

OFFICE OF THE

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Matthew H. Hymel
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Daniel Eilerman
ASSISTANT COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

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ASSISTANT COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

August 22, 2023

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903



SUBJECT: Response to 2022-23 Grand Jury Report "*Electrical Resiliency – It's Time to Do More*" (June 5, 2023)

Dear Supervisors,

RECOMMENDATION: Concur in and adopt the attached proposed response to the FY 2022-23 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report regarding renewable energy microgrids and authorize the Board President to forward the response to the Presiding Judge of the Marin County Superior Court.

SUMMARY: The 2022-23 Civil Grand Jury Report published a report entitled "*Electrical Resiliency – It's Time to Do More*" (June 5, 2023). The report included a request for response from your Board. Attached for your consideration, in accordance with §933 of the California Penal Code, is a proposed response. A copy of the Grand Jury report is also attached for your information.

FISCAL/STAFFING IMPACT: None.

ALTERNATIVE TO RECOMMENDED ACTION(S): The Board may amend any suggested response.

REVIEWED BY: (These boxes must be checked)

☐ Department of Finance	☒ N/A
☒ County Counsel	☐ N/A
☐ Human Resources	☒ N/A

SUBMITTED BY:

Dan Eilerman
Assistant County Administrator

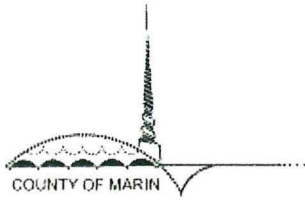
REVIEWED BY:

Matthew H. Hymel
County Administrator

Attachments: June 5, 2023, Grand Jury Report

Cc: Jason Weber, Marin County Fire Chief, Sarah Jones, Director of Community Development

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RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT TITLE: *"Electrical Resiliency — It's Time to Do More"*
REPORT DATE: June 5, 2023
RESPONSE BY: County of Marin Board of Supervisors

GRAND JURY FINDINGS

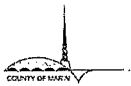
- We agree with the finding numbered: **F1-F2**
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: **F3-F4**

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation numbered **R3** has been implemented.
- Recommendation numbered **R4** require further analysis.
- Recommendations numbered **R1, R2, and R5** will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable.

Date: August 20, 2023

Signed: Stephanie Monahan-Peters
President, Board of Supervisors



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations
"Electrical Resiliency — It's Time to Do More"
(Report Date)

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS

F1. PG&E's electric transmission infrastructure is fragile, unable to reliably deliver electricity due to climate change events, and older electrical infrastructure, etc. A result of these events is that outages are increasing in number, frequency, and duration.

Response: Agree.

Service interruptions have increased on average from 2016–2022 and we are concerned particularly with impacts to the most vulnerable in our community during sustained events.

The Board of Supervisors is on record supporting efforts to ensure energy providers are held accountable by regulators for costs associated with preparing for and recovering from deenergization events, including "fast-trip" (EPSS) shutoffs. Such events must be regulated to ensure a balance of utility risk mitigation with adequate notice to local governments, emergency managers and residents for protection of vulnerable customers and critical facilities, particularly in areas with poor cellular networks. We further support efforts to require utility companies to strengthen the reliability and resiliency of the existing energy grid to be better prepared for extreme weather events.

As of September 2022, PG&E reports that it has completed 60 miles of enhanced vegetation management and 11 miles of equipment upgrade in Marin County, and similar work is ongoing.

F2. Marin County has developed strong emergency action plans that allow a unified response to outages with a range of resources for the community. However, the level of responsiveness for solutions to outages is not adequate. There is a clear need to build electric resiliency in Marin in order to reduce outages, and emergencies stemming from them.

Response: Agree.

The County has a responsibility and feasible plan to ensure that emergency services are available to Marin residents. Both internal and external subject matter experts agree that a 100% elimination of power outages is not possible. The County does not have authority over PG&E with respect to transmission or distribution system improvements; PG&E is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission.

F3. Microgrids are an energy source that, although costly, can provide backup power in the event of brownouts or blackouts.

Response: Partially Disagree.

A microgrid is not an energy source unto itself. It is a self-sufficient energy system that includes energy generation as a component. While microgrids can be a source of emergency power for critical community facilities, they can be vulnerable to the same conditions that cause brownouts or blackouts in traditional energy grids, depending on the size and makeup of the microgrid.

F4. Initial establishment of microgrids will provide Marin County with islands of resilient power during times of emergency (earthquakes, extreme heat emergencies for example).



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(Report Date)

As additional microgrids are built, these islands merge together creating ever larger areas of self-sufficient power and resilient power storage and distribution for Marin residents and businesses.

Response: Partially Disagree.

While establishment of microgrids for critical County facilities could result in islands of resilient power during times of emergency, merging multiple microgrids will not necessarily solve all power outages, particularly in areas of West Marin. Even in cases where microgrids include power generation and storage, getting power to individual homes and buildings is dependent on distribution lines that can be interrupted in an emergency. Resiliency should come from a combination of microgrids for critical facilities, utility upgrades, vegetation management, and community preparedness. Any initial focus on microgrids should support critical facilities and localized resilience centers.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends the following:

R1. By December 31, 2023, the Board of Supervisors should vote on funding a study to determine the viability of microgrids, and how they could be installed in Marin County.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

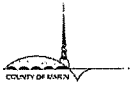
Allocating funding to study microgrid viability is not necessary as there are already several resiliency efforts and projects underway in Marin County. For example, MCE is currently working with several sites and partners in Marin to develop resilience solutions in Marin City and West Marin, such as the West Marin Medical Center project to install battery storage for critical medical facility needs backup power. Since 2020, the County has also been assessing and upgrading emergency backup electrical power infrastructure.

Additionally, the County is participating in the Bay Area Regional Energy Network's Resilient Libraries Pilot Project to identify opportunities for improving the Novato and Fairfax Libraries so they can also function as Community Resilience Centers in the event of emergencies. The County is also the lead in an Ad Hoc Green Microgrid Policymakers Group that is examining the possibilities and potential barriers to microgrids in Marin.

R2. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors will have committed to installing microgrids, in coordination with local leadership. Two sites should be chosen as pilot programs. The Grand Jury recommends Marin City and West Marin as the sites because they include underserved communities. Also, West Marin is a remote location that would benefit from reliable energy via alternative sources.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

As the local community energy provider in Marin, MCE is the more appropriate entity to develop community scale microgrids as suggested in this recommendation. MCE has the technical expertise that is needed to drive projects of this type forward. The County of Marin will continue



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to partner with MCE to support their efforts on microgrid projects, such as those already development in Marin City and West Marin.

R3. By September 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors will update the County Strategic Plan to include microgrids and enlist public support for the project.

This recommendation has been implemented.

The 2023 Amendments to the Countywide Plan include discussion of resiliency planning in microgrids in the Environmental Hazards chapter (see pages 2.6-25 through 2.6-27) and includes Implementing Program EH-5.4.a "Develop Resilience Hubs" (page 2.6-69).

R4. By September 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors will engage with County Planning to develop permitting and construction guidelines to accelerate the development of microgrids.

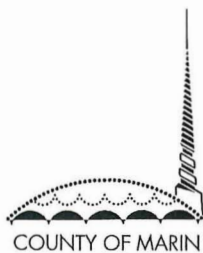
This recommendation requires further analysis.

County Planning and Building will evaluate existing permitting process and local construction guidelines to identify if there are any barriers to development and/or streamlining opportunities for components of microgrids, including energy generation, storage, and distribution. If barriers and/or opportunities are identified, then County Planning and Building will consider further steps that would be needed to accelerate the development of microgrids in the unincorporated portions of the County.

R5. By December 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors will investigate and identify public and private funding sources for the proposed microgrid(s).

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

As the local community energy provider in Marin, MCE is the most appropriate entity to develop community-scale microgrids. MCE has stated that they have "a \$9M Resiliency Fund to help fund small-scale customer-owned solar and storage installations throughout our service area." Additionally, MCE has received a \$750,000 grant from the Marin Community Foundation to support solar and storage resiliency microgrids at critical facilities in Marin, and \$500,000 in federal funding for energy storage at critical facilities. Finally, MCE has facilitated applications for residential and non-residential customers to receive over \$600,000 in awards under California's Self Generation Incentive Program.



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PRESIDENT

Stephanie Moulton-Peters

3RD DISTRICT

August 22, 2023

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Dennis Rodoni

4TH DISTRICT

Honorable James T. Chou
Presiding Judge
Marin County Superior Court
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Mary Sackett

1ST DISTRICT

Dear Judge Chou:

Katie Rice

2ND DISTRICT

The Marin County Board of Supervisors' response to the FY 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Report "*Electrical Resiliency – It's Time to Do More*" (June 5, 2023) is attached. The attached document responds to all the requests made for responses from the Board of Supervisors,

Eric Lucan

5TH DISTRICT

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew H. Hymel

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

CLERK OF THE BOARD

Stephanie Moulton-Peters
President, Board of Supervisors

Carla Kacmar

ASSISTANT CLERK OF THE BOARD

CC: Marin County Civil Grand Jury

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