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July 14, 2023

The Honorable Judge Wendy Getty
Solano Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

RE: Response to 2022-2023 Civil Grand Jury Report Entitled: "First 5 Solano"

Dear Honorable Judge Getty:

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 (c) and 933.05, First 5, a division of the Solano County Administrator's Office, (CAO) is responding to the following findings and recommendations contained in the Civil Grand Jury Report that pertain to matters related to First 5 and the County Administrator's Office.

Finding 1 – Declining revenue from tobacco Tax funding presents both current and future monetary challenges for maintaining mandated First 5 Solano services.

Response to Finding 1 – The First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission (First 5 Solano), a Division within the County Administrator's Office, agrees with Finding 1.

Recommendation 1a – If the State Controller does not act according to Revenue and Taxation Code section 30130.54(b) and transfer appropriate funding, First 5 Solano can request offsets.

Response to Recommendation 1a – The recommendation for First 5 Solano to request offsets from the State Controller will not be implemented at this time because it is not warranted. First 5 Solano, through its Long-Term Financial Plan, has anticipated this decrease in revenue and has planned for adjustments accordingly. The State Controller has been allocating the funding to First 5 Solano in a timely manner. Although the recommendation is that First 5 Solano can request offsets, it seems to only apply if the State Controller does not actually issue the funds. Further, under Cal. Rev. & Tax. Code § 30130.54 (e), "the transfers...shall be made by the Controller at such times as the Controller determines necessary to further the intent of this section." This language in the law seems to imply that it is within the Controller's discretion as to the circumstances of the issuance of the funds. If the necessary amounts due under the Revenue and Taxation Code are not issued, it would be reasonable for First 5 Solano to then request that the offsets are given. But given that the Controller has been allocating the funding appropriately thus far, First 5 does not believe it is warranted to make a request at this time.

Recommendation 1b – Develop further sources of income, both public and private, to maintain and expand delivery of services.

Response to Recommendation 1b – The recommendation has been implemented. First 5 Solano has been working to develop further sources of income, both public and private, to maintain and expand delivery of services since 2016, as stated in its 2022 Systems Change Implementation Plan Update. Further, First 5 Solano reports out successes in fund development in its Annual Report.

Finding 2 – First 5 Solano currently operates a Family Learning Center [a.k.a. First 5 Center] in the City of Vallejo only. Residents of other cities in Solano County could benefit from similar programs.

Response to Finding 2 – First 5 Solano, a Division within the County Administrator’s Office, agrees with Finding 2.

Recommendation 2 – Establish additional First 5 Solano Family Learning Centers in each city within Solano County.

Response to Recommendation 2 – The recommendation to establish additional First 5 Centers in each city within Solano County will be partially implemented. Each First 5 Center has an operational budget of \$720,000. First 5 Solano has enough resources to operate two (2) First 5 Centers in Solano County, one operating in Vallejo and one opening in Fairfield in early 2025. The recommendation to establish additional First 5 Centers in each city within Solano County will not be fully implemented due to financial constraints. Should additional funding be secured, the Commission could consider directing the funding to the five other cities within Solano County to operate a First 5 Center.

On behalf of First 5 Solano and the County Administrator’s Office, we wish to thank the Civil Grand Jury and their membership for writing this report and for bringing this information to the public. We also appreciate the opportunity to respond and thank you for your service to this County and our residents.

Sincerely,

Bill Emlen
County Administrator

Michele Harris
Executive Director, First 5 Solano

cc: Solano Board of Supervisors