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Eco-Friendly County Programs Commended by Grand Jury

(Santa Ana, CA) – Three County of Orange departments were lauded by the Grand Jury for their commitment to protecting natural resources and employing environmentally conscious practices. In a report titled “Orange County Goes Green,” the Grand Jury described the OC Waste & Recycling department as “one of the most cost-conscious agencies in the county – and one of the most respected in the nation.”

The report praised **OC Waste & Recycling’s** ability to capture methane gas from the County’s Frank R. Bowerman Landfill, convert it into liquid natural gas, and then sell it to power local bus and truck fleets. In addition, the department puts forth tremendous effort to protect the natural environment in its management of the County’s landfills, manages four Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers and has successfully increased the diversion of self-hauled waste from the landfills by 70% through recycling outreach and the self-hauled waste surcharge.

The **County Executive Office’s Procurement Department** was also noted in the Grand Jury report for the development of the OC Green Fair, inspired by the Board of Supervisors’ adoption of an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy. The purchasing policy sets forth guidelines for County agencies and departments to ascertain goods and services that are eco-friendly compared to other competing products.

The environmental stewardship efforts of **John Wayne Airport (JWA)** were also acclaimed in the report including the early implementation of water conservation, pollution prevention, energy efficiency, air quality, noise abatement and recycling practices. This is illustrated through the Airport’s requirement of all fleet vehicles, such as taxi cabs and parking shuttles, to use compressed natural gas. Aircraft at JWA have decreased their fuel costs and substantially reduced carbon emissions by using ground-based electrical power for cooling aircraft, rather than onboard auxiliary power units when they are parked at the gate. In addition, almost half of the refuse collected from aircraft and facilities is recycled and all used fuel, oil and solvents are re-used.

“These County Departments have demonstrated innovation by developing environmentally sustainable practices and policies so that we can remain conscientious stewards of our great county for many generations to come,” said Board Chair Janet Nguyen.

Read the Grand Jury Report at www.ocgrandjury.org/.