

The County of Orange Report

Prepared for the Mesa Water District

June 17, 2021
by Lewis Consulting Group



Update

County Unveils 2021/2022 Budget

The June 8th Board of Supervisors meeting got off to a rocky start by postponing an item which would have given the Chair additional power in limiting time for public testimony on future items. By postponing this item, about 100 people prepared to testify in opposition, were left fuming.

This did however allow for the Board to focus their energy on the main issue at hand, the review of the proposed County 2021/2022 fiscal budget. The hearing was broken up by staff presentations for each of the County's seven main departments. A series of "straw votes" was conducted so any change could be made in time for the budget final adoption vote on June 22, 2021.

The budget of \$7.7 billion is \$200 million higher than the current year. The three largest categories of spending in the budget include community services 40%, public safety 22% and infrastructure environmental resources 18%. The budget's largest two types of spending are salaries & benefits 32% along with services & supplies 23%. Despite COVID-19, the County's budget has been buoyed by federal spending contained in both the Cares Act as well as the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The largest unknown in crafting the budget is the amount of FEMA money they will recover for an outlay of \$180 million in expenses. On the positive side of the ledger, the County will receive an additional \$308 million when it receives its second tranche of ARPA funding sometime within the next year.





June 9th Meeting

The June 9th OCLAFCO meeting was short, 30 minutes, and devoid of controversy. The agency voted to retain Best, Best & Krieger LLC for an extended two years, through 2024.

Public alternate member Lou Penrose was re-appointed unanimously for another four year term and finally a brief but non-substantive conversation was held regarding the unincorporated area of South Orange County.

PPIC Produces Another New Survey

The Public Policy Institute of California is on a roll. They have published yet another new survey on Californian's political attitudes. The survey was conducted May 9-18, 2021 of 1,705 adults. The margin of error of a survey this size is +/- 3.2%.



Below are some of the poll questions and the results:

Thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?

- 20% jobs, economy
- 16% COVID-19, coronavirus
- 10% homelessness
- 10% housing costs, availability
- 5% government in general, problems with elected officials, political parties
- 4% environment, pollution, global warming
- 4% health care, health insurance
- 4% immigration, illegal immigration
- 4% state budget, deficit, state spending
- 3% race relations, racial and ethnic issues
- 2% education, schools, teachers
- 2% water, water availability, drought
- 13% other
- 5% don't know

There is an effort under way to remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office in a recall election. If a special election to recall Governor Newsom were held today, would you vote yes to remove Newsom as governor or no to keep Newsom as governor?

- 40% YES, remove Newsom
- 57% NO, keep Newsom
- 3% don't know

Should the state government be doing more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in California, or is this something that the state government should not be doing?

- 65% should do more
- 28% should not do more
- 7% don't know

Do you favor or oppose providing another round of stimulus checks with \$600 going to Californians with incomes under \$75,000 and an additional \$500 going to those with children?

- 70% favor
- 28% oppose
- 1% don't know

Do you favor or oppose assisting Californians who fell behind during the pandemic with money to pay overdue rent and utility bills?

- 81% favor
- 17% oppose
- 2% don't know

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Joe Biden is handling his job as president?

- 66% approve
- 30% disapprove
- 5% don't know

Have you personally received the COVID vaccine, or not? Did you receive a single-dose vaccine? The first of two doses, or have you received both doses of a two-dose vaccine?

- 7% YES, single-dose vaccine
- 9% YES, first of two doses
- 50% YES, both doses of two doses
- 33% NO

When it becomes available to you, will you definitely get the coronavirus vaccine, probably get it, probably not get it, or definitely not get it?

- 6% definitely get the vaccine
- 9% probably get the vaccine
- 5% probably not get the vaccine
- 12% definitely not get the vaccine
- 67% already got the vaccine
- 2% don't know

Do you favor or oppose having guaranteed health insurance coverage in which all Californians would get their insurance through a single state government health plan? Do you favor it even if it means raising taxes?

- 42% favor, even if it means raising taxes
- 20% favor, not if it means raising taxes
- 32% oppose
- 6% don't know

Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

- 46% Democrat
- 24% Republican
- 6% another party
- 24% decline-to-state/independent

Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:

- 15% very liberal
- 19% somewhat liberal
- 30% middle-of-the-road
- 19% somewhat conservative
- 12% very conservative
- 4% don't know

Grand Jury Criticizes Local Officials

On May 12, 2021, the Orange County Grand Jury released a report entitled "Orange County Pandemic Preparedness". In its overview of the report, the Grand Jury noted "The world was unprepared for a pandemic outbreak and Orange County was no exception. A well defined pandemic response preparedness plan and its effective execution by the various County Departments was imperative to keep residents safe."

FINDINGS OF THE REPORT Orange County Pandemic Preparedness

Based on its investigation described here, the 2020-2021 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at the following principal findings:

- F1. State, national, and international guidelines are not adequately addressed in the County's Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan (see Appendix 1).
- F2. Orange County Emergency Operations Plan's classification of a pandemic as being "Unlikely" has caused the OCHCA to be underprepared for the current pandemic.
- F3. The OCHCA has not effectively used its resources to close the gaps in a) Pandemic Influenza Planning Program Work Plan and b) Public Health Emergency Preparedness Work Plan and c) Hospital Preparedness Work Plan.
- F4. The OCHCA's budget was not allocated relative to the likelihood of pandemic planning and preparation.
- F5. The OCHCA has not established comprehensive community-based task forces that facilitate and support health care institutions in Orange County.
- F6. The OCHCA does not have the capability to provide translations in all "Threshold" languages within Orange County in a timely manner.
- F7. The OCHCA has underestimated the media requirements necessary to effectively communicate during a pandemic.
- F8. The OCHCA has not implemented or maintained appropriate community resources and back-up communication systems/channels to allow for an expedited transmission and receipt of information. This limits the ability to communicate and respond to local questions from the public and professional groups.
- F9. The OCHCA has not effectively addressed the pandemic related needs of the residents of Orange County with limited English language proficiency in accordance with the pandemic preparedness plan.

Orange County COVID-19 Stats

ORANGE COUNTY COVID-19 STATS	AS OF 6/17/2021	AS OF 5/18/2021
CUMULATIVE CASES TO DATE	255,771	254,831
CUMULATIVE DEATHS TO DATE	5,102	5,031
DEATHS REPORTED TODAY	1	0
CUMULATIVE TESTS TO DATE	4,042,700	3,814,553
TESTS REPORTED TODAY	7,647	6,145
CASES CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED	50 *	78 *
CASES CURRENTLY IN ICU	8	14
CUMULATIVE RECOVERED TO DATE	249,743 *	248,148 *

* = INCLUDES *ICU* CASES

Where Orange County Ranks [as of 6/17/2021]

LOCATION	POPULATION	CONFIRMED CASES	DEATHS
CALIFORNIA	40,129,160	3,699,455	62,565
LOS ANGELES COUNTY	10,247,557	1,205,102	24,439
ORANGE COUNTY	3,228,519	255,771	5,102
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY	2,217,398	293,499	4,797
RIVERSIDE COUNTY	2,468,145	289,539	4,457
SAN DIEGO COUNTY	3,370,418	281,423	3,770

CALIFORNIA COVID-19 TIERS

Source: CA Department of Public Health

The infographic details four COVID-19 tiers in California, each with specific criteria for daily cases and positivity rates. A large 'GONE' watermark is superimposed over the center of the graphic.

- TIER 1) WIDESPREAD OR PURPLE:**
 - WHAT IT MEANS: Many non-essential indoor business operations are closed.
 - CRITERIA: # of new daily cases: More than 7 per 100K people; Positivity rate: More than 8%.
- TIER 2) SUBSTANTIAL OR RED:**
 - WHAT IT MEANS: Some non-essential indoor business operations are open.
 - CRITERIA: # of new daily cases: 4-7 per 100K people; Positivity rate: Between 5% and 8%.
- TIER 3) MODERATE OR ORANGE:**
 - WHAT IT MEANS: Some indoor business operations are open with modifications.
 - CRITERIA: # of new daily cases: 1-3.3 per 100K people; Positivity rate: Between 2% and 4.9%.
- TIER 4) MINIMAL OR YELLOW:**
 - WHAT IT MEANS: Most indoor business operations are open with modifications.
 - CRITERIA: # of new daily cases: Less than 1 per 100K people; Positivity rate: Less than 2%.

Governor Newsom Extends Emergency

June 15, 2021 was supposed to be the magical date for returning to normalcy in California. However, the Governor has announced he is keeping in place California's State of Emergency. By doing so, he retains the right to impose restrictions unilaterally. It also makes it much easier for the State to obtain COVID-19 related federal reimbursements.

Also taking effect June 15th are new mask regulations promulgated by Cal-OSHA and the California Department of Public Health. Among other things, these new rules extend the requirement for all Californians to wear masks in any kind of public transit, additional regulations are imposed on both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals.



VectorStock

An Interesting Proposal

Three scientists, Joseph Schulman M.V., John Schaefer PhD, and Henry Miller - molecular biologists and Senior Fellow at the Pacific Research Institute, have penned an article calling for and expanded interstate water system. This article can be accessed at:

www.bigthink.com/technology-innovation/an-interstate-water-system-could-fix-the-wests-water-woes

Which Way El Niño?

ENSO METER ---

