>This project will provide installation of a permanent HVAC system at the US&R Warehouse. Over time, it will be more cost effective to cool the warehouse with an efficient, permanent HVAC system. The system will improve the usefulness of the facility by providing heated and cooled ventilation. The intent is to cool/heat the warehouse on an as-needed basis, similar to the current use of rental heating/cooling units, therefore preventing higher ongoing utility costs.</p> | <p>System design, Public Works bid award, and construction is anticipated to occur in FY 2028/29.</p> | <p>AD-72, SD-37, CD-40</p> |
| Firefighter Initiative Tracking System | \$1,200,000 | IT | <p>Firefighter tracking systems improve first-responder safety by monitoring the whereabouts of fire and EMS crews during an emergency and assist with making emergency management decisions. The project scope will include but not be limited to the research, evaluation, and purchase of tracking system equipment, software, supporting hardware, implementation, and training.</p> | <p>Project to begin in FY 2027/28.</p> | <p>All</p> |
| Service Truck - Light (Support) Replacement and Addition | \$1,200,000 | Fleet Services | <p>The Service truck – light duty vehicle is used for field service on fire apparatus and vehicles by Fleet Services and IT – Communication Services. These units are also sent out of county if technicians are requested on large campaign fires. This project is for two units in FY 2026/2027, one unit in FY 2027/2028, and one unit in FY 2028/2029.</p> | <p>Purchases to occur in various years.</p> | <p>All</p> |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|---|-------------|----------------|--|---|-----------|
| Battalion Utility Vehicle (Emergency) Replacement | \$1,400,000 | Fleet Services | Each of the ten battalions is assigned a utility vehicle. Approximately 40% of the vehicle cost is for equipment which includes cell phones, Mobile Data Computers (MDCs), and a slide-out working station to manage any large incident. This project is for the replacement of six units in FY 2026/27, and six additional units in FY 2027/28. | Purchases to occur in FY 2026/27 and FY 2027/28 | All |
| Dozer and Transport Tractor/ Trailer (Emergency) Addition | \$2,000,000 | Fleet Services | The dozer will provide Special Operations Fire Crews & Equipment with an additional unit for use in fire prevention operations and support during fire emergencies. This project provides for the purchase of a sixth dozer in the OCFA fleet, and a transport tractor/trailer designed for hauling heavy equipment, specifically bull dozers. The addition of this dozer will improve OCFA's implementation of high-priority fuel reduction projects to protect communities from wildfire and participate in prescribed fire projects to achieve more resilient landscapes. | Purchase to occur in FY 2029/30. | All |
| Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) Patrol Vehicle - Type 6 (Emergency) Replacement | \$2,300,000 | Fleet Services | The CAFS unit carries hose, water, and a skid mounted pump. The system injects air making a very rich foam allowing the crews to pretreat buildings and vegetation in the line of fire. This unit also has the ability to pump and roll. The CAFS unit is primarily for urban interface firefighting and rescue operations. These units are smaller by design to maneuver on truck trails and rural areas. This project is for the replacement of seven units in FY 2026/27, and four additional units in FY 2027/28. | Purchases to occur in FY 2026/27 and 2027/28 | All |
| Crew Carrier (Emergency) Replacement | \$2,800,000 | Fleet Services | This project will provide replacement units for OCFA's Fire Crews carrier trucks. These vehicles are used to transport Fire Hand Crew personnel to wildland vegetation reduction sites and incidents/fire lines. They are built to handle rough terrain and provide safe transportation for the crews. This project is for the replacement of two units in FY 2027/28. | Purchases to occur in FY 2027/2028. | All |
| Turnout Gear Replacement | \$3,500,000 | Service Center | This project involves replacing turnout gear that has reached the end of its life cycle. The gear is a crucial component of firefighter PPE, offering protection from heat, flames, and other hazards encountered during firefighting operations. It provides a barrier against radiant heat, burns, and moisture, enabling firefighters to safely enter and operate within a fire scene. The life cycle for turnout gear is ten years, and replacement sets are estimated to cost \$3,500 each. | Purchase is scheduled to occur in FY 2028/29. The purchase of the replacement turnout gear will be coordinated with the PFAS Committee. | All |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|--|-------------|----------------|---|--|--|
| Inclusive Restroom Facilities | \$4,400,000 | Property Mgmt. | <p>An evaluation of all bathrooms located in the OCFA fire stations began in FY 2019/20. Based on the results of the evaluation, a comprehensive and multi-year project plan was developed to modify or enhance bathroom facilities in fire stations where changes are needed. Improvements covered by the project may also include any modifications and upgrades to station accessibility, kitchen, and living quarters facilities necessary to meet current ADA standards and city/local agency permitting requirements.</p> | <p>OCFA owned fire stations will be completed during FY 2028/29. OCFA staff will work with Cash Contract cities to coordinate modifications and enhancements needed for city-owned station bathroom facilities.</p> | All |
| RFOTC Training Grounds Expansion and Upgrade | \$5,300,000 | Property Mgmt. | <p>The RFOTC Training Grounds requires expansion and upgrade to accommodate OCFA's growth since the grounds were originally constructed in 2004. The OCFA has increased the size of our recruit academies from an average of 30 recruits in 2010 to up to 50 recruits currently. These larger academies require more instructors to maintain a 5:1 ratio, which results in a greater need for office space, classroom space, and bathroom facilities. There is also a need to replace outdated fire training technology that is increasingly difficult to maintain in operable condition due to age and difficulty in sourcing replacement parts. To address these shortcomings, the project will be handled in stages.</p> | <p>Phased improvements began in FY2019/20 with the installation of temporary classrooms, electrical improvements, and fire training structure improvements through 2024. An environmental study is in process for the remaining FY 2028/29 improvements to comply with required plan reviews and other city approvals.</p> | All (could be specific since it's RFOTC) |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|---|--------------|---------------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| Fire Station 12 New Construction (Laguna Woods) | \$8,000,000 | Property Mgmt. | This project contemplates planning, design, and construction of new Fire Station 12 located in Laguna Woods. The station will house a crew of four safety personnel (three shifts), a front-line engine, as well as a relief engine. Additional features will include a communal office to supporting regional services. The project budget and scope of work includes temporary station facilities to ensure continuous station operations prior to and during construction. | The preliminary station layout concept has been prepared. Procurement of the design-build services is scheduled for FY 2026/27, with design and construction scheduled for FY 2027/28. | AD-72, SD-37, CD-40 |
| Fire Station 9 Remodel (Mission Viejo) | \$8,300,000 | Property Mgmt. | This project contemplates the comprehensive remodeling of Fire Station 9, constructed in 1974. The project will provide interior improvements including the dormitories, kitchen, and restroom facilities, and exterior renovation including roofing, painting, flatwork, ADA accessibility, and landscaping. | Project design will commence in FY 2027/28. | AD-71, SD-38, CD-40 |
| Engine - Type III (Emergency) Replacement | \$8,400,000 | Fleet Services | The Type III engine carries hose, water and a skid mounted pump, giving the apparatus the capability to pump while driving. The unit's primary objective is off-road wildland firefighting and rescue operations. These engines are smaller by design to maneuver on truck trails and rural areas. This project is for the replacement of two units in FY 2026/27, two units in FY 2027/28, two units in FY 2028/2029, and two units in FY 2029/2030. | Purchases to occur in various years. | All |
| Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Workforce Management - Time & Attendance (WM-TM) Systems | \$13,000,000 | Business Services, IT, HR | This project contemplates the procurement of a fully integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application. The current HRMS/Payroll Finance ERP has been in use for over 20 years. The ERP solution would perform all of the OCFA's business functions, inclusive of general accounting, accounts receivable, accounts payable, purchasing, budgeting, HRMS/payroll, and provide intuitive reporting, dashboards, and other functionality to enhance productivity, create efficiencies, and streamline existing manual business processes. | Initial phases of the project began in FY2025/26 with the RFP to replace the ERP RFP to be issued in FY 2026/27. | All |

OCFA Priority Projects Calendar Year 2026

Updated January 2025

| Project | Amount | Dept | Description | Project Status | Districts |
|--|--------------|----------------|---|--|---------------------|
| Fire Station 10 Remodel/ Replacement (Yorba Linda) | \$17,000,000 | Property Mgmt. | This project contemplates planning, design, demolition, and replacement of Fire Station 10, constructed in 1972, along with the adjacent Old Fire Station 10, constructed in 1938. Both facilities currently occupy a combined site comprising 0.74 of an acre, anticipated to be exchanged for a replacement one acre site a quarter of a mile from the current station’s location. The project will be consistent with a general renewal of Historic Old Town Yorba Linda currently in process with the City of Yorba Linda. The project includes all demolition of current sites; planning, design, and construction of a temporary fire station; grading and planning design; and construction of an approximately 15,000 square feet, two company, three apparatus bay fire station with added standard modules to support a Division Chief and a station training room. | Historic Architectural Review has been completed, determining that Station 10 does not qualify for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources. Concept layouts of the new station have been completed with the Design Build procurement process to begin commensurate with the project budget in FY 2026/27. | AD-59, SD-32, CD-40 |
| Truck (Emergency) Replacement | \$17,000,000 | Fleet Services | The Truck Apparatus is used to provide search and rescue, roof ventilation, elevated water streams, salvage, and overhaul operations. These vehicles also carry all the applicable tools needed for these tasks. Depending on the station assignment and requirements determined by the Apparatus Committee, OCFA Truck Apparatus may be configured with or without tiller steering, a mid or rear-mount ladder with arial reach of approximately 100 feet, a 300-gallon or greater capacity water tank, and a fire pump similar to a fire engine. This project is to replace five units in FY 2026/2027. | Purchases to occur in FY 2026/2027. | All |
| Bell Helicopter Replacement | \$30,000,000 | | Replacement of two Bell helicopters which are approaching the end of their recommended service life. | | All |
| Engine - Type I (Emergency) Replacement | \$64,200,000 | Fleet Services | The Type I engine carries hose, water, and a pump used primarily for structure fires. Most fire stations contain one or more of these units. This project is for the replacement of fourteen units in FY 2026/27, nine units in FY 2027/28, nine units in FY 2028/2029, and seven units in FY 2029/2030. | Purchases to occur in various years. | All |



Orange County Fire Authority
AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Legislative and Public Affairs Committee Meeting
January 21, 2026

Agenda Item No. 3C
Discussion Calendar

Quarterly Public Affairs Update

Contact(s) for Further Information

Matt Olson, Chief of Staff
Assistant Chief of Corporate Communications

MattOlson@ocfa.org

714.573.6028

Summary

This item is submitted to provide a preliminary update on current OCFA public affairs programs and analytics to 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, resulting in thousands of community events, news articles, radio spots, social media campaigns, and TV clips that garnered hundreds of millions of impressions, views, and engagements. These and various other 2025 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 2026 projects.

Attachment(s)

None.