

**CALAVERAS COUNTY  
CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL  
REPORT  
2023-2024**



*Photo courtesy of Ranger Dan Kendall*

# Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

## 2023-2024 FINAL REPORT

The 2023-2024 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury approved the Final Report.

S/: *Diane Lloyd*  
Diane Lloyd, Foreperson

Date: 08-02-24

I accept this Civil Grand Jury report for the year 2023-2024 for filing and certify that it complies with Part II, title IV of the California Penal Code.

S/: *T. S. Healy*  
The Honorable Timothy S. Healy  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court

Date: 8-12-24

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# **CIVIL GRAND JURY INFORMATION**

## **THE WHAT, WHO, AND WHY OF CIVIL GRAND JURIES**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

We all know that California is a special place. One of our unique qualities is our County Civil Grand Jury system. Called a “civil” Grand Jury, it operates as an arm of the county’s Superior Court and provides an opportunity for self-governance.

In California, the Grand Jury system consists of 58 separate grand juries – one in each county – that is convened on an annual basis by the Superior Court to carry out a number of functions. One of these functions is investigating and reporting on local government operations - the “watchdog” function, a civil, rather than criminal investigation. The issuance of criminal indictments or allegations of a public official’s willful misconduct in office may follow from such investigations.

Every year, in each of California’s 58 counties, a group of ordinary citizens takes an oath to serve as an arbiter of local government. This body of equals is primarily concerned with governmental effectiveness and efficiency matters. In addition to examining county and city government, the Civil Grand Jury reviews school districts, joint powers agencies, special districts, housing authorities, and other governing agencies to ensure that the best interests of the citizenry are served.

Grand Jurors are citizens of all ages and different walks of life bringing their unique personalities and abilities to the panel. All Grand Jurors are volunteers. They are gleaned from Voter Registration files as well as Department of Motor Vehicles records. Some are citizens who have submitted applications to serve their communities as Civil Grand Jurors.

With regard to its watchdog authority, the Civil Grand Jury is well suited to the effective investigation of local governments because it is an independent agency, operationally separate from the entities and officials it investigates. Civil Grand Jurors are officers of the Superior Court in the county in which they serve. They are members of the Judicial branch of government, as opposed to the Legislative or Executive branches.

The Civil Grand Jury’s fact-finding efforts result in written reports that contain specific recommendations aimed at identifying problems, improving government operations, and enhancing responsiveness to the citizens of the county.

## **THE GRAND JURY IN CALIFORNIA**

Grand Juries have existed in the State of California since the adoption of California’s original Constitution in 1849-1850. The Constitution, Article 1, Section 23, requires that a Civil Grand Jury “be drawn and summoned at least once a year in each county.” The Grand Jury system in California is unusual in that Federal and County Grand Juries in most states are concerned solely with criminal indictments and have no civil responsibilities.

The number of Civil Grand Jurors impaneled each year is determined by the population of the county in which they reside. Counties with fewer than 20,000 citizens impanel 11 jurors; counties

with 4 million or more citizens impanel juries of 23 individuals. Calaveras County fields 19 jurors for the duration of their one year of volunteer service.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CIVIL GRAND JURY**

The major function of the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury is to examine County and City government and special districts to ensure said entities are carrying out their duties to the citizens of the County. The Civil Grand Jury is mandated to investigate the condition of jails and detention centers. Other than this annual requirement, the Civil Grand Jury may pursue investigations as a truly independent body. Each Civil Grand Jury is free to choose which local governmental entities or public officials to investigate. Ideas for investigations generally come by way of three avenues: citizen complaints, matters raised by members of the Civil Grand Jury, and referrals from the preceding Civil Grand Jury.

During its investigations, the Civil Grand Jury acts as a finder of fact. In addition to determining if the official or entity under investigation is adhering to the laws that govern the operations of that entity, the jury analyzes whether the entity is operating in a businesslike manner and providing public services effectively and economically.

A final report is created after many hours of fact-finding investigations conducted by the Civil Grand Jury. This report can disclose inefficiency, unfairness, wrongdoings, and violations of public law and regulations in local governments. The report can also recognize positive aspects of local governance and provide information to the public. The Civil Grand Jury makes recommendations for change, requests responses, and follows up to ensure more efficient and lawful operation of government.

It is through its report that the Civil Grand Jury wields its power. This report is influential because it may attract the attention of the media, and subsequently, the voting constituencies of the investigated officials and agencies.

## **WHY THE CITIZENS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY SHOULD CARE**

Civil Grand juries work. They can do what no other group or individual can do – thoroughly, systematically, and without bias, delve into the actions and policies of local governmental entities and officials to evaluate their effectiveness in providing services to the people they are supposed to serve.

Calaveras County needs what their Grand Jury provides: an objective, non-partisan analysis of what works, and what does not work, in local government.

**MEMBERS OF THE 2023-2024 CALAVERAS COUNTY CIVIL  
GRAND JURY**

**Diane Lloyd, Foreperson**

**Betty Miner, Foreperson Pro Tem**

**Deanna Correa, Treasurer**

**Alex Ketchen, Recorder and IT Officer**

**Vicki Plaughter, Corresponding Secretary**

**Dale Thompson, Sergeant-At-Arms**

**Erin Dahlquist**

**Vivian Eversole**

**Mary Klise**

**Lauren Liberty**

**Kendall Morlan**

**Rick Ponti**

**Sue Ross**

**Al Segalla**

**Victor Tarango**

# HOW TO CONTACT THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTERVIEWS

Reports issued by the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury do not identify the individuals interviewed. California Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

A Civil Grand Jury report will never reveal how the Grand Jury, or any Grand Juror, voted.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLAIMER

A Civil Grand Juror will recuse themselves if there is a conflict of interest (real or perceived) related to an investigation and that recusal shall be stated in the written report.

To Calaveras County Citizens,

A new Calaveras County Grand Jury is impaneled each year that consists of 19 citizens. Civil Grand Jurors are officers of the court and function as an independent body under the guidance of the Superior Court Judge.

The Civil Grand Jury is required by California Penal Code §919(b) to inquire into public prisons and jails annually. No report is required to be issued. Apart from the inquiry mandated by law, only the Civil Grand Jury decides what other County agencies or services it will investigate. Areas of inquiry may include all aspects of County government; the operation, records, and accounts of County offices; allegations of corrupt and/or willful misconduct of public officials; and activities of all schools and special assessment districts within Calaveras County. Investigations may also be initiated in response to letters from citizens, newspaper articles, and/or personal knowledge.

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury works to ensure that the best interests of all citizens of the County are being served by their governing bodies.

Those who wish to contact the Grand Jury may do so by writing to:

Calaveras County Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1414  
San Andreas, CA 95249

Complaint forms are available at all County libraries and for download on the Grand Jury website at: <http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/>. Completed forms may be mailed to the above Post Office Box or emailed to [V\\_Plaugher@yahoo.com](mailto:V_Plaugher@yahoo.com), 2024-2025 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury Foreperson Vicki Plaugher. Her cellphone is (510) 304-6188.

Respectfully,

2023-2024 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury Foreperson Diane Lloyd

# Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Calaveras County Animal Services Department

## Still Scratching the Surface

*June 30, 2024*



*"It's a critter care conundrum." – Erin Dahlquist*

## SUMMARY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury's decision to investigate Calaveras County Animal Services Department was in accordance with California Penal Code §925 which states in part "...investigations may be conducted on some selective basis each year." The Civil Grand Jury was interested in assessing the overall operations of the facility and management of the Animal Shelter.

The Grand Jury concluded that the Animal Shelter, built in the 1950s, remains inadequate. As reported in past Grand Jury reports dating back to 1987, the shelter is understaffed, unsanitary, underfunded, and in need of replacement. Although steps have been taken in recent months to build a new shelter, the funding available at the time of this report is grossly deficient.

It remains to be seen how the new shelter will be funded. However, there are immediate actions that may be taken by the department that could improve their service to the community.

## GLOSSARY

The list below identifies the acronyms used in this report.

BOS	Calaveras County Board of Supervisors
CCAS	Calaveras County Animal Services
CCCGJ	Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
FOCAS	Friends of Calaveras County Animal Shelter

## METHODOLOGY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted a site visit to the Calaveras County Animal Services (CCAS) shelter, reviewed past CCCGJ reports, conducted a number of interviews with relevant county employees, and evaluated the department's website.

## BACKGROUND

Calaveras County Animal Services (CCAS) has been under the direction of the Environmental Management Agency since October 2012. Funding for the shelter is provided by Calaveras County through allocations from County taxes which are approved by the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors (BOS). CCAS is responsible for animal-related calls and concerns from the community. CCAS is also responsible for animal shelter operations, dog licensing, rabies vaccinations, spay and neutering services, and adoptions.

For more than 20 years, CCCGJ has reported that the Calaveras County Animal Shelter has outgrown and outlived its effectiveness and needs to be replaced. The dire need for a new CCAS facility was substantiated by the May 21, 2018, Calaveras County Animal Services Bickmore Shelter Hazard Report, as well as the November 3, 2022, University of California, Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program Report. Both reports support the need for a new shelter. The following are excerpts from past CCCGJ reports:

- **1999-2000:** "The building conditions are in need of improvement."

- **2001-2002:** “The Calaveras County Animal Control facility (shelter) has been a long-recognized problem with past Grand Juries since 1986. Final reports of past Grand Juries have many times reflected the need for change in this outdated facility”
- **2005-2006:** CCCGJ received a citizen complaint. “The complainant specified many issues pertaining to the condition of the facility...”
- **2006-2007:** “Finding 1: A facility upgrade recommended by a special audit in 2006, [*sic*] remains unresolved. The proposed plan submitted by Nacht & Lewis Architects to the County Administrator includes acquisition of space, construction of a new animal shelter, and repairs to the existing facility.”
- **2007-2008:** “Finding: The current animal shelter is too small and outdated for the housing of animals for Calaveras County.”
- **2008-2009:** “Recommendation: The Grand Jury continues to recommend the Sheriff’s update, and the Board of Supervisors approve, the plan for a new shelter with a specific timeline. The BOS needs to allocate the necessary funding.”
- **2009-2010:** “Recommendation: The Grand Jury continues to recommend that the Board of Supervisors implement the previously approved plan for a new shelter with a specific time line. The BOS should allocate the necessary funding to proceed with the project.”
- **2010-2011:** “Finding 1: Although a relatively new modular building serves as the office space for the shelter, most of the facility is old and inadequate.”
- **2011-2012:** “Finding 1: A relatively new modular building serves as the office space for the shelter; however, most of the facility is old and inadequate.”
- **2015-2016:** “ACS [*sic*] is working with the humane society and local community outreach programs to construct better housing for animals.”
- **2017-2018:** “The existing aging and obsolete animal shelter is small and outdated (built in the 1950’s) to adequately meet the daily services and operational needs for animal housing.”
- **2018-2019:** “After conducting interviews and inspections, the Grand Jury finds that the current Animal Control Services facility continues to be inadequate, unsafe, understaffed, and has outlived its utility. Replacement with a new facility or a refurbished existing building needs to occur.”
- **2019-2020:** “After reviewing past CCGJ reports from 1999 to 2019, it was found that each year’s recommendations were virtually the same and each report concluded that the shelter needed to be replaced.”
- **2022-2023:** “Until recently, despite multiple Grand Jury reports, citizen complaints, and third-party studies, little has been done to replace the Animal Shelter.”

At the March 26, 2024 BOS meeting, LDA Partners Inc, an architectural firm based in Stockton, CA, presented an agreement for an amount not to exceed \$798,000 for design development and

construction documents. Additionally, as of March 11, 2024, the county has paid LDA Partners Inc. \$177,650 (details on these payments were unknown at the time of this report). However, the BOS failed to approve the payment of \$798,000. This reluctance stemmed from the realization that the proposed expenditure significantly strained the budget, which stands at \$4.16 million. Moreover, with the projected total cost of the project ranging between \$7 million to \$13 million, the current financial allocation is insufficient. Consequently, the fate of the animal shelter project is now clouded in uncertainty, lacking a concrete plan and the necessary budget to progress or be finalized in the foreseeable future.

Until these budget matters are addressed and resolved by the BOS, CCCGJ decided to focus its report on other aspects of the current shelter's operations that may be improved now.

## DISCUSSION

### Website

The Animal Services website (<https://animal.calaverasgov.us/>), as part of the Calaveras County website, was examined and evaluated. After reviewing the 2022-2023 Grand Jury report, it was discovered that many of the suggestions had been implemented, resulting in a more user-friendly website. In a new 2024 website evaluation, the Grand Jury found more areas for improvement to make the animal services website a go-to resource for the County.

Updates could include:

#### CODES & LAWS PAGE

- Provide a course of action. Examples: What can one do when a barking dog can't be resolved between neighbors? What can one expect the course of action to be from the Animal Services Dept.?
- Provide a direct link to the specific part of the Calaveras County Code of Ordinances that addresses barking dogs to make it easier for citizens to navigate to this information.

#### LOST & FOUND PETS

- Provide links to some of the popular places where people post found/lost animals. For example: NextDoor.com and locally based Facebook Groups such as "Lost and Found Pets Calaveras County".

#### FEES & LICENSING

- Make it a priority to increase community awareness of the Fee Flexibility Program – the public should know that it exists:
  - Any animal that has been available for adoption for more than 15 days, the overall fee for the adoption will be 50% off. Please note that the stray/wait period does NOT count towards the 15 days.
  - Overpopulation: We only have 21 dog kennels and 34 cat cages. When either of these get to 80% full or above, the overall adoption fee will be 50% off.
  - The 55-5-5 program: Any adopter over 55 years old adopting any pet over 5 years old will pay a total adoption fee of \$5.00.

## FORMS PAGE

- Categorization of Forms, Documents, and Other Information:
  - Safety & Emergencies
  - Forms and Applications
  - Pet Programs
  - Press Releases
  - Resources

## SERVICES

- Add links to the bullet points that go to the relevant pages.

## AMAZON WISH LIST

- Update the list regularly to reflect current needs.

## **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONDENTS**

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, reviewing reference documents, and touring the facility, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

**F1.** The Animal Services website needs improvements for the public to use it as an information resource.

**R1.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Animal Services update its website with current information and improved user-friendly operations as suggested in the Discussion – Website portion of this report by November 1, 2024.

### **Required Responses**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

### **Invited Responses**

Director of the Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency  
Manager of the Calaveras County Animal Services Department

## **COMMENDATIONS**

**C1.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury commends the Environmental Management Agency Director, shelter staff, and FOCAS volunteers for their dedication to the impounded animals and their pursuit of a new Calaveras County Animal Shelter to better serve the citizens and animals of Calaveras County.

**C2.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury commends the Environmental Management Agency Director, shelter staff, and FOCAS volunteers for implementing the majority of recommendations

from the 2022-2023 CCCGJ report, including adjusting business hours to better serve the public, additions to staff, an improved website, and improvements in staff and volunteer communications.

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify the individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

### **REFERENCE SOURCES**

Bickmore Shelter Hazard Report, Calaveras County Animal Services Tom Kline, ARM, CPSI, Terrie S. Norris, CSP, ARM, CPSI, September 2018

BOS minutes from meetings on September 10, 2019; February 18, 2020; December 13, 2022, April 11, 2023, and January 23, 2024 ([www.calaveras.gov.us](http://www.calaveras.gov.us)),.

Calaveras County Animal Shelter (<https://animal.calaverasgov.us/>)

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury Reports from 1999-2000, 2001-2002, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2015-2016, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2022-2023 (<https://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/Reports>)

County Ordinance, Title 6 – ANIMALS, Chapter 6. UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program; Calaveras Housing Capacity Report D. Wagner, B. Stunteback, November 3, 2022

[LDA Partners, Inc. presentation](#) to the BOS on January 23, 2024 <https://bit.ly/3PxHgYf>  
2023-2024 Calaveras County Final Budget; page 68

# **Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury**

**Calaveras County Water District**

## **Still Waters Run Deep**

**June 30, 2024**



*Photo courtesy of Victor Tarango*

## **SUMMARY**

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury received over 170 written complaints related to the five-year water and wastewater rate increase proposal from Calaveras County Water District. In general, the complaints centered around the amount of the proposed rate increase, non-compliance with California Proposition 218 (state mandated process for seeking a rate increase), and the perception that employee salaries are exorbitant for the water/wastewater utility industry. It should be noted that complaints were also widespread on social media sites.

Given the volume of complaints, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury felt compelled to pursue an investigation into the rate increase proposal. The original inquiry led to the discovery of other areas in need of investigation, such as their vehicle lease program, information technology infrastructure, workplace culture, and employee turnover.

This report is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the operations of Calaveras County Water District, but the content will clarify community concerns related to the rate increase proposal and make recommendations to improve operational deficiencies discovered during the investigation.

## **GLOSSARY**

AMI – Advanced Metering Infrastructure  
BOD – Board of Directors  
CCCGJ – Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury  
CCWD – Calaveras County Water District (The District)  
COLA – Cost of Living Adjustment  
ERP – Enterprise Resource Planning  
LAFCo – Local Agency Formation Commission  
MCU – Management and Confidential Unit  
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding  
SEIU – Service Employees International Union

## **METHODOLOGY**

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted interviews and reviewed online documentation available from numerous sources including but not limited to Calaveras County Water District (CCWD), California Legislative Information, California Special Districts Association, California Secretary of State, and the Calaveras Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

## **BACKGROUND**

CCWD was formed on August 30, 1946, as an independent special District. CCWD has approximately 13,400 water connections and 5,200 wastewater connections. Nearly all of

the wastewater customers are also water customers. CCWD also has two hydroelectric power projects.

As stated on the CCWD website, “The District is a not-for-profit public agency. As a California special District, CCWD’s jurisdiction includes provision of public water service, water supply development and planning, wastewater treatment, and disposal and recycling.

“The District has broad general jurisdiction over the use of water within its boundaries, including the right of eminent domain, authority to acquire, control, distribute, store, spread, sink, treat, purify, reclaim, process and salvage any water for beneficial use, to provide sewer service, to sell treated or untreated water, to acquire or construct hydroelectric facilities and sell the power and energy produced to public agencies or public utilities engaged in the distribution of power, to contract with the United States, other political subdivisions, public subdivisions, public utilities, or other persons, and – subject to Article XIII A of the State constitution – to levy taxes and improvements.”

## **DISCUSSION**

### **CCWD Proposed Five-Year Rate Plan**

CCWD is a local public agency that provides water and wastewater services to customers in portions of Calaveras County. CCWD must collect sufficient revenues to pay the costs to operate and maintain each of its two utilities, water, and wastewater.

California voters approved Proposition 218, also known as the “Right to Vote on Taxes Act” in 1996. This action added Article XIII C and Article XIII D to the California Constitution, restricting the imposition of local taxes or assessments without voter approval. The written complaints received by CCCGJ asserted that CCWD had not followed the required legal process detailed within the California Constitution and associated Government Codes for requesting a service rate increase. CCCGJ came to a similar conclusion after its initial review of the claims made within the written complaints.

CCCGJ would later learn that there is a special exception from the voter approval requirement within Article XIII D, Section 6(c) for fees charged for sewer, water, and refuse collection services and that there is a distinction between a *fee* and an *assessment* in Section 2.

An assessment is a charge levied on property to pay for a public improvement or service that benefits property (e.g., water facilities, sewer facilities, undergrounding of utilities, or landscape improvements) or services (e.g., maintenance of storm water facilities, landscape improvements, or street lighting improvements). An assessment requires a majority affirmative ballot vote of the property owners residing in the affected area.

A fee is a charge imposed on an individual or business for a service or facility provided directly to an individual or business. The amount of the fee may not exceed the cost to provide the service.

CCWD did follow the procedural requirements of Proposition 218 for a utility fee rate increase. These requirements include:

1. Noticing Requirement – The District must mail a notice of the proposed rate increases to all affected property owners or ratepayers. The notice must specify the amount of the fee, the basis upon which it was calculated, the reason for the fee, and the date/time/location of a public rate hearing at which the proposed rates will be considered/adopted. In addition, CCWD held three community workshops in 2023 at Ebbetts Pass on August 14th, Copperopolis on August 16<sup>th</sup>, and Jenny Lind/Valley Springs on August 17th.
2. Public Hearing – The District must hold a public hearing prior to adopting the proposed rate increases. The public hearing must be held not less than 45 days after the required notices are mailed. At the public hearing, the proposed rate increases are subject to majority protest. If more than 50% of affected property owners or ratepayers submit written protests against the proposed rate increases, the increases cannot be adopted.

Proposition 218 established substantive requirements that apply to water and wastewater rates and charges, including:

1. Cost of Service – Revenues derived from the fee or charge cannot exceed the funds required to provide the service. In essence, fees cannot exceed the “cost of service.”
2. Intended Purpose – Revenues derived from the fee or charge can only be used for the purpose for which the fee was imposed.
3. Proportional Cost Recovery – The amount of the fee or charge levied on any customer shall not exceed the proportional cost of service attributable to that customer.

The following is from CCWD’s website page for the 2023 Cost of Service Study:

“The base rate is calculated to ensure appropriate cost allocation based on meter size so that those accounts necessitating a larger capacity due to larger meter size are not subsidized by accounts with smaller meters that require a smaller capacity of water from the system.”

At closer inspection, the published rate tables do not reflect *appropriate cost allocation based on meter size*. In the first year of the new rate tables, the 1” meter increases by a mere 65¢, while all meters 1 ½” through 8” decrease in price.

**Table 1**

**Bi-Monthly Water Base Rate Charges by Meter Size**

Meter Size	Bi-Monthly Base Rate Charge				
	Jul 16, 2018	Jul 16, 2019	Jul 16, 2020	Jul 16, 2021	Jul 16, 2022
5/8"	\$112.28	\$114.23	\$116.22	\$118.26	\$120.35
3/4"	\$168.43	\$171.34	\$174.33	\$177.39	\$180.53
1"	\$280.71	\$285.57	\$290.55	\$295.65	\$300.89
1.5"	\$561.43	\$571.14	\$581.10	\$591.31	\$601.77
2"	\$898.28	\$913.83	\$929.76	\$946.09	\$962.83
3"	\$1,796.57	\$1,827.66	\$1,859.52	\$1,892.19	\$1,925.66
4"	\$2,807.14	\$2,855.71	\$2,905.50	\$2,956.54	\$3,008.85
6"	\$5,614.00	\$5,711.50	\$5,811.00	\$5,913.00	\$6,017.50
8"	\$8,982.40	\$9,138.40	\$9,297.60	\$9,460.80	\$9,628.00

Total Fixed Meter Charges (\$/Bi-Month)					
Revenue Adjustment:		12.0%	13.0%	7.0%	7.0%
Meter Size	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
5/8"	\$136.03	\$152.36	\$172.17	\$184.23	\$197.13
3/4"	\$191.20	\$214.15	\$241.99	\$258.93	\$277.06
1"	\$301.54	\$337.73	\$381.64	\$408.36	\$436.95
1 1/2"	\$577.39	\$646.68	\$730.75	\$781.91	\$836.65
2"	\$908.41	\$1,017.42	\$1,149.69	\$1,230.17	\$1,316.29
3"	\$1,791.13	\$2,006.07	\$2,266.86	\$2,425.55	\$2,595.34
4"	\$2,784.19	\$3,118.30	\$3,523.68	\$3,770.34	\$4,034.27
6"	\$5,542.69	\$6,207.82	\$7,014.84	\$7,505.88	\$8,031.30
8"	\$8,852.89	\$9,915.24	\$11,204.23	\$11,988.53	\$12,827.73

Note: Current rates on CCWD’s website do not include the 4” through 8” meters, thus the chart for current rates was taken from the Final Cost of Service Study.

The same inequity appears in the consumption rate charges. Previously there were four tiers of usage rates for Residential customers. In the new five-year rate plan, there are three tiers of usage charges. The first-tier range increased by 50% (a positive for customers), but the second-tier range decreased by 50% (a negative impact on large households/heavy users). At the end of the five-year rate increase period, Residential customers will have experienced a 158% increase at the first-tier usage rate when compared to the rate prior to October 16, 2023. During the same period, Non-Residential customer usage rates will increase by 113% and Irrigation/Landscape accounts by 74%, neither of which are subject to tiered pricing.

BI-MONTHLY WATER CONSUMPTION RATES			
S PER 100 CF			
<b>Residential</b>	Water Use (cf)		Increase
October 15, 2023	0-1,000	\$1.57	
July 16, 2027	0-1500	\$3.02	158%
<b>Non-Residential</b>	Flat Rate		
October 15, 2023		\$1.57	
July 16, 2027		\$3.34	113%
<b>Irrigation/Landscape/Other</b>	Flat Rate		
October 15, 2023		\$1.91	
July 16, 2027		\$3.32	74%

Residential customers are paying more than their fair share of the five-year rate plan increase. It defies logic for CCWD to apply a discount, to what are typically commercial accounts, and at the same time tell their customers, "We need a generational investment in our water and wastewater infrastructure, and we ask for your understanding."

Complaints were raised because tenants with CCWD services were not allowed to submit protest letters. Article XIII D, Section 2(g) stipulates, "'Property ownership' shall be deemed to include tenancies of real property where tenants are personally liable to pay the assessment, fee, or charge in question." CCWD holds the parcel owner financially liable for default on the account; therefore, tenants with CCWD services are unable to protest the rate increase proposal since they are not *personally liable*.

The greater portion of the rate increase is based on capital improvement projects and an increase in operating expenses. These facts have to be accepted in good faith, as there is no way for customers of CCWD or this body to verify the stated financial figures or urgency of the capital improvement projects. Interviewees did express skepticism about the ability to complete the slated projects, given the engineering, design, and regulatory hurdles required to reach a shovel-ready status. A contractor capable of this specialized construction must also be available.

A rate proposal Public Hearing was held by the CCWD Board of Directors (BOD) on September 13, 2023, at 5 P.M. at the CCWD Boardroom, 120 Toma Court, San Andreas. There was a large community effort to collect enough protest letters to stop the rate increase, but it fell short.

### Vehicle Lease Program

In an effort to justify and rationalize the need for rate increases for its customers, CCWD offered a written and slide presentation titled CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT PROPOSED FIVE-YEAR RATE PLAN. Within that presentation, under the heading of COST SAVING IMPROVEMENTS AND EFFICIENCIES, was a reference to a VEHICLE LEASE-TO-OWN PROGRAM that was implemented in 2019.



A few comments from the presentation referencing that program caught the attention of CCCGJ.

1. "Since 2019 CCWD lease-to-own program has resulted in the purchase of 28 vehicles in a very cost-effective program."
2. "This program allows the District to improve the reliability, fuel economy, safety and efficiency of the fleet while spreading the purchase expense out over a five-year period."
3. "The above slide illustrates the expense in year one (2019) of the lease-to-own program, when the District received ten service trucks to replace the oldest trucks in the fleet for less than the cost of purchasing one new service truck outright."
4. An \$83,000/year figure was also stated, suggesting that figure was the annual cost to own ten new vehicles vs. purchasing two new vehicles.

CCCGJ found these statements to be incongruous and somewhat contradictory. We chose to attempt to qualify these statements and determine what lease program existed and whether it was a "cost-effective" approach to procuring the District's vehicles. Based on our inquiry and that the information that we received was confirmed by sources deemed accurate and reliable, we have concluded the following:

A vehicle lease is a contractual arrangement by which a company (Lessee) can rent vehicles from a leasing firm (Lessor) for a specific term, when upon expiration, the vehicles are returned. The vehicles remain the property of the lessor while the lessee assumes no ownership stake but pays for the right to use the vehicles for a predetermined length of time.

Within a lease document, such as a Lease-To-Own, there may be options to purchase or continue to lease a vehicle thereafter, but not without further financial obligations, which may include, but are not limited to, a form of down payment, monthly lease charges, or an amortization of the full purchase costs. A lease-to-own program may be considered a misnomer as the lessee never owns the vehicle at the expiration of the initial term. Also included in commercial leases are excess mileage charges and the responsibility to return the vehicle in proper acceptable condition. Leasing to own is always a more expensive alternative to a financed or outright purchase and is often an option when a down payment isn't available.

It is apparent that CCWD has committed to modified Open-End Leases, which consists of rental terms of five years, an excessive mileage surcharge, responsibility for return condition, and additional cost of contracted maintenance, but with the possibility of a small percentage of an equity share. The potential equity is based on the performance of a predetermined residual amount and is granted only if the vehicles were purchased or a new lease was generated after having been rented for five years, but there is no guaranteed or implied accrued ownership.

CCCGJ contends that the program assertions by CCWD in their public RATE PLAN presentation were inaccurately expressed and could easily be misconstrued. CCWD's choice of wording in their presentation, intermingling the terms "lease" and "purchase," did not accurately describe a financial arrangement in which a vehicle is leased (rented) for five years, then somehow becomes a purchased asset of the company without further contractual or financial obligations. The inference that the "lease-to-own program has resulted in the

purchase of 28 vehicles in a very cost-effective program” may be misrepresented as is the claim of “spreading the purchase expense out over a five-year period.”

CCWD has leased 28 vehicles, ten of which have either expired or soon will expire and be returned, presumably to be replaced with ten more new leased vehicles. Neither the ten replaced trucks, nor the ten replacement trucks, will result in any substantial equity to the District because no purchase has ensued and therefore no equity ownership has been gained.

CCWD received ten leased service trucks to replace the oldest trucks in the fleet, but not at the cost of purchasing one or two new service trucks outright. What the District received was the temporary use of ten leased (rented) trucks for one year at the unaudited expense of \$ 83,000.00, which would have been adequate to purchase or finance at least one new vehicle.

What wasn't stated was that had the trucks been financed to purchase at a slightly higher cost per month for a similar term, they could have been utilized by CCWD for more than five years, become assets of the District, and continued to perform indefinitely without monthly finance or lease or mileage charges after the loans had been satisfied. Since the vehicles would have then become company owned assets, they could have later been sold to the benefit of the District whenever and by whatever parameters they deemed appropriate. The useful lifespan of a commercial vehicle is rarely considered to be concluded at five years. Some municipalities expect to utilize their vehicles for 10 to 25 years.

The options that were available to CCWD at the expiration of their initial five-year lease term were:

- to return the trucks and replace them with new, leased vehicles at an even greater expense while understanding that this strategy will never culminate in the ownership of any of them.
- to continue leasing the same vehicles indefinitely at similar or higher expense, again continuing without any ultimate ownership of any vehicles.
- to purchase the trucks from the lessor, either paying a full residual cash price or financing, resulting in the trucks becoming company assets, although they already incurred rental costs for the vehicles over the prior five years.

CCCGJ proposes that none of these options were, or now are, the most cost effective or advantageous manner to procure vehicles for the operations of CCWD. It is not apparent that any vehicle has ever become owned by CCWD, nor has any equity ever been gained in any vehicle as a result of the current leasing program.

If a company is to operate a commercial vehicle for an anticipated period of five years or more, employs mechanics, has a maintenance facility, utilizes specialized (upfit) equipment, accrues moderate to high mileage, and has a staff member that can assist in the sale of an asset at the end of its most useful life, it is always an economic advantage to purchase that vehicle. CCWD's operations satisfies all the aforementioned criteria.

CCCGJ further questioned the necessity of assigning leased or owned company vehicles to management personnel since there is no apparent need to do so in their job descriptions.

These vehicles are being used for commuting to and from their homes, some of which are outside the county, but are seemingly not being used in any significant manner in the daily performance of their employment responsibilities. The use of company vehicles in this inefficient manner obligates the District to monthly lease payments, adds to return condition responsibility and excess mileage surcharges, possible theft, or damage, but most crucially, it exposes CCWD to added legal liability. It is uncertain if these vehicle benefits are being accurately described by the District or are appropriately being declared as income by the employee. It is evident that the practice of providing exclusive personal use of vehicles to some employees and not others, contributes to perceived compensation inequities and an “us versus them” mindset.

### **Enterprise Resource Planning Software Migration**

The CCCGJ inquiry brought to light internal concerns with the financial expense and operational deficiency of CCWD’s Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software platform. ERP is a software system that integrates a corporation’s management of essential business processes, e.g., accounting, billing, payroll, and operations.

CCWD was operating with an older software version from their existing ERP solution provider, designated here as Vendor A. An internal committee was formed to research the option to update with their existing vendor and also evaluate solutions from competitive ERP providers. Under consideration were the integration of the ERP solution with a project to expand their advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) from a few accounts to all customers and collecting real-time metrics for operations and required statistical reporting by California regulators.

During the committee’s exploratory process, a second vendor, designated here as Vendor B, became the favored solution provider by a majority of the committee members. However, strong concerns were raised by some of the stakeholders in the committee who believed that Vendor B’s application would not meet the requirements to perform daily operational duties. Discussion ensued about the complexity of implementing an entirely new ERP platform versus upgrading the existing system. Despite their objections, the dissenting committee members were not given sufficient opportunity to express their views, and the decision to move forward with Vendor B’s platform passed.

What ensued were decisions that led to a flawed transition to the Vendor B platform:

1. Vendor B recommended that financial services should be implemented first, and after a successful trial period, follow with migrating the billing process. CCWD’s management team, however, decided to lead with the billing process migration instead. Their decision was driven in part by installation and financial deadlines related to the AMI project.
2. Billing and AMI, two major business functions, were implemented during the same time period.
3. Vendor B offers several versions of their ERP software, which allows them to provide business sector specific solutions. CCWD staff members, current and former, have expressed concern that the Vendor B software suite selected and installed at CCWD may not be the best fit for a utility provider business.

In the autumn of 2021, the Vendor B application went into operation, resulting in a significant negative impact on CCWD's labor and fiscal operations.

1. The usage data from the automated metering system and the Vendor B billing module have not been successfully integrated. In order to complete a billing cycle, an estimated 40 to 80 labor hours are required each month to reconcile data from the two systems.
2. Neither financial services, nor any other business function at CCWD, have migrated to the Vendor B platform. This defeats the goal of managing the corporation with an integrated business solution. In addition, other business services like payroll and outside plant work orders are hosted on unique software applications and should be migrated to the ERP platform.
3. CCWD financial services are still hosted on the Vendor A platform; therefore, there is not an integrated connection between the billing and accounting processes.
4. CCWD has incurred the additional expense of paying two ERP vendors for over two and one-half years.
5. The implementation expense of Vendor B's solution is approximately 50% higher than a similar solution from Vendor A.
6. Issues from the initial implementation of the Vendor B platform have yet to be resolved.
7. Vendor B requires their customers to use a specific credit card processing vendor; therefore, CCWD cannot shop for a more economical solution. The 3.9% processing fee is passed on to the CCWD customer.
8. Delinquent payment notifications and fees were suspended by California emergency State mandate during the COVID crisis. Although the mandate was lifted on June 30, 2021, late fees are not being collected by CCWD due to the ongoing billing issues.

The CCWD BOD received an update in November 2021 on a plan to improve customer service. This plan included the creation of a new management position and was dependent on the migration of finance and payroll to the Vendor B platform. This "phase two" of the data migration was stated to be in progress. The position was created and filled, but to date finance is still running on the Vendor A platform and payroll is still being processed by a third-party vendor.

### **CCWD Employee Turnover and Workplace Culture**

Initially, the premise regarding what might be the cause of the reportedly high CCWD employee turnover rate was pursuit of a higher salary and/or the termination of retiree health benefits (vested employees are still eligible for retiree health benefits). In interviews with current and former employees, these issues were cited but not as top of mind. Negative workplace culture was frequently stated first as the reason for the high employee turnover rate at CCWD.

Interviewees repeatedly stated that a company's workplace culture begins at the top. In examining the top, what immediately stands out is that CCWD has had 14 or more General Managers since the year 2000. The high turnover rate at the General Manager level seems to have set the tone for the rest of the organization. It was suggested that CCWD's General Manager position has been a springboard into upper management at other agencies. The same occurrence plays out with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) employees who apparently stay with CCWD long enough to get a few certifications before they begin to apply elsewhere, which raises the question of what prompted them to look

around for options while they were completing certifications and gaining experience at CCWD.

In general, the top reasons cited for leaving CCWD were:

- The negative workplace culture.
- Poor employee management
- Seeking a higher salary
- The termination of retiree health benefits

Looking at the commonalities of responses from interviewees, it became clear that rank-and-file employees fear retaliation for expressing their opinion about any aspect of operations to CCWD managers. Also, the perception exists that direct communication from any employees to CCWD's BOD was not only discouraged, but there would be repercussions, forcing employees to take drastic measures in order to communicate with a BOD member. This violates California labor code section 1102.5 and CCWD Board Resolution number 2003-67 Policy of Open Communication Between Board Members and Staff.

With the exception of the General Manager position, all employees at CCWD are represented by a bargaining unit. The managers are represented by the Management & Confidential Unit (MCU), and the office staff and field employees are represented by the SEIU. A separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) exists for both bargaining units and they are both effective July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2026.

Productive employees are disheartened by the lack of performance accountability at all levels. In general, MCU and SEIU members do not receive regular performance evaluations, with a possible exception during an employee's probationary period. A few interviewees shared that they had not received a performance evaluation in a number of years. Both bargaining units negotiate fixed income steps per job title and cost of living adjustments (COLA), which contributes to the complacency of performing employee evaluations. This compensation structure offers a limited merit increase component, but without an evaluation, an employee merit increase cannot be justified. Without regular employee evaluations, documentation does not exist for recognition, setting goals and objectives, confidential feedback, or disciplinary action. This has led to a workplace perception that some employees get away with doing the minimum—or less. It should be noted that the SEIU MOU references an employee evaluation policy, however, there is no reference to employee evaluations within the MCU MOU.

During the COVID crisis, employees were allowed to work from home if their job function could be performed remotely. Post-COVID, this practice is still being utilized by MCU and SEIU office employees on a limited basis. The majority of CCWD employees work in the field and are therefore ineligible to work from home. The SEIU office and field employees have the perception that employees working from home are not being monitored for productivity, hence contributing to the perception of a lack of accountability for non-performers.

Given the ratio of field versus office staff employees, there is a perception of a "top-heavy" management structure by the employees performing the operational functions of CCWD

and the SEIU office staff. This situation contributes to what has come to light as an “us versus them” workplace culture, with some not feeling as valued as others. The lack of respect is palpable and creates a generalized fear of retaliation. In addition, there is a perception of a management clique, implying that those members receive special privileges.

Positions held by MCU members have a nine-step wage increase structure, as opposed to the five-step structure of SEIU members. The classification of job titles to either MCU or SEIU can be arbitrary. Also, the reclassification of job titles from SEIU to MCU has been exercised as a retention and/or promotion tool. These are more actions that feed the us versus them workplace culture perception.

CCWD provides its employees with one of the highest compensation packages within Calaveras County. The wage and salary schedules at CCWD are within the range of the regional water and wastewater industry. With the exception of limited local opportunities within the East Bay Municipal Utility District, there are few local options to pursue a higher income. CCWD employees are faced with relocation or long commutes if they seek higher income within their industry specialty. For this reason, income is not the top reason for leaving employment with CCWD.

The elimination of retiree health benefits for life has provided substantial savings to CCWD. This benefit and high compensation had contributed to employee longevity—for better or worse. The loss of this benefit has contributed to the employee turnover rate and a loss of institutional knowledge. The effect of this benefit change will be felt until the last vested employee retires.

## **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONDENTS**

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Calaveras Civil Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next CCCGJ report, invited responses must be received within 90 days. After conducting interviews and reviewing reference documents the CCCGJ findings and recommendations are as follows:

**F1.** The five-year rate increase is disproportionately spread by meter size and usage, which has caused the 5/8” and 3/4” meter customers to bear a greater percentage of the overall rate increase.

**R1.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, Calaveras County Water District follow their own policy and recalculate the base and usage rates so that the smaller meter customers are not subsidizing the larger meter customers.

### **Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

### **Invited Response**

None.

**R1a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors request that the California State Controller conduct a review of CCWD’s internal control system to determine the adequacy of CCWD’s controls for conducting its operations, preparing financial reports, safeguarding of assets, and ensuring proper use of public funds. Government Code Section 12422.5 authorizes the State Controller to “audit any local agency for purposes of determining whether the agency’s internal controls are adequate to detect and prevent financial errors and fraud.”

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**F2.** The Lease-To-Own Program has not resulted in the purchase ownership of any vehicles, despite what was stated in Calaveras County Water District’s community presentations.

**R2.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, Calaveras County Water District publish a correction to the statement made in their community presentations.

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

None.

**R2a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors request that the California State Controller conduct a review of CCWD’s internal control system to determine the adequacy of CCWD’s controls for conducting its operations, preparing financial reports, safeguarding of assets, and ensuring proper use of public funds. Government Code Section 12422.5 authorizes the State Controller to “audit any local agency for purposes of determining whether the agency’s internal controls are adequate to detect and prevent financial errors and fraud.”

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**F3.** Vehicle Lease-To-Own programs are not always the most effective use of funds.

**R3.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the management of Calaveras County Water District, by December 31, 2024, re-evaluate the effectiveness of the Lease To-Own Program by initiating a study that compares the cost of leasing and subsequently returning vehicles, versus the ownership of vehicles throughout a reasonably expected useful lifespan.

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

None.

**R3a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors request that the California State Controller conduct a review of CCWD's internal control system to determine the adequacy of CCWD's controls for conducting its operations, preparing financial reports, safeguarding of assets, and ensuring proper use of public funds. Government Code Section 12422.5 authorizes the State Controller to "audit any local agency for purposes of determining whether the agency's internal controls are adequate to detect and prevent financial errors and fraud."

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Director of Operations  
Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**F4.** The practice of assigning district vehicles to management personnel is unnecessary to operations and creates additional expense and liability.

**R4.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, all Calaveras County Water District vehicles be used by personnel only within the scope of their job descriptions during business hours with exceptions of after-hours by on-call and emergency response personnel.

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**R4a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors request that the California State Controller conduct a review of CCWD's internal control system to determine the adequacy of CCWD's controls for conducting its operations, preparing financial reports, safeguarding of assets, and ensuring proper use of public funds. Government Code Section 12422.5 authorizes the State Controller to "audit

any local agency for purposes of determining whether the agency’s internal controls are adequate to detect and prevent financial errors and fraud.”

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**F5.** The Enterprise Resource Planning software integration issues cause unnecessary inefficiencies in day-to-day operations.

**R5.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, Calaveras County Water District contract with an information technology firm that has the expertise to identify and provide an action plan to resolve the current system integration issues.

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Business Services Manager  
Calaveras County Water District General Manager  
Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**R5a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors request that the California State Controller conduct a review of CCWD’s internal control system to determine the adequacy of CCWD’s controls for conducting its operations, preparing financial reports, safeguarding of assets, and ensuring proper use of public funds. Government Code Section 12422.5 authorizes the State Controller to “audit any local agency for purposes of determining whether the agency’s internal controls are adequate to detect and prevent financial errors and fraud.”

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

**Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Business Services Manager  
Calaveras County Water District General Manager  
Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**R5b.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, a process and timeline be created for the migration of other standalone applications at Calaveras County Water District into their Enterprise Resource Planning platform.

**Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

### **Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Business Services Manager  
Calaveras County Water District General Manager

**F6.** Given the fear of retaliation, rank and file employees at Calaveras County Water District do not feel they can express their concerns to their superiors.

**R6.** Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, an outside human resource consultant be contracted to address the root of workplace culture issues with all Calaveras County Water District management and employees.

### **Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

### **Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Human Resources Manager

**F7.** Regularly scheduled employee performance reviews are not being completed in a timely or consistent manner, causing a lack of accountability at all levels of the workforce.

**R7a.** Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that all employees in a supervisory level position review the District employee performance evaluation policy and comply with that policy by December 31, 2024.

### **Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

### **Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Human Resources Manager  
Calaveras County Water District General Manager

**R7b.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, the Calaveras County Water District Human Resources Department document and enforce the execution of regularly scheduled employee performance reviews.

### **Required Response**

Calaveras County Water District Board of Directors

### **Invited Response**

Calaveras County Water District Human Resources Manager

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

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Various Agendas, Agenda Packages, and Minutes from past Calaveras County Water District Board Meetings

# Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

## Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District

### The Value of Transparency

June 30, 2024



*Photo courtesy of Victoria Plaughter*

## **SUMMARY**

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury's decision to investigate the Ebbetts Pass Veteran's Memorial District was prompted by two citizen complaints.

Additionally, in early 2023, a Calaveras Enterprise article was published under the headline: "Tensions Rise over Plans for the Old Murphys Schoolhouse". At the Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District meeting referenced in the article, changes to the deed and the restoration of the Old Murphys Schoolhouse were brought up.

Finding these issues to be of public interest, further investigation was deemed warranted.

## **GLOSSARY**

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

CCCGJ – Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

EPVMD – Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District

LAFCO – Local Agency Formation Commission

The Enterprise – Calaveras Enterprise

VUSD – Vallecito Union School District

## **METHODOLOGY**

To better understand the issues identified in the citizen complaints and the February 16, 2023, Calaveras Enterprise (the Enterprise) article, Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted numerous interviews, reviewed information from various websites, and studied a variety of historical and financial documents.

## **BACKGROUND**

Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District (EPVMD) was established in 1958 under the California Military and Veterans Code, Division 6 – Veterans Buildings, Memorials, and Cemeteries.

The EPVMD board consists of five members elected for two-year terms, in alternate years. Because some members left the board mid-term and were replaced by temporary candidates, all five positions will be up for election in November 2024.

Major funding for EPVMD comes from a .3 (3/10) cent tax on assessed value of all taxable property in the district. Funds have also been raised for specific projects through dedicated campaigns; for instance, the sale of engraved bricks for the Veterans Memorial wall, and "The Bell Will Ring Again" campaign to restore the Old Murphys Schoolhouse.

In 1973, the Old Murphys Schoolhouse, owned by Vallecito Union School District (VUSD), was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1974, VUSD transferred the Old Murphys Schoolhouse property to EPVMD with the following conditions:

1. The financial consideration shall be \$1.00.
2. All costs for the transfer of property shall be borne by the buyer.
3. A condition shall specify that the property cannot be sold and that the building is to be maintained as a historic monument.

4. Should the buildings and grounds not be maintained in a manner to reflect the historical significance of the Vallecito Union School District (sic) reserve the right to restore the ownership of the property to the Vallecito Union School District.
5. The Superintendent be authorized to execute the documents relating to said transfer.

The Old Murphys Schoolhouse was used by EPVMD as a meeting room and event space, and by a daycare provider, until the building was shuttered in April 2023 by the EPVMD board, due to safety concerns.

The tennis courts were installed by EPVMD approximately 30 years ago. The Murphys Tennis Club currently maintains them, although EPVMD recently donated \$3,000 to help the tennis club resurface the courts.

The Veterans Memorial Hall (also known as the Lions Club building and scout hut) was built by EPVMD in the 1990s. It is currently leased by the Lions Club for \$1.00 a year, with a lease period of ten years. The current lease is paid in full and expires in 2027. The Lions Club maintains the building, as well as covers the yearly solid waste fee.

An additional asset of EPVMD was a community pool. In October 2014, EPVMD sold the pool and the property it sat on to a private party. The pool was in poor condition and under-utilized, so EPVMD decided it would be best to sell it to a private party that could restore the pool and facilities. The proceeds from the sale were \$485,503.08 and the EPVMD board, at the time, designated the proceeds to go toward restoration work on the Old Murphys Schoolhouse. This designation is confirmed on the current EPVMD website.

Around the time of the sale of the pool property, the Old Murphys Schoolhouse roof was replaced, and the steeple was repaired. In 2017, EPVMD added a commercial quality kitchen and an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible entrance and restroom to the back of the Old Murphys Schoolhouse.

Over the years, ongoing maintenance and repair work have been done on the Old Murphys Schoolhouse. This included roof and steeple repairs after a storm blew a tree onto the structure in the winter of 2021.

This ongoing maintenance and repair work has not addressed the structural issues of the building, which prompted the EPVMD board to deem the Old Murphys Schoolhouse unsafe to occupy. The combination rock, wood, and cinder block foundation is crumbling and settling at different rates, and the floor joists are deteriorating. This is causing the walls to balloon out. EPVMD had metal cables installed in the old schoolhouse to stabilize the walls, but until the foundation and walls are restored, the Old Murphys Schoolhouse will remain closed.

EPVMD collected two bids in 2019-2020 for restoring the Old Murphys Schoolhouse. The bids ranged from \$900,000 to \$1,300,000. With the increase in the cost of construction materials since the pandemic, these bids would be considerably higher today.

EPVMD maintains a website (<http://www.ebbettspassvetsdistrict.com>) where it posts information about EPVMD, as well as board meeting agendas and approved meeting minutes. EPVMD has been working with a 3rd-party vendor since the fall of 2023 to create a new, ADA-compliant

website, but, as of this writing, has not launched the new site due to technical difficulties. Approved board meeting minutes have not been posted to the current website since August 2023.

The current website states the EPVMD board has now moved to quarterly meetings, held on the first Tuesday of January, April, July, and October unless that Tuesday is a public holiday, in which case the meeting will be held on the next Tuesday. The meetings are held at 10:00 a.m. at the Arnold Fire Station's community room. The Board will hold other special meetings as necessary, at the call of the chair, subject to the Board's approval.

The current website states that at each open meeting of the Board, the public will be given an opportunity to comment on any item on the agenda or on any topic within the purview of the Board. The opportunity for public comment will be provided as close as practical to the beginning of the meeting. The Chair may allow the public to offer comment during the consideration of individual agenda items.

As a local governing body, EPVMD is subject to the Brown Act. The Brown Act was enacted in 1953 to guarantee the public's right to attend and participate in meetings of local governing bodies. The Brown Act has numerous requirements; too numerous to list here, but following are some examples the CCCGJ feels pertain to this investigation.

All meetings of local government bodies must be fully open and accessible to the public. Boards must discuss, deliberate, and act on the public's business openly. Exceptions to the rule of openness are few and narrowly construed.

Closed sessions are permissible for litigation matters, real estate negotiations, personnel discussions, labor negotiations, and specified other matters. Although the Brown Act doesn't specify that the results of a closed session need to be disclosed when no final action has been determined, transparency is achieved when meeting minutes include "no reportable action."

Serial meetings are frowned upon by the Brown Act. These are meetings held outside the public forum and may be conducted between board members, through direct communications, personal intermediaries, or technological devices. Board members may not use a serial meeting to develop a concurrence as to what action is to be taken on a particular agenda item.

Agendas must be posted at least 72 hours prior to a regular meeting, or 24 hours prior to a special meeting (salary/benefit discussions are not considered special). Agenda items (including closed sessions) need not exceed 20 words so that they make sense to the general public.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Restoration of Old Murphys Schoolhouse**

When the Old Murphys Schoolhouse was deeded to EPVMD, a specific condition was that the building be maintained as a historic monument. There was no requirement to restore the property, and funds needed for restoration would limit funds available to provide services to veterans.

Another condition of the deed states that VUSD reserves the right to reclaim the property if the buildings and grounds are not maintained in a manner to reflect the historical significance. At this juncture, public records confirm that VUSD has no intention to reclaim the property.

This has created a dilemma in need of a solution. After extensive interviews with parties invested in the restoration of the Old Murphys Schoolhouse, CCCGJ learned that discussions are currently underway to identify pathways to accomplish said restoration.

Additionally, on February 13, 2024, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved an interim urgency ordinance to protect historical structures in the county from demolition without appropriate permits from the County. The Old Murphys Schoolhouse falls under this category. To clarify the dilemma, the Old Murphys Schoolhouse cannot be sold, there is no money to restore it, and as a historical monument it cannot be demolished without obtaining approval via the County permit process. Additionally, VUSD has expressed no interest in reestablishing ownership of the property. Active discussions are in progress with the EPVMD board to seek a resolution, and this issue does not fall within the purview of CCCGJ.

### **Adherence to the Brown Act and Transparency**

CCCGJ has determined that although existing EPVMD board members are striving to follow the requirements of the Brown Act, no current board members have received any formal Brown Act training.

Although governing boards are not required to disclose that no final action was agreed upon in a closed session, transparency is the guiding tenet of the Brown Act. Indicating in the meeting minutes that “no reportable action was taken” accomplishes the need for transparency.

### **EPVMD Website(s)**

As the new, ADA-accessible EPVMD website was not available at the time of this report, CCCGJ is unable to comment on its contents. CCCGJ, therefore, will use the existing EPVMD website (<http://www.ebbettspassvetsdistrict.com/>) as its template.

The current website contains conflicting information regarding meeting times, dates, and locations, which does not serve the public interest within the district.

On the website’s homepage, it is stated that board meetings take place monthly, and that they are to meet in Murphys’s. It then states elsewhere that meetings are quarterly.

The website provides the following contact information: either via mail to EPVMD, P.O. Box 175, Murphys, CA 95247 or via email to EPVMD95247@gmail.com. Other than the mention of contacting the District Secretary for ordering bricks, the website could be a vehicle for the public to request that an item be added to the next EPVMD board meeting agenda although this is not required by law.

### **Expenditures**

After review of EPVMD’s financial records, CCCGJ was able to confirm that EPVMD has used funds from the pool sale to cover the costs of repair/maintenance work on the Old Murphys Schoolhouse, as intended.

## **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONDENTS**

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days. After conducting interviews, and reviewing reference documents, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

**F1.** The Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors has demonstrated a lack of adequate training in the Ralph M. Brown Act.

**R1a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends all current board members be trained regarding public meetings by taking Brown Act training by September 1, 2024.

**Required Responses**

Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors

**Invited Responses**

None

**R1b.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends any newly appointed or elected board member be trained regarding public meetings by taking Brown Act training within three (3) months of taking the oath of office.

**Required Responses**

Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors

**Invited Responses**

None

**F2.** Because Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District’s website has not been updated due to technical difficulties, important information, such as Board member contact information and reliable meeting date schedules and locations, is not being disseminated to the public.

**R2a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District have their new website deployed, with appropriate ADA compliance, no later than January 1, 2025.

**Required Responses**

Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors

**Invited Responses**

None

**R2b.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District create a standard means for the public to submit agenda items, in a clear and concise process, by January 1, 2025.

**Required Responses**

Ebbetts Pass Veterans Memorial District Board of Directors

**Invited Responses**

None

## **COMMENDATIONS**

**C1.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury commends the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors (BOS) for its approval on February 13, 2024, of the urgency ordinance to preserve and protect historical structures in the County.

## **DISCLAIMER**

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Civil Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.

## **REFERENCE SOURCES**

Brown Act

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayText.xhtml?division=2.&chapter=9.&part=1.&lawCode=GOV&title=5](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?division=2.&chapter=9.&part=1.&lawCode=GOV&title=5),

<https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/the-brown-act.pdf>

<https://www.access-board.gov/news/2022/03/21/departments-of-justice-issues-web-accessibility-guidance-under-the-ada/>

# Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

## Calaveras County High School Education

### Pathways to the Future

June 30, 2024



## **SUMMARY**

What kind of career training is available to high school students in Calaveras County? How prepared are they for their future? The 2023-2024 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury decided to look at vocational training opportunities for high school students within the county. Given the small size and rural location of Calaveras County, the Civil Grand Jury expected to find a lack of opportunities for local high school students to receive job-ready education and training. Upon investigation, however, we found the opposite to be true. Calaveras County high school students have an extensive selection of career training courses available to them through Career Technical Education.

## **GLOSSARY**

BHUHSD	Bret Harte Union High School District
CCCGJ	Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
CCOE	Calaveras County Office of Education
CHS	Calaveras High School
CTE	Career Technical Education
CUSD	Calaveras Unified School District

## **METHODOLOGY**

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted many interviews, reviewed high school course catalogs and websites, attended a school board meeting, and used internet searches to find needed information.

## **BACKGROUND**

Education is a priority for parents, educators, and government officials, from local school boards to U.S. Presidents. Students engage with education in different ways. While some students choose to attend college to attain a degree, others find that Career Technical Education (CTE) is a better choice, often leading to well-paying jobs that motivate our students to remain local to live and work.

Calaveras County is a rural community. According to the U.S. Census of 2020, Calaveras County had a population of 45,292, a slight decline from 2010. Skills that serve our rural area are crucial. CCCGJ discovered CTE is a vital and thriving part of the Calaveras County educational system with as many as 60-70% of its high school students participating in various programs.

The State of California has made CTE a priority in their State Standards Curriculum. The California Education Code requires students to be “college and career ready” and for schools to provide a course of study that helps students attain entry-level employment skills in business or industry upon graduation. The California Department of Education CTE Fact Sheet lists a myriad of benefits to students who participate in CTE courses. These include a higher than average graduation rate, higher scores on the high school exit exam, more than double the rate of college entrance for minority students, increased college enrollment rates for all student populations, and many more.

## **DISCUSSION**

There is a wide variety of CTE programs and course offerings in our county. There is a very high number (up to 70%) of students who participate in these programs. Calaveras County high schools offer the following courses of study: medical science, fire science, culinary, agricultural mechanics, crop production, animal science, auto mechanics, engineering, computer science, welding, computer-aided design (CAD), floral design, forestry and natural resources, technical theater, audio and video production, and digital photography. The high schools provide multi-year pathways for different career programs. The schools have a successful track record of facilitating job placement with local companies for real-world work experience while still in high school, as well as helping students locate employment after graduation. In addition, there are dual enrollment programs with Columbia College, where students can attend classes and earn college credits while still in high school. There is a dedicated staff of educators at our county high schools that are facilitating these programs.

## **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONDENTS**

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Civil Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews, attending meetings, and reviewing reference documents, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

**F1.** Calaveras County schools are doing an excellent job in providing Career Technical Training opportunities.

**R1.** None

### **Required Responses**

None

### **Invited Responses**

None

**F2.** There is a dedicated staff of educators at our county high schools that are facilitating these programs and engaging students.

**R2.** None

### **Required Responses**

None

### **Invited Responses**

None

## **COMMENDATIONS**

**C1.** The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury commends all the educators and instructors involved with Career Technical Education in Calaveras County high schools for their continued dedication to their students and the success of these programs.

## **REFERENCE SOURCES**

Bret Harte Union High School Course Catalog, [brethartebullfrogs.org](http://brethartebullfrogs.org)

Bret Harte Union High School District Website, [brethartebullfrogs.org](http://brethartebullfrogs.org)

Calaveras High School Course Catalog, [chs.custudents.net](http://chs.custudents.net)

Calaveras Unified School District Website, [calaverasusd.com](http://calaverasusd.com)

Calaveras County Office of Education Website, [coe.k12.ca.us](http://coe.k12.ca.us)

Calaverascte.org Website

California Department of Education Website, CTE Fact sheet for School Leaders,

[www.cde.ca.gov>cteschoolleaderfacts](http://www.cde.ca.gov/cteschoolleaderfacts)

Central Motherlode Career Education Guide

Governor Gavin Newsom's Website: [www.gov.ca.gov](http://www.gov.ca.gov) – Press release dated 11/2/2023 Ready for Work Podcast: “Campus CTE Tour: How Calaveras High is Preparing for the Future”,

YouTube, October 2, 2022

U.S, Census, Calaveras County, <https://www.census.gov>

# **Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury**

## **Child Welfare Services in Calaveras County**

### **Striving for Success: Doing More With Less**

June 30, 2024



## **SUMMARY**

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury chose to examine the Child Welfare Services division of Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency. The Grand Jury looked for ways in which services to our most vulnerable population, our children, could be improved and made more efficient with the intent of ensuring that no child was overlooked, neglected, or underserved. The Grand Jury also sought to understand the interdepartmental cooperation among the various county agencies and non-profits charged with protecting the vulnerable youth of our county, including Child Welfare Services, the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Department, the Resource Connection, and the County Office of Education. The Grand Jury's findings were mixed but encouraging.

## **GLOSSARY**

CCCGJ – Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

CCSO – Calaveras County Sheriff's Office

CWS – Child Welfare Services

ECDD - Calaveras County Economic and Community Development Department

HHSA – Health and Human Services Agency (Calaveras County)

## **METHODOLOGY**

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted interviews with staff at multiple county agencies, conducted research using websites, Board of Supervisors' meeting minutes, the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Employee Handbook, brochures, newspaper articles, flyers and directories, and toured facilities that serve county youth.

## **BACKGROUND**

Newspapers across the country are riddled with tragic stories in which the agencies charged with protecting children have failed a child. Historically, Calaveras County has not been immune to these types of stories. Keeping this in mind, CCCGJ looked for gaps in the process of serving Calaveras County's abused, neglected, or at-risk children.

Research shows that there is a nationwide shortage of people entering the field of social work. According to the Columbia School of Social Work, "The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a substantial deficit of 74,000 social workers each year for the next decade, highlighting a critical need for solutions....Rural areas and specific states, in particular, grapple with the acute shortages."

A National Study of Licensed Social Workers found that "... because more than half of healthcare social workers work in hospitals in metropolitan areas, providing comprehensive services to people living in rural areas is an additional challenge."

California "has the highest number of Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) areas in the nation, meaning a grave shortage of mental health service providers in many parts of the state" according to SteinbergInstitute.org, an independent, nonprofit public policy institute dedicated to the issues of mental health and substance use.

Senate Bill 964, introduced by Sen. Scott Wiener in 2022, would have offered “financial stipends to students pursuing a master’s degree in social work while creating a fund to increase pay and set bonuses for current licensed professionals. Under SB 964, the California Community Colleges, California State University and University of California systems would have been required to develop accelerated programs for social work degrees, such as allowing students to combine their last one or two years of undergraduate study with their graduate work in order to complete both programs more quickly”.

The bill passed the Assembly and the Senate in August 2022, but was vetoed in September 2022 by Governor Newsom.

A recent Compensation Study for Calaveras County interviewed county employees regarding job satisfaction. Although they expressed a need for higher compensation, employees reported several positive factors that contributed to job satisfaction. These included the county’s benefits, work culture, mission, work-life balance, and location. This report could be used as a tool, as part of an ongoing collaboration of agencies and community partners, such as the Calaveras County Economic and Community Development Department (ECDD), to attract qualified candidates, along with high school and college career days, job fairs, expanded advertising, and internet promotion of the opportunities within our county.

## **DISCUSSION**

Calaveras County HHSA is under new leadership in recent years, and their commitment to accountability and protection of children is clearly evident. However, other factors can alter the effectiveness of the department, and if those can be improved, it will benefit our entire community.

Like many rural counties in California, the various departments of HHSA, such as Child Welfare Services (CWS), are understaffed. CWS is currently short six social workers and one management position. High employee turnover occurs, in part, due to the lack of competitive compensation when compared to larger urban counties. Burnout is also an issue, because existing workers must take on more responsibilities than are required in their job descriptions. In addition, this worker shortage forces the agency to hire employees that are sometimes less than fully qualified for this important job. Agencies are able to obtain waivers from the State to allow this. All of these factors necessitate a constant cycle of new-hire training.

There is a need to promptly provide health-related services to CWS families within our county. Contracts with service providers, such as therapists, can be difficult to procure due to time constraints, a shortage of service providers, and county contract requirements. County policy requires a legal contract to be drawn up - and in place - before the county can utilize the services of any outside professional. This process can take months. Under the current process, each contract, even if renewed annually, is written “from scratch” and reviewed by three different departments before being approved. If previously approved standard boilerplate clauses of each contract could be accepted without review, and then tailored to the individual needs of each department, this could save valuable approval time for contracting services.

Due to the volatile and emotional nature of their profession, social workers of Calaveras County frequently find themselves placed in uncomfortable, potentially dangerous, and sometimes life-threatening situations. They are often not accompanied by law enforcement. This may be due to the unpredictable nature of these situations, as well as a lack of communication between HHSA and Law Enforcement regarding what level of protection may be needed for a given situation.

Further communication between the agencies would improve understanding of when a Law Enforcement presence would be necessary or available to assist.

CCCGJ found that there is an encouraging level of cooperation between agencies thanks to new leadership in HHSA, and there is ongoing effort to increase collaboration in order to improve the services they each provide. These agencies and non-profits serve the children in our community by addressing needs such as legal, mental health and crisis, substance abuse, health and medical, housing, food and nutrition, transportation, education, foster care, child abuse awareness and prevention, and more. These groups come together through several avenues, such as the Calaveras Care Team and the annual Child Abuse Prevention Summit to best serve individuals and the community.

Despite the challenges, CCCGJ found that Calaveras County CWS employees are a dedicated and caring group of professionals. They will often go beyond what workers in other counties are willing to do, sometimes at great personal sacrifice and risk, in order to best serve their young clients.

In summary:

- There is a shortage of people choosing to enter the field of Social Work.
- Rural counties cannot compete with larger urban counties' salary and benefit offerings.
- When fully qualified employment candidates are unavailable, agencies are allowed to obtain a waiver from the State to hire less than fully qualified employees.
- The county's contract practices require a legal contract to be drawn up and in effect before the county can utilize the services of any outside professional. This is often a lengthy process.
- Social workers must often face hazardous or unsafe situations in the scope of their daily work.
- There are many agencies and organizations serving the needs of children in our community.

## **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, RESPONDENTS**

Pursuant to Penal Code §933 and §933.05, the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury requires responses within 60 days from elected county official(s), and within 90 days from governing bodies. In order to be included and published in the next Grand Jury report, invited responses must be received within 90 days. After conducting interviews, reviewing reference documents, and touring facilities, the Grand Jury findings and recommendations are as follows:

**F1.** The current level of staffing at Child Welfare Services risks decreasing the department's ability to properly meet the needs of our community due to employee burnout and turnover.

**R1a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, a task force be established by Calaveras County Health and Human Service Agency, with representatives from Child Welfare Service, and Calaveras County Economic and Community Development Department to create a campaign to attract and recruit qualified candidates for Social Work positions in Calaveras County.

## **Required Responses**

**Invited Responses**

Child Welfare Services

Director of Calaveras County Economic Development

Director of Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency

**R1b.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the resulting Health and Human Services task force implement the campaign by March 31, 2025.

**Required Responses**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**Invited Responses**

Child Welfare Services

Director of Calaveras County Economic Development

Director of Calaveras County Health & Human Services Agency

**F2.** Operating under the current county contract procedure can sometimes delay or prevent the ability to provide prompt access to health providers, which can be detrimental to clients in need of services.

**R2.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Calaveras County Health and Human Services create standardized contracts with language previously approved and then tailored to the requirements of each individual division of Health and Human Services Agency by March 31, 2025.

**Required Responses**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

**Invited Responses**

Director of Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency

**F3.** A shortage of pre-approved service providers can delay access to much-needed services for clients.

**R3a.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, HHSA establish a process of prequalifying and pre-approving anticipated health care providers prior to an immediate need.

**Required Responses**

None

**Invited Responses**

Director of Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency

**R3b.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, HHS streamlines the process of renewing contracts with established service providers prior to contract expiration dates.

### **Required Responses**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

### **Invited Responses**

Director of Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency

**F4.** Child Welfare Services and Calaveras County Sheriff's Office have different understandings of what security is needed for social workers in the field during volatile or hazardous calls.

**R4.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that, by December 31, 2024, representatives from Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency, Child Welfare Services, and Calaveras County Sheriff's Office meet to establish a mutual understanding regarding these anticipated situations and meet quarterly thereafter.

### **Required Responses**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors  
Calaveras County Sheriff

### **Invited Responses**

Child Welfare Services  
Director of Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency

### **Commendations**

**C1.** Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury commends the many organizations and services available to serve the youth of our county. Under new leadership, effort is being made to improve efficiency and cooperation among county agencies, and we feel confident that those working in these agencies are devoted to supporting and serving our children to the absolute best of their ability.

**C2.** Throughout the review and investigative process by the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury, the Grand Jury was impressed and pleased to have been introduced to personnel within multiple divisions of the Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency. The Grand Jury encountered dedicated professionals who extended their time and full cooperation to help us understand their mission and functions in providing health and social wellbeing support to the citizens of Calaveras County. They have been tasked to do so much with fewer resources than many comparable counties. The Grand Jury applauds their efforts and can comfortably suggest that Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency is in capable and amply qualified hands.

**Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code §929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.**

## **REFERENCE SOURCES**

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

Calaveras County Office of Education Website and Brochures, [www.ccoe.k12.ca.us](http://www.ccoe.k12.ca.us) (See Student Support Services)

Calaveras Enterprise articles

Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children, [nexusyfs.org/casa/](http://nexusyfs.org/casa/)

Health and Human Services Handbook

Health and Human Services Website and Brochures, [hhsa.calaverasgov.us](http://hhsa.calaverasgov.us)

Resource Connection Website, Brochures, and Community Resource Directory, [rr.trcac.org](http://rr.trcac.org)

Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program, [www.calaverasmentoring.org](http://www.calaverasmentoring.org)

Gutierrez, Melody, “California Has Too Few Behavioral Health Professionals. Lawmakers Propose Fix.” *Los Angeles Times*, February 10, 2022

Weiner, Jocelyn, “Why California Is Facing a Mental Health Care Worker Shortage”, *CalMatters*, September 8, 2022

“Bridging the Gap: The Urgent need for Social Workers” Columbia School of Social Work, September 29, 2023

“Social Work Profession Faces Impending Labor Shortages, Study Finds” *Philanthropy News Digest*, March 13, 2006

“Classification and Compensation Study for Calaveras County, CA” conducted by Evergreen Solutions, LLC, March 21, 2024

<http://steinberginstitute.org>

[www.sierrachildandfamilyservices.org](http://www.sierrachildandfamilyservices.org)

**RESPONSES TO 2022-2023 GRAND JURY  
REPORTS**

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Timothy S. Healy, Presiding  
Judge Superior Court State of California 400  
Government Center Drive San Andreas, CA  
95249-9794

**RE: Board of Supervisors response to "Calaveras Cannabis Dis-Jointed" Grand Jury Report**

**Dear Honorable Judge Healy:**

In accordance with California Penal Code sections §933 & §933.05, the County of Calaveras Board of Supervisors submits this response to the above referenced Grand Jury report dated June 22, 2023, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on June 19, 2023. The Board wishes to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their professionalism and dedication to public service, which made this report possible.

**GRAND JURY FINDINGS FOR CALAVERAS COUNTY LOCAL CANNABIS INDUSTRY Grand Jury Finding FI**

The Environmental Management Agency and Code Compliance do not test for contaminants in soil and water at cannabis cultivation sites, so any environmental impact remains unseen.

**County Response to Finding FI**

The County agrees with this finding. EMA does not have a program, nor has the Board of Supervisors directed it to undertake a program, to affirmatively test for soil or water contamination on any parcels—cannabis-related or otherwise—and certainly not in the absence of any actual evidence of contamination. If hazardous materials were discovered in the soil or water as part of EMA's routine operations, or if a law enforcement investigation resulted in evidence of contamination on a parcel, EMA would help facilitate an appropriate response either itself or with the appropriate regulatory agencies. EMA does not, however, have either the resources or the authority to pre-emptively enter all properties "identified by the MET team" to test water and soil there—and certainly not in the absence of property owner consent, a warrant, or an emergency situation that can't wait for a warrant. EMA works cooperatively with law enforcement on an as-needed basis but cannot simply assume that all properties suspected by the MET team of harboring illegal cannabis cultivation also have contaminated water and soil.

The County does have a CEQA-compliant program in place to regulate cannabis-related environmental impacts on permitted cannabis cultivation sites, and—while soil and water testing for contaminants are not part of this program--EMA does work with the DCC to ensure compliance with the various provisions of Chapter 17.95 that are designed to mitigate potential impacts. EMA's involvement in Cannabis Cultivation is primarily identifying potential permitted Cannabis grows that include operations related to EMA regulated program elements. The programs include Solid Waste Management, Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Material Management, Water Adequacy, Onsite Wastewater Management and Air Quality for Carbon Offsets. EMA works with the Division of Cannabis Control (DCC) to identify any potential cannabis grows that do not satisfy regulatory requirements. The DCC, Code Compliance and EMA staff work together to identify any potential violations. Water Adequacy testing is required for permitted cannabis cultivation sites. EMA does not have knowledge that any permitted cannabis cultivation sites have violated this requirement. Water Adequacy Testing is required to be facilitated by licensed professionals. EMA and DCC staff verify all EMA elements are satisfied. The Sheriff's office reaches out to other County departments if needed.

## Grand Jury Recommendation R1

The Calaveras Grand Jury recommends that the Environmental Management Agency, Code Compliance, and the Sheriff's Office work together to coordinate efforts in the collection of soil and water samples at cultivation sites that have been identified by the Marijuana Enforcement Team, to be tested for contaminants by January 1, 2024.

## County Response to Recommendation R1

This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not reasonable and not warranted. To date no contamination concerns have been identified at permitted sites. EMA works with the Division of Cannabis Control (DCC) to identify any potential cannabis grows that do not satisfy regulatory requirements. Water and soil testing for chemical contaminants is not required by EMA. Code Compliance Investigators already coordinate with the Sheriff's Office in the investigation and eradication of illegal cannabis cultivation sites. As part of this investigation, it is standard procedure to identify the presence of known or unknown chemicals or materials that are contamination risks and require remediation which would include testing of soil and/or water as necessary to determine that remediation has been conducted sufficiently to remove these contaminants. However, our records do not indicate that any such unidentified chemicals or known contaminants have been found on previous cannabis investigations. Therefore, testing and remediation were not required. The Code Compliance Division will continue to coordinate with its partner agencies in the investigation of these sites and will work to improve communication between all enforcement partners. However, it is not reasonable to ask for remediation measures or testing of sites where there is no evidence to suggest that a contaminant exists.

## Grand Jury Finding F2

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors does not request or hear, in a timely and ongoing way, information specific to cannabis cultivation, thus they and the public are not adequately informed of the environmental consequences facing the County.

## County Response to Finding F2

The County agrees with this finding.

## Grand Jury Recommendation R2

The Calaveras Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors get a periodic briefing from the Division of Cannabis Control, Environmental Management Agency, and Sheriff's Office about any activity related to environmental impacts of the cannabis industry in the County.

## County Response to Recommendation R2

This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Division of Cannabis Control and the Calaveras Sheriff's Department will present to the Board of Supervisors in August 2023, regarding cannabis operations in Calaveras County. The Board will continue to request annual updates. In addition, EMA will collaborate with partnering agencies and the Calaveras Office of Administration on an acceptable presentation to the Board on any identified environmental violations as reported by the Sheriff's Office, Code Compliance, and the DCC on an as needed basis should any future violations occur.

## Grand Jury Finding F3

The Calaveras County Cannabis Code allowed for environmental remediation on cultivation sites to alleviate concerns about environmental damage, but available records do not support that this code has

been actively enforced, leaving any environmental damage unchecked.

### County Response to Finding F3

The County disagrees with this finding. EMA, Code Compliance, and the Sheriff's Office have worked together to identify any environmental concerns. Code Compliance has been the lead agency for response; EMA staff act as consultants to assist with any findings and to provide direction on remediation. Since the DCC has been in operation strict compliance is adhered to by both EMA, Code Compliance and the DCC.

### Grand Jury Recommendation R3

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras Board of Supervisors instruct the Division of Cannabis Control and Code Compliance to actively enforce Calaveras County Codes §17.95 and §8.06 related to remediation of cannabis cultivation sites by January 1, 2024.

### County Response to Recommendation R3

This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not reasonable and not warranted. The Code Compliance Program is complaint driven and does not provide for 100% enforcement of County ordinances. Completing investigations of all possible cannabis cultivation sites arising from the 2016 cannabis ordinance by January 1, 2024, would not be possible due to the limited staffing currently providing code compliance services. The County has limited resources for all programs within the County. Departments have the opportunity to submit rationale for funding multiple times throughout the fiscal year. All requests are considered and prioritized within the constraints of the County Budget.

Sincerely,

Gary Tofanelli Chair



DATE: July 5, 2023

TO: Honorable Timothy S. Healey, Presiding Superior Court Judge Rick DiBasilio, Sheriff

FROM: Response to 2022-23 Grand Jury Report on Cannabis Cultivation in Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT:

Cc: The 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report was reviewed by The Calaveras County Sheriffs Office and staff members. The Grand Jury's investigation into the status and effects of Cannabis cultivation in Calaveras County outlined three findings. Of these three findings, two required a response from the Sheriff's Office.

***Finding 1:***

***The Environmental Management Agency and Code Compliance do not test for contaminants in soil and water at cannabis cultivation sites, so any environmental impact remains unseen.***

***Recommendation:***

***The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that the Environmental Management Agency, Code Compliance, and the Sheriff's Office work together to coordinate efforts in the collection of soil and water samples at cultivation sites that have been identified by the Marijuana Enforcement Team, to be tested for contaminants by January 1, 2024.***

***Sheriff's Office Response:***

The Sheriffs Office does not agree or disagree with this finding. However, the Sheriffs Office currently has a mechanism in which the Calaveras Division of Cannabis Control is notified of cannabis eradication activities that have been conducted pursuant to a criminal investigation. Additionally, media releases are published on every search warrant that is served at a cannabis cultivation site.

The Sheriffs Office will immediately begin notifying the Environmental Management Agency and Code Compliance with a notification letter that will provide the location, date, and relevant details of cannabis eradication activities. From this letter, the proper agencies will be equipped with information that can be utilized if they choose to collect soil and water samples. The Sheriffs Office does note that the

collection of these samples, even for civil or administrative use, represents an investigative seizure of property that should be discussed with proper counsel by the respective agencies.

***Finding 2:***

***The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors does not request or hear, in a timely and ongoing way, information specific to cannabis cultivation, thus they and the public are not adequately informed of the environmental consequences facing the county.***

***Recommendation:***

***The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors get a periodic briefing from the Division of Cannabis Control, Environmental Management Agency, and Sheriff's Office about any activity related to the environmental impacts of the cannabis industry in the County.***

The Sheriff's Office currently publishes a full press release on every search warrant which is served at a cannabis cultivation site. Environmental concerns, if present, are identified and photographed. These photographs are routinely included in media releases along with an informational narrative that details if another agency became involved to investigate the environmental concerns. Often, the agency investigating environmental concerns is the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Sheriff's Office currently has an informational item concerning marijuana eradication scheduled for the Board of Supervisors in the next thirty days. The Sheriff's Office will continue to provide these informational updates to the Board of Supervisors as needed. RECEIVED JUL 05 2023 CALAVERAS SUPERIOR COURT

<b>MET Statistics</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>TOTAL LOCATIONS ERADICATED</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Marijuana Search Warrants</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Consent/8.06/Parole Searches</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>BHO Labs Investigated</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Marijuana Plants</b>	<b>62,841</b>	<b>59,783</b>	<b>74,424</b>	<b>85,075</b>	<b>37,436</b>	<b>68,084</b>	<b>43,444</b>	<b>7,917</b>
<b>Processed Marijuana (lbs.)</b>	<b>7,385.11</b>	<b>14,962.62</b>	<b>8,023.85</b>	<b>3,319.96</b>	<b>2,147.36</b>	<b>2,490.00</b>	<b>1,238.24</b>	<b>28.30</b>
<b>Marijuana Concentrate (lbs.)</b>	<b>27.73</b>	<b>35.17</b>	<b>264.01</b>	<b>23.78</b>	<b>25.27</b>	<b>4.43</b>	<b>20.12</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>CCSO Arrests/Cites</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Firearms</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Skid Steer On Site</b>					<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



<b>MET Statistics</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023 Percentage Compared to 2022</b>
<b>TOTAL LOCATIONS ERADICATED</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>TOTAL WARRANTS WRITTEN</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Eradication/BHO Search Warrants</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>BHO Labs</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Marijuana Plants</b>	<b>43,444</b>	<b>7,917</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Processed Marijuana (lbs.)</b>	<b>1,238.24</b>	<b>28.30</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Marijuana Concentrate (oz.)</b>	<b>321.99</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>CCSO Arrests/Cites</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Firearms</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

**Indoor Cultivation Sites Eradicated**

**Each Year**

Indoor Grow Sites

**2023: 5**

**2022: 29**

**2021: 29**

**2020: 10**

2019: 15  
2018: 7  
2017: 9  
2016: 0

**Repeated Eradication Sites 48 Sites have been eradicated multiple times, 2016-2023**

1 site has been eradicated 6 Times 1 site has been eradicated 5 Times 1 site  
has been eradicated 4 Times **5** sites have been eradicated 3 Times **40** sites  
have been eradicated 2 Times

25 of the repeat sites were previously registered or had applied for registration during the Urgency Ordinance.



891 Mountain Ranch Road

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Timothy S. Healy, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court State of California 400 Government  
Center Drive San Andreas, CA 95249-9794

***RE: Board of Supervisors response to "Calaveras County Fire and Environment: Everyday is Earth Day" Grand Jury Report***

Dear Honorable Judge Healy:

In accordance with California Penal Code sections §933 & §933.05, the County of Calaveras Board of Supervisors submits this response to the above referenced Grand Jury report dated June 15, 2023, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on June 15, 2023. The Board wishes to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their professionalism and dedication to public service, which made this report possible.

***GRAND JURY FINDINGS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AGENCY, CALAVERAS COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES, CALAVERAS COUNTY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT***

Grand Jury Finding FI

Since the emergency notification system does not provide customer feedback to the account holder by way of two-way confirmation of a successful test, residents cannot be sure they are being notified appropriately.

County Response to Finding FI

The County disagrees with this finding. There is a test function within the alerting programs. These tests should (emphasis added) be conducted in the test environment in order to avoid "alerting fatigue" from the public. Anecdotally, many counties and system operators see an increase of participants "opting out" or turning their notifications off if the notification is perceived to be a nuisance from the public. The tests provide positive confirmation to the alerting operator that the system is operating normal.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1

The Calaveras Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Emergency Services to develop and annual emergency alert test system offering positive confirmation tests with an 80% confirmation rate by January 1, 2024.

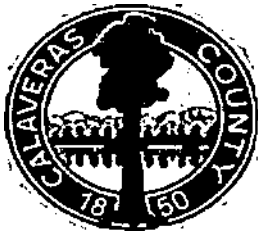
Gary Tofanelli  
District 1  
286-9002

Jack Garamendi  
District 2  
286-9003

Martin Huberty  
District 3  
286-9007

Amanda Folendorf  
District 4  
286-9050

Benjamin Stopper  
District 5  
286-9059



## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

891 Mountain Ranch Road San Andreas, California 95249  
(209)754-6370 FAX (209) 754-6733

### County Response to Recommendation R1

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Everbridge is the current emergency alert system used in Calaveras County and also includes Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS). This portion of the system allows Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) or short text messages to mobile phones and active cellular towers in the geo-targeted area, and/or Emergency Alert Systems (EAS) send a short text message to televisions and audio transmission to radio stations. This notification system is only dependent on cell service and the phone being in the designated area and does not require opting in.

### Grand Jury Finding F2

Residents are unsure of what emergency notification systems are used for what purposes within the County and are unclear how to set up each system to accommodate their personal needs.

### County Response to Finding F2

The County agrees with this finding.

### Grand Jury Recommendation R2a

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Emergency Services to develop a communication plan to promote the use of all Emergency Alert Systems by January 1, 2024.

### County Response to Recommendation R2a

This recommendation will be implemented by January 1, 2024.

### Grand Jury Recommendation R2b

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Emergency Services to create user friendly instructions for residents clearly defining which emergency notification systems exist, what each system is used for, and how residents will be notified in the event of an emergency by January 1, 2024.

### County Response to Recommendation R2b

This recommendation will be implemented by January 1, 2024.

### Grand Jury Finding F3

Most wildfire fuel breaks built in the County are not routinely maintained which reduces the effectiveness of the fuel breaks overtime.

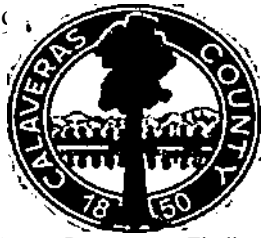
Gary Tofanelli  
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District 3  
286-9007

Amanda Folendorf  
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286-9050

Benjamin Stopper  
District 5  
286-9059



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS San Andreas,

California 95249

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County Response to Finding F2

The County neither agrees or disagrees with this finding because the County does not construct or maintain fuel breaks and has no metrics to evaluate fuel break effectiveness.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3a

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct the appropriate agency to inventory, create, and maintain a publicly available map of the wildfire fuel breaks in the County by March 29,2024.

County Response to Recommendation R3a

This recommendation requires further analysis. Fuel breaks are built and maintained by multiple agencies within the County. This will require a multi-agency effort to identify the locations and condition of fuel breaks. The Office of Emergency Services will work toward identifying agencies who have constructed fuel breaks within the County by January 1,2024. Once all agencies have been identified then the County will work toward updating the County's Geographic Information System with the data available.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3b

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the County provide the manpower, equipment, and annual budget necessary to maintain all County created wildfire fuel breaks in the County by March 29, 2024.

County Response to Recommendation R3b

This recommendation will not be implemented because there are no County created and maintained wildfire fuel breaks.

Grand Jury Finding F4

Recent storms resulting in major infrastructure damage have brought to light the confusion about responsibility for maintenance, preparation, and cleanup.

County Response to Finding F4

The County disagrees with this finding. The County is fully aware of the assets for which it has responsibility. The County maintains an inventory of every capital asset owned by the County. In addition, the Public Works Department maintains a spreadsheet of every road mile that we maintain. This is reported to the State when changes are made.

Grand Jury Recommendation R4

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors determine who is responsible to develop a plan to maintain, prepare for, and reduce damage from future storms and put these plans into place by January 1,2024.

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286-9002

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Martin Huberty  
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Benjamin Stopper  
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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS San Andreas,

FAX (209) 754-6733

California 95249

(209) 754-6370

**891 Mountain Ranch Road**

County Response to Recommendation R4

This recommendation will not be implemented as it is unreasonable and not warranted. The County already has plans for the maintenance and protection of County infrastructure. This recommendation would require hydrology/hydraulics analysis of all road crossings of creeks and streams to determine if they still can pass the 100-year storm. This analysis would be very expensive and take significant time as there are many crossings that are not County responsibility. Once an analysis is completed, there is no funding to upgrade the crossings.

Grand Jury Finding FS

The Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency does not have robust enforcement practices nor an effective tracking system for environmental violations which results in mitigation delay and further environmental damage.

County Response to Finding FS

The County disagrees with this finding. EMA is comprised of five separate departments including the Air Pollution Control District, Agricultural, Environmental Health, Animal Services and Onsite Wastewater. Each department regulates programs with separate laws, statutes, ordinances, and regulations accordingly. To refer to EMA enforcement practices as one entity is not practical, logical, or appropriate. Each department has an effective tracking system for enforcement processes specific to the laws, statutes, ordinances, and regulations that facilitate activities overseen by each department. Complaints are received, logged, and referred to the appropriate department for review, response and enforcement of any regulations that have been violated.

Grand Jury Recommendation RS

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors direct the Environmental Management Agency and other related departments to develop and implement a standardized issue tracking system by January 1, 2024.

County Response to Recommendation RS

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. EMA has five separate departments each with their own individual tracking system and to implement a "standardized tracking system" for all EMA is not appropriate or feasible as each department enforces separate laws, statutes, ordinances, and regulations.

Grand Jury Finding F6

Because the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District does not list all information required by the Brown Act on their website, County residents are not informed about important air quality issues.

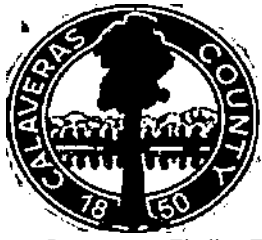
Gary Tofanelli  
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Amanda Folendorf  
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**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

891 Mountain Ranch Road San Andreas, California 95249  
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County Response to Finding F6

The County agrees with this finding. The Air Pollution Control District has worked with County IT to update the APCD website to reflect "Purple Air" a program that illustrates real time air quality.

Grand Jury Recommendation R6

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District Board review and comply with the Brown Act requirements for websites by January 1,2024.

County Response to Recommendation R6

This recommendation has been implemented and a link has been created for the public to access the Board meetings and agendas.

Sincerely,

Gary Tofanelli  
Chair

**Gary  
Tofanelli  
District 1  
286-9002**

**Jack  
Garrett  
District 2  
286-9003**

**Martin  
Huberty  
District 3  
286-9007**

**Amanda  
Foley  
District 4  
286-9050**

**Benjamin  
Stopper  
District 5  
286-9059**



**CALAVERAS COUNTY**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

891 Mountain Ranch  
Road

July 11, 2023

San Andreas, California 95249

(209) 754-6370

**FAX (209) 754-6733**

The Honorable Timothy S. Healy, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court State of California  
P.O. Box 850  
San Andreas, CA 95249

**RE: Board of Supervisors response to "Veterans Services Office: No Veteran Left Behind" Grand Jury Report**

Dear Honorable Judge Healy:

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 & 933.05, the County of Calaveras Board of Supervisors submits this response to the above referenced Grand Jury report dated May 26, 2023, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on May 24, 2023. The Board wishes to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their professionalism and dedication to public service, which made this report possible.

**GRAND JURY FINDINGS OF CALAVERAS COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES OFFICE (CCVSO)**

Grand Jury Finding F1

Since the goal of completing a CCVSO Policies and Procedures Manual was not met, current staff is tasked with training new employees.

**County Response to Finding F1**

The County agrees with this finding.

**Grand Jury Recommendation R1**

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends the current CCVSO staff complete and implement a CCVSO Policies and Procedures Manual, which includes a personnel succession plan by December 31, 2023.

**County Response to Recommendation R1**

The County agrees with this recommendation. The CCVSO has indicated that this recommendation will be implemented by the recommended date.

Grand Jury Finding F2

VSO's and VSR's have to perform clerical duties due to only having part-time administrative support.

# County Response to Finding F2

The County agrees with

this finding.

Gary Tofanelli  
District 1  
286-9002

Jack Garamendi  
District 2  
286-9003

Martin Huberty  
District 3  
286-9007

Amanda Folendorf  
District 4  
286-9050

Benjamin Stopper  
District 5  
286-9059



**CALAVERAS COUNTY**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

891 Mountain Ranch Road San Andreas, California  
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95249  
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**Grand Jury Recommendation R2**

The Calaveras County Grand Jury recommends that BOS and the County Executive Officer (CEO) provide funding for an additional FTE or PTE administrative position by December 31, 2023.

**County Response to Recommendation R2**

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The County has limited resources for all programs within the County. Departments have the opportunity to submit rationale for funding multiple times throughout the fiscal year. All requests are considered and prioritized within the constraints of the County Budget.

Gary Tofanelli  
District 1  
286-9007

Sincerely,

Gary Tofanelli  
Chair

Jack Garamendi  
District 2  
286-9003

Martin Huberty  
District 3  
286-9007

Amanda Folendorf  
District 4  
286-9050

Benjamin Stopper  
District 5  
286-9059

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AUG 14 2023



**Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency**

Cori Allen, Director  
Road  
Michael MagafVa, Assistant Director  
95249

891 Mountain Ranch  
San Andreas, CA

t Services  
754-6452

Behavioral Health  
754-6525

Calaveras-  
Piposa  
Community  
Action Agency  
754-6054

Children's  
Services 209-754-

Ability and  
Employment  
Services 209-754-

5 Calaveras  
754-6914

ing  
grams

754-6325

ic Authority  
754-6544

ic Health

754-6460

ans Services  
754-6910

June 5, 2023

Honorable Timothy S. Healy  
Superior Court of California, County of Calaveras  
400 Government Center Drive  
San Andreas, CA 95249

RE: Response to Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury "Veterans Services Office: No Veteran Left Behind"  
report dated May 26, 2023

Dear Judge Healy,

I am writing in response to Finding 1 in the Grand Jury report referenced above.

I believe in having a Policies and Procedures Manual for the Veterans Service Office. I believe it is important for there to be direction in writing for all members of the office staff to refer to when needed. While the request was made previously for a Policies and Procedures Manual to be completed and implemented, it was not. It is my belief this was not due to negligence; however, was due to the priority of time being given to the needs of our veteran community, especially during times the office was short of staff.

I, as the Calaveras County Veterans Service Officer, will complete and implement an office Policies and Procedures Manual by the time prescribed in the Grand Jury's report, it will include a personnel succession plan which will outline how the office will operate and what tasks are given priority in times of staffing shortages, i will continue to find other ways to improve upon the succession plan as well (e.g. Request funding for a second Veterans Service Representative to process veterans' claims.).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Very Respectfully ,Brian Galicia

Calaveras County Veterans Service Officer cc: Diane Lloyd, Foreperson, Calaveras County Grand Jury

CALAVERAS COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE Physical Address: 300 W. DAPHNE STREET •  
Mail: POB 1389, VALLEY SPRINGS, CA 95252 209-754-6910 •Fax:209-754-9049 •  
[teranservices.calaverasgovus](http://teranservices.calaverasgovus)





*Scarlet Columbine in Calaveras Big Trees Park – photo courtesy of Victoria Plaughter*