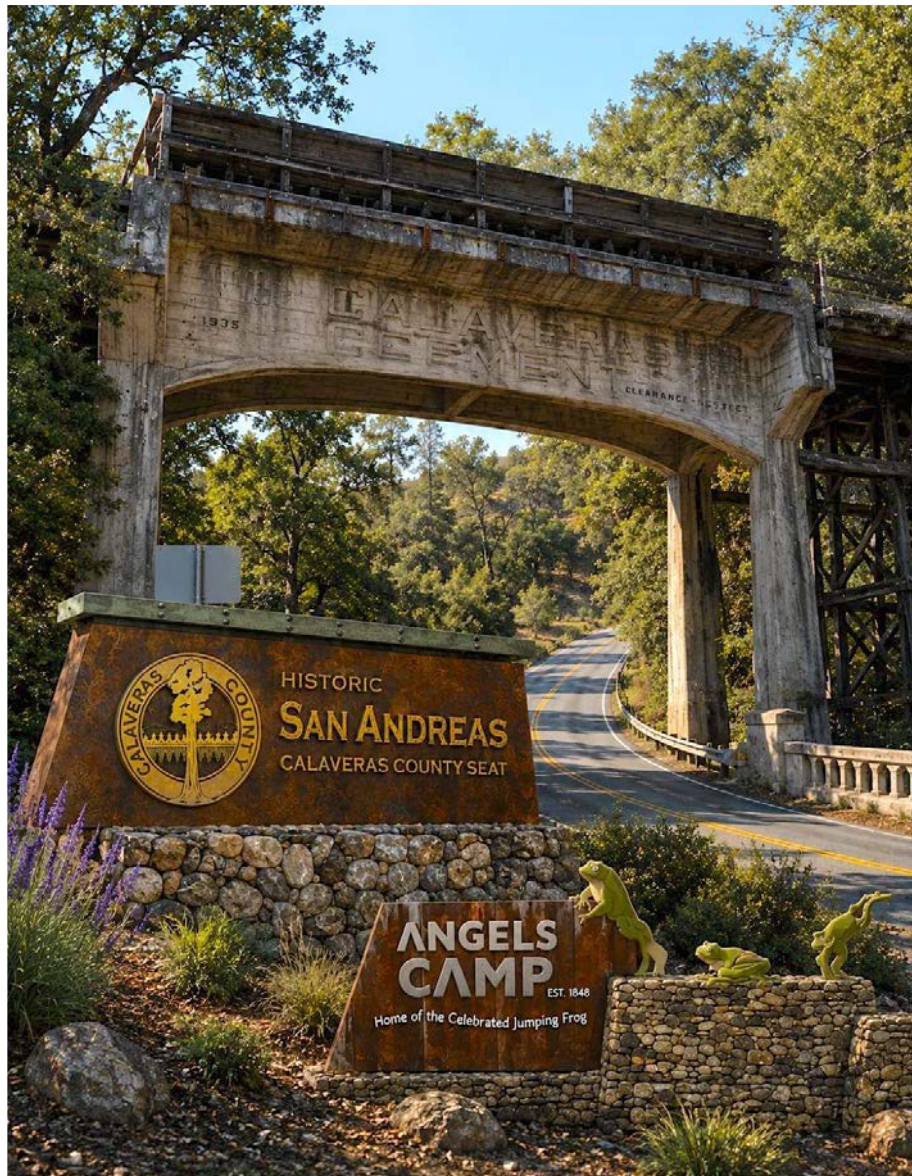


CALAVERAS COUNTY
CIVIL GRAND JURY
FINAL REPORT
2025-2026



**Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
2025-2026 Final Report**

The 2025-2026 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury approved the Final Report.

Signature: Katharine Klise

Katharine Klise, Foreperson

Date: 10/30/2020

**I accept this Civil Grand Jury report for the year 2025-2026 for filing and certify that it
complies with Part II, title IV of the California Penal Code.**

Signature: Timothy S. Healy

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

Date: 7-2-26

Table of Contents

LETTER TO THE PRESIDING JUDGE	4
GRAND JURY INFORMATION	5
CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM	7
MEMBERS OF THE 2025-2026 CALAVERAS COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY	9
REPORTS	
Fire Agencies of Calaveras County: Taking the Measure of Measure A	10
Detention Facilities of Calaveras County: A Model of Excellence and Innovation	20
Calaveras County Animal Services: Road Map to a Modern Shelter: Policies and Procedures	24
Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District: Where There's Smoke, There's Fire	35
RESPONSES TO THE 2024-2025 CALAVERAS COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORTS	48
Calaveras County Planning Department: Are We Running Out of Rock?	
Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility: Behind the Walls: Oversight and Observations of the Detention System	
Calaveras County Animal Services: A new shelter: 140 dog years in the making. But are we close?	
Calaveras County Code Compliance: Communication is a Two-Way Street	
Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency: Breaking the Cycle: Re-integration Strategies for Homeless Families with Children	
Calaveras County Water District: The Cost of Water	

On the cover: Symbols of the county. The Calaveras Cement Company bridge has been an iconic sight on Highway 49 since 1935. Gateway monument signs were installed in 2025 as part of the Clean California project. The composite image was generated by ChatGPT.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249

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

June 30, 2026

Dear Judge Healy,

In accordance with Penal Code 933(a), the 2025-2026 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury respectfully submits this Final Report to you, the Honorable Timothy Healy, Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California, Calaveras County.

It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as foreperson during this last term of the Grand Jury. No year is without its share of disruptions, and this jury faced lightning fires, snowstorms, highway improvements, and a big move. Through it all, their dedication to making Calaveras County a better place to live has been clear and admirable, and I am proud of what we accomplished together.

Civil grand juries would never get their work finished if not for all the court and county staff helping us along the way. On behalf of the 2025-2026 Grand Jury, I'd like to thank Court Assistants Lindsey Raymond and Louise Boschke, Deputy County Clerk to the Board of Directors Stacy Simpson, and County Auditor-Controllers Kathy Gomes and Greg Sessions for all their assistance. To our legal advisors, County Counsels Jonathan Frost and Sarah Edwards, and District Attorney Barbara Yook, we thank them for the time they took for us and all the patient explanations. And to the excellent team at County IT who kept us running smoothly, Kelly Stefanick, Derrick Tribble, Aaron Shaw, Lars Roundy, Greg Barnes, and Charlie Vaughn.

I'd like to give a special thanks to County Admin Candace Doyle, who was always there with a prompt response whenever we needed supplies or administrative help. We thank Candace for all her help and coordination that made the move of the Grand Jury's office a smooth one.

Lastly, I don't think it would be too presumptuous of me to say thank you, Judge Healy, on behalf of past forepersons whose juries you presided over, for all your advice, candor, and encouragement along the way. Your enthusiasm for the civil grand jury process is truly inspiring.

Sincerely,

Katharine Klise

Katharine Klise, Foreperson
2025-2026 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

CIVIL GRAND JURY INFORMATION

*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*

THE WHAT, WHO, AND WHY OF CIVIL GRAND JURIES

We all know that California is a special place. One of our unique qualities, written into Article 1, Section 23 of California's Constitution, is our county grand jury system. Called a *civil* grand jury, it operates as an arm of the Superior Court of the county and provides an opportunity for self-governance. The civil 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.

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 matters of governmental effectiveness and efficiency. In addition to examining county and city government, the civil grand jury reviews school districts, joint powers authorities, special districts, housing authorities, and other governing agencies to ensure that the best interests of the citizenry are served.

Grand jurors are citizens of various 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 grand jurors. The number of grand jurors impaneled each year is determined by the population of the county in which they reside. Calaveras County fields 19 jurors for the duration of their one year of volunteer service.

With regard to its watchdog authority, the 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.

The civil grand jury's fact-finding efforts result in written reports which contain specific recommendations aimed at identifying problems as well as improving government operations and enhancing responsiveness to citizens of the county.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

The major function of 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 the jails and detention centers within the county. Other than this annual requirement, each civil grand jury is free to choose which local government entities or public officials to investigate. Ideas for investigations generally come by way of three avenues: citizen complaints, matters raised by members of the grand jury, and referrals from the preceding grand jury.

During its investigation, 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 operation of that

entity, the jury analyzes whether the entity is operating in a businesslike manner and providing public services effectively and economically.

Grand juries work. They can do what no other group or individual can do: thoroughly, systematically, and without partisanship or bias, delve into the actions and policies of local governmental entities and officials to evaluate their effectiveness.

FINAL REPORT

A final report is created after many hours of fact-finding investigations conducted by the 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 grand jury makes recommendations for change and requests responses in order to ensure more efficient and lawful operation of government.

The Final Report of the 2025-2026 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury includes the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury and is released to the presiding Calaveras County Superior Court Judge by July 1 of each year. Upon approval, it is made available to the 2026-2027 Civil Grand Jury, the media, the public, and government officials.

It will also be available on the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury website:

<http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/>.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTERVIEWS

Reports issued by the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury do not identify 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 grand jury.

A civil grand jury report will never reveal how the jury or any 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.

HOW TO CONTACT THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

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

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
891 Mountain Ranch Rd
San Andreas, CA 95249

A Citizen Complaint Form is available for download on the Civil Grand Jury website at:

<http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/>.

Completed forms may be mailed to the above address or emailed to:

grandjuryfore@calaverascounty.gov.



Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

891 Mountain Ranch Road,
San Andreas, California 95249

<https://grandjury.calaverasgov.us>

Citizen Complaint Form – Confidential

The Calaveras County Grand Jury is a civil investigative body that deals with complaints falling within its jurisdiction. The Grand Jury may examine all aspects of county and city government, public schools, special districts, jails and detention centers.

Person filing the complaint:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Describe your complaint:

Identify the person(s) and/or the county or city government, public school, special districts, jail or detention center that is the subject of this complaint. The complaint should clearly state specific and verifiable facts. Include all names, dates, places, etc.

Note: All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

What other agencies, officials or persons have you contacted about this matter? What was (has been) their response to you? Provide names, addresses, phone numbers, contacts, dates, etc.

Is the subject matter of your complaint currently involved in litigation?

NO _____ YES _____

What action are you expecting from the Calaveras County Grand Jury?

It is a crime to knowingly make a false report to the Grand Jury that a felony or misdemeanor has been committed (CA Penal Code Section 148.5).

Attach copies of all pertinent documents and correspondence. Use additional sheets if necessary.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mail this completed form to:

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249

Or Email to: grandjuryfore@calaverascounty.gov

**MEMBERS OF THE 2025-2026
CALAVERAS COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY**

Katharine Klise, Foreperson

Lisa Carey, Foreperson Pro Tempore

Lora Collum, Recording Secretary

Mary Klise, Treasurer

Terry Wong, Sergeant-at-Arms

John Adkins

Michael Orrfelt

Nancy Smith

Mark Marsh

Robert Pile

Verity Totlebensmith

Christopher Moore

Debra Sackett

Hector Vega

Karin Silcox-Baker

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Fire Agencies of Calaveras County

Taking the Measure of Measure A: Local Fire Protection Ordinance Review

May 4, 2026



Photo by AscentXmedia (iStock).

SUMMARY

In March 2024, Calaveras County voters approved the Local Fire Protection Ordinance, otherwise known as Measure A, which allowed an increase in the local sales tax of one percent. Measure A has strict requirements on how the funds are to be divided among the local fire agencies, how the funds are used, as well as requirements for transparency through annual budgets and audits. As part of Measure A requirements for transparency, the Calaveras County Fire Services Joint Powers Authority (JPA) collects budgets and audits from the County's nine fire districts and the City of Angels Fire Department. The JPA then provides an annual report to the Board of Supervisors, local media, and the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury found that Measure A's 1% sales tax generated \$4,308,846.92 in revenue for partial fiscal year 2024-2025, exceeding initial estimates of \$2,550,000. Furthermore, in accordance with the measure's spending requirements, all ten of the County's fire agencies used at least 70% of the funds they received on staffing, including salaries, benefits, and personal protective equipment, with eight of the agencies spending 85% or more on staffing. This allowed all but one agency to transition from a volunteer to paid full-time firefighting staff in fiscal year 2024-2025.

However, the success of the measure came with its own set of challenges. Staffing fire stations 24/7 necessitates facilities such as sleeping quarters, men's and women's showers, and kitchens. Many of the County's fire stations were not originally constructed with living quarters. It also put added scrutiny on fire agencies to make sure they are compliant with Measure A and State requirements for annual audits.

With these results in mind, this report should serve as a baseline for future grand juries against which to measure how Calaveras's ten fire agencies, the JPA, and the County Auditor-Controller navigate Measure A's spending and reporting requirements in the years to come.

GLOSSARY

CCCGJ	Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
CLFPA	Calaveras Local Fire Protection Account
Fire agencies	The nine fire districts of Calaveras County and the City of Angels Fire Department
JPA	Calaveras County Fire Services Joint Powers Authority
Measure A	Calaveras Local Fire Protection Ordinance
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment

METHODOLOGY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews with relevant County, fire agency, and Fire Services Joint Powers Authority (JPA) employees, studied Measure A text, and reviewed numerous financial documents and reports.

BACKGROUND

Measure A, the Calaveras Local Fire Protection Ordinance, which allows an increase in the local sales tax of one percent, first appeared on the ballot in November 2022, when it failed to pass by 266 votes. Opponents of the measure suggested the County's ten fire agencies could find other ways to cut costs and stretch existing funding further, rather than increasing the tax burden on residents. Proponents argued that the funds the new tax would bring in were vital to maintaining adequate fire protection in a county prone to wildfires, and that response times to medical emergencies would also improve. After the closure of the Valley Springs fire station in July 2023 and the media attention it garnered, and a successful initiative to get Measure A back on the ballot for the March Primary Election of 2024, Calaveras County voters approved Measure A by a margin of 55% yes to 44.9% no.

Measure A has strict requirements on how the funds are to be divided among the local fire agencies, how the funds are used, as well as requirements for transparency through annual budgets and audits. It is in the spirit of transparency that the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) has prepared this report. It is this jury's hope that future civil grand juries will use the data presented here as a baseline for future investigations. Because the vote totals for and against Measure A were so close in 2022 and 2024, this report is also intended to provide some accountability to Calaveras County voters on how their tax dollars are being spent.

What is Measure A?

Known officially as the Calaveras Local Fire Protection Ordinance, Measure A is a one cent tax (1%) added to each dollar spent on taxable items (including use tax rates) in Calaveras County. Measure A was written by a citizen committee, with input from the local fire agencies. The revenue generated by this 1% tax is to be used "to improve the speed of response and the quantity and quality of personnel available to immediately respond to emergencies."

There are ten fire agencies in Calaveras County identified by Measure A that are eligible to receive Measure A funds:

- Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District
- City of Angels Fire Department (herein known as Angels Camp)
- Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District
- Central Calaveras Fire & Rescue Protection District
- Copperopolis Fire Protection District
- Ebbetts Pass Fire District
- Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District
- Murphys Fire Protection District
- San Andreas Fire Protection District
- West Point Fire Protection District

Measure A was approved by voters on March 5, 2024, and went into effect on October 1, 2024.

How are Measure A funds distributed to Calaveras County fire agencies?

Each year by May 1, the Calaveras County Auditor-Controller's office shall provide the fire agencies with an estimate of expected revenue from Measure A for the coming fiscal year (July 1

through June 30). This estimate is based on prior years' sales tax revenue and current economic conditions and forecasts.

Based on the estimate of expected revenue from Measure A for the coming fiscal year, the Auditor-Controller calculates the amount each of the fire agencies will receive, using the following formula:

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the funds shall be divided evenly among the ten fire agencies.
- One percent (1%) of the funds shall be allocated to San Andreas Fire Protection District to compensate for the burden of protecting non-property-tax-paying countywide infrastructure including the Government Center, Jail, Courthouse, and Hospital.
- Thirty percent (30%) of the funds shall be proportionately allocated to the local fire agencies based on their share of county population. Calculation of each local fire agency's share of the county population is based on the current available census data and other local information, including maps of housing and estimated household size.

The State of California collects the sales tax and distributes the County's portion to the County, of which 1% is earmarked for Measure A. All Measure A funds are deposited into a special Calaveras Local Fire Protection Account (CLFPA) set up by the County Auditor-Controller and distributed to each local fire agency on a monthly basis.

In any year where the revenue from Measure A exceeds 110% of the Auditor-Controller's estimate, the excess shall be retained in the CLFPA and made available for allocation and distribution in the next fiscal year.

How may local fire agencies use Measure A funds?

Each fire agency shall by June 1 of each year submit to the JPA an improvement plan and budget for the coming fiscal year (July 1 thru June 30) based on the estimate of expected Measure A revenue provided by the Auditor-Controller's office.

- No more than thirty percent (30%) of these funds may be used to improve or replace equipment and facilities.
- No less than seventy percent (70%) of these funds may be used for staffing, including incentives, training and stipends for volunteer firefighters; compensation, incentives and training for paid firefighters; personal protective equipment (PPE) for firefighters; and office and professional costs, including compensating an office manager, payroll services, auditing services and the cost of required audits or reports related to the Calaveras Local Fire Protection Ordinance.
- No more than five percent (5%) of the total Calaveras Local Fire Protection Ordinance funds for each agency may be devoted to the office and professional costs.

Fire agencies may retain up to ten percent (10%) of total funds received as a cash carryover in order to maintain service levels in future years when revenue declines. Beyond that 10% carryover, any funds not used by a fire agency in the current fiscal year go back into the CLFPA to be distributed among all fire agencies in the next fiscal year.

What are Measure A oversight and accountability requirements?

Each fire agency shall also provide the JPA with a copy of its annual audit and management report each year.

The JPA uses the plans and audits to prepare an annual summary of the countywide improvements funded by Measure A. They then issue this summary and a news release to media outlets, provide copies to Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury and Calaveras County Board of Supervisors, and post online.

DISCUSSION

Revenues and Budgets by Fire Agency

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Calaveras County Auditor-Controller estimated Measure A revenue for the nine-month period from October 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, to be \$2,550,000. The amount received for this period was \$4,308,846.92. In accordance with Measure A requirements, only 110% of the annual estimated amount (\$2,805,000 for fiscal year 2024-2025) may be distributed in the current fiscal year. Funds distributed for 2024-2025 were paid out monthly starting December 2024, but only through May 2025, when the 110% limit was reached.

The total funds distributed during this six-month payout period were as follows:

• Altaville-Melones	\$218,790.00
• Angels Camp	\$260,865.00
• Calaveras Consolidated	\$479,655.00
• Central Calaveras	\$252,450.00
• Copperopolis	\$294,525.00
• Ebbetts Pass	\$302,940.00
• Mokelumne Hill	\$218,790.00
• Murphys	\$252,450.00
• San Andreas	\$288,915.00
• West Point	<u>\$235,620.00</u>
TOTAL	\$2,805,000.00

The revenue received in excess of 110% for fiscal year 2024-2025 (\$1,503,846.92) was held in the CLFPA for fiscal year 2025-2026 and paid out in August 2025 as follows:

• Altaville-Melones	\$117,300.06
• Angels Camp	\$139,857.76
• Calaveras Consolidated	\$257,157.82
• Central Calaveras	\$135,346.22

- Copperopolis \$157,903.93
- Ebbetts Pass \$162,415.47
- Mokelumne Hill \$117,300.06
- Murphys \$135,346.22
- San Andreas \$154,896.24
- West Point \$126,323.14

TOTAL \$1,503,846.92

When estimating the expected Measure A revenue for any fiscal year, the Auditor-Controller has to consider economic forecasts, including the impact of tariffs on goods and changes to spending by visitors to Calaveras County. Because it's difficult to predict what will happen months in the future, a conservative estimate of expected revenue for the coming fiscal year keeps fire agencies from spending more than they will receive.

It should be noted that online purchases greatly increased Measure A revenue. Most online retailers collect sales tax based on the delivery address of the buyer instead of the retailer's address. For instance, when you purchase a refrigerator online instead of in a retail store in Lodi or Jackson, the county portion of the sales tax comes to Calaveras County instead of San Joaquin or Amador County.

The Auditor-Controller's estimate of expected Measure A revenue for fiscal year 2025-2026 was \$4,500,000. With the carryover from fiscal year 2024-2025 of \$1,503,846.92, the total revenue estimates for fiscal year 2025-2026 was \$6,153,846.92. Each fire agency submitted a budget and an improvement plan for fiscal year 2025-2026 to the JPA based on the following allocation:

- Altaville-Melones \$480,000.06
- Angels Camp \$572,307.76
- Calaveras Consolidated \$1,052,307.82
- Central Calaveras \$553,846.22
- Copperopolis \$646,153.93
- Ebbetts Pass \$664,615.47
- Mokelumne Hill \$480,000.06
- Murphys \$553,846.22
- San Andreas \$633,846.23
- West Point \$516,923.14

TOTAL \$6,153,846.91

As of January 1, 2026, the revenue from Measure A far exceeded what was originally estimated by the Auditor-Controller, so the Auditor-Controller agreed to re-estimate Measure A revenue for fiscal year 2025-2026. With this new estimate, each fire agency will have to submit an updated budget to the JPA. The new allocations are as follows:

- Altaville-Melones \$774,106.80
- Angels Camp \$922,973.49
- Calaveras Consolidated \$1,697,080.29
- Central Calaveras \$893,200.15

• Copperopolis	\$1,042,066.85
• Ebbetts Pass	\$1,071,840.18
• Mokelumne Hill	\$774,106.80
• Murphys	\$893,200.15
• San Andreas	\$1,022,217.96
• West Point	<u>\$833,653.48</u>
TOTAL	\$9,924,446.15

How Fire Agencies Used Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Measure A Funds

According to the JPA's annual report submitted to CCCGJ on November 11, 2025, most of fiscal year 2024-2025 Measure A funds were used for staffing: adding full-time employees and paying existing employees, including salary, benefits, and retirement; providing training for both paid and volunteer firefighters; and updating PPE.

The number of full-time firefighters in Calaveras County increased from 48 to 101 by June 30, 2025. The following shows how many full-time firefighters were added to each fire agency's ranks and what percentage of their 2024-2025 Measure A funds were used for staffing:

• Altaville-Melones	9	(85.68%)
• Angels Camp	4	(75%)
• Calaveras Consolidated	4	(100%)
• Central Calaveras	2	(100%)
• Copperopolis	3	(89.87%)
• Ebbetts Pass	3	(98.86%)
• Mokelumne Hill	0	(95.12%)
• Murphys	9	(100%)
• San Andreas	10	(73.09%)
• West Point	<u>9</u>	(99.06%)
TOTAL	53	

Mokelumne Hill was the only fire agency that did not transition from volunteer to paid full-time staffing in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Instead, their volunteer firefighters are compensated for the hours they staff the fire station and the calls they respond to. Mokelumne Hill plans to add full-time positions in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Adding full-time employees comes with additional costs under the ordinance's staffing category, such as medical insurance, workman's compensation, and retirement benefits. Staffing fire stations 24/7 adds costs under the Measure A facilities category, such as sleeping quarters and bath and kitchen facilities. Some of the stations were prepared for 24/7 staffing, but some stations are in need of upgrades in order to accommodate 24/7 staffing.

It should be noted that when fire stations are staffed 24/7, firefighters are able to roll out immediately instead of waiting for firefighters (including volunteers) to assemble at the station. CCCGJ was unable to obtain an exact percentage of callouts that are medical/accident-related versus fire-related, but based on interviews, we estimated that 70-90% of calls are

medical/accident-related and 10-30% of calls are fire-related.

For those fire agencies that did not use all of their Measure A funds for staffing, the remaining funds were used for facilities and/or equipment repairs and/or upgrades, or set aside (up to 10%) as a cash-carryover.

The ordinance specifies that the governing body of each fire agency—that is, its board of directors, or city council in the case of Angels Camp—is responsible for improving the speed of response and the quantity and quality of personnel. During its investigation into how Measure A funds were being used, CCCGJ noticed that not all fire agencies had the same understanding of what was included in the ordinance. For example, the ordinance does not require all fire stations to be staffed 24/7. Likewise, not all agencies have the same understanding of how the County Auditor-Controller's estimation and allocation process works under Measure A. Therefore, it would benefit the fire agencies if their chiefs and board members familiarize themselves with the ordinance's specific requirements.

Compliance with Measure A Oversight and Accountability Requirements

As mentioned above, one of the requirements of Measure A is that each fire agency provide the JPA with a copy of its management report and annual audit each year. All fire agencies turned their 2024-2025 management reports in to the JPA. As of the publication of this report, the independent audits for fiscal year 2024-2025 are underway.

During our investigation, CCCGJ learned that Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District has not conducted an independent audit since the 2020-2021 fiscal year. California Government Code §26909 contains audit requirements for special districts and provides multiple options for special districts to comply with its requirements.

The JPA fulfilled its reporting requirement to the Civil Grand Jury, Board of Supervisors, and media outlets in November 2025. This entailed a brief written summary of expenditures for fiscal year 2024-2025, the total number of firefighting staff added countywide, and the plans for fiscal year 2025-2026. The JPA readily provided more detailed information upon request.

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 CCCGJ report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews and reviewing documents, CCCGJs findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1: Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District has not had an independent audit performed since fiscal year 2020-2021, resulting in a lack of accountability and transparency to the public it serves.

R1a: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District conduct an independent audit for fiscal year 2024-2025 by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Calaveras County Auditor-Controller

R1b: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District conduct independent audits for three missing fiscal years, 2021-2022 through 2023-2024, by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Altaville-Melones Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Calaveras County Auditor-Controller

F2: Calaveras County's ten fire agencies fulfilled their Measure A requirement to submit management reports, including the previous year's expenditures and current year's budget, to Calaveras County Fire Services Joint Powers Authority.

Required Response

None

F3: Calaveras County Fire Services Joint Powers Authority fulfilled its Measure A requirement to submit an annual summary report to Calaveras County Board of Supervisors, Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury, and local media outlets.

Required Response

None

DISCLAIMER

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify the 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

Baptista, Nick, ed. "New Tax adds more firefighters." *Valley Springs News*, November 28, 2025, 1.

Benson, Danny. "Proponents look to resurrect Measure A." *Calaveras Enterprise*. March 9, 2023. <https://www.calaverasenterprise.com/articles/featured-stories/proponents-look-to-resurrect-measure-a/>.

Calaveras County. "Calaveras Local Fire Protection Transactions and Use Tax." Accessed March 26, 2026. <https://elections.calaverasgov.us/Portals/Elections/Documents/Measures/2024/1%20Percent%20Sales%20Tax%20to%20Benefit%20Local%20Fire%20Agencies%20Full%20Text.pdf>.

Hansen, B.J. "Valley Springs Fire Station Temporary Closures Could Be New Trend." *myMotherLode.com*. August 3, 2023. <https://mymotherlode.com/news/local/3201018/valley-springs-fire-station-temporary-closures-could-be-new-trend.html>.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Detention Facilities of Calaveras County

A Model of Excellence and Innovation

June 4, 2026



Composite image by N. Smith, K. Klise, and L. Carey.

SUMMARY

Penal Code 919(b) obligates the county grand jury to “inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county.” There are two detention facilities located within Calaveras County: Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility and Vallecito Conservation Camp #1.

The Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility is a medium-security 240-bed jail opened in 2014. Vallecito Conservation Camp #1 is a minimum-security fire camp built in 1958 in Angels Camp.

Members of the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) toured both facilities and met with staff and some inmates. We found both to be well run, clean, safe, and secure.

GLOSSARY

CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CCCGJ	Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
CDCR	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

METHODOLOGY

Section 919(b) of the Penal Code mandates that the grand jury inquire into the conditions of any public prison within the county. Sections 919(a), 925 and 925(a) authorize the grand jury to investigate county and city jails and other detention facilities within their jurisdiction.

On October 2, 2025, Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) toured the county jail facility and met with the Sheriff and her command staff. We spent several hours asking questions about the operation and function of the facility. We confirmed that the policies and procedures were in line with current standards and laws.

On February 26, 2026, CCCGJ toured Vallecito Conservation Camp #1 and had an opportunity to speak to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) personnel and inmates and confirm practices were in line with current policies and procedures. We met with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff and learned about the training, equipment, and work that the inmates perform.

BACKGROUND

Penal Code 919(b) obligates the county grand jury to “inquire into the condition and management of 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 jail or regional camp used for confinement is a typical example of such a local detention facility. Calaveras County has two facilities that fall under this designation: Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility and Vallecito Conservation Camp #1.

Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility

The Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility is a 240-bed jail operated by the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office. The facility was opened in 2014 and is located in San Andreas. Custody

responsibilities include inmate incarceration, work release programs, prisoner transportation, and court security. The detention facility handles intake of arrestees from every law enforcement entity in Calaveras County.

At the Adult Detention Facility inmates are given opportunities to improve their education and work skills. Mental health services are also available, including both individual and group therapy sessions. Limited computer access gives inmates a chance to take online college courses and skills courses. For example, an inmate can complete an online welding course that would allow him or her to be a certified welder after completing skills training and assessment upon release. Inmates may also work in the kitchen, where they have a chance to learn cooking skills that could facilitate employment after release.

Vallecito Conservation Camp #1

Vallecito Conservation Camp #1 is a minimum-security correctional facility in Angels Camp that opened in 1958. The facility is part of the Conservation Fire Camp Program jointly run by the CDCR and CAL FIRE, one of the most successful vocational programs offered to inmates in the California Corrections system. In addition to receiving time off their sentences, incarcerated crews can obtain their initial certification to work on fires, with the opportunity to obtain additional CAL FIRE certifications which make them eligible to apply to become firefighters upon their release.

Inmates are housed at the facility where they are trained in various aspects of wildland fire fighting. They can respond to fires and other emergencies to assist CAL FIRE. Between emergencies, they fulfill other functions such as fuel reduction and ground maintenance at County schools, parks, and cemeteries.

During the September 2025 TCU Lightning Complex fires, and again after the devastating March 2026 snowstorm, inmate crews provided crucial assistance in clearing fallen trees so that emergency crews could access affected areas.

DISCUSSION

Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility

Members of CCCGJ toured the Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility (County jail) on October 2, 2025, and met with the Sheriff and her staff, who comprehensively answered questions relevant to policies, operations, and the handling of complaints. We were advised of the numerous activities designed to assist the inmates in improving their education and life skills to reduce recidivism upon their release, including preparing meals for the other inmates in the facility's kitchen.

The conditions were clean and orderly. Meals were prepared with both taste and nutrition in mind. The inmates were respectful and satisfied with their treatment. Detention staff were dedicated and proud of their work.

Vallecito Conservation Camp #1

Members of CCCGJ toured the Vallecito Conservation Camp #1 on February 26, 2026, and spoke to staff and inmates. Inmates have opportunities to improve their education and skills in a variety of areas, including shop classes, fire hose and chainsaw repair, and culinary courses from

Columbia College. The camp also has a garden and a flock of chickens maintained by inmates which supplements their meals.

CCCGJ found the facilities to be clean and well maintained. There was an overall feel of respect between inmates and staff.

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 CCCGJ report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting site visits, CCCGJ's findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury found the Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility to be well run, clean, and properly maintained, and was impressed by the dedication of its officers and staff. Inmates are treated in a safe and respectful manner with a goal of improving their life skills.

Required Response

None

F2: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury found Vallecito Conservation Camp #1 to be well run, clean, and properly maintained, and was impressed by the dedication of its officers and staff. The variety of programs open to inmates in addition to firefighting demonstrates a commitment to improving opportunities for employment and improved quality of life upon inmates' release.

Required Response

None

DISCLAIMER

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify the 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.

REFERENCED SOURCES

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. "About CDCR." Accessed April 21, 2026. <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/about-cdcr/>.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Calaveras County Animal Services Road Map to a Modern Shelter: Policies and Procedures

June 9, 2026



Photo by V. Totlebensmith.

SUMMARY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) has issued numerous reports on Calaveras County Animal Services Department over the years addressing various concerns. One perennial subject of investigation has been the dire need for a new shelter to replace the current facilities, namely the original building that now houses the dog kennels, which falls short of current standards of animal care.

Now that plans for a new shelter have been approved by the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors and a loan negotiated to finance the \$10-million build, CCCGJ wanted to know how Animal Services is prepared to meet the transition, with a focus on the department's policies and procedures and the preparedness of its staff to maintain continuity of service.

CCCGJ found that Animal Services lacks a complete, organized policies and procedures manual or handbook, and what remains in use of an older one is fragmented and in need of updating. Other procedural documents, including guidance for such delicate operations as euthanasia, are disorganized and not readily available for staff to consult. Most job descriptions have not been updated since 2015.

As for continuity of service, Animal Services is understaffed for a modern county shelter, and is struggling to retain staff, especially Officers, whose field duties often have them interfacing with potentially dangerous dogs and County residents. CCCGJ found that Officers are expected to perform those duties without a Use of Force policy, are currently working with malfunctioning equipment and without basic protective gear, and spend a large portion of their time transporting animals to and from veterinary appointments rather than fielding their caseload of complaints.

These issues require immediate action and cannot be deferred until a new shelter is in place. Instituting an updated, organized set of policies and procedures to provide clear guidance and accountability is a crucial first step to improving both morale among shelter staff and the standing of the animal shelter in the community.

GLOSSARY

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

METHODOLOGY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews with relevant Calaveras County Animal Services (CCAS) employees as well as shelter and Friends of Calaveras Animal Services (FOCAS) volunteers; reviewed CCAS policies and procedural documents, job descriptions, and budget; reviewed previous Civil Grand Jury reports; and conducted research into animal care news and shelter best practices to better understand the standards of the field. Jurors toured the animal shelter in San Andreas on September 29, 2025.

BACKGROUND

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) has issued numerous reports on Calaveras County Animal Services Department (CCAS) over the years addressing various concerns. One perennial subject of investigation has been the dire need for a new shelter to replace the current facilities, namely the original shelter building that now houses the dog kennels, which falls short enough of current standards of animal care and building codes to be considered operationally obsolete.

At the March 10, 2026, meeting of the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors (BOS), the BOS voted 4-0 to approve negotiations of a \$10-million revolving loan from the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) to finance the construction of a new animal shelter. District 5 Supervisor Ben Stopper was absent. Construction on the 10,555-square-foot shelter facility is anticipated to begin in July 2026 and be completed by August 2027. The loan could cost the County up to \$23 million to repay over thirty years.

Now that concrete steps have been taken to move forward on the new shelter project, CCCGJ wanted to know how well CCAS is prepared to meet the transition, with a focus on the department's policies and procedures and the preparedness of its staff to maintain continuity of service during the disruptive construction process.

DISCUSSION

Policies and Procedures

CCCGJ found that CCAS does not have a policies and procedures manual or handbook for staff to reference for guidance, nor are new staff given one to read and sign off on at the time of orientation. Training is on-the-job for most staff, though new Officers do receive the PC 832 Arrest, Search and Seizure Course and Humane Officer Training as part of their standard training in addition to shadowing a senior Officer on staff.

There are some pages remaining in use from an older policies and procedures guide, and other specific procedural documents appear to be taken from various sources such as the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program and printed on an as-needed basis, and in some cases consists of internal correspondence that was deemed useful at some point but contains personal contact information for staff members or volunteers that is outdated.

Some examples include:

- Some CCAS Policies and Procedures dating back to 2016 are designated “#: XXXX” as if they were going to be given reference numbers but never were. These include procedures for Animal Bite Reporting, Rabies Protection for Staff and Volunteers, and Veterinary Care and Treatment. They are not easily referenced due to all having the same numerical designation.
- The Animal Bite Reporting document is missing its listed attachment, the Animal Bite Reporting Form.

- The euthanasia procedure from the old policies and procedures document (General Order No. AS-06-004) was last updated December 12, 2012, and includes guidelines that no longer appear to be CCAS procedure or current with California Penal Code Title 16 Section 2039. For example, policies covering the euthanasia of adoptable animals and owner surrenders, who may be allowed to perform euthanasia with which substance, and the responsibility of CCAS Officers to perform euthanasia in the field with the use of tranquilizers and/or firearms.
- It is unknown when the Feline/Shelter Protocol document was written, but it contains extensive guidelines for taking in healthy and sick cats, including those scheduled for euthanasia, that are not organized in any discernable way, and includes reference to Sergeants and Lieutenants which are not current CCAS positions.
- Some policy and procedural documents, including Animal Bite Reporting and Euth Procedure (the latter dated January 16, 2015), include contact information that may no longer be correct a decade later.

Job descriptions provide much of the guidance for hired staff as to what duties they are expected to perform at CCAS facilities and, in the case of Officers, in the field. Most job descriptions have not been updated in at least eight years, for example the Office Technician position which was last updated in 2009. This leaves in doubt whether all of the responsibilities of a position are still relevant to the way the job is performed today and current with California law. Only the job description for Animal Care Specialist has been revised since the COVID-19 pandemic.

CCAS Officers' job descriptions in particular were last revised in 2015, but still include language from 1991 when Animal Services was a division of the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office. CCAS became a department of the Environmental Management Agency in October 2012. According to current job descriptions, Officer I and II are expected to: "learn and perform animal capture involving tranquilizers, traps and related equipment" and "discharge firearm[s] safely and accurately," neither of which they are allowed to do without a Use of Force policy; and perform humane euthanasia, despite California Code of Regulations Title 16 Section 2039 requiring certified training in euthanasia in order for shelter staff to legally perform it. CCAS Officer training and equipment is further covered in the next subsection, Staff Preparedness.

In addition to outdated job descriptions, CCCGJ learned that CCAS staff have not received performance reviews. In the absence of organized, up-to-date, and accessible policies and procedures, it falls to CCAS management to ensure that continuity of training is maintained and that staff are accountable for their performance on the job. With neither a current policies and procedures handbook nor regular performance reviews of staff, it is unclear by what measure management ensures CCAS staff understand their responsibilities and have the tools and support necessary to perform them to the best of their ability.

Staff Preparedness

CCAS is considered fully staffed with one (1) Manager, three (3) Officers, one (1) Office Tech, and three (3) kennel techs which includes two Animal Care Specialists. It also has the ability to take on extra-hires for part-time help.

Even when CCAS is considered fully staffed, this basic crew creates continuity concerns when an experienced full-time staff member is unavailable or retires. CCAS functionality depends on volunteers to socialize animals, do laundry, and help with outreach (e.g. social media posts, community education, and contacting rescue organizations), but there are duties that can only be performed by staff (e.g. cleaning cages and litter boxes, caring for quarantined animals, and answering calls and responding to citizen complaints). However, when essential staff are unavailable or overworked, it may fall to volunteers to perform essential animal care duties that are more appropriately handled by staff. The lack of redundant staffing can also result in inadequate training of new hires, compounded by the absence of a policies and procedures manual that could otherwise provide continuity.

CCAS has had difficulty hiring and retaining Officers in particular, and as of the publication of this report is down to one full-time Officer on staff. CCCGJ identified these challenges to hiring and retaining qualified Officers:

- CCAS Officers are not provided deescalation or crisis training as part of their standard training despite being expected to interface with animals and people who may be in crisis and/or potentially dangerous.
- Calaveras County does not currently have a Use of Force policy that covers CCAS Officers, leaving Officers underequipped to handle potentially dangerous situations in the field on their own.
- The lack of a clear policies and procedures manual for Officers means that, rather than given the ability to act independently to make informed decisions about animal welfare, they are dependent on the CCAS Manager or Environmental Management Director to provide that guidance, which may be delayed or inconsistent.
- Equipment and cages aboard Officer vehicles are frequently nonfunctional, hampering their ability to carry out their duties safely and in a timely manner. Computers in the vehicles are nonoperational.
- The only protective gear Officers are issued are tactical vests and catchpoles. Pepper spray is often used by county and municipal animal control services but CCAS Officers are not allowed to carry or discharge it. Without a Use of Force policy, they are also not allowed to carry knives that could be used to free entangled pets or livestock.
- Officers spend much of their time transporting animals to and from veterinarian clinics and hospitals, some as far away as Stockton, which leaves them less time in the day to address citizen complaints, leading to a perpetual backlog of cases.

In the case of veterinary care and animal clinic visits, CCAS spent \$142,000 on animal care in 2024. This number does not include the cost of fuel and vehicle maintenance associated with these visits, though it is noted in the 2025-2026 budget that Gas and Oil expenditures did increase due in part to a greater number of emergencies and travel related to medical care; nor

does it factor in the amount of Officer time spent on medical transport rather than following up on complaints from the public.

Many county and municipal shelters either have a veterinarian on staff or contract with one to provide animal care at the shelter. Sometimes these vets are also able to provide spay and neuter clinics and rabies vaccinations to the public at a reduced rate, which can be a source of revenue for the shelter. At this time the plans for the new CCAS shelter do not include dedicated space for an in-house veterinarian. However, it is worth studying whether CCAS could save Calaveras taxpayer money, as well as make better use of its Officers' time, by either hiring or contracting with a shelter vet.

Another obstacle to the retention of qualified staff is morale. Shelter workers face many of the same stress factors as veterinarians, including interfacing regularly with members of the public in heightened emotional states and making difficult decisions about animals' health and welfare. Add to that the exposure to excessive noise and uncleanness in a shelter environment, decapitations of carcasses that must be performed for rabies testing and reporting, and a lack of redundancy in staffing essential CCAS positions leading to overworked employees and compassion fatigue.

These stressors make the need for leadership who is receptive and effective all the more important. Shelter staff and Officers should be given the tools and training to make basic procedural decisions on their own, in order to make effective use of their own time. They also need to know that any concerns they raise with management about the way animals are being cared for at the shelter will be addressed and corrected with the animals' welfare in mind, as animal care is the primary mission of a county animal shelter.

Shelter Population and Reputation

During interviews, one common refrain was that Calaveras residents frequently confuse the County animal shelter for the Humane Society. Many residents are not even aware that the County has its own shelter. CCAS is working to educate the public on what services it provides and the animals that are available for adoption by holding adoption events and having a presence at local fairs and BOS meetings, but the work is ongoing. They also use Facebook as a way to connect to members of the public both in and outside the County. Reputation also matters, and the public is more likely to visit a modern facility that is clean and inviting, where they can trust the staff to help them address their concerns and provide certain essential services.

The new shelter facility should bring animal care and housing up to modern standards. However, the number of kennels is expected to remain about the same. This brings up the question of whether the new facility will also be at or over its capacity for housing dogs, as a new shelter cannot fix some of the problems endemic to a rural county: roaming and abandoned dogs, often unsterilized, interacting with other pets, people, livestock, and wildlife.

The current shelter is frequently overcapacity with dogs and has to triage cases it takes in, prioritizing animals that are sick, intact (i.e., not spayed or neutered), in danger, or posing a danger to the public. Dogs that are considered low risk are often left where they were found. Many calls to have found strays picked up by CCAS staff do not get addressed due to a backlog

of higher priority calls, such as dog bites, and unaddressed calls are not well documented.

These policies, sometimes called “community animal” and “managed intake” policies, while more humane than euthanizing healthy animals, are part of a shift nationwide away from spay and neuter programs, which are costly but proven to reduce the number of animals at shelters. CCCGJ learned that CCAS has not obtained grants to help offset the cost to the department of spaying and neutering since 2022, meaning CCAS has had to use money from its budget to pay for sterilization of adoptable animals.

Because of a shortage of kennels at the County shelter, CCAS does not take owner surrenders except after a waiting period or immediately in extreme cases. However, it appears that management has an unwritten policy of accusing people turning in strays, without proof, of being owners attempting to surrender their own animals. Assuming that people in need of help are lying does not help CCAS’s reputation with the community they exist to serve. If Calaveras taxpayers and residents are not able to trust that the services of the County animal shelter will be there to help them when they need those services most, they may turn to other solutions, including animal abandonment, contributing to the stray dog problem in this County.

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 officials, 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 documents, CCCGJs findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1: Calaveras County Animal Services lacks any centralized, organized, and up-to-date policies and procedures to guide Animal Services Officers and shelter staff in the performance of their jobs, negatively affecting accountability among staff and leadership.

R1a: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services update and organize their policies and procedures for Animal Services Officers and shelter staff to current standards and in accordance with State law by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

R1b: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services distribute its updated policies and procedures to all paid Animal Services staff and obtain signed acknowledgement of receipt by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

F2: Calaveras County Animal Services job descriptions, with the exception of Animal Care Specialist, have not been updated in the last eight years, listing duties that are no longer relevant to the job or legally allowed, resulting in inconsistent and delayed resolution to problems as they occur.

R2: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services update the job descriptions for Animal Services Manager, Animal Services Officers I and II, and Office Technician II by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

F3: Calaveras County Animal Services management is not conducting annual performance reviews of its staff, denying staff members a crucial opportunity to receive and provide feedback on their job performance, as well as opportunities for advancement, and negatively affecting team cohesion and morale.

R3: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services management conduct performance reviews of hired staff, beginning no later than December 31, 2026, and annually thereafter.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

F4: Calaveras County Animal Services Officers are ill-equipped to fulfill their duties in the field, due to a lack of deescalation training, adequate protective gear and safety equipment, a Use of Force policy, and vehicles that are safe for Officers and the animals in their care.

R4a: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services provide current Officers with deescalation and crisis training as part of their standard Officer training regimen by December 31, 2026, and as new Officers are onboarded.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

R4b: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services adopt a Use of Force policy and provide Animal Services Officers with the appropriate protective gear and safety equipment by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

R4c: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services repair the equipment on their Animal Services Officer vehicles and create a routine maintenance schedule to make sure safe, fully functioning equipment is always available, each by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

F5: Currently Calaveras County Animal Services spends a large portion of its budget on veterinary services and transportation to animal hospitals, and the time spent in transportation greatly decreases the amount of time Animal Services Officers have to address a growing backlog of complaints from the public.

R5: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether taxpayer money and Animal Services Officer time could be saved by hiring or contracting for in-house veterinary services, by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

F6: Calaveras County Animal Services has not obtained grants for spay and neuter programs since 2022, despite such programs having proven to reduce the number of stray dogs and feral cats in the community as well as shelter intake.

R6: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services apply for new spay and neuter grants to offset the cost of these crucial services to the County by December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

F7: The Calaveras County Animal Services shelter remains overcapacity for dogs despite staff and volunteers' dedicated struggle to increase adoption rates through community education and outreach to rescue organizations.

R7: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Calaveras County Animal Services adopt a policy to identify and list eligible rescue organizations in order to reduce the shelter population, beginning no later than December 31, 2026.

Required Response

Calaveras County Board of Supervisors

Invited Response

Director of Calaveras County Environmental Management Agency

DISCLAIMER

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify the 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.

This report was prepared by the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury, with the exception of one juror who volunteers at the Calaveras County Animal Services shelter. This juror did not participate in any aspect of the investigation, including interviews and deliberations, or the writing of this report.

REFERENCE SOURCES

Boks, Ed. “We Solved Pet Overpopulation Once—So Why Did We Stop?” *Animal Politics with Ed Boks*. October 25, 2025. <https://animalpolitics.substack.com/p/we-solved-pet-overpopulation-once>.

Boks, Ed. “Ryther Law Group Fires Hayden Act Warning Shots at California Shelters.” *Animal Politics with Ed Boks*. February 18, 2026. <https://animalpolitics.substack.com/p/ryther-law-group-fires-hayden-act>.

Calaveras County Clerk. “March 10, 2026 Board of Supervisors Meeting.” Board of Supervisors meeting, San Andreas, March 10, 2026. YouTube, 01:26:54. <https://www.youtube.com/live/gaM3IIB5g7I>.

Naungayan, Karen C. “IBank Board Approves \$10 Million to Build Modern Animal Services Facility in Calaveras County.” IBank. March 11, 2026. <https://www.ibank.ca.gov/ibank-board-approves-10-million-to-build-modern-animal-services-facility-in-calaveras-county/>.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Where There's Smoke, There's Fire

July 13, 2026



Photo by N. Smith.

SUMMARY

During its investigation into how the ten fire agencies of Calaveras County are using Measure A funds, Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) was made aware of issues affecting Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District's (MHFPD) ability to respond to emergency calls in a safe and professional manner. Shortly after a declaration of no confidence was presented by the vast majority of MHFPD firefighters at the January 15, 2026 MHFPD Board of Directors meeting, CCCGJ received a citizen's complaint which outlined safety concerns, fiscal mismanagement, and a pattern of retaliatory behavior. An Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) notification of a complaint followed in March 2026.

CCCGJ corroborated several of the deficiencies listed in the OSHA notification of a complaint, namely incomplete or inconsistent documentation of qualifications and certifications, and a complete lack of an Injury and Illness Prevention Program. Several of the issues listed in the OSHA notification of complaint had also been identified during an OSHA investigation in July 2012, according to a previous CCCGJ report.

Internal communications and actions taken in public meetings corroborated firefighters' allegations of vindictive or retaliatory behavior, which was also indicated by the 2012 OSHA investigation. Other issues CCCGJ identified include incomplete policies and procedures, drug and alcohol policies not being enforced, and no rotation of officer positions within the MHFPD Board of Directors.

Because of Measure A funding, MHFPD was able to transition from a volunteer to paid full-time fire district in this fiscal year. Measure A spending and reporting requirements place the District under tighter financial scrutiny, and furthermore call on leadership to demonstrate a greater level of accountability to both taxpayers and firefighters. The recommendations in this report are aimed at improving governance by MHFPD's Board of Directors, operational effectiveness, and the safety of MHFPD's firefighters, who in turn are entrusted with the safety of their community.

GLOSSARY

CCCGJ	Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury
IIPP	Injury and Illness Prevention Program
MHFPD	Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SCBA	Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures

METHODOLOGY

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury (CCCGJ) conducted interviews with past and present Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District (MHFPD) management, board members, and

firefighters; researched relevant national and state fire district codes and standards; reviewed MHFPD operational and financial documents; attended MHFPD Board of Directors meetings; and reviewed the notification of a complaint to OSHA, the 2012-2013 CCCGJ report and violations identified by OSHA in 2012, and related 2014 news articles.

BACKGROUND

The Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District (MHFPD) serves an area that covers approximately 34 square miles. The District includes the towns of Mokelumne Hill and Paloma, and the surrounding areas. An elected board of five directors and an appointed Fire Chief serve the District. The current Chair of the Board of Directors has held that position for over a decade. The current Fire Chief, who was appointed in March 2026, succeeds the Fire Chief who was with the District in one capacity or another from 1963 until his retirement in June 2026.

Prior to receiving Measure A funding, MHFPD operated as a volunteer fire district with limited operational funding and resources. With the passing of Measure A, MHFPD's operating funds have increased substantially, elevating the need for greater transparency and accountability.

Measure A has strict guidelines on how funds can be spent (see 2025-2026 CCCGJ report "Taking the Measure of Measure A: Local Fire Protection Ordinance Review" for details). In summary, no less than 70% of the funds may be used for staffing, training, and personal protective equipment (PPE); no more than 30% may be used to improve or replace equipment and facilities; no more than 10% may be carried over to following years.

Any funds not used by a fire district, excluding carry-over funds, are returned to the County to be distributed among all the County's fire districts.

In fiscal year 2024-2025 (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) MHFPD received \$198,900 in Measure A funds and began paying their volunteer firefighters, replaced outdated PPE, and set aside 6.5% of the Measure A funds for future fiscal years.

For current fiscal year (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026) Measure A funds for MHFPD are estimated by the County Auditor-Controller to be \$774,106. The fire district may receive more or less than the estimate depending on sales tax revenues.

On January 15, 2026, at an open, public meeting, the MHFPD Board of Directors was presented with a declaration of no confidence in the then Fire Chief, signed by 83% of MHFPD firefighters. The following are some of the grievances and allegations that were included, as presented in the January 15 meeting:

1. Operational Negligence and Equipment Failures:

- **Failure to Commission Apparatus:** A fire engine has sat idle for years without the Chief taking any steps to provide the necessary training or certification for personnel to operate it safely. Furthermore, the vehicle remains unmarked and unnumbered, rendering it useless for active service.

- **Neglect of Life-Saving Tools:** A critical extrication tool valued at \$15,000 has sat broken on the bay floor for nearly a year. No effort has been made to repair or replace this essential life-saving equipment, directly impacting our ability to perform rescues.
- **Maintenance and Station Neglect:** Requests for apparatus maintenance consistently go unaddressed. Additionally, damage to the station and the C150 vehicle remains unresolved as the Chief has failed to follow through on insurance claims.

2. Fiscal Mismanagement and Lack of Transparency:

- **Budgetary Irregularities:** There is a documented lack of transparency in Treasurer's reports, including missing items and the improper allocation of Measure A funds toward non-compliant expenses.
- **Credit Failures:** The department's CAL-Card was locked for non-payment between December 2025 and January 2026.

3. [omitted]

4. Professional Conduct and Leadership:

- **Communication Breakdown:** There is a total lack of communication regarding the department's vision. The Chief's inability to manage finances necessitated hiring outside help, yet transparency hasn't improved.

Other grievances and allegations were presented in the January 15 Board meeting that were determined to be outside the scope of this grand jury report and omitted from the list above, including those listed under item 3.

Following the January 15 Board meeting, the MHFPD Board Chair responded to all of the above grievances as either resolved or in the process of being resolved. On January 21, 2026, the Chief asked the presenter of the list of grievances to resign from the department immediately.

In late January, CCCGJ received a citizen's complaint which alleged MHFPD operated under a sustained pattern of fiscal mismanagement, operational negligence, and potential violations of the Firefighters Procedural Bill of Rights (FBOR). Along with many of the grievances listed above, the complaint also alleged an atmosphere of intimidation and fear of retribution.

DISCUSSION

Fiscal Management

During our investigation of the Local Fire Protection Ordinance/Tax, also known as Measure A, CCCGJ was able to confirm that all fire districts, including MHFPD, used their fiscal year 2024-2025 funds in accordance with Measure A rules.

A cursory look at how fire districts were using their fiscal year 2025-2026 funds brought to our attention a possible issue with MHFPD. For fiscal year 2025-2026 (July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026), the estimated Measure A funds available to MHFPD was revised from the original

estimate of \$480,000.00 to \$774,106.80. CCCGJ noticed that by February 28, 2026 (eight months into the fiscal year), MHFPD had spent less than 30% of the Measure A funds they were expected to receive. As specified in the Measure A rules, any funds not used in the current fiscal year are returned to the County and distributed among all fire agencies within the County. With only four months remaining in the fiscal year, CCCGJ was concerned whether MHFPD leadership fully understood the language of Measure A and had a plan for using the remaining funds in the current fiscal year.

Among the grievances presented to the MHFPD Board at the January 15, 2026 meeting was the District's CAL-Card being locked for non-payment between December 2025 and January 2026. A CAL-Card is an essential tool, enabling departments to purchase necessary supplies when the need arises. Use of the CAL-Card holds departments accountable for adherence to all State procurement laws, regulations, and authorized individual spending limits. The CAL-Card was operational in March 2026, but it was noted as recently as the May 21, 2026 Board meeting agenda that MHFPD's CAL-Card was declined at an attempted point of sale. This was also cited as an issue during the wildfires of September 2025, when the card was declined at a critical time.

OSHA

Shortly thereafter, CCCGJ learned that MHFPD recently received a notification of complaint letter from the Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) noting the following alleged conditions "which may be a violation of the Safety Orders found in Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations":

1. **OSHA 2300** - Unqualified Personnel Assigned to Emergency Incidents. Personnel without verified Firefighter 1 certification, documented competency training, or driver/operator qualification are being assigned to live fire incidents and emergency responses.
2. **OSHA 2982** - Improper Training Documentation/Record Integrity.
3. **OSHA 5144** - Respiratory Protection Non-compliance. There is no documented Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) fit testing program and no verified respiratory medical clearance process.
4. **OSHA 5192** - PPE Inspection and Maintenance Deficiencies. Structural firefighting PPE lacks documented annual inspection, cleaning, contamination control, and lifecycle tracking consistent with NFPA 1851 and NFPA 1971 standards.
5. **OSHA 3297** - Apparatus Mechanical and Testing Concerns. Fire apparatus are operated despite mechanical reliability concerns.
6. **OSHA 3203** - Injury and Illness Prevention Program Deficiencies.

CCCGJ visited MHFPD on May 4, 2026, to review certification documentation, policies, equipment logs, and training materials, including those MHFPD sent in their 14-day response to OSHA. The visit was conducted with the then Assistant Fire Chief (former Fire Chief) and the Board Chair. The following are the results of our visit:

1. Certification documentation was incomplete, and the verification for qualifications and

certifications was inconsistent, despite those qualifications being listed on a roster sent to OSHA. Because that documentation was either missing or nonexistent, unqualified personnel may have been assigned to emergency responses.

2. Required documentation in the training logs and personnel files was found to be incomplete, inconsistent, and/or absent.
3. SCBA training, fit testing, and verified respiratory medical clearance consistently lacked documentation and verification.
4. No documentation was provided for PPE inspection, maintenance, or fitment guidelines, or an exposure control plan.
5. Fire apparatus was not operational.
6. Injury and Illness Protection Program (IIPP) documentation was absent. Only a photo of the cover of an IIPP binder was sent as part of MHFPD's response to OSHA. Upon CCCGJ's May 4 visit, the binder was found to contain no IIPP documentation, and MHFPD did not have an IIPP manual. This was confirmed by the current Fire Chief.

Additionally, CCCGJ requested a copy of the MHFPD roster sent to OSHA and a current roster of personnel noting certifications for firefighter, driver/operator, and Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). MHFPD provided four conflicting rosters to CCCGJ. The certifications noted on the roster provided to OSHA on March 14, 2026, were missing from the personnel files at the fire house. The former Fire Chief, who was officially retroactively reassigned to Assistant Chief at the April 16, 2026 Board meeting, was omitted from the four rosters provided to CCCGJ and the roster provided to OSHA, despite being a paid employee during that period according to the District's financial records.

During its investigation, CCCGJ also made multiple inquiries regarding the date the former Chief assumed the role of Fire Chief. However, the requested information was not provided by those with whom we spoke. It is unclear whether this is another example of personnel records being incomplete and/or poorly maintained.

A CCCGJ report published in 2012-2013 also referenced an OSHA onsite inspection of MHFPD which led to the District being cited for 20 violations. The alleged conditions from the 2026 OSHA notification of complaint are similar to the following violations from the July 2012 OSHA investigation:

- Did not provide a medical evaluation to determine the employee's ability to use a respirator
- Did not provide effective Heat Illness training
- Did not establish and implement an effective control of hazardous substances
- Did not establish, implement, and maintain an effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)

According to an August 5, 2014, article in *Calaveras Enterprise*, each violation carried a fine of

\$18,000 to \$25,000, and if any were willful, which they appeared to be per an OSHA inspector, they could have carried a fine of up to \$70,000 each. OSHA settled on a lesser fine of \$1,500 with the expectation the District would fix the issues.

Many fire agencies, under NFPA guidelines, designate a firefighter or fire officer other than the chief to be an in-house Health and Safety Officer (HSO). The HSO is responsible for making sure staff get the necessary training and that records are properly kept and up to date. They also oversee exposure reporting, medical evaluations, fitness and wellness regimes, and administration of the agency's IIPP. MHFPD does not have a Health and Safety Officer.

Ethics, SOPs, and Bylaws

CCCGJ was able to corroborate through interviews, internal communications, and actions taken in public Board meetings some of the firefighters' allegations of vindictive or retaliatory behavior. For instance, in January 2026, the then Fire Chief demanded the resignation of a whistleblower after staff's grievances were brought to the Board. We also corroborated some instances of preferential treatment in disciplining staff.

A climate of fear and vindictiveness was also mentioned in relation to the 2012 OSHA investigation, where the inspector noted firefighters' reluctance to speak to them about problems within the District. In 2014, the District entered a settlement with a former MHFPD Board member and firefighter who claimed to have been forced off the Board by the then and current Board Chair, demonstrating to this grand jury that there is a history of retaliatory behavior that has persisted for some time and has been a financial liability to the District in the past.

This environment may discourage open communication, hinder organizational improvement, and negatively impact firefighter safety, operational effectiveness, and public trust. For this reason, it is standard operating procedure and required by California State law that all elected board members and staff complete biennial ethics training and harassment prevention training (SB 1343, AB 1825, and AB 1234). CCCGJ was not provided any documentation to show that ethics training or harassment prevention training were completed by staff or the Board.

During our investigation, multiple instances were brought to our attention demonstrating that MHFPD's Stand Down policy has not been enforced. The Stand Down policy states "No member of the district will respond to, or in any way participate in, any district operations or training activity while under the influence of any drugs or alcohol." Stand Down policies follow the chain of command, but in a district with proper checks and balances, if anyone witnesses inappropriate behavior or perceived impairment, they should feel comfortable going to any supervisor to address their concerns. Not observing the policy presents a possible liability for the District if someone who is perceived to be impaired is allowed to assist in or command an emergency response. This, again, was a finding in the CCCGJ 2012-2013 report, indicating a history of behavior.

CCCGJ found that despite a zero-tolerance drug and alcohol policy in MHFPD's Standard Operating Policies [sic], or SOPs, this policy has not consistently been enforced, and we could find no evidence that anyone received drug and alcohol testing at the time of hiring or onboarding, nor randomly as per standard procedure.

In addition to policies not consistently being followed, we found the SOPs provided by the District to CCCGJ to be incomplete and missing sections, and they had not been updated to meet current standards in some time. The drug and alcohol policy, as well as other policies and SOPs, were written by the Board of Directors instead of firefighting staff or an expert on fire agency operations, which is not typical as Boards may not necessarily have the expertise in operations to write SOPs for a fire agency. It is standard practice that fire agencies use outside experts, such as LEXIPOL, to draft their Standard Operating Procedures, which are then brought to command staff for review and approval. Finally, the amended draft is presented to the Board for adoption.

The current Board Chair has held the position for over a decade. The Board of Directors bylaws state that officer positions (chair, secretary, and treasurer) are for a term of one year, but they do not say anything about holding a position for consecutive terms. In practice, if no one else vies for an officer position, the incumbent is able to continue holding that position indefinitely, potentially resulting in consolidation of power in one individual, instead of the Board being a collaborative effort with a shared division of labor.

The MHFPD Board's bylaws do not include a provision for the rotation of Board officers. Best practices by a board should include regular rotation of board officer positions to promote a diversity among leadership, to spread out duties appropriately, to strengthen accountability, to prevent burnout, and to prevent responsibility and decision-making from becoming concentrated in a single board officer over an extended period of time. Best practices also encourage the rest of the board to exercise sufficient oversight to address concerns that may expose the district to increased operational and financial risk.

The MHFPD Board's bylaws do state that in the case of the vacancy of an officer position, that position shall be "filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board," but they do not state who is eligible or ineligible to fill that position. Under California law, the chair of a non-profit organization's board cannot hold secretary or treasurer positions at the same time (CA Corporation Code 9213). When an officer of the board resigns, the chair should not take over their duties. According to the code, "This restriction exists to maintain the separation of powers and fiduciary oversight."

Conclusion

Based on information gathered from the Citizen Complaint to CCCGJ, the OSHA notification of complaint, CCCGJ's investigation and multiple visits to the Mokelumne Hill fire station, the following issues were found to be of priority:

- By not fully utilizing the Measure A funds MHFPD received throughout fiscal year 2025-2026 on much needed equipment and facility repairs, training and certification, and staffing, it risks losing unused funds to other fire districts within the County.
- MHFPD's CAL-Card credit account has been locked repeatedly, hampering staff's ability to purchase gas, food, and urgently needed supplies.
- Most MHFPD firefighters lack the required qualification and certification documentation for their assigned positions, and management has not maintained appropriate

documentation within firefighter training logs and personnel files.

- There is no supporting documentation that MHFPD was inspecting or cleaning PPE to the standards required by OSHA.
- OSHA-required Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) has not been implemented. Per onsite visit, no relevant IIPP documentation was found.
- Firefighters reported a workplace environment characterized by intimidation and retaliation for raising complaints or reporting issues within the Fire District. Records verify that instances of intimidation and retaliation occurred.
- MHFPD failed to consistently uphold and enforce its Stand Down and zero tolerance policies.
- Firefighters at all levels, whether volunteer or paid staff, were not required to have a physical or drug and alcohol testing at the time of hire.
- MHFPD's Standard Operating Policies manual is incomplete and out of date.

In March 2026, MHFPD hired a new Fire Chief, who has started to spend Measure A funds for much needed training, PPE, compensation, and equipment. He has stated that he has or will implement the following changes:

- The Mokelumne Hill fire station is now staffed 24/7 with a captain, engineer, and firefighter.
- All current firefighters, including volunteer personnel, are required to maintain certifications appropriate to their assigned positions, with supporting documentation to be properly retained in their personnel files.
- All firefighters, including volunteer personnel, will complete the required physical, drug and alcohol testing, and fit testing by May 2026, and corresponding documentation is to be placed in their personnel files.
- An extractor (heavy duty washing machine) has been authorized for purchase to clean turnout gear after a fire, which is required by OSHA.
- Major repair work has been completed on the Type 3 engine.
- The broken extrication tool, sometimes referred to as Jaws of Life, has been repaired and is available for in-service use.

CCCGJ recognizes that the new Fire Chief is working to resolve these issues and utilizing Measure A funds, as required by the ordinance, with the intent that residents of the Mokelumne Hill area will receive the full benefit of those funds.

At the time of writing this report, a new Assistant Chief has been hired and the acting Assistant Chief (former Fire Chief) has retired.

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 CCCGJ report, invited responses must be received within 90 days.

After conducting interviews and reviewing documents, CCCGJs findings and recommendations are as follows:

F1: Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District lacks or is deficient in the following Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)-required programs and/or required documentation thereof: Respiratory Protection Program, Exposure Control Plan, Heat Illness Protection Program, and Injury and Illness Prevention Program. This has resulted in significant health and safety risks for its firefighters, and poses a potential legal and financial liability to the District.

R1a: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District review all OSHA-required programs for fire districts, comply with those requirements, including required documentation, and verify compliance beginning no later than November 1, 2026, and annually thereafter.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Fire Chief

R1b: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District designate by September 1, 2026, a Health and Safety Officer, who is not the Fire Chief or a Board member, to make sure proper training is completed and documented, and that health and safety protocols are being followed.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Fire Chief

F2: Staff grievances presented to Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District management and Board of Directors resulted in instances of retaliation and a general fear of retaliation among the staff.

R2a: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends all Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection

District Board members and staff attend biennial ethics and harassment prevention training beginning no later than September 30, 2026, in order to recognize protected activities such as reporting misconduct, fostering a “speak-up” culture, and protecting whistleblowers from adverse actions.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Fire Chief

R2b: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District appropriately document when biennial ethics and harassment prevention training are completed beginning no later than September 30, 2026.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Fire Chief

F3: Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District’s current Standard Operating Policies are incomplete and outdated, resulting in inconsistency, lack of clarity, and non-compliance in following fire industry standards.

R3: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District implement a new Standard Operating Procedures manual that conforms to fire industry standards and a new Policies and Procedures Manual by December 1, 2026.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Fire Chief

F4: Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District’s policies regarding the use of alcohol or drugs while on duty, on agency property, or conducting agency business are not consistently enforced, resulting in potential risk to firefighters and the community, as well as potential legal and financial liability to the Fire District.

R4: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that all Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District firefighters, including all leadership, paid and volunteer personnel, acknowledge and document their agreement to the Fire District’s drug and alcohol zero tolerance and Stand Down policies, annually, beginning December 1, 2026.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

Invited Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Fire Chief

F5: Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District’s Board of Directors bylaws do not provide for the rotation of Board officer positions nor set limits for how many consecutive years Board members may hold officer positions, allowing for individuals to hold the same position indefinitely, which impedes the sharing of responsibility, knowledge, and accountability among all Board members.

R5: Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board, in the interest of fairness and transparency of leadership, update their bylaws to include the rotation of Board officer positions by September 30, 2026.

Required Response

Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District Board of Directors

DISCLAIMER

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify the 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

Armstrong, Lance. “Santos institutes changes as Moke Hill’s new fire chief.” *Calaveras Enterprise*. March 28, 2026. <http://www.calaverasenterprise.com/articles/news/santos-insistutes-changes-as-moke-kills-new-fire-chief/>.

Calaveras County. “Calaveras Local Fire Protection Transactions and Use Tax.” Accessed March 26, 2026. <https://elections.calaverasgov.us/Portals/Elections/Documents/Measures/2024/1%20Percent%20Sales%20Tax%20to%20Benefit%20Local%20Fire%20Agencies%20Full%20Text.pdf>.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury. “Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District.” *Calaveras County 2012-2013 Grand Jury Final Report*, June 13, 2013: 27-33. <http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/Reports>.

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury. “Response to the 2012-2013 Grand Jury Report Regarding

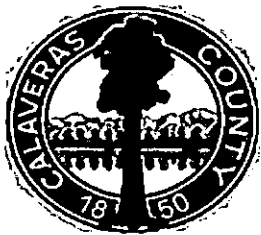
Mokelumne Hill Fire Protection District.” *Calaveras County 2013-2014 Grand Jury Final Report*, June 5, 2014: 40-46. <http://grandjury.calaverasgov.us/Reports>.

Crane, Stephen. “Fire District Burned by Lawsuit.” *Calaveras Enterprise*. August 5, 2014. <https://www.calaverasenterprise.com/articles/news/fire-district-burned-by-lawsuit/>.

RESPONSES TO THE 2024-2025 CALAVERAS COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORTS



Snow flowers (Sarcodes sanguinea) emerging after the March 2026 winter storm at Big Trees State Park. Photo by K. Klise.



CALAVERAS COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

891 Mountain Ranch Road

San Andreas, California 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

August 12, 2025

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 "Calaveras County Planning Department: Are We Running out of Rock"
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 19, 2025, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on May 20, 2025. 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 PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Grand Jury Finding F1

The Planning Department does not update the Board of Supervisors on surface mining issues on a regular, annual basis, therefore the Board of Supervisors, as lead agency under SMARA, is unaware of the results of annual inspections, and is unable to adjust and approve annual financial assurance cost estimates or consider enforcement actions for surface mines within its jurisdiction.

County Response to Finding F1

The County agrees with this finding. Title 17 Zoning Code Chapter 17.13 Mineral Resource Overlay Zone and the General Plan Resource Production Element does not require the Planning Department to update the Board of Supervisors on surface mining issues.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department adopt a schedule for reporting the annual mine inspection results to the Board of Supervisors, including any recommendations for administrative action, on an annual basis or more frequently as deemed necessary, beginning December 31, 2025.

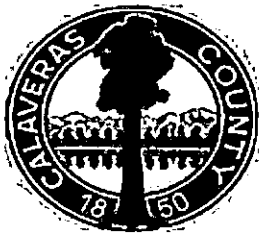
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R1a

This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Planning Department will adopt a schedule for reporting the annual mine inspection results to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2025.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors agendize annually, or more frequently when needed, a report from the Planning Department's mine inspector as to the status of all surface mines within the County's jurisdiction, with recommendations for administrative actions when warranted, beginning December 31, 2025..

County Response to Recommendation R1b

This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Planning Department will adopt a schedule for reporting the annual mine inspection results to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2025

Grand Jury Finding F2

The Planning Department does not appropriately note violations on annual mine inspection reports, which may be considered a substantial enough violation of the County's administrative responsibilities under SMARA that those responsibilities could potentially be subject to assumption by the State Mining and Geology Board.

County Response to Finding F2

The County disagrees with this finding. The Division of Mine Reclamation has been receiving and reviewing the County's annual inspection reports, and the County is not required to report more information than the law requires.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department clearly note violations pursuant to SMARA when conducting annual inspections, which includes review of the site-specific reclamation plan, specific conditions set forth in the use permit issued by the Planning Department, observations made during mine inspection visits, and annual financial assurances adjustments, beginning December 31, 2025.

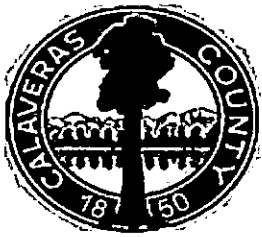
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R2a

This recommendation has been implemented. The Division of Mine Reclamation has been receiving and reviewing the County's annual inspection reports (submitted on Form MRRC-1 as required by 14 C.C.R. §3504.5) which reveal any issues that the County has found to be inconsistent with the mine's Use Permit and Reclamation Plan, observations of violations during inspection visits, and issues concerning financial assurances. In addition, the Planning Department has been working directly with mine operators to correct any inconsistencies with the Use Permit and Reclamation Plan and/or issues with annual submittals to the Division of Mine Reclamation.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department present an overview of the annual mine inspection reports to the Board of Supervisors, including any recommendations for administrative action, on an annual basis or more frequently as deemed necessary, by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R2b

This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Planning Department will adopt a schedule for reporting the annual mine inspection results to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2025.

Grand Jury Finding F3

The Planning Department's failure and reluctance to appropriately issue violations that may be subject to financial penalties and corrective actions in its inspection reports and in reporting to the Board of Supervisors negatively impacts the lead agency's ability to maintain compliance across all surface mining operations within its jurisdiction, provide a level playing field for surface mining in the County, as well as avoid hidden financial liabilities that may increase substantially over time if left unaddressed.

County Response to Finding F3

The County disagrees with this finding. The Planning Department has a professional regulatory relationship with local mine operators and requires compliance across all surface mining operations within its jurisdiction. Out of the 15 active mine sites within the County, the Planning Department recently worked with the operator of one site to close out after reclamation was completed in 2024 and is working with 2 other sites to close in 2025. The Planning Department is unaware of any "hidden financial liabilities" that are not being addressed.

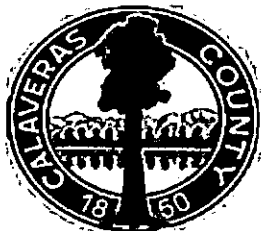
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

Grand Jury Recommendation R3a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department notify the Board of Supervisors of violations identified during annual surface mine inspections and recommend financial penalties and/or corrective actions, beginning by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R3a

This recommendation will be partially implemented. The Planning Department will adopt a schedule for reporting the annual mine inspection results to the Board of Supervisors by December 31, 2025.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors, as the lead agency under SMARA, begin exercising their authority to issue financial penalties and/or corrective actions for non-compliant operators by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R3b

This recommendation has been implemented. Planning has been working closely with all mine operators to correct any inconsistencies with SMARA, Use Permits and/or Reclamation Plans as they arise. Should financial penalties and/or corrective actions need to be implemented for operators not working toward compliance the County will act.

Grand Jury Finding F4

Without engineered scaled site maps, it is uncertain whether annual inspection reports prepared by the Planning Department reflect the true amount of disturbed acreage at each surface mining site.

County Response to Finding F4

The County disagrees with this finding. All of the Mine Use Permits and Reclamation Plans (save one) were approved prior to 1990 and the site maps submitted were deemed adequate and approved with the Mine Use Permits. In addition, all sites are required to report the amount of disturbed acreage in their Annual Reports which are submitted to the Planning Department and the Division of Mine Reclamation.

Grand Jury Recommendation R4

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department issue more comprehensive inspection reports, which include scaled site maps and annual annotated photo documentation of site conditions, beginning by December 31, 2025.

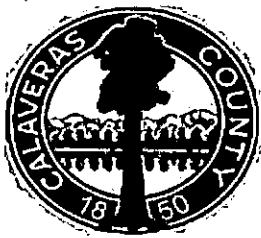
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R4

This recommendation will be partially implemented by December 31, 2025. The Planning Department will work to issue more comprehensive inspection reports and include annual annotated photo documentation of site conditions. In addition, Planning will request that all operators submit updated scaled site maps as needed.

Grand Jury Finding F5

The Planning Department depends on technical information provided by the surface mining operator and their respective consultants, which should include appropriately scaled maps of current site conditions, disturbed acreage; and financial assurance cost estimates, with minimal internal review for accuracy. Submitting inaccurate reports could be viewed as cause for the State Mining and Geology Board to assume the County's administrative responsibilities under SMARA.

County Response to Finding F5

The County agrees with this finding and will work to issue more comprehensive inspection reports and include annual annotated photo documentation of site conditions. In addition, Planning will request that all operators submit updated scaled site maps as needed.

Grand Jury Recommendation R5a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends all technical information provided by a surface mine operator or their consultant be verified that it was prepared by a California licensed professional and be reviewed internally on behalf of the County by individuals qualified to review such information beginning December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R5a

This recommendation has been implemented. Although the Planning Department was not previously requiring the mine operators to have their Financial Assurance Cost Estimates to be prepared by a California licensed engineer or geologist, it has been working with the mine operators to require this for the last few years. All of the active mining sites have a California licensed professional prepare their Financial Assurance Cost Estimates.

Grand Jury Recommendation R5b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department request at the time of each annual inspection an updated engineered site map from surface mine operators at an appropriate scale for all surface mining operations beginning December 31, 2025.

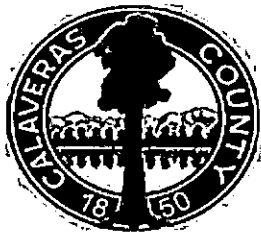
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R5b

This recommendation will be partially implemented by December 31, 2025. The Planning Department will work to issue more comprehensive inspection reports and include annual annotated photo documentation of site conditions. In addition, Planning will request that all operators submit updated scaled site maps as needed.

Grand Jury Finding F6

Instead of charging each surface mining operation the actual cost of time and materials associated with the completion of inspections, the Planning Department charges all operators the same amount regardless of the size of the operation and complexity of the issues associated with each one.

County Response to Finding F6

The County agrees with this finding. The Board of Supervisors approved a fee update in 2019 which reduced the annual mining inspection from \$615 to \$205.

Grand Jury Recommendation R6

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department charge each surface mine operator reasonable reimbursement rates for time and other expenses associated with its annual inspection, rather than charging a flat rate, beginning December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R6

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Planning Department will investigate the adequacy of the current fee to determine if an update is necessary by December 31, 2025.

Grand Jury Finding F7

Certain surface mining operations are operating under an Interim Management Plan that has lapsed or expired, which puts them out of compliance with the County's responsibilities under SMARA regulations.

County Response to Finding F7

The County disagrees with this finding. The County has several sites that have become idle and the mine operators have been working with Planning to reclaim and/or close those sites since the expiration of those Interim Management Plans.

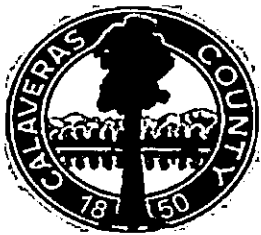
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

Grand Jury Recommendation R7

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors, as lead agency, inform the operator that the surface mining operation is out of compliance with SMARA and should promptly commence reclamation by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R7

This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not reasonable. The County has several sites that have become idle and the mine operators have been working with Planning to reclaim and/or close those sites since the expiration of those Interim Management Plans.

Grand Jury Finding F8

The Planning Department has neither conducted a comprehensive review nor analyzed the County's existing quantities of permitted production of sand, gravel, and aggregate in relation to existing and future needs, which could impact the future availability of such materials as commercial and residential development and infrastructure repair increase throughout the County.

County Response to Finding F8

The County agrees with this finding. The Planning Department will work to implement per Board direction the following General Plan Resource Production Element Implementation Measures:

Mineral Resources

RP-4C Mineral Resource Information- Adopt a procedure for incorporating new Mineral Classification Reports from the State Geologist into the general plan map land use map to reflect newly classified valuable mineral resources.

RP-4D Mining Advisory Committee- Consider establishing a Mineral Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors related to the management of mineral reserves countywide, to consider appropriate non-mining uses on mineral reserve lands, to review requests for general plan amendments on lands identified as containing important mineral reserves, and to review other actions related to mining operations in Calaveras County.

RP-4G Mineral Resource Zones- Petition the State Mining and Geology Board to prioritize additional areas of significant mineral resources in the county for consideration and designation as Mineral Resource Zones. Identify through appropriate zoning important mineral lands identified in State Classification Reports from the State Geologist to assist in their conservation for future use.

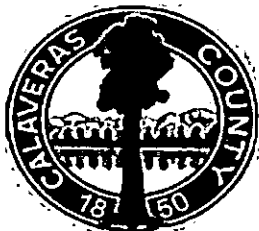
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

Grand Jury Recommendation R8

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department partner with the California Geological Survey to assess the County's existing supply of mineral resources and future needs, notably in regard to sand, gravel and aggregate, beginning by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R8

This recommendation will not be implemented as there is no law requiring it. The Planning Department will work to implement per Board direction the following General Plan Resource Production Element Implementation Measures:

Mineral Resources

RP-4C Mineral Resource Information- Adopt a procedure for incorporating new Mineral Classification Reports from the State Geologist into the general plan map land use map to reflect newly classified valuable mineral resources.

RP-4D Mining Advisory Committee- Consider establishing a Mineral Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors related to the management of mineral reserves countywide, to consider appropriate non-mining uses on mineral reserve lands, to review requests for general plan amendments on lands identified as containing important mineral reserves, and to review other actions related to mining operations in Calaveras County.

RP-4G Mineral Resource Zones- Petition the State Mining and Geology Board to prioritize additional areas of significant mineral resources in the county for consideration and designation as Mineral Resource Zones. Identify through appropriate zoning important mineral lands identified in State Classification Reports from the State Geologist to assist in their conservation for future use.

Grand Jury Finding F9

The Planning Department has mineral resource management objectives as part of the County's General Plan which does not regularly track or set as tasks to be performed and scheduled for implementation or completion, thereby decreasing the likelihood they will be implemented at all.

County Response to Finding F9

The County disagrees with this finding. The Planning Department will work to implement per Board direction the following General Plan Resource Production Element Implementation Measures:

Mineral Resources

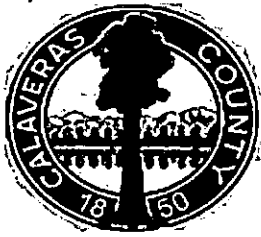
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

RP-4C Mineral Resource Information- Adopt a procedure for incorporating new Mineral Classification Reports from the State Geologist into the general plan map land use map to reflect newly classified valuable mineral resources.

RP-4D Mining Advisory Committee- Consider establishing a Mineral Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors related to the management of mineral reserves countywide, to consider appropriate non-mining uses on mineral reserve lands, to review requests for general plan amendments on lands identified as containing important mineral reserves, and to review other actions related to mining operations in Calaveras County.

RP-4G Mineral Resource Zones- Petition the State Mining and Geology Board to prioritize additional areas of significant mineral resources in the county for consideration and designation as Mineral Resource Zones. Identify through appropriate zoning important mineral lands identified in State Classification Reports from the State Geologist to assist in their conservation for future use.

Grand Jury Recommendation R9a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department establish and maintain mechanisms for tracking progress on mineral resource management goals and setting reasonable timetables for completion by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R9a

This recommendation has been partially implemented. The Planning Department tracks General Plan Implementation on an annual basis which includes a report directly to the Board of Supervisors. The Planning Department is not required to commit to implementation of the above General Plan measures by a deadline.

Grand Jury Recommendation R9b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors establish a Mineral Advisory Committee for recommendations related to the management of mineral reserves countywide as suggested in the General Plan by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R9b

This recommendation requires further analysis. Per General Plan RP-4D, the County will consider establishing a Mineral Advisory Committee during the next annual General Plan Report to the Board of Supervisors.

Prior to establishing the Mineral Advisory Committee the Board of Supervisors will need to establish roles and responsibilities as well as composition for a Mining Advisory Committee. The Board will also need to consider bylaws for the committee and the process for appointment of committee members.

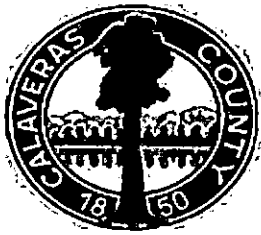
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

Grand Jury Recommendation R9c

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors designate a County Geologist, who is licensed to practice in the State of California, to provide continuity on geological matters across all departments in County government by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R9c

This recommendation will not be implemented as it is both unwarranted and unreasonable. There is no statutory requirement for a County Geologist nor is there an implementation measure in the General Plan Resource Production Element requiring that the County designate a County Geologist, there is no mechanism for such an action. Furthermore, having a County Geologist is not required in any way and would require significant financial resources.

Grand Jury Finding F10

Despite hundreds of abandoned mines dispersed throughout the County, the Planning Department does not maintain a current map or tabulation of abandoned mines within its jurisdiction for use by first responders and as a readily accessible and standardized reference across County departments.

County Response to Finding F10

The County agrees with this finding. While preparing this map is not a requirement and would involve considerable resources to complete, the County will consider this effort as funding is available.

Grand Jury Recommendation R10

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department maintain a database of known abandoned mines in Calaveras County for internal use by all affected County and State departments, to be implemented by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R10

This recommendation has been implemented. The Planning Department has Mineral Survey maps for hundreds of historic claims that have plat maps from the U.S. Surveyor General's Office. These maps have always been made available during private landowner inquiries.

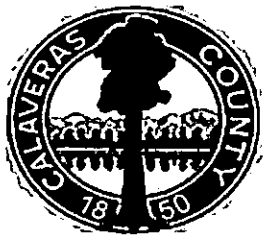
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

abandoned mines, many of which are on private land and could become liabilities for property owners if they are not adequately secured or disclosed in property transfers.

County Response to Finding F11

The County agrees with this finding. The Department of Conservation Abandoned Mine Lands Unit is responsible for protecting the public and remediating hazards associated with legacy (pre-SMARA) mines. Private landowners can report abandoned mines to the DOC Abandoned Mine Lands Unit.

Grand Jury Recommendation R11

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Planning Department institute a process, accessible through their website, whereby the public can report locations of abandoned mines to the County and/or be directed to resources about mitigating their associated hazards, by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R11

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Department of Conservation Abandoned Mine Lands Unit is responsible for protecting the public and remediating hazards associated with legacy (pre-SMARA) mines. Private landowners can report abandoned mines to the DOC Abandoned Mine Lands Unit.

Sincerely,

Martin Huberty
Chair

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
District 2
286-9003

Martin Huberty
District 3
286-9007

Amanda Folendorf
District 4
286-9050

Benjamin Stopper
District 5
286-9059

RECEIVED

AUG 15 2025

CALAVERAS SUPERIOR COURT

Office of the Sheriff

1045 Jeff Tuttle Drive
San Andreas, CA 95249



Rachelle Whiting, Sheriff

209.754.6500
sheriff.calaverasgov.us

DATE: June 4, 2025
TO: Honorable Timothy S. Healey, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
FROM: Rachelle Whiting, Sheriff
SUBJECT: Response to 2025 Grand Jury Report on the Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility
Cc: Board of Supervisors, CCCGJ Foreperson

The Calaveras County Sheriff's Office and staff members reviewed the 2025 Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury Report. The Grand Jury's investigation into the Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility had one finding (F1) requiring a response from the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office.

Finding 1:

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury was left with a very positive opinion of the Calaveras County Adult Detention Facility. The facility is well run, clean and properly maintained, and is being operated in an efficient manner by committed officers and staff. Inmates are treated in a safe and humane manner.

Sheriff's Office Response:

The Calaveras County Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding and humbly thanks the Grand Jury for its diligent work to ensure we remain efficient, accountable, and transparent in our jail operations.

The Sheriff's Office welcomes and respects the level of scrutiny that the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury conducts annually to inquire into the condition and management of our Adult Detention Facility. The Sheriff's Office continues its commitment to not only meeting the basic needs of our incarcerated population but also doing so with the highest regard for human dignity and protection for all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rachelle Whiting".

RECEIVED

JUN 04 2025

CALAVERAS SUPERIOR COURT



CALAVERAS COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

891 Mountain Ranch Road

San Andreas, California 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

July 22, 2025

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 "Calaveras County Animal Services: A new Shelter" 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 2, 2025, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on June 6, 2025. 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 ANIMAL SERVICES

Grand Jury Finding F1

The conditions and construction of the current Animal Services facility do not adequately provide safe care and housing for animals according to current industry standards.

County Response to Finding F1

The County agrees with this finding.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors provide their direction on whether or not the County will proceed with the construction of the industry standard compatible facility outlined in the plans purchased through the contract with LDA Partners, Inc., by October 1, 2025, in order to minimize the impacts of future financial market factors on plan viability.

County Response to Recommendation R1

This recommendation has been implemented. On June 24, 2025 the Board of Supervisors provided direction that authorized staff to negotiate and return with a contract for bid-phase and construction-phase services with LDA Partners and directed staff to begin preparing the bid package and to continue exploring financing options in coordination with the Auditor's Office.

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

Grand Jury Finding F2

The remaining \$3,995,015.00 set aside for this project are held in the General Fund and are not guaranteed to remain exclusively for the Animal Services build and may be redirected to other projects at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors. This could potentially negatively impact the efforts of the county to secure matching grant funding or donations.

County Response to Finding F2

The County partially agrees with this finding. The remaining funds set aside for the shelter facility are held in the General Fund and are not guaranteed to remain exclusively for the Animal Services building and may be redirected to other projects at the discretion of the Board of Supervisors. However, this has no negative impact on the efforts of the county to secure matching grant funding or donations.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors consider passing a resolution to officially designate the remaining project funds located in the General Fund as Committed Funds according to the policies outlined in General Administrative Policy-Finance, B-01 Budget and Finance, Resolution 2012-087 and 20250128r007, effective date January 28, 2025, by October 1, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R2

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. A resolution would not result in a permanent restriction of the funds. Although these are general fund discretionary dollars, the Board has set them aside to construct a new animal shelter facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Huberty".

Martin Huberty
Chair

RECEIVED

JUL 24 2025

CALAVERAS SUPERIOR COURT

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

July 22, 2025

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 "Calaveras County Code Compliance: Communication is a Two-Way Street" 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 2, 2025, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on June 6, 2025. 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 CODE COMPLIANCE

Grand Jury Finding F1

Code Compliance does not have a consistent mechanism in place to acknowledge and confirm the receipt of citizen complaints by all methods of submittal (email, posted mail, and in-person), leaving some concerned citizens unsure whether their complaints are even received.

County Response to Finding F1

The County agrees with this finding. While in-person and online complaints are confirmed immediately, there is no mechanism for addressing mail-in complaints. However, clear directions are provided on the complaint form on how to contact the department if there are questions about the status of the complaint. These complaints are rare and often provide no means to contact them with updates.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Code Compliance adopt a system of acknowledging and confirming to the complainant that their complaint has been received, including a case number if a case is opened, for all methods of complaint submittal, to be implemented by December 31, 2025.

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R1

This recommendation will be implemented by July 1, 2026. The Building Department commits to implementing software solutions for filing and tracking citizen complaints. The current code enforcement software will be enhanced to provide direct access through the web portal, which will allow the public to file complaints electronically, be immediately given a reference number, and allow the public to view the progress of complaints, without compromising the security of case management files. This update will allow telephone complaints as well. The Building Department will include this update in the strategic plan with a completion date of July 1, 2026. The online tracking system will provide all complainants the ability to track the status of their complaint regardless of how it was submitted.

Grand Jury Finding F2

Code Compliance's citizen complaint form and website create a reasonable expectation that a complainant request for follow-up information will be answered in a timely and professional manner. Yet Code Compliance's Policy and Procedure Manual lacks guidance regarding Code Enforcement Officers' obligations, if any, to respond to complainants requesting follow-ups on their cases.

County Response to Finding F2

The County agrees with this finding. While the standard response time that is observed in the department is two weeks between complaint and 1st investigation, this information is not provided in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2a

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Code Compliance, in order to better adhere to their stated core values, institute a clear procedure for responding to complainant requests for follow-up information, by December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R2a

This recommendation will be implemented. The Building Department commits to updating the policy and procedure manual to demonstrate a reasonable response time based on staffing levels by August 1, 2025, and shall update this standard as service levels and complaint metrics change.

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

Grand Jury Recommendation R2b

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Code Compliance follow their stated core values to treat every interaction as an opportunity to educate and respond in a timely and professional manner to complainant requests for follow-up information regarding complaint cases, beginning no later than December 31, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R2b

This recommendation will be implemented. Planned software improvements will streamline the process and provide greater opportunities to advise the public on case activity.

Grand Jury Finding F3

With staff vacancy rates frequently at 20% or higher, Code Compliance is operating at staff levels insufficient to handle its high case load, leading to cases taking longer to be resolved, if they are deemed a high enough priority to be addressed at all.

County Response to Finding F3

The County agrees with this finding. A total of 518 cases were opened in FY 2024/25. Due to strict due-process standards, it often takes up to 10 hours to successfully process a case to resolution. In cases where the County performs an abatement action, an additional 20 hours of staff time may be necessary for the serving of warrants, abatement supervision, and cost recovery. This equates to approximately 4 full-time staff members to handle current case volume. The staff for this fiscal year was reduced to 2 full-time staff members due to budgeted reductions in staff and turnover. All budgeted positions were filled in April bringing the number to 3.25 for FY 2025/26.

The department has implemented case management prioritization to ensure that attention is given to the highest public hazards first. Therefore, health and safety violations have taken an average of 12 business days to respond, with high hazards cases being responded to on the same day as the complaint. Low-risk cases, such as sign violations and other zoning violations have taken an average of 54 days to respond.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3

Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends Code Compliance hire additional Code Enforcement Officers to bring Code Compliance up to fully staffed levels, that being five employees, by December 31, 2025.

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R3

This recommendation will not be implemented at this time. Due to current economic conditions the County has implemented a series of cost-cutting measures in this budget cycle in order to ensure the County's financial stability over the next few years, including a hiring freeze. At this time there isn't funding available to expand any county services. In the future as funding restrictions ease the Board may revisit this recommendation.

However, the Building Department is currently working on case management through improvements to case management software and amendments to the Code Compliance Ordinance (chapter 8.06). Amendments are currently in progress, with all efforts projected to be complete by December 2026. This is expected to reduce workload and allow current staffing to be able to respond to complaints more efficiently.

Sincerely,

Martin Huberty
Chair

RECEIVED

JUL 24 2025

CALAVERAS SUPERIOR COURT

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

July 22, 2025

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 "Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency: Breaking the Cycle"
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 2, 2025, which was received in the Office of the County Administrator on June 6, 2025. 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 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Grand Jury Finding F1

Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency's ability to respond quickly to community needs by applying for grants or securing contracts is negatively impacted by the current \$50,000 limit before requiring Board of Supervisors or State approval.

County Response to Finding F1

The County agrees with this finding. The County has flexibility on grant applications and has taken steps to increase departmental limits. However, California State law determines contracting limits.

Grand Jury Recommendation R1

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors and Health and Human Services Agency develop methods of improving accessibility for funding above \$50,000 by October 1, 2025.

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R1

This recommendation has been implemented. On January 28, 2025, the Board of Supervisors adopted a new grant policy that allows Department Heads to approve grant applications for their departments up to \$100,000 and allows the County Executive Officer to approve applications up to \$500,000. This provides significantly more flexibility for departments to apply for grant opportunities.

Grand Jury Finding F2

Calaveras County does not have a dedicated emergency shelter which greatly limits the County's ability to provide emergency housing for residents in crisis.

County Response to Finding F2

The County partially agrees with this finding. The County does not have a dedicated emergency shelter. However, the County does provide emergency shelter for families with children, HHSA provides up to 16 days of shelter annually for low-income families with children through the Temporary Housing Assistance Program (THA). This service is provided in non-congregate sheltering (motel rooms throughout the county) rather than by operating an emergency shelter that may not be near where the children attend school or have childcare. Families unable to resolve housing needs within 16 days are referred to the County's housing stabilization programs that assist with longer term housing solutions. Over the last two years, 90 families with children have been provided emergency shelter through THA and during that same two-year period, 121 families with children participated in longer term housing stabilization programs. Housing stabilization programs provide interim housing with case management focusing on specific barriers to long term housing. The combination of THA and longer-term housing programs for families has proven to be highly successful in ending homelessness for families with children in Calaveras County.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2a

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors and Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency coordinate with local non-profits and other members of the Housing Resource Partnership to reevaluate the County's need for an emergency homeless shelter by October 1, 2025.

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

County Response to Recommendation R2a

This recommendation has been implemented. The Housing Resource Partnership (HRP) which consists of members from the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) and local non-profits meets monthly to discuss the expansion of housing resources including evaluating the need for an emergency homeless shelter for people experiencing homelessness in Calaveras County. The County currently provides emergency shelter for families with children, HHSA provides up to 16 days of shelter annually for low-income families with children through the Temporary Housing Assistance Program (THA). This service is provided in non-congregate sheltering (motel rooms throughout the county) rather than by operating an emergency shelter that may not be near where the children attend school or have childcare. Families unable to resolve housing needs within 16 days are referred to our housing stabilization programs that assist with longer term housing solutions. Over the last two years, 90 families with children have been provided emergency shelter through THA and during that same two year period, 121 families with children participated in longer term housing stabilization programs. Housing stabilization programs provide interim housing with case management focusing on specific barriers to long term housing. The combination of THA and longer term housing programs for families has proven to be highly successful in ending homelessness for families with children in Calaveras County. The county has been able to meet the demand for housing our homeless families with children without a waiting list.

The Housing Resource Partnership will continue to evaluate the feasibility of a dedicated congregate emergency shelter to address the sheltering needs of Calaveras County's single adults that are not eligible for THA.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2b

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors and Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency coordinate with local non-profits and other members of the Housing Resource Partnership for the purpose of developing plans to mitigate the resident concerns that resulted in the cancelation of the 2019 emergency shelter plan by October 1, 2025.

County Response to Recommendation R2b

This recommendation has been partially implemented and will be fully implemented by January 31, 2026. HRP meets monthly with a membership that includes government agencies, community and faith-based organizations as well as local residents interested in addressing the county's housing needs.

The HRP is currently working on The Strategic Plan for Housing which when complete, will provide specific strategies for the Partnership to address community identified needs. The Strategic Plan for Housing is

Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
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 95249

(209) 754-6370

FAX (209) 754-6733

expected to be completed in November 2025 and presented to the Board of Supervisors in January 2026 for approval.

Grand Jury Finding F3

With annual budgetary and resource allocations being based on Point-In-Time data collected on a single day of the year, County agencies are not able to accurately plan to accommodate the changes in the homeless population and their needs throughout the year.

County Response to Finding F3

The County agrees with this finding.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3

The Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors, with the assistance of Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency, develop supplemental data collection methods to compile a more accurate real-time count of the homeless population throughout the year by January 1, 2026.

County Response to Recommendation R3

This recommendation has been implemented. As an action taken from our first Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, Calaveras County's HHSA set up the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in 2020. HMIS is a database used throughout the State to collect real-time information on those facing homelessness. We were the first county in our Continuum of Care to add County housing programs data to this system so we could more accurately measure need and impact. While the data from both HMIS and PIT have minimal impact on funding for the homeless services the county provides, the data does provide better understanding of who we are serving, what services are needed, impact of services and how to best collaborate with our partners. We continue through our partnerships to expand and improve on our data collection using HMIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin Huberty".

Martin Huberty
Chair

RECEIVED

JUL 24 2025

CALAVERAS SUPERIOR COURT

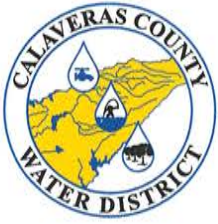
Gary Tofanelli
District 1
286-9002

Autumn Andahl
District 2
286-9003

Martin Huberty
District 3
286-9007

Amanda Folendorf
District 4
286-9050

Benjamin Stopper
District 5
286-9059



CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

120 Toma Court • San Andreas, CA 95249 • (209) 754-3543

September 4, 2025

Honorable Timothy S. Healy
Superior Court of California, County of Calaveras
400 Government Center Drive
San Andreas, California, 95249-9794

**Re: Calaveras County Water District's Response to Calaveras County
2025 Grand Jury Final Report – The Cost of Water**

Dear Judge Healy:

Calaveras County Water District (CCWD or District) wishes to thank the Grand Jury for their commitment to public service and their extensive efforts in the development of the most recent Grand Jury Report.

As required by the 2025 Calaveras County Grand Jury Final Report entitled "*The Cost of Water*," the Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) has reviewed the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations and prepared the attached formal response.

The CCWD Board of Directors discussed both the Report and the District's proposed response during a duly noticed public meeting. Following this discussion, the Board authorized the submission of the attached response on behalf of the District.

Accordingly, please find CCWD's official responses to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury's Final Report attached for your review and records.

Please do not hesitate to call me at (209) 754-3001 if you have any questions or require further clarification.

Sincerely,

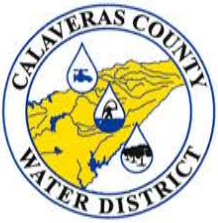
CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M Minkler", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael Minkler
General Manager

Attachment: CCWD's Responses to Calaveras County's 2025 Grand Jury Report

Copy: Katharine Klise, Grand Jury Foreperson



CALAVERAS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

120 Toma Court • San Andreas, CA 95249 • (209) 754-3543

Honorable Timothy S. Healy
Superior Court of California, County of Calaveras
400 Government Center Drive
San Andreas, California, 95249-9794

Re: The Calaveras County Water District Response to the Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury Report

Dear Honorable Judge Healy,

The Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) Board of Directors writes in response to Calaveras County Civil Grand Jury's (CCCGJ's) report entitled "The Cost of Water." The CCWD Board of Directors appreciates the role of the Grand Jury and the effort and dedication of the members of the Grand Jury. We thank you for your service to Calaveras County.

CCWD appreciates the CCCGJ's acknowledgment of our compliance with Proposition 218. We are pleased that the CCCGJ was satisfied that CCWD communicated planned rate changes and conducted public meetings according to the requirements of Proposition 218. We also thank the CCCGJ for recognizing that CCWD has taken steps to improve public outreach. We fully agree that outreach is an ongoing responsibility, and we welcome continued evaluation and recommendations that help us better serve our ratepayers and community.

CCWD is committed to continually strengthening our communication with the public, recognizing that transparency and education are key to building trust, particularly when navigating complex issues such as water and wastewater rate structures.

The CCCGJ Report refers to widespread complaints about CCWD's rate increases on social media sites. While social media remains a useful component of our outreach strategy, we are mindful of its limitations as a barometer of public sentiment. Research, including a [2024 MIT Sloan Management Review study](#), has demonstrated that false or emotionally charged content tends to spread more rapidly than accurate information on social media platforms. This dynamic can elevate fringe opinions and amplify outrage, often distorting the broader public discourse. As a result, what gains traction online may not reflect the majority viewpoint or offer a reliable measure of community sentiment. To ensure we are listening thoughtfully and inclusively, we continue to prioritize more grounded and representative forms of engagement, such as direct outreach, public meetings, written communications, and in-person educational efforts.

Additionally, the CCCGJ summary states, "Public outcry focused on the amount of the proposed and subsequently implemented rate increase." However, CCWD did not implement the originally proposed rates. At the hearing on September 13, 2023, the [Board adopted a smaller rate increase](#) in response to public outcry. We acknowledge it was still a substantial rate increase, and we are mindful of the impacts rate increases have, but we want to clarify this point and emphasize that CCWD worked hard to strike the balance between responsible financial stewardship and the impacts on ratepayers.

During the recent rate study, CCWD discussed and presented the rate structure, the rationale and reasoning for the study at numerous publicly available meetings:

- 6 - Regular Board Meetings (2 of which were workshops)
- 6 - Finance Committee Meetings
- 2 - Special Board Meetings
- 2 - Public notices mailed to all customers
- 3 - regional-specific town halls (focused on local service areas)
- 1 - Rate Hearing

All meetings were publicly noticed, and all but the town halls were video recorded for public review as well as all of the presentations and documentation is available on our website. In contrast, Prop 218 only requires one mailed public notice and one rate hearing.

A dedicated [webpage \(2023 Cost-of-Service Study\)](#) was created for the rate study, which included the study itself, relevant documentation, FAQ's, and all presentations given at the town halls, with [detailed explanations](#) for each slide. While the CCCGJ acknowledged that outreach efforts can take many forms, CCWD made a commendable effort to appropriately educate the community about the rate study far beyond the requirements of Proposition 218.

Thank you for including Table 2. and for the comparative review of regional water rates, as well as for acknowledging that the current rates established by CCWD are consistent with those in the other counties reviewed. Not all water and wastewater agencies operate under the same conditions or cost structures. Factors such as geography, infrastructure age, regulatory requirements, service area size, and population all contribute to rate differences. A true apples-to-apples comparison would require a more detailed and comprehensive analysis.

CCWD's Ongoing Commitment to Public Outreach

CCWD remains committed to enhancing transparency and community engagement. Some recent highlights of this ongoing effort include:

- **June 2024:** Launched a new, user-friendly [website](#) to improve access to information and services.
- **Communication Survey:** Initiated a [communication survey](#) that is continually live at the top of our website.
- **Rate Calculators:** Introduced two distinct styles of [rate calculators](#) on the website to help customers better understand their water bills.
- **Water Use Efficiency:** Created an informative [water use efficiency webpage](#) to educate and encourage water saving techniques.
- **Customer Portal:** Implemented a [customer portal](#) allowing users to view and track near real-time water usage and billing data.
- **Mailing List:** Website integrated "Join Our Mailing List" to simplify staying connected and informed about CCWD information.
- **January 2025:** Received the [transparency certificate of excellence award](#) in recognition of CCWD's commitment to openness and accountability.
- **High School Engagement:** Recently participated in two local high school events designed to prepare seniors for adulthood. Students were tasked with learning about water rates by engaging directly with CCWD.
- **Career Fairs:** Recently attended two local job and career fairs to share opportunities and information about the water and wastewater industry.
- **Winter Emergency Preparedness Community Event:** Engaged with the public on preparing for winter-related water challenges.

- **Firewise Community Events:** Two separate events, one in Ebbetts Pass and one in West Point which allowed us to share information on fire prevention and water system readiness.
- **Copperopolis Community Meeting:** Addressed local construction projects updates and water and wastewater rates.
- **Presentation at Calaveras County Historical Society:** Educated the public on CCWD's history.
- **Monthly Community Meetings:** Regular participation in Ebbetts Pass Property Owners Council (EPPOC) and White Pines Park Committee meetings.
- **Forest Meadows Homeowners Association Day:** Participated with several other utilities and agencies.
- **Calaveras Forest & Wildfire Film Festival:**
- **Social Media Outreach:** Online engagement continues to grow significantly, with minimal negative feedback.
- **Rotary Club Engagement:** Invited to an upcoming (July 2025) Rotary meeting for discussions specific to CCWD.
- **External Affairs Reports:** Delivered numerous in-depth reports at public Board and Committee meetings.

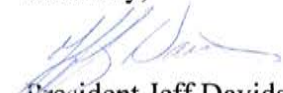
Continuing the Conversation on Rates and Infrastructure

Water and Wastewater rates are a frequent topic at nearly every public event CCWD attends. These events offer valuable opportunities to educate the community about the complexity and cost of delivering reliable water service, and face-to-face conversations are invaluable. From sourcing water in the high Sierra headwaters, through dams, treatment plants, pump stations, storage tanks, and miles of pipelines to the tap, each step involves significant infrastructure and resources.

The same applies to wastewater services, which include collecting, pumping, treating, and disposing of wastewater in an environmentally responsible way to ensure public health and safety. These essential services are often taken for granted, yet they are fundamental to making Calaveras County the vibrant, thriving community it is today.

CCWD will implement CCCGJ's recommendation to continue evaluating and improving our public outreach efforts. We agree that conducting an annual review is beneficial to ensure ongoing effectiveness. We will continue to use our long-standing External Affairs Reports to the CCWD Board of Directors as part of this review process. These evaluations will include assessments of our outreach channels, clarity of messaging, and public feedback received across all platforms. To see a snapshot of our recent efforts, we invite you to view our [2024 Year In Review Presentation](#), which might shed some light on CCWD. We remain committed to continuously improving how we engage with our community, ensuring our ratepayers feel informed, respected, and heard.

Sincerely,



President Jeff Davidson

On behalf of the Calaveras County Water District Board