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DETENTION FACILITY INQUIRIES STATEMENT

OVERVIEW

Penal Code section 919(b) obligates the grand jury to "inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county." In 2022, the California Attorney General issued an opinion (No. 18-103) stating the term "public prisons" includes "local detention facilities," and that a county or city jail is a typical example of such a local detention facility.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about how the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury fulfilled this duty. While Penal Code section 919(b) requires this inquiry, it does not require the grand jury to conduct an investigation or to write a report about local detention facilities. In fact, a report cannot be written based solely upon an inquiry. To write a report, a full investigation is required and all the facts in the report must be verified. (See Penal Code section 939.9.)

LOCAL DETENTION FACILITIES WITHIN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

There are six local detention facilities within Santa Cruz County, five of which are operated by the county:

1. Juvenile Detention Center (Probation Department), 3650 Graham Hill Road, Felton, CA
2. Santa Cruz Main Jail, 259 Water Street, Santa Cruz, CA
3. Blaine Street Women's Jail, 141 Blaine Street, Santa Cruz, CA
4. Rountree Detention Center (Medium Security), 90 Rountree Lane, Watsonville, CA
5. Rountree Detention Center (Minimum Security), 100 Rountree Lane, Watsonville, CA

The grand jury fulfilled its duty to inquire into these facilities through a variety of methods.

- On January 10, 2025 the Santa Cruz County Probation staff gave an overview and tour of the Juvenile Detention Center to members of the Grand Jury.
- On February 4, 2025 the Santa Cruz County Sheriff Corrections staff gave an overview and tour of the Santa Cruz Main Jail, Blaine Street Women's Jail, and the Rountree Detention Center to members of the Grand Jury.

The grand jury reviewed documents requested from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department and a Board of State and Community Corrections report "2023-2024 TARGETED INSPECTION, PENAL CODE SECTION 6031, WELFARE & INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 209, SANTA CRUZ DETENTION FACILITIES" dated January 7, 2025.

The other local detention facility within Santa Cruz County is the Ben Lomond Conservation Camp, which is operated jointly by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and Cal Fire. The Grand Jury took no actions concerning the Ben Lomond Conservation Camp.

CONCLUSION

The grand jury's legal obligation to inquire into the condition and management of each local detention facility within the county was fulfilled by touring the facilities, making general inquiries to the staff, and reviewing recent regulatory reports.



2024-2025

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Civil Grand Jury

701 Ocean Street, Room 318-I
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 454-2099
grandjury@scgrandjury.org

"Climate Action" Demands Outreach

County staff alone cannot meet our County's climate goals.

Summary

Santa Cruz County, like all other counties in California, was tasked with specific climate action goals by the State of California legislature in 2016 (Senate Bill 32) and again in 2022 (Assembly Bill 1279). The County has responded with proposed written actions that will advance the stated climate goals. But making a meaningful dent in those goals requires citizen cooperation. The County has conducted minimal to no outreach to the community and has failed to achieve widespread citizen engagement in the effort to mitigate climate change, specifically in reducing the production of greenhouse gases (**GHG**) caused by vehicle emissions.

It is crucial to have increased citizen involvement in implementing climate action goals for the benefit of all. The Santa Cruz Grand Jury (**the Jury**) encourages the County's Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (**OR3**) to engage with the citizens of Santa Cruz County to increase the community's understanding of the goals and gain the community's cooperation in reducing GHG's so that the County can achieve the larger goals established by the State of California.

Table of Contents

Background 3
Scope and Methodology 4
Investigation 5
Storymap Website Created for Public Use 5
Other Public Information Sources 6
Reaching out to John Q. Public 8
Conclusion 8
Findings 9
Recommendations 10
Required Responses 10
Invited Responses 10
Definitions 11
Sources 11
References 11
Websites 13
Site Visits 14

Background

> *"In 2016, the state passed Senate Bill (SB) 32, which requires California to reduce GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030. In September 2022, Assembly Bill (AB) 1279 was signed, which establishes a statewide goal of carbon neutrality by 2045. Cities and counties across the state are working to reduce their own emissions to meet these goals and contribute to the achievement of California's emissions targets." – From the Santa Cruz County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan website.*[1]

Before 2016, Santa Cruz County (the County) had a Climate Action Plan in place. That plan was updated in 2022 in response to the Senate and Assembly bills mentioned above to become what is known as the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (**CAAP**).[2] The CAAP plan opens with the 2019 Greenhouse Gas (**GHG**) inventory. The CAAP "Storymap Website" was developed to communicate points in the plan to the public.[1]

Figure 1. GHG Emissions by Category

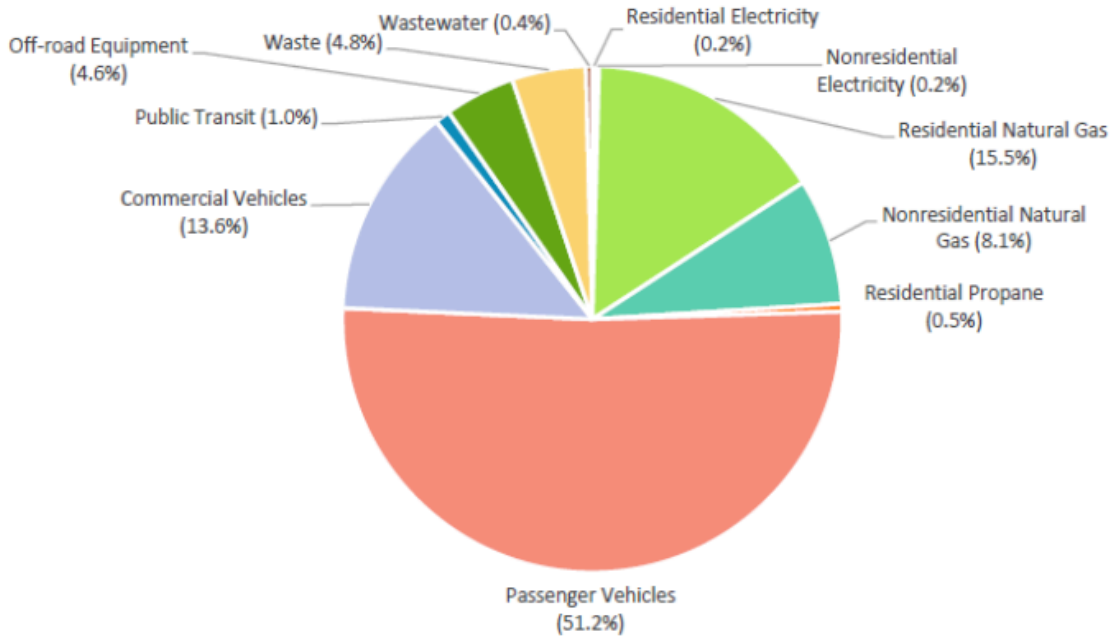


Figure 1: 2019 Green House Gas Inventory breakout from the CAAP document. [2]

Notably, both the document and the website feature graphs indicating that tailpipe emissions from passenger vehicles are the single largest contributor of pollutants, accounting for 51.2% of the total (or 64.8% when including commercial vehicles). The CAAP document lists five strategies for the transportation sector to eliminate emissions, two of which directly address citizen choices.[2]

These strategies are:

- Eliminate fossil fuel use from passenger and commercial vehicles
- By 2040, increase use of public transportation, walking, or bicycling for commute trips by 15%.

(There are minor differences between the language in the CAAP document and the CAAP Storymap Website. For example, these two items above have different numbers. For the remainder of the report, the Jury will reference the Storymap Website version, as it was specifically created for public viewing.)

The CAAP document and Storymap Website both emphasize "engagement and education necessary to implement the project or program" are critical components of each strategy.[1] [2]

Every day, residents make personal choices about their mode of travel for work, business, and leisure. The Jury has attempted to understand the County's engagement efforts directed towards county residents regarding transportation choices. The Jury refers to any approaches by County staff to educate and engage the residents of Santa Cruz County about the CAAP as "Outreach".

Scope and Methodology

The Jury investigated the County's attempts to notify and gain the cooperation of citizens in the reduction of tailpipe emissions by reviewing county documents, reviewing social media and publicity, and attending events. The Jury began its investigation by thoroughly reviewing publicly available documents from Santa Cruz County, the state of California, and the City of Santa Cruz. Questions were then developed for various members of the County who have knowledge of, or impact upon, the CAAP. Throughout the investigation, members of the Jury also visited various public event spaces, such as the County Fair, the Capitola Art and Wine Festival, the 'EVs for All' event in Watsonville, and various formal county meetings that had the topic of Climate Change action on the agenda. The Jury investigated various websites and web tools related to climate issues and viewed actions being undertaken by other counties in California.

The Jury's primary investigation emphasis focused on transportation for two reasons:

1. its size in comparison to other GHG emission sources overall, and
2. the necessity for civic engagement.

Though the primary focus remains on transportation, the Jury will tangentially mention other goals and strategies in the CAAP that might benefit from greater Outreach as well.

Two groups are primarily responsible for actions undertaken in the CAAP. One is the County's Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (**OR3**). They are responsible for breaking down strategies into action items and tasks,monitoring achievement across various county departments and reporting their findings to the Board of Supervisors (**BoS**).

The second is the Commission on the Environment (**COE**). This is an appointed body intended to advise the BoS on climate issues and pending legislation. This Commission receives CAAP updates from OR3 or other sub-agencies assigned by OR3. The COE then informs the BoS. The COE meets six times a year but has no direct operational responsibility for the CAAP strategies/actions.

Investigation

The Jury, after reading the CAAP, noted that the transportation sector stood out as by far the largest contributor to emissions, accounting for approximately 65% of the total. This total is divided into passenger vehicle traffic at 51.2% and commercial vehicles at 13.6%.[2] In viewing the CAAP goals for the next two decades, it is clear that the program goals are unachievable without significant reductions in GHG emissions from passenger vehicles. This concerning conclusion was verified by County staff.[3]

Since the County is tasked with reducing GHG emissions to well below 1990 levels and given the conclusion that significant reductions in passenger vehicle use are necessary to meet CAAP goals, the County must engage its population in these reduction efforts.

Storymap Website Created for Public Use

In December 2022, the CAAP Storymap Website, developed to explain the CAAP's purpose and actions to the public, was published online.

There are 30 strategies listed on the website.[1] [2] For over two full years (December 2022 to date), the progress trackers on the Storymap Website have never moved from "Not Started 100%", indicating that no progress has been made.[4]



Figure 2: Screenshot of website example: County Transportation Progress Tracker set at "not started". [4]

Yet within the County's offices, the 30 strategies have been broken down into 167 different action items that are assigned to various work groups.[5] Work is occurring on these strategies and action items, but public report mechanisms such as the progress trackers do not reflect any action.

Why? The Jury was told that it can be difficult to quantify actual, sustained reductions in greenhouse gases. The Jury's review of the CAAP and the Storymap Website reveals that "progress" on a task is not defined solely as "sustained GHG reduction". The progress trackers are reporting on *actions taken* to address each strategy. Therefore, the Jury feels that progress related to the 30 strategies could be listed for public review. For example:

- the County's planning steps that should result in reductions;
- the number of sub-tasks created and assigned to County staff;
- how far along County staff is on achieving sub-tasks;
- the volunteer organizations working on specific actions with County guidance;
- the budgetary priority set for each strategy;
- grants obtained to achieve various strategies.

None of this progress is displayed on the publicly accessible CAAP Storymap Website. Any visitor to the site would likely question whether any progress has been made in the two years since its publication. However, much is occurring within County offices. The public's perception and reality are at odds because the website has not been updated.[6]

The shortfall in publicizing progress on the CAAP Storymap Website exists not only in the transportation sector displayed above but in *all 30 of the strategies.* Progress trackers for all strategies meant to inform the public about county progress are set to "Not Started 100%." The County paid a significant amount of money for the RINCON web development contract, part of which was the progress tracking measures. That part of the County's investment is not being utilized and, more critically, the public remains uninformed.

Interviews revealed that other methods of displaying progress measurements were discussed, but no alternate measures have been developed in the intervening two years. [3] [5]

Other Public Information Sources

There are two other major websites dealing with the CAAP actions:

1. The OR3 has a Climate Change section on their public website.
    a. As of April 14, 2025, the website shows no published updates about the CAAP for over two years.
    b. The "Newsletters" and "Press Releases" buttons for OR3 also show no updates in the past two years.[7]

In interviews, the Jury was informed that OR3 newsletters containing updates have been published over the past two years. However, members of the Jury who signed up for newsletters last year have received nothing to date.

2. The COE county website was similarly stagnant:[8]
    a. The latest Biennial report is dated 2022. A new one is overdue.
    b. The latest Letter to the Board of Supervisors is dated 2022.
    c. In their latest March 26, 2025 meeting, the COE belatedly approved several prior meeting minutes that were missing from their public website. Before the March 26, 2025 meeting, the most recent minutes were from May 2024, leaving nearly a year-long backlog.[9]

It should be noted here that in 2019-2020, a prior Santa Cruz Grand Jury found the County and cities within the county were not regularly updating their website communications for various reasons, and the entities responded that they would improve their practices.[10]

Cities within the county have made some attempts to reach out to the public on climate issues. The City of Santa Cruz has sought input from the public via web posting. [11] [12] [13] The City of Watsonville sent a flyer out with a utility billing that addressed home composting.[14] Through testimony, the Jury learned that some public engagement happened at “Trunk or Treat” and the National Night Out, but that engagement was focused on fire preparedness.[3]

In neighboring areas, Monterey County has a CAAP website that solicits feedback and provides education to the public.[15] The San Francisco Grand Jury has recommended public engagement in Climate Action efforts.[16]

The City of Santa Cruz and the counties of Monterey and Santa Cruz have joined together to engage Ecology Action to run local, citizen-aimed websites. (See for example Resilientsantacruzcounty.org for Santa Cruz.) These websites enable community members to list the climate actions they have personally made to encourage other community members. Unfortunately, without publicity, these websites receive little public engagement. None of the local websites hit their modest participation goals by the end of 2024.[17]

The County of Santa Cruz might qualify for a grant from the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (**MBARD**) to cover the costs of tri-county publicity efforts by allying Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties.

The County’s OR3 is charged with implementing the CAAP and has a long list of volunteer agencies involved in climate actions. But there is little to no evidence of coordination of efforts or successful Outreach to the community at large.

Other climate-focused efforts do exist in the county. These efforts are run by volunteer groups such as Bike Church, Sempervirens, and Earth Day, and non-profits such as Ecology Action (with programs like ‘EVs for Everyone’ and ‘Modo’). These organizations do good work but are not mandated to communicate with the citizenry.

Reaching out to John Q. Public

The websites above are all places an engaged citizen might seek out climate change information. But what about John Q. Public? John Q. is a busy person who doesn't surf the web — especially not for info about County programs! With 2.5 kids, a good job, and a hectic schedule, John Q. isn't actively seeking information on the climate. Santa Cruz averages two cars per household[18], so John Q. is driving that GHG-emitting vehicle without a second thought. John Q. is a part of that 51% passenger vehicle traffic problem.

The County needs to actively reach out to John Q. Low-cost methods of Outreach might include:

- Public Service Announcements on TV or radio
- Fact sheets on the County's official Facebook page and social media
- Flyers included in mailed utility bills, property tax bills
- A booth at the County Fair
- Leafleting at tourist events

Would John Q. become a part of the solution if they were to learn an EV purchase can save money in the long run? Might John Q. win management's attention if they started a ride-share group at work? John Q. could claim bragging rights if they lost weight by walking to the local stores instead of driving. Would John Q. want to see their photo on the side of a bus, praising their decision to bus to work instead of driving?

We live in a society thirsty for "human interest" stories. A campaign of recognizing other John Qs within the community could build pride, interest in similar actions, and cement the commitment of the larger public to the goals of the CAAP. (This effort can be scaled up to include local businesses. A green business award is a similar low-cost way to heighten awareness of efforts made on behalf of all.[19])

As stated in the San Francisco Grand Jury report on similar issues:[16] "The public needs to know what is being currently done to adapt to climate change, as they will be the taxpayers, ratepayers, and floodplain dwellers affected by the success of the city's resilience efforts." The same need for communication holds for Santa Cruz County taxpayers, ratepayers, and John Q. Public, present and future.

Conclusion

"Everybody knows" drunk driving is dangerous, yet we still mount campaigns to raise awareness. "Everybody knows" that wood houses burn down in fires, yet fire departments still develop websites about fire-wise landscaping. And "everybody knows" that gasoline-fueled cars emit pollutants. Unfortunately, to date, the County has no public campaign to directly address this largest pollutant source in the county.

Passenger vehicle use is the largest single polluter shown in the CAAP. The goal given by the State of California to the County covers *all* emissions. Yet the Jury was told that Outreach was not the County's job.[3] [5] As currently assigned, the responsibility for achieving CAAP goals rests with the County OR3.

The County has admitted that it cannot meet its state-mandated climate emission reduction goals without the cooperation of the community at large. Since climate change represents an existential threat to all citizens, the Santa Cruz County Grand Jury urges the County to reprioritize climate Outreach.

Findings

F1. The County's need for Outreach to raise awareness of passenger vehicle greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals is not being addressed by staff in significant ways.

F2. Responsibility for the County's Outreach efforts isn't clearly defined. Even interested citizens have trouble finding updates.

F3. The County Staff and the Commission on the Environment (COE) charged with reporting to superiors (i.e., Board of Supervisors) don't stay current in publicly publishing their actions regarding the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP).

F4. Staff charged with instigating/tracking/coordinating efforts required by the CAAP do not consider public Outreach part of their task.

F5. Money was spent to create progress trackers on the CAAP Storymap Website, but no one is updating the progress.

F6. Money has been spent to create another interactive website (Resilient Santa Cruz) for the interested citizen, but that website is not being publicized, and the modest participation goals have not been met.

F7. County web pages and social media specifically created for reporting to the public have been allowed to languish and are not populated with recent news items on CAAP goal progress.

Recommendations

R1. The Board of Supervisors should assign an office to own the task of proactive Outreach related to the CAAP. This assignment can either be County-only or in coordination with other agencies and local counties. (For example, working with MBARD or putting flyers into residents' utility bills.) Completion date: January 31, 2026. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7)

R2. The Board of Supervisors should require OR3 to update all public-facing websites every quarter and post on their social media to reflect the CAAP actions being taken within the County offices. Completion date: October 1, 2025, and ongoing. (F3, F4, F5, F7)

R3. When the County spends money or staff time on any climate efforts addressing the state-mandated CAAP, the Board of Supervisors should ensure these actions are publicized to inspire and inform the taxpaying citizens. Completion date: within 90 days of any significant expenditure. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F7)

Required Responses

Respondent	*Findings*	*Recommendations*	*Respond Within/ Respond By*
County Board of Supervisors	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7	R1, R2, R3	90 Days September 2, 2025

Invited Responses

Respondent	*Findings*	*Recommendations*	*Respond Within/ Respond By*
Director, OR3	F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7	R2, R3	60 Days August 1, 2025

Definitions

- **AB-1279** - California Assembly Bill 1279, one of two bills establishing Climate Goals for California Counties.
- **CAAP** - the 2022 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- **CAP** - Climate Action Plan, an acronym used by some areas to describe current or former county/city plans addressing climate change.
- **COE** - Commission on the Environment. A Santa Cruz County commission charged with tracking climate activities at state and county levels and advising the Board of Supervisors as appropriate.
- **Ecology Action** - a non-profit organization with various climate-related projects, including the development of websites for community engagement.
- **GHG** - Greenhouse Gases, determined to be responsible for global climate change and the target for reduction of the legislature bills.
- **MBARD** - Monterey Bay Air Resources District.
- **OR3** - Santa Cruz County's Office of Response, Recovery & Resiliency.
- **RINCON** - a contracting company hired by the County to establish the 2019 Santa Cruz Greenhouse Gas Inventory and create the County's public website on the subject.
- **SB-32** - California Senate Bill 32, one of two bills establishing Climate Goals for California Counties.

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https://greenbusinessca.org/about-us/

https://www.watsonville.gov/1764/Learn-About-Climate-Action-Plan

https://www.facebook.com/countyofsantacruz

Site Visits

Watsonville Library, Commission on the Environment public meeting (and online).

Santa Cruz County Fair

Capitola Art and Wine Festival

EVs for All, Watsonville

Board of Supervisors public meetings (online)