

The County of Orange Report

Prepared for the Mesa Water District

December 12, 2022
by Lewis Consulting Group

Closing the Book on the 2022 Elections

With Democrat Senator Raphael Warnock's successful re-election in Georgia, the 2022 election is finally over. His election added an exclamation point to an under-performance by national Republicans. Typically, the Party that does NOT hold the Presidency makes large gains in mid-term elections. This did not happen in 2022. Instead, Democrats gained one seat in the U.S. Senate by capturing the open seat in Pennsylvania. This resulted in a 51-49 Democrat advantage in the upper house. Perhaps the single biggest loser is Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who can no longer be the sole swing vote on legislation.



In the House, Republicans gains were muted, but they still emerged with a new 222-213 majority. That slim majority however, may make like difficult for Speaker-in-Waiting Kevin McCarthy as he tries to unify a fractured caucus.

At the state level, California cemented its' reputation as a heavily **blue state** by electing Democrats to a "Super-Duper" majority in both the Assembly and State Senate. Democrats now have a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority in both houses.

Locally, for the first time since 1980, Democrats have a majority on the Board of Supervisors. Just how partisan the new Board will be will be tested out of the gate when a new Board Chair is elected in January. According to the usual rotation, Supervisor Don Wagner should get the nod for Chairman, but his election will probably be determined by how more centrist Democrat Supervisor Doug Chaffee votes.



Board of Supervisor Meetings

The Board meetings of November 29th and December 6th both had seemingly short and non-substantive agendas. However, appearances can be deceiving. Boisterous audiences amply found fault with the Supervisors deliberations.

The highlight of the November 29th meeting was the approval of a continuation of local emergency by the County's Health Officer. The emergency originally dissolved on October 31, 2022 was in response to the quick spread of Respiratory Syncytial Virus [RSV]. The virus which is most dangerous to babies and toddlers has overwhelmed the Children's Hospital of Orange County [CHOC]. The State of emergency among other things allows for regulating relief by making it easier to switch adult hospital beds to children. The public speakers notwithstanding saw this as an attempt to reinstate harsh COVID-19 rules such as mask mandates. The health local emergency was extended by a 4-0 vote.

The December 6th meeting of the Board of Supervisors again provided opportunities for angry activists to sound off. The most contentious items which brought the crowd to the Chambers was the receipt and filing of the certification of the November 8, 2022 general election. The public speakers, one after another charged that the vote counting process in Orange County was either fraudulent or incompetent. They did not want the election certified and voiced their objection to the use of anything other than paper ballots. They claimed vote scanners are easily hackable and the current system utilizing drop boxes encourages fraud. What the protesters didn't realize until County Counsel explained was that the Board vote would be ministerial in nature because the Registrar of Voters has already certified the election. The ministerial action also only applied to County races, not state and federal.

Another item that solicited ire was a proposed \$9.6 million public relations contract with Angels Baseball. The Angels would provide various means of advertising to increase wellness strategies and suicide prevention. The public speakers asserted there were far more effective ways to spend the money and some claimed it was just enriching Angels owner Arte Moreno as he prepares to sell the team.

Lastly, the audience took exception to a resolution proposed by Supervisors Chaffee and Do to declare racism and inequity as a public health crisis. Every item the public speakers opposed were quickly adopted by the Board.

HAPPY
Holidays!

Orange County COVID-19 Update

| ORANGE COUNTY COVID-19 STATS | 12/8/2022 | 11/10/2022 |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|
| CUMULATIVE CASES TO DATE | 687,334 | 675,634 |
| CUMULATIVE DEATHS TO DATE | 7,594 | 7,555 |
| DEATHS REPORTED THIS WEEK | 17 | 14 |
| CUMULATIVE TESTS TO DATE | 10,323,223 | 10,203,368 |
| TESTS REPORTED THIS WEEK | 37,592 | 27,026 |
| CASES CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED | 388 * | 112 * |
| CASES CURRENTLY IN ICU | 48 | 20 |

* = INCLUDES *ICU* CASES



December 14th LAFCO Meeting

The December OCLAFCO meeting takes place after the submission of this report. The agenda is "December light" with the only agenized matter of note - the review of the LAFCO MSR process by four entities which recently went through the process. The written comments were largely positive.

Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow

For December 12th, 2022

Snowpack is 113% of avg
TotalPrecip is 96.00% of avg

Lake Powell is currently
394.97 feet deep at the
dam

IMPRESSIVE SIERRA SNOWFALL HAS HOPEFULLY SET THE TONE FOR THIS YEAR. LAST YEAR'S CHRISTMAS MIRACLE SNOWSTORM WAS SQUANDERED BY CONTINUING DROUGHT. THE COLORADO SNOW BASIN IS ALSO OFF TO A FAVORABLE START.

Provided by the California Cooperative Snow Surveys

Data For: 12-Dec-2022

% Apr 1 Avg. / % Normal for this Date

