

The County of Orange Report

Prepared for the Mesa Water District

April 22, 2022
by Lewis Consulting Group



April 13th Meeting

The April OCLAFCO meeting was short and devoid of controversy. Of interest, the Board unanimously approved a small contract for Berkson Associates to assist the agency's MSR process. The majority of the contract relates to the importation of data regarding fiscal indicators for 24 OC districts. The data will ultimately be available on the LAFCO website.

The most informative part of the meeting came during Commissioner's Comments. Supervisor Bartlett gave an update on South Orange County incorporation efforts. She noted that Rancho Mission Viejo is not contemplating incorporation for 10-15 years. This leaves other South County communities with the option of banding together or possibility annexing into Ranch Santa Margarita, San Juan Capistrano or Mission Viejo.

Commissioner Mike Posey announced that the City of Huntington Beach was taking another look at annexing Bolsa Chica. Chairman Davert posed the possibility of live streaming future LAFCO meetings, but staff indicated a more viable option might be to record the meetings and post them on the LAFCO website.



Supervisors Weigh In on PFAS

The April 12th meeting of the Orange County Board of Supervisors was relatively short and dealt with non-controversial items. The on-going division within the Board again became apparent as Supervisor Bartlett chastised her colleague Katrina Foley for inappropriately conducting meetings and making appointments of people in her District without prior approval. Bartlett currently represents South Orange County; and Foley is campaigning in much of South Orange County due to her district changing boundaries for the 2022 election. Its been a long time since there has been comity on the Board.

In more productive action, the Board unanimously and without debate passed a resolution urging Federal protection of water districts from PFAS liability.

The following is the resolution authored by Board Chairman Doug Chaffee:

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF ORANGE
SUPPORTING FEDERAL PFAS LEGISLATION THAT PROTECTS
RATEPAYERS AND WATER/WASTEWATER AGENCIES**

WHEREAS, Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a group of chemicals developed by chemical manufacturers that would otherwise not exist naturally and despite playing no role in releasing PFAS into the environment, water and wastewater agencies must find ways to remove them from local water supplies; and

WHEREAS, Ratepayers are at risk from pending PFAS legislation and associated PFAS costs and water agencies and stakeholders must take action to inform members of Congress of these devastating impacts; and

WHEREAS, All PFAS-related legislation must exempt water and wastewater agencies from any liability for PFAS cleanup costs; and

WHEREAS, A water or wastewater utility that complies with applicable and appropriate federal management and treatment standards must not be responsible for current and future costs associated with a PFAS cleanup; and

WHEREAS, Given the potential for federal legislation to expose water and wastewater agencies with across-the-board liability for PFAS-related cleanups when they have no responsibility for the presence of PFAS, an explicit exemption from Superfund clean-up liability must be made for water and wastewater agencies; and

WHEREAS, Under existing law (Safe Drinking Water Act), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ensures that public health benefits of new drinking water standards are reasonably balanced with the compliance costs that water system ratepayers will ultimately incur and eliminating this analysis would burden ratepayers of all income levels with astronomical costs to comply with drinking water standards; and

WHEREAS, When setting drinking water standards for PFAS compounds, we advocate for the EPA to use this longstanding methodology; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Orange hereby supports these federal PFAS policy principles to protect water/wastewater agencies and their ratepayers and

FURTHERMORE, we call upon the Orange County Congressional Delegation and California Senatorial Delegation to cast votes implementing these public policy positions.

Orange County COVID-19 Update

ORANGE COUNTY COVID-19 STATS	4/21/2022	3/17/2022
CUMULATIVE CASES TO DATE	550,856	544,113
CUMULATIVE DEATHS TO DATE	6,990	6,820
DEATHS REPORTED TODAY	24	26
CUMULATIVE TESTS TO DATE	8,608,383	8,061,903
TESTS REPORTED THIS WEEK	318,605	100,843
CASES CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED	64 * ↘	137 *
CASES CURRENTLY IN ICU	14 ↘	27
CUMULATIVE RECOVERED TO DATE	539,474 *	532,219 *

* = INCLUDES *ICU* CASES

PPIC Publishes Latest California Survey

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) in March 2022 released the results of its latest sampling of California resident's opinions. The survey of 1,672 California adults was conducted from March 6-17 and has a margin of error of +/- 4.1% with a 95% confidence level.

Here are some of the questions and responses that caught our eye. . .

Have recent price increases caused any financial hardships for you or others in your household, or not?

- 35% yes, serious
- 32% yes, not serious
- 33% no
- don't know

Overall, how fair do you think our present state and local tax system is—would you say it is very fair, moderately fair, not too fair, or not at all fair?

- 6% very fair
- 34% moderately fair
- 29% not too fair
- 29% not at all fair
- 3% don't know

When you combine all of the taxes you pay to state and local governments, do you feel that you pay much more than you should, somewhat more than you should, about the right amount, or less than you should?

- 35% much more
- 27% somewhat more
- 32% about the right amount
- 3% less than you should
- 3% don't know

In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more— [1] I'd rather pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services, [or] [2] I'd rather pay lower taxes and have a state government that provides fewer services?

- 51% higher taxes and more services
- 44% lower taxes and fewer services
- 5% don't know

How much of a problem is housing affordability in your part of California? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?

- 64% big problem
- 25% somewhat of a problem
- 10% not a problem
- 1% don't know

Does the cost of your housing make you and your family seriously consider moving away from the part of California you live in now?

- 8% yes, seriously considered moving elsewhere in California
- 37% yes, seriously considered moving outside of California
- 54% no, have not seriously considered moving
- 1% don't know

How much of a problem is homelessness in your part of California? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 64% big problem
- 25% somewhat of a problem
- 10% not a problem
- don't know

How concerned are you about the presence of homeless people in your local community today? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 46% very concerned
- 35% somewhat concerned
- 13% not too concerned
- 5% not at all concerned
- 1% don't know

Is voting this year more important to you than in past midterm elections, less important, or about the same?

- 42% more important
- 3% less important
- 54% about the same
- don't know

Which comes closer to your view about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak: [1] the worst is behind us [or] [2] the worst is yet to come?

- 79% the worst is behind us
- 16% the worst is yet to come
- 4% don't know

Do you favor or oppose requiring proof of the COVID-19 vaccine to be able to enter large outdoor gatherings or certain indoor spaces such as restaurants, bars, and gyms?

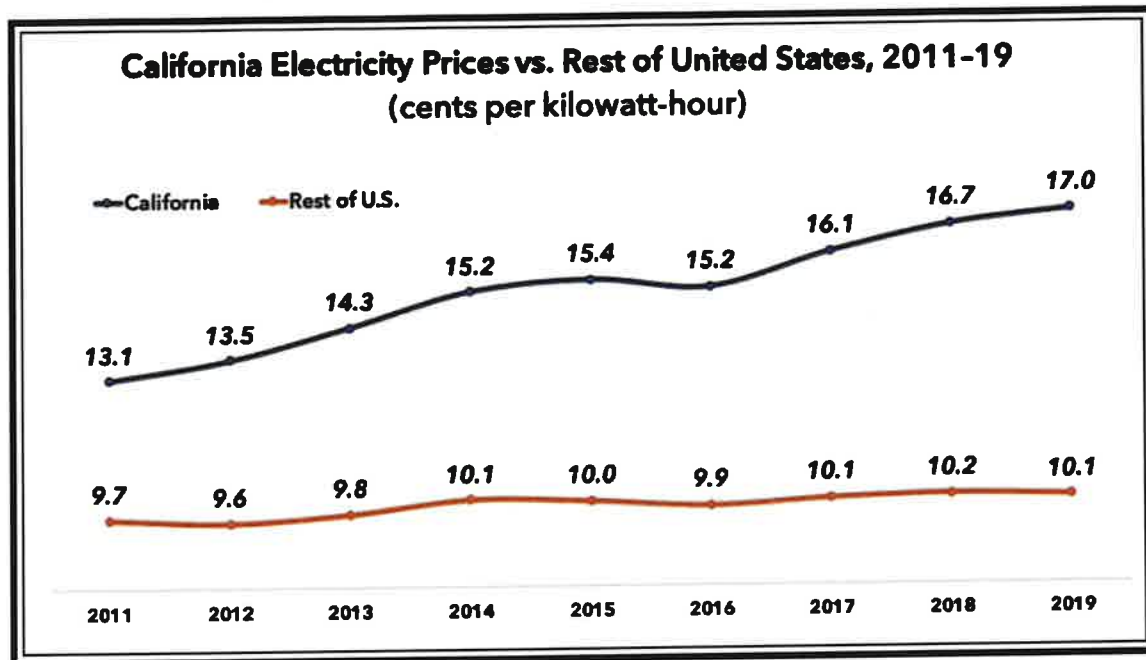
- 57% favor
- 41% oppose
- 2% don't know

Given Russian military action involving Ukraine, do you support or oppose the United States and its European allies imposing economic sanctions on Russia?

- 56% support, even if higher energy prices
- 16% support, but not if higher energy prices
- 4% support, but don't know
- 19% oppose
- 5% don't know

California's Green Policy

Is it a noble attempt to help thwart global warming or a self-inflicted wound?



La Niña Keeps Hanging On

La Niña conditions which began in September 2021 and lasted through the entirety of the 2021-2022 Southern California rainy season is so far refusing to leave. The cooler Pacific temperatures helped quash our rainfall totals, even after promising December rain and snow. According to NOAA's April 14, 2022 Climate Prediction Center update, there is 59% chance of La Niña continuing through August 2022 and a 55% chance it will carry through the fall. Odds of a La Niña continuance have increased since this March projection.

