

**“FRIENDS OF THE FIRE RINGS ANNOUNCES SURVEY RESULTS  
- BEACH FIRE RINGS EXTREMELY POPULAR WITH NEWPORT BEACH  
RESIDENTS AND WITH ALL OF ORANGE COUNTIANS”**

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Newport Beach, CA –

Friends of the Fire Rings, a coalition of residents in Newport Beach and Orange County, announced today the findings of a public opinion survey conducted over the past week. The results show that a huge majority of residents favor leaving the fire rings on the beaches in Newport Beach and the rest of Orange County as they currently are. This survey was conducted by the Orange County based polling firm of Lewis Consulting Group and was fielded July 2<sup>nd</sup> through July 9<sup>th</sup> among 250 Newport Beach residents and 250 Orange County residents living outside of Newport Beach. The 500 sample survey has an overall margin of error of +/- 4.75%.

Amongst all 500 respondents, an astonishing 89% of those surveyed believe the 60 fire rings at Corona del Mar State Beach and near the Balboa Pier should not be removed with 7% thinking the fire rings should be removed. Further in the survey, when asked if they believed that the fire rings should be modified with propane as opposed to wood burning, 80% felt that this was a silly and expensive idea, while only 8% felt it is a fair compromise.

Tom Sweat, a leader of the Friends of the Fire Rings, stated, “The findings from this survey conclusively show that the fire rings are a popular community mainstay. For an extremely small minority of disgruntled people to try to dictate to the rest of us who should be able to enjoy our public beaches is an affront to our freedoms and our sense of community.”

Also asked only of Newport Beach residents in this survey was if this issue would affect how voters might cast their ballot in next year’s Newport Beach city council elections. All seven City Council members voted to begin the process to remove the fire rings. When asked how this issue alone would affect their vote, 36% of those responding said they would be less likely to vote for councilmembers who voted for the removal while only 6% said they would be more likely to vote for those councilmembers.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) at their next Board meeting will hear an item that affects the future of the fire rings in Newport Beach and Orange County. Of those surveyed, 82% believe the AQMD should allow all fire rings in Orange County to remain as they are today, while 10% believe only the Newport Beach fire rings should be removed and 4% believe all fire rings in Orange County should be removed.

John Lewis, President of the polling firm of Lewis Consulting Group, observed that the popularity of the fire rings is unparalleled. “The rings in Newport Beach and along the coast in

Orange County are as popular of a community fixture as I have ever seen in my 30 years of polling. Not only are the fire rings popular across the board, but the passion to keep the fire rings is very high.” Referencing the results of questions asked of only Newport Beach residents where 82% of Newport Beach residents disapprove of the City Council action to start the process of removing the fire rings and results of similar questions asked to all Orange County residents, Lewis noted, “It is important to recognize that opinion amongst Newport Beach residents and Orange County residents at large is strikingly similar.”

Orange County Supervisor Shawn Nelson, who also sits on the AQMD Board of Directors, said of the survey results, “It comes as no surprise. The effort to remove fire rings from the beach in Newport is and always was an effort to remove the public from the beach and provide an exclusive domain for a very select few. Health issues are not related to this effort and have merely provided a convenient diversion.”

State Assemblyman Allan Mansoor who was been an outspoken supporter of the fire rings said, “We're on the right side of this fight. It's the people of Orange County against government bureaucrats. No one wants to ban our beloved fire rings except for over-zealous politicians who are looking for a new problem to create, so they can pretend to fix it.”

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