As you may have seen, the Orange County Health Officer has issued an order regarding the COVID-19 emergency that takes effect immediately. This order reinforces many of the measures that OCSD has already put in place in response to this rapidly changing situation. This order was issued in the past few hours and is still being reviewed by our team. However, following the guidance of our County, State and Federal officials, and to prevent increasing transmission of COVID-19, effective immediately the following additional changes will take place:

1. To protect our employees and limit person-to-person interactions, all employees are encouraged to work from home where feasible. OCSD has created a telecommuting policy that is available on MyOCSD on the COVID-19 SharePoint page. Any employee can request from their supervisor to telecommute. It is my intent to reduce potential exposure and risk of transmission of this virus as much as possible. With that said, it is also important to note that the Orange County Sanitation District is an essential service that provides the protection of public health and the environment for Orange County. All requests will need to be conducive to our business needs, and be determined feasible by the department head.

2. Following the Governor’s directive and additional guidance by the Centers for Disease Control, Orange County Health Care Agency and the California Department of Public Health, all employees 65 years and older, and those with a medical condition that increases their risk of serious illness from exposure to COVID-19 (a medical note may be requested) who are unable to work from home will be allowed to go on paid administrative leave through March 31. Additional information and clarification will be forthcoming by Human Resources on March 18 based on anticipated Federal law that has recently been introduced. Please let your supervisor know your decision and contact Human Resources for more information.

3. OCSD will be temporarily closing our doors to the public and requesting all business be conducted online or via phone. Contractors and deliveries will continue to be allowed on site.

4. In accordance with new guidance from the Orange County Health Care Agency, all OCSD meetings MUST be less than 10 people and follow the 6-feet social distancing guideline and/or through alternative means (i.e. Teams, phone, online).

5. Meetings with external guests are discouraged at this time unless determined critical in nature by your department head.

These are changing times and we are going through them together. I appreciate your patience and flexibility as things change. Please know that I and the Executive Team are committed to ensuring the health and safety of you our employees, your family, and our community.

-Jim