



(707) 644-8949
www.VallejoWastewater.org
450 Ryder Street
Vallejo, CA 94590

July 22, 2026

The Honorable William Pendergast III
Presiding Judge of the Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Re: Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District Response to 2025-2026 Solano County Grand Jury's June 10, 2026 Report "There's Something in the Air"

Dear Judge Pendergast:

The Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District ("**District**") Board of Trustees ("**Board**"), submits this letter as its formal response to the findings made in by the Solano County Grand Jury ("**Grand Jury**") in its June 10, 2026 Report titled "There's Something in the Air" ("**Report**"). The Board approved this response at its July 21, 2026 meeting.

Pursuant to California Penal Code section 933.05, the District's responses to the Report's Findings and Recommendations are below.

FINDING 1a The language of the district outreach at the onset and during the construction project was broad and vague. This left residents unclear on the impact.

District Response The District partially agrees with this finding.

The District acknowledges that the initial public outreach for the MIPS, 3W, and Effluent Bypass Project contained high-level summaries of the Project. However, at the Project onset, the District did not anticipate or otherwise expect there to be significant prolonged odor issues. The District did not anticipate that the odor control equipment for this process area would also require a major overhaul which ultimately exacerbated the odor issue.

FINDING 1b The District's initial public notice in March 2024 underestimated the offensiveness of the odors and understated the timeframe, adding to the public's distrust.

District Response

The District partially agrees with this finding.

The District's initial public notice was based on the contractor's estimate of the potential odor range. After the public notice was issued, the District received additional complaints that provided specific details regarding the strength and characteristics of the odors. Once the District became aware of increased level of odors being reported by District residents, the District worked quickly to identify the potential cause and source of the odors. Additionally, District staff proactively met with residents to hear their concerns as well as developing and deploying additional treatment processes that were aimed specifically at addressing the odor issue reported by residents. The District has worked very diligently to build open communication lines with its customers and prides itself on its track record of being responsive to its customers.

The District's General Manager also provided monthly updates at public Board meetings, and District staff routinely provided updates directly to concerned customers.

FINDING 2

The food waste from garbage disposals and non-flushable material from toilets exacerbate the odors and costs to treat the sewage.

District Response

The District partially agrees with this finding. There is no correlation between food waste from garbage disposals and non-flushable material and odors within the sewer system or treatment process. However, the District concurs that these items can cause other problems with treatment, such as degradation and blockage of pumps and increase costs of treatment.

FINDING 3

During a Board of Trustees meeting held on December 10, 2024, the Jury observed a lack of industry expertise demonstrated by board members. This failure contributed to the Board's inability to ask constructive questions and relay accurate information to the public. The public expressed a similar frustration with the Board's lack of operational knowledge.

District Response

The District partially agrees with this finding.

The District's Trustees are not industry experts nor do the District's enabling statutes create an expectation that they become

industry experts. The Board sets overall policies and goals for the District's General Manager to implement and effectuate. The Board is also responsible for providing general oversight of the District. Wastewater treatment is technical and highly regulated and requires many levels of certifications or licenses. The District has a very experienced and knowledgeable staff, many of whom have decades of experience in the wastewater industry. The Board relies on the deep expertise of District staff to provide the Board with accurate information and sound recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 1 For future nuisance alerts, the District offer more specifics and routine updates in their outreach communications.

District Response The District agrees with this recommendation. We have increased outreach in the community and continually work to improve communications and outreach.

RECOMMENDATION 2 The District enhance the ongoing campaign by January 2027, to educate the public about what items should not be disposed of in the sewer system.

District Response The District partially agrees with this recommendation.

The District is an active partner in the Bay Area Pollution Prevention Group, which has a public website (<https://www.vallejowastewater.org/382/Pollution-Prevention-Baywise.org>), that provides guidelines on what not to flush. The District also has information regarding what not to flush on its website (<https://www.vallejowastewater.org/382/Pollution-Prevention>). In addition, the District provides pollution prevention information in its quarterly newsletters that are mailed to all properties in the District (<https://www.vallejowastewater.org/186/District-Newsletter>). The District continues to invest in educational campaigns to inform the public about appropriate wastewater disposal practices.

RECOMMENDATION 3 The Board of Trustees add an industry expert to the Board and familiarize themselves with basic operations of the District Treatment Plant by July 1, 2027.

District Response The District partially agrees with this recommendation.

The Board of Trustees is an *ex officio* body comprised of all of the members of the City Council of the City of Vallejo and one member of the Solano County Board of Supervisors. These are all elected positions, not appointed, and therefore there is no functional way to add an industry expert to the Board under the current governance structure.

The District has supported legislation authored by Assemblymember Lori Wilson, AB 912, which as currently drafted would change the Board of Trustees composition to include two Trustees appointed from the City Council, one Trustee appointed from the County Board of Supervisors, and two appointed Trustees at-large.

While not a finding or recommendation, the District respectfully requests that all future Civil Grand Jury inquiries and requests be submitted to the District's General Manager, who can facilitate the appropriate employee interviews and responses to proposed Grand Jury Reports.

The District is committed to continuing to improve the important services we provide to our constituents, including increased public outreach and educational materials. The District appreciates the Grand Jury's Report and trusts that the Grand Jury will find these responses beneficial to its future endeavors.

Sincerely,



Mark Tomko, P.E, General Manager on behalf of
Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District Board of Trustees