



CITY OF PERRIS
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MICHAEL M. VARGAS

July 10, 2025

Jacqueline Jackson, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of
Riverside
4050 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501

Riverside County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 829
Riverside, CA 92502

Riverside County Clerk-Recorder
2720 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507

**Re: City of Perris Responses to Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations in
Report Titled "Mission Accomplished, Time to Completely Dissolve"**

To the Honorable Judge Jackson, Riverside County Grand Jury, and Riverside County Clerk-Recorder:

On April 10, 2025, the Riverside County Grand Jury ("Grand Jury") issued a report regarding the March Joint Powers Authority ("March JPA"), entitled "March Joint Powers Authority: Mission Accomplished, Time to Completely Dissolve" ("Report"). The Grand Jury sent this Report to me in my official capacity as the Mayor of the City of Perris ("City"). The Report requires responses to its Finding 9 and Recommendation 8. The City of Perris' response must be filed with the Superior Court of California, County of Riverside, Riverside County Grand Jury, and the Riverside County Clerk-Recorder within 90 days.

Required Response to Findings

F-9 March JPA Commissioners' votes may sometimes conflict with the positions held by their respective city council or county board.

City response: Agree. The finding is consistent with how representatives are appointed by legislative bodies to serve on boards of other agencies. This issue was clearly

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addressed in the March JPA's response to the prior Grand Jury report titled "Marginally Transparent" (see F-4 from that response, which is copied below verbatim). While votes cast by March JPA Commissioners may at times differ from the positions of the City Council, this does not constitute a conflict. Commissioners are expected to exercise independent judgment in their roles, which is separate from their responsibilities as City Councilmembers.

"F-4: The March JPA Commissioners infrequently seek a consensus on March JPA issues from other elected officials on their city council/board."

City response: Agree. March JPA Commission members are authorized to exercise their own discretion when voting on matters coming before them. (See *Harbach v. El Pueblo De Los Angeles etc. Com.*, 14 Cal. App. 3d 828, 834 (1971)). The Joint Powers Act, the March Joint Powers Agreement, and the City's ordinances and resolutions do not limit their authority to vote as March MPA Commission members. In addition, the Government Code acknowledges that a joint powers agreement may create an agency or entity that is separate from the parties to the agreement and which agency or entity is responsible for the administration of the agreement. (See Cal. Gov. Code Section 6503.5). As such, even though the City's appointed March JPA commission members may report back on the March JPA matters, this does not give the City jurisdiction over such matters and, thus, many March JPA Commission matters are beyond the subject matter jurisdiction of the City such that the City is not able to consider such matters in order to provide direction.

Required Responses to Recommendations

- R-8 If the March Joint Powers Authority does not agree to dissolve itself by December 31, 2028, the Riverside County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the March Joint Powers Authority Commission modify its joint powers agreement to convert its appointed commissioner positions into elected positions no later than October 1, 2027. (Candidates should appear on the 2028 California primary election ballot.)**

City response: The recommendation has not been implemented by the City. The City does not find the recommendation to convert March Joint Powers Authority Commissioner positions into directly elected offices to be warranted or reasonable. March JPA Commissioners are appointed by elected officials in their respective jurisdictions and are accountable to their constituents. As such, the City appoints two members of its body to the March JPA. Requiring a separate election for March JPA Commissioners would create unnecessary complexity and administrative burden without enhancing accountability or performance.

With respect to the Report's findings and recommendations in which responses are invited, the City defers to the responses provided by March JPA as the March JPA is in the best position to respond.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact the Perris City Manager at 951-943-6100.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Vargas", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael Vargas
Mayor
City of Perris

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