

# ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

EXTERNAL MEMO  
RECEIVED



To: Leon Page, County Counsel  
 From: Michelle Anderson, County Emergency Manager *WLA*  
 Date: February 6, 2025  
 RE: Status Report, Item 23 for February 11, 2025 Agenda: Review the Need for Continuing the Local Emergency

2025 FEB -6 PM 2:58  
 CLERK OF THE BOARD  
 COUNTY OF ORANGE  
 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Airport Fire began on September 9, 2024 and was deemed 100% contained on October 5, 2024.

## County Proclamations and Ordinance Status

- The Orange County Board of Supervisors proclaimed a Local Emergency on September 10, 2024, and continued the local emergency proclamation at the November 5, 2024 meeting
- The Orange County Health Officer proclaimed a Local Health Emergency on September 13<sup>th</sup> and renewed it on 20<sup>th</sup>; the Orange County Board of Supervisors ratified the health emergency proclamation on September 24, 2024, and continued the local health emergency on November 5<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The continuation of the local health emergency is be considered by the Board of Supervisors on the December 17<sup>th</sup> agenda as Item 21.
- On October 8, 2024, the Orange County Board of Supervisors adopted an Urgency Ordinance for the Airport Fire Debris Removal Program.

## Costs

The costs in the table below do not include the current contracts established for asbestos testing, debris monitoring, or debris removal as these activities have just begun and expenditures have not yet been made. Estimated response costs and damages for public agencies include:

City/District	Estimated Response Costs & Damages Reported 12/11/2024	Estimated Response Costs & Damages Reported 2/5/25	Change
Orange County Fire Authority* (OCFA)	\$68,130,000	\$1,130,000	<\$67,000,000>
Orange County CEO	\$45,640	\$45,640	0
Orange County Community Resources (OCCR)	\$19,269	\$19,269	0
OCCR - OC Animal Care	\$42,840	\$42,840	0
OCCR - OC Parks	\$152,825	\$152,825	0
Orange County Counsel	\$47,778	\$47,778	0
Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA)	\$51,412	\$51,412	0
Orange County Public Works (OCPW)	\$12,580,299	\$12,612,329	\$32,030
Orange County Sheriff-Coroner (OCSD)	\$1,934,877	\$1,934,877	0
Orange County Social Services Agency	\$46,657	\$46,657	0
Orange County Waste and Recycling	\$6,592	\$6,592	0
Rancho Santa Margarita	\$36,338	\$36,338	0
Trabuco Canyon Water District	\$1,001,000	\$1,001,000	0
<b>Operational Total</b>	<b>\$84,095,526</b>	<b>\$17,127,557</b>	<b>&lt;\$66,967,970&gt;</b>

\* OCFA entered into a cost share agreement with the United States Forest Service (USFS), the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), and the Riverside County Fire Department for costs related to this incident. Because they are a separate government entity, no additional information is included here; it can be obtained through a request to OCFA.

The OCSD Emergency Management Division is actively facilitating the submission of these costs and supporting documentation from each agency to the California Office of Emergency Services Recovery Unit in pursuit of California Disaster Assistance Act funding or Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance. The Cal OES Recovery Unit conducted an on-site visit with all agencies listed in the table above on December 4, 2024 and follow-up documentation is being provided by those agencies to Cal OES. No eligibility determination has been made at the time of this status report submission.

## Recovery Efforts

Phase 1 (Hazardous Debris Removal): Completed; no change from previous report.

Phase 1.5 (Watershed Protection): The direct assistance through Cal OES has been completed; no change from previous report.

Between December 23, 2024 to January 3, 2025, additional local work was performed by OCPW to grade and armor the slope to protect the Trabuco Water District (TCWD) wells and facility. Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) protections recommended by OCPW were installed from January 3 through January 5, 2025.

Phase 2 (Private Property Debris Removal [PPDR]): Direct assistance was not available through Cal OES so the County has proceeded with County resources, including contractors and coordinating with volunteer organizations.

- **OC Debris Removal**

- All impacted property owners were provided with the Right of Entry forms in December 2024. The deadline for submission was January 15, 2025. Thirty (30) have returned them to date.
- The asbestos testing contractor began on February 3, 2025, first in the Long Canyon area, and will then proceed to Holy Jim, El Cariso west of Ortega, and El Cariso east of Ortega.
- The debris monitoring contractor has completed evaluation of Long Canyon area to prepare for debris removal.
- Once asbestos testing is completed, the debris removal contractor will begin work. Property debris removal is anticipated to begin February 10, 2025.

- **Riverside County (RC) Debris Removal**

- OCPW is coordinating with Riverside County on proceeding with debris removal for properties impacted along the Ortega Highway.

- **Technical Assistance**

- In January, Team Rubicon worked in Holy Jim and along Trabuco Creek Road for a dozen properties. OCPW cleared the roads and provided materials such as sandbags, plastic sheeting, silt board, wattles, and chain link fence that were installed by Rubicon.
- OCPW is partnering with Riverside County Public Works and Team Rubicon in El Cariso. Coordinated efforts will potentially provide disposal services for materials cleared from private creeks in order to ensure proper drainage in case of rains.

- **Storm Preparation**

- OCPW worked with the Trabuco Canyon Water District on storm preparations for their facility.
- Sandbags have been stocked at designated pick-up locations, including the County lot at Santiago Canyon Road x Modjeska Canyon Road. Orange County Waste & Recycling-produced compost socks will also be provided at this location.
- Plans have been established in case dumpsters for debris flow are needed.

**Post Fire Debris Flow Planning**Watershed Emergency Response Team Report (WERT; private lands)

CalFire and the California Geological Survey published the Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) 2024 Airport Fire (CA-ORC-127883) on October 25, 2024. This report presents the results of a rapid evaluation of post fire geologic and hydrologic hazards to life-safety and property (i.e., collectively known as “Values-at-Risk” or “VARs”) for private lands affected by the Airport Fire. These threats can include flooding, debris flows, erosions, and other hazards. The report includes preliminary emergency protective measures needed to avoid or minimize threats to life-safety and property. The full report is available to the public at:

<https://app.box.com/s/11tq7s11ogov37ceshhxa5kbdhxiipfmu/file/1683004722491>

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER; National Forest Service lands)

The Forest Service—Cleveland National Forest completed a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) post-fire assessment of the Airport burned area and affected watersheds to determine their response, soil conditions, potential threats, and recommended BAER emergency stabilization measures and actions on National Forest System (NFS) lands. BAER emergency treatments and activities are designed to decrease possible impacts to critical values from the burned areas during rainstorm events such as: human life and safety, property, critical natural resources, and cultural resources. While the final report has not yet been released, a summary report is available to the public at:

<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-publication/cabdf-southern-california-postfire-baer-2024/airport-postfire-baer-assessment-report-summary-released-12-11-2024>

Orange County Airport Fire Post-Fire Debris Flow Plan

Based on the WERT and BAER report, a collaborative group of Orange County agencies was convened to develop and approve a post-fire debris flow plan that was presented to the impacted communities on December 12, 2024. The plan includes triggers for protective measures, including but not limited to evacuation warnings and orders that may be implemented by Unified Command consisting of the OCSD, Orange County Fire Authority, and Orange County Public Works. The plan will be presented to the County’s Emergency Management Council (the County’s designated disaster council) on February 19<sup>th</sup> for approval. Information on evacuation areas, and actions to be taken when evacuation warnings and orders are issued can be found at:

<https://www.ocsheriff.gov/commands-divisions/investigations-special-operations-command/emergency-management/resources-after-0>

**Recommended Action**

Approve continuation of Local Emergency for the Airport Fire; and order review to determine need for continuing local emergency for April 8, 2025, 9:30 a.m. and every 60 days thereafter until terminated.

cc: Interim County Executive Officer Michelle Aguirre  
Clerk of the Board Robin Stieler  
Undersheriff Jeff Hallock, Sheriff-Coroner Department