

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

civilgrandjury.org is a project of UnGovr.org, a US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to government transparency and public accountability.



LAFCO Response to Finding 2 and the Recommendation:

The conduct of the Calaveras Local Agency Formation Commission is governed by the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, Sections 56000 and 57000 et. seq. of the California Government Code, as amended. LAFCO's responsibilities include review of and action on proposals for 1) formation of new local public agencies, 2) change in boundaries of existing local agencies, and 3) other changes in organization of local agencies, such as consolidations. In making such determinations, LAFCO's efforts are directed to encouraging the efficient and economic delivery of public services, while protecting other important state interests such as the preservation of agricultural and open-space lands

In 2001 the Legislature gave a new responsibility to prepare, adopt and update, as necessary, Spheres of Influence for all districts subject to its jurisdiction. In order to update a Sphere of Influence, a Municipal Service Review (MSR's) is required. LAFCo prepares MSR's for all types of services provided in the County including road, cemetery, healthcare, fire and EMS, veterans, wastewater and water services to mention a few.

A Water and Wastewater Forum meeting was conducted and hosted by LAFCo and the CCWD. As an outcome of the Water and Wastewater Forum, a Water and Wastewater "MSR" Committee was created and a Municipal Service Review Committee for water and wastewater services was formed with the purpose of providing information to be used in the preparation of the MSR for Water and Wastewater Services. This effort was funded by LAFCo's Water and Wastewater MSR budget. The committee met for several years and was disbanded upon the finalization of the Water and Wastewater MSR adopted on June 18, 2012. The water and wastewater districts along the Highway 4 corridor have formed a committee for these purposes. LAFCo encourages districts in other areas of the county to also form committees or join the Highway 4 corridor committee.

If LAFCo were to reconstruct a committee to focus "on issues facing Calaveras County now and in the future", the costs of operating a new Committee would need to be identified and included in LAFCo's operational budget. Costs include public outreach, Brown Act Compliance, additional staff to prepare reports, minutes, public notices, attendance, clerking and several other related costs.

In addition to water issues there are several issues associated with the other services LAFCo is required to review. Of concern would be to focus solely upon water and not pay equal attention to other issues such as the preservation of agricultural and open space lands. This year LAFCO is focused upon the provision of Road Services in Calaveras County and the preparation of Service Reviews for those services.

While LAFCO should be a partner in regarding issues facing Calaveras County now and in the future, LAFCo is not in the financial position to undertake such an effort in light of its mandatory responsibilities. We agree coordination between the County and LAFCo

needs to occur and representatives from LAFCo should be involved in any effort regarding issues facing Calaveras County and be invited to the table.

We thank you for the opportunity to respond to the 2014-2015 Grand Jury Report. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Benoit, LAFCO's Executive Officer at (209) 754-6511 or by email at johnbenoit@surewest.net.



Anita Paque, Chair
Calaveras Local Agency Formation Commission



CALAVERAS COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

891 Mountain Ranch Road

San Andreas, California 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6316

September 8, 2015

The Honorable Grant Barrett
Presiding Judge
Calaveras County Superior Court
P.O. Box 850
San Andreas, CA 95249

FILED

SEP 10 2015

Clerk of the Court
Superior Court of California
County of Calaveras
By *[Signature]*, Deputy

Judge Barrett:

In accordance with California Penal Code (CPC) Sections 933 (c) and 933.05 (a) & (b) the Board of Supervisors submits the following responses to all findings from Grand Jury report regarding the Calaveras County Jail, Animal Control Services, County Administrative Office and Budget Process, Ground Water and Wells, and Oversight of Calaveras County's Water Providers. The Board also wishes to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their volunteerism and dedication to public service which made it possible for this report to be completed.

Calaveras County Jail

Finding 5

Insufficient correction staff is still an issue, creating additional overtime costs.

Recommendation

This facility could be fully utilized by renting beds to neighboring counties for added income. In order to accomplish this, additional corrections officer would be needed. Further consideration would need to be made for impact on the community.

Response to Finding 5

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding. The recommendation requires further analysis.

Prior to construction of the new Jail, the Sheriff's Office laid out its proposed staffing and operations plan for the new facility. The plan called for initially opening with a capacity of 80 inmates, expanding to 160 inmates as need and resources allowed. The new Jail began operating on June 13, 2014 as planned, with allocated correctional positions based on a capacity of 80 inmates. Adequate staffing of the jail remains an issue due to difficulty in recruiting and retaining correctional officers. As stated in the Sheriff's FY 2015/16 Recommended Budget memo, "...the Jail experienced a substantial staff turnover rate in FY 2014-15. The Jail did not have all of its allocated positions filled until February, 2015. Currently, there are four correctional officers seeking and pursuing employment with other agencies." The Jail currently supplements permanent staff through the use of extra hires to provide a relief factor, to cover vacated position, and fill shift shortages in order to reduce overtime.

Cliff Edson
District 1
754-6370

Chris Wright
District 2
304-3729

Michael C Oliveira
District 3
754-6308

Debbie Ponte
District 4
754-6309

Steve Kearney
District 5
754-6310

The new jail has only been in operation for one year. An in-depth analysis would be required to determine additional staffing needs, resolve recruiting and staff retention issues, and determine actual bed space costs. This analysis would need to be completed prior to entering into agreements with neighboring counties to ensure Calaveras County could recoup the costs of housing additional inmates. Under AB 109, inmates may be incarcerated for longer periods of time. As such, the county will also need to take into consideration the costs of services to inmates' families should they move to Calaveras County in order to be closer to family members. It is also important to note that State funding (AB 900) was used to construct the new jail. Any agreements to rent bed space would require prior approval from the State.

Animal Control Services (ACS)

Finding 1

Inadequate budget to fund Animal Control Services.

Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors should demonstrate their support for the citizens and animals of Calaveras County by increasing the budgeted funds allocated to ACS to provide adequate staffing.

Response to Finding 1, Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this finding. The recommendation will be implemented when increases to discretionary General Fund revenues allow. The County's General Fund annual expenditures continue to exceed annual General Fund revenues requiring the use of one-time funds to balance the County's General Fund budget. It should be noted that the Board of Supervisors approved an additional Animal Shelter Assistant position effective January 2016 and a 0.4 Paralegal position as part of the FY 2015-16 Recommended Budget.

Recommendation 2

The ACS be allowed to carry over unused revenue from year to year to fund the department.

Response to Finding 1, Recommendation 2

The Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with this finding. This will not be implemented at this time as it is not feasible. The ACS (Animal Services) receives revenues in the form of gifts and donations. These revenues may be used in the current fiscal years to offset spay and neuter costs or transferred to an Animal Services Designated Fund for future use. Revenues from fees for services do not fully cover the costs of operating Animal Services. The General Fund contribution provides the majority of necessary funding to operate Animal Services on a day to day basis. The County will consider allowing Animal Services to carry over unused revenues only when Animal Services' revenues exceed expenditures.

Finding 2

The Grand Jury has found through testimony that ASC operated more efficiently and effectively when under the control of the Sheriff's Department.

The Grand Jury can find no explanation for the transfer of ACS to the Environmental Management Agency other than a funding dispute with the Sheriff's Department.

Recommendation

Since the Sheriff's Department is the chief law enforcement agency in the county and whose responsibilities are more closely aligned with ACS, the Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors reposition ACS from the Environmental Management Agency to the Sheriff's.

Response to Finding 2

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with Finding 2 and the Grand Jury's recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Finding 2 provides no explanation, statistical data or supporting documentation as to how the Grand Jury made the determination that Animal Services was operated more efficiently and effectively under the control of the Sheriff's Department. Animal Services has increased the hours that it is open to the public from 4 to 5 days, significantly increased the number of volunteers who assist Animal Services staff with animal-related services, and maintains euthanasia rates well below the national average for both canines and felines. While under the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and in addition to the Calaveras Humane Society (CHS), a new non-profit organization, Friends of Calaveras Animal Services (FOCAS), was formed to further support the efforts of Animal Services. Both organizations have donated modular buildings, one to house the felines separately from the canines and one to act as offices for CHS and a future spay and neuter clinic. Another indication that Animal Services is operating efficiently and effectively under the EMA, is the dissolution of the Domestic Animal Advisory Committee (DAAC). The DAAC was originally formed to act as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors regarding concerns and issues associated with the Animal Services Department. It was determined that the initial purpose for the DAAC was no longer necessary. The EMA also worked with the Sheriff's Office to provide Dispatch with a matrix to assist them with directing domestic and wild animal response calls to the appropriate agencies.

The Grand Jury states that they could find no explanation for the transfer of Animal Services to the EMA. On February 14, 2014, Captain Ed Ballard, Sheriff's Office appeared before the Board of Supervisors during public comment and stated that the Sheriff's Office would like to transition Animal Services back to the County. On June 5, 2012, in a letter from Sheriff Kuntz to then CAO Jeanne Boyce, Sheriff Kuntz states: "As you remember on February 14th of this year, Captain Ballard addressed the Board of Supervisors, making them and your office aware of our plan to relinquish control of the Animal Services Operation effective at the end of this fiscal year." It is clear from Sheriff Kuntz's letter (Attachment A), that it was at the Sheriff's request that Animal Services was transferred out of the Sheriff's Office. In a letter dated June 11, 2012 (Attachment B), CAO Boyce responded outlining the process that had been undertaken to recommend changes in the future management of Animal Services for the Board's consideration. This included the formation of a Working Group of stakeholders made up of representative from the Sheriff's Office (Animal Services), CHS, DAAC, Animal Services volunteers, the EMA and Administrative Office staff, to analyze all possible options. The issue was brought to the Board on August 28, 2012. The Board item discussed the different options that the Working Group considered and the Working Group's recommendation to transfer Animal Services to the EMA. The Board agreed with the Working Group's recommendation and adopted the necessary resolutions to transfer Animal Services to the EMA.

As there is inadequate evidence that Animal Services was operated more efficiently and effectively under the Sheriff's Office, and because it was at the Sheriff request that he relinquished control of Animal Services, the Grand Jury's Finding 2 recommendation is not warranted or reasonable.

Finding 3

Facilities necessary to meet the needs of the county animal population is in need of an upgrade.

Recommendation

The Board of Supervisors, in conjunction ACS management, should explore all avenues that could accelerate construction of additional facilities. These sources of funding should include budget increases and grants from public and/or private sources.

Response to Finding 3

The Board agrees with Finding 3 that the Animal Services facilities are in need of an upgrade. The recommendation will be implemented as funding becomes available and as resources allow.

It should be noted that the Board has taken steps towards construction of new Animal Services Facilities. In December 2014, the Board dedicated 6.93 acres of county-owned property for the development of a new public/private Animal Services Center. The Calaveras Humane Society (CHS) plans to raise funds to construct the new joint-use Animal Services Center. CHS and the County are developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will provide initial guidelines for the development, function and division of responsibilities of the Animal Services Center between the County and CHS.

Donations of modular buildings, one from CHS and two from Friends of Calaveras Animal Services (FOCAS), will provide additional temporary space until the new center can be built. As mentioned in the response to Finding 2, the FOCAS modulars will house all felines, distancing them from the canines. The CHS modular will provide CHS with on-site offices and will serve as a future spay/neuter clinic.

Although other funding sources should be explored, counties are limited in their abilities to raise funds for the construction of the new shelter. As mentioned in the EMA's response to Finding 1, most major grant funding has "no kill" provisions, which cannot reasonably be met by a public agency charged with protecting the public and other animals from contagious or dangerous animals. Unlike the private sector, the county cannot finance the center through a mortgage or construction loan. CHS is committed to raising the necessary funds to construct the new center and the County supports their efforts.

Finding 4

Inadequate staffing to properly accomplish daily operations.

Recommendation

The Board of Supervisors should make long overdue additions to ACS staffing in order to provide a meaningful service to the citizens and animals of Calaveras County.

Response to Finding 4

The Board of Supervisors agrees that additional Animal Services staff is needed; however, the recommendation has and will continue to be implemented as resources allow. The Board has a finite amount of discretionary funds each fiscal year to allocate to General Fund departments and those Non-General Fund departments that require a county share of cost. Public safety has always been the Board's highest priority; limited resources are therefore allocated accordingly. Upon transfer of Animal Service to the EMA, the Board approved three new positions; an Animal Services Manager, replacing the Sergeant position, a Shelter Assistant and an Office Technician. As a result of budget reductions required to close the structural deficit, one Animal Services Officer position was eliminated. In an effort

to meet the growing needs of the department, the Board approved 1.0 FTE Shelter Assistant who will assist in covering the new feline holding facility and a 0.4 FTE Paralegal position that will assist with potentially dangerous and vicious dog investigations. Additional staff can only be added as resources become available.

Finding 5

The lack of timely response to complaints and phone inquiries.

ACS, operating with minimal staff at best, relies heavily upon a volunteer work force. These volunteers are routinely tasked with responding to complaints and inquiries left by phone message. Since volunteer participation cannot be anticipated, unacceptable delays are more common.

Finding 5, Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors should approve funding for training ACS management in maximizing the effectiveness of a volunteer workforce.

Response to Finding 5, Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with Finding 5, therefore, Recommendation 1 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Animal Services relies on a significant volunteer work force to assist with the re-homing of adoptable shelter animal and caring for ill or infant animals. With one exception in the past, Animal Services does not use volunteers to respond to animal safety or nuisance complaints and/or inquiries made to Animal Services by phone.

County Administrative Office and Budget Process

Finding 3

The Grand Jury finds that the County Administration (CA), ACAO, Auditor/Controller) was correct in stating that future General Fund revenues may not support rising expenditures. This would result in the depletion of County reserves and its inability to meet obligations.

Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends that the County explore opportunities to grow its revenue and tax base. For example, streamlining the permitting process could help attract new business to the county while aiding local contractors and existing small business owners.

Response to Finding 3

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Finding 3. The Recommendation requires further analysis. The Board has directed staff to do an analysis of all county fees and bring the fees study to the Board for possible action. This study session is planned for the fall of 2015. However, it should be noted that the largest source of discretionary funds that the county receives is from property tax revenues. Property tax revenues increase or decrease as property values increase or decrease. Increases or decreases to property tax revenues depend on assessed valuations and fluctuations in the economy and local housing market. The second largest source of discretionary funds is from the County's share (.75% to the General Fund) of Sales and Use tax. The Board has very limited authority over Sales and Use taxes; however, State legislation enacted in 1987 allows counties to seek voter approval of a local Sales and Use tax. Calaveras County has never placed an initiative for a local Sales and Use tax before the voters.

Finding 4

Independent audits of the County's financial statements are a safeguard for the citizens of the county. Grand Jury participation provides oversight to ensure that audits conducted are free from internal influences. This participation is currently not mandated by policy or procedure.

Finding 4, Recommendation 2

Board of Supervisors pass resolution(s) directing County Chief Administrative Officer to ensure appropriate Policy and Procedures reflect Recommendation 1 for Findings 4.

Response to Finding 4, Recommendation 2

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Finding 4. Recommendation 2 will be implemented in the fall 2015, prior to the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for outside auditing services that include the examination of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Compliance Audit. Although Recommendation 1 for Findings 4 was implemented in 2010, written policies and procedures have not been developed.

Finding 5

The Grand Jury finds that department heads have little incentive in seeking outside funds through grants, etc. Historically, departments awarded funds have sometimes found their bottom line appropriation decreased by the same amount.

Recommendation

If a department works to receive outside funding (such as from grants), the County should not subtract a like amount from the general fund allocation for that department.

Response to Finding 5

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with Finding 5. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

Past reductions to department's "bottom line" or general fund allocation have been based on available discretionary funds. During the recession and subsequent years, decreases to assessed property values and other economy-driven revenues, the General Fund experienced a reduction in discretionary revenues in excess of \$4 million annually. Reduction to department General Fund contributions were based solely on the amount of funds available to allocate to departments. Certain departments were able to mitigate these reductions by applying for grants or entering into contracts for services. However, reductions to department's General Fund allocation were based strictly on available discretionary funds.

Finding 6

The Grand Jury finds that hiring freeze decisions may not be in the best interest of the County. In certain departments, added personnel could increase ability to accomplish delayed or backlogged tasks, resulting in increased revenue to the County.

Recommendation

Board of Supervisors request department heads provide an analysis of potential revenue enhancements from increased headcount.

Response to Finding 6

The Board of Supervisors does not agree with Finding 6. The Recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

The Hiring freeze was enacted so that the CAO and Human Resources could ensure departments were filling positions that were necessary and that funding was available in the department's budget to support the request to fill. Departments must supply the cost of the position and justification of the department's need. As part of budget preparation, departments may submit requests for new positions with their proposed budget. This includes completion of the required forms, including the need for the position, potential revenue an additional position may provide, current department workload that supports additional staff, and the cost of the position. The CAO, Human Resources Director, and the Auditor-Controller meet with department heads to review those requests. Based on documentation provided by the department and review of the position request, a recommendation is made to the Board for inclusion in the budget.

Finding 7

The Grand Jury finds significant risk to future county operations through loss of key personnel. In certain departments the complex regulations from State and Federal sources require expert knowledge of those same regulations and bureaucratic processes to maximize revenues to the county and service to residents.

Recommendation

Board of Supervisors require each department head to identify key personnel and provide a plan that addresses the loss and extended absence of those individuals.

Response to Finding 7

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Finding 7 that succession planning is crucial to the county's continued success of providing services to our citizens. This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The County is in the processes of recruiting a new Deputy CAO/Human Resources and Risk Management (HR & RM). One of the priorities of this position will be to work with departments to develop succession plans and institute a leadership program that will identify and help future leader to obtain the skill sets needed to be successful in new roles. The Deputy CAO/HR & RM may assist departments with plans for the cross-training of staff and/or recruit extra hires to assist department due to unexpected absences.

Finding 8

The Board of Supervisors and department heads lack expertise in the budget process.

Recommendation

Mandatory training, by qualified personnel, be instituted every February in advance of the start of new budget preparation for all Supervisors and Department Heads covering the State's *County Budget Act*, definition of terms and language used in budgets and budget discussions, fiscal reports required by the State, timelines and deadlines in statutes, and Calaveras County timelines for various budget activities in the coming Fiscal Year.

Response to Finding 8

The Board of Supervisors disagrees in part with Finding 8. The Recommendation for Finding 8 has been partially implemented.

The County budget is a complex document. While new Board members and Department Heads initially lack expertise in the budget process, they are provided information on the budget process in a number of ways over the course of the fiscal year. New Supervisors and Department Heads are provided with a "New Supervisor/Department Head Binder" that includes information on the county's budget process. New Supervisors are extended an offer of a one on one meeting with the Administrative Office to review the budget and budget process. In February, the Administrative Office presents the Mid-Year Report to the Board, staff and the public, which reviews the Board's Budget Principles and budget timelines and makes recommendations for the preparation of the next year's budget. Based on those recommendations and direction from the Board, budget instructions are sent to departments. Training is held by the Auditor-Controller and Administration for department heads and staff on the preparation of their budgets. Administration and the Auditor-Controller meet with departments to review their budget requests, resolve any issues and put forth any recommendations. The Recommended Budget Binder provided to the Supervisors includes budget memos from all department budget units, department's requested budget, a recap of all fund revenues and expenditures, the State's County Budget Act, and the CAO's Budget memo that provides an in-depth overview of the proposed Recommended Budget and departmental requests. Although, training and information on the budget process is provided to the Board and Department Heads throughout the year, there are always opportunities to improve the process, such as additional budget workshops beginning in December or January.

Finding 9

Ongoing budgetary issues within the County are subject to rumor and innuendo.

Recommendation

Board of Supervisors establish a Public Relations Division within an existing department to issue News Releases/Public Announcements that affect the County to ensure complete and unabridged knowledge is available to media outlets and residents.

Response to Finding 9

While the Board of Supervisors may partially agree with Finding 9, the Recommendation will not be implemented at this time because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Many governmental departments and processes are subject to rumor and innuendo, and the budget process is not immune from this. The Board of Supervisors believes that ongoing transparency is the most efficient means of correcting misinformation. Budgetary issues are discussed in open Board sessions. Most often reporters from the local newspaper are in attendance to report on the information provided to the Board and decisions that are made. Additionally, all Board meetings are recorded and aired on the local Community Access Television station. Departments are responsive to inquiries by the media and public and often publish new releases or announcement on major issues of concern to the citizens. At this time, current budgetary resources do not allow for the establishment of a Public Relation Division solely for the purpose or issuing news releases and or public announcements.

Finding 10

Employee separation costs have not been budgeted. These costs can include unused vacation/sick days plus other contractual obligations.

Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends the CAO add to the budget and Board of Supervisors allocate funds for employee separation costs.

Response to Finding 10

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Finding 10. The recommendation will not be implemented at this time. It will be implemented when the county budget is structurally balance and additional resources become available to fund the estimated employee separation costs of \$1.6 million.

Groundwater and Wells

Finding 3

“Many wells in the western part of the county draw water from the San Joaquin County Ground Water Sub-Basin and some have failed. The primary cause is serious overdraft of the sub-basin for many years. The reasons for this are well understood, but lay outside the scope of the Grand Jury. . . .”

Finding 3, Recommendation 2

The Grand Jury recommends that the County explore opportunities to grow its revenue and tax base. For example, streamlining the permitting process could help attract new business to the county while aiding local contractors and existing small business owners.

Response to Finding 3, Recommendation 2

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Finding 3. Recommendation 2 has yet to be implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The Environmental Health Department (EHD) intends to access some funding made available by passage of AB 1471, the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 to reinstate its Global Positioning System (GPS)/Geographic Information System (GIS) program that tracks groundwater quantity and quality. EHD hopes to prepare a proposal to Cal/EPA in the coming year.

Finding 4

“Options become limited when wells fail, particularly for communities with multiple failing wells. . . .”

Finding 4, Recommendation 1

The Grand Jury recommends that a portion of the funds from property taxes be placed in a fund for future expansion of infrastructure and financial assistance for property owners with failed wells.

Response to Finding 4, Recommendation 1

The Board of Supervisors may agree with Finding 4; however, Recommendation 1 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

State laws direct the allocation of revenue from the 1% property tax rate (AB 8) and dictate the apportionment of that revenue to local governments (counties, cities, special districts, etc.). It is at the discretion of the legislative body of each entity to determine how those funds will be used to support ongoing operations and/or infrastructure. The use of property tax revenues collected from all property owners for the benefit of private property owner with failed wells would be considered a gift of public

funds and is not allowed under Article XVI, Section 6 of the California State Constitution. Calaveras County Water District has a program in place to assist homeowners that are experiencing water issues.

Finding 4, Recommendation 2

The Grand Jury recommends Board of Supervisors pursue the availability of grants to alleviate the financial hardships associated with depletion of ground water sources.

Response to Finding 4, Recommendation 2

The Recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The County has no control over ground water sources and is unaware of any grants for the alleviation of financial hardships associated with the depletion of ground water sources. The Board could declare a state of drought emergency, however EHD statistics do not support this as of yet.

Impact of Drought on Water Service to Copperopolis

Finding 2

“There are multiple players at the Lake Tulloch decision making table: . . . it is difficult to resolve problems quickly. . . .”

Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends LAFCO and the two Board of Supervisor members on the LAFCO board, reconstruct the technical advisory team to promote cooperation and collaboration focused on issues facing Calaveras County now and in the future. It is also a mechanism for members of County government to keep apprised of water issues facing the county.

Response

The Board of Supervisors partially agrees with the Grand Jury’s recommendation and it has been implemented in a form other than as a technical advisory team. Calaveras Conserves was formed to allow the county, city and water district to meet on a monthly basis to discuss water issues and concerns faced by the county as a result of the drought. The Board assigned Brian Moss, Assistant CAO, as the Board’s representative on the Calaveras Conserves committee. Calaveras Conserves provides information to the public related to ongoing drought and water issues through signage, pamphlets and the Calaveras Conserves website.

Oversight of Calaveras County’s Water Providers

Finding 1

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors has no authority over any utility agency or entity, yet CCWD and other water agencies receive property tax revenue regardless of services provided. There is no official mechanism for reporting information to the Board of Supervisors or anyone else in county government.

Recommendation

The Grand Jury recommends that all six public water companies submit a quarterly budget report to the Board of Supervisors.

Response

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Finding 1 that it has no authority over any utility agency or entity. The Board cannot compel the six public water companies to submit a quarterly report to the Board because, as Finding 1 states, the Board has no authority over any utility agency. Therefore, the Board of Supervisors cannot implement this recommendation.

Finding 2

“Residential water consumption includes outdoor (landscape irrigation and swimming pools), toilet, shower, cleaning, and kitchen uses. . . .”

Recommendation

“The Grand Jury recommends that the county promotes water conservation efforts even in periods of ample water supply. The Planning Department and the Environmental Health Department should partner with water companies in establishing a water conservation management practice program to promote water use efficiency. . . .”

Response

The Board of Supervisor agrees with the Grand Jury’s recommendation and it has been implemented when the Board directed staff to participate in the Calaveras Conserves Committee. Calaveras Conserves was formed to allow the county, city and water district to meet on a monthly basis to discuss water issues and concerns faced by the county as a result of the drought. The Board assigned Brian Moss, Assistant CAO, as the Board’s representative on the Calaveras Conserves committee. Calaveras Conserves provides information to the public related to ongoing drought and water issues through signage, pamphlets and the Calaveras Conserves website.

Sincerely,



Cliff Edson, Board Chair
Calaveras County Board of Supervisors