

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Civil Grand Jury

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June 27, 2024

Honorable Katherine Hansen, Grand Jury Supervising Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean St.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Dear Judge Hansen,

On behalf of the 2023-24 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury, it is with great pride that I present our Consolidated Final Report to the residents of Santa Cruz County. For this term, the Grand Jury chose nine topics for its investigative reports, including reports on behavioral health services, jail conditions, affordable housing shortages, and rural road conditions. The Grand Jury delved thoroughly into each one in order to provide informed and balanced guidance. Legal provisions were followed throughout the term as detailed in Government Code sections 23000 through 23027, 24054, and 26525 and Welfare & Institutions Code 17006.

The Grand Jury's mission is to "shine a light" on local government agencies and to update our community on areas needing improvement, as well as recognizing jobs well done. Our hope is that the recommendations included in each report, if adopted, will generate progress on pressing issues facing our County. While each report stands alone, in concert they reflect the difficulties our County faces - with limited funding - to address the underlying issues of housing, poverty and mental health amongst our residents. From agency staffing, to child protection, to behavioral health, these root causes pose a consistent challenge.

Nineteen ordinary citizens from all walks of life came together to produce this Consolidated Final Report. Jurors have fulfilled their duties with distinction and have served their community selflessly and with great professionalism. Through the research of the inner workings of local government, we, the Jury, have come away with a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, our local government and the employees who keep it running.

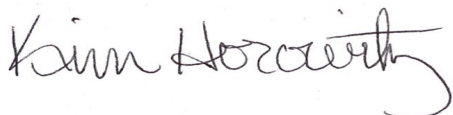
The Grand Jury could not have carried out its duties without the support of our admins, John Rible, David Heinz, Eric Decker, and Suzanne Mann. These volunteers are former jurors who provide training and technical support to streamline our editing and publishing process. In addition, we have been aided throughout our term by our County Counsel, Ann Jackson, and Supervising Judge, Katherine Hansen. Both have provided legal advice during our investigations and reviewed our reports. We thank them for their assistance.

It has been my distinct privilege and honor to act as this term's foreperson. It has been a humbling experience with challenges along the way and obstacles to overcome. At the same time, the experience has been immensely rewarding. I come away with a deeper appreciation for the important role that our Grand Jury system plays in our community. The Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury service is an example of our California democracy at its best.

The variety of report topics in this Consolidated Final Report merit the interest of all residents. Transparency and efficiency serve all of us. My hope is that readers study the Grand Jury recommendations contained in each report and then pay attention when responses from County and City agencies are reported. Do agencies agree to work towards meeting these recommendations? If the answer is yes, the hope is that residents monitor progress towards fulfillment of those government commitments. If no, that should also be noted, and questioned as to why.

This Grand Jury term has come to an end. It is now in the hands of the community to see the process through, and in this way, carry on the Grand Jury's mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Horowitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberly Horowitz, Foreperson
2023–2024 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury





2023-2024

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

Back Row: Kevin Dempsey, Dan Brodsky, Steve Pleich, Alta Northcutt, Steve Shupe, Al Morgan, Dick Lovelace, Sethuraman Suresh, and Jim Goodrich

Front Row: Stephen Bosworth, Karen McBride, Lalitha Parameswaran, Gillian Greensite, Kim Horowitz, Marina Archer, Lorie Goudie, Judy Keenan, and Richard Hencke

Foreperson Kim Horowitz

Foreperson Pro Tempore Kevin Dempsey

Treasurer Steve Shupe

Secretary Alta Northcutt

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Picture of Jurors is a personal photo.*