



LORIE TINFOW
City Manager

August 21, 2019

Mr. Wayne Goodman, Foreperson
Solano County Grand Jury
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533
(via email: cdclower@solano.courts.ca.gov)

RE: Responses to Solano County Grand Jury Report

Dear Mr. Goodman,

This letter shall serve as the City of Benicia's response in accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05 to the Grand Jury request for information (Solano County Grand Jury 2018-2019 Wastewater Treatment Plants Report [received June 20, 2019]).

Finding #1

In many cases, wastewater effluent is not used to supply industrial needs or to irrigate crops and public lands.

Response to Finding #1

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

The term "many cases" is vague. In the case of Benicia, no wastewater effluent is used to supply industrial needs or irrigate crops and public lands. We are not aware of information supporting the clause "many cases."

Recommendation #1

Wastewater treatment facility decision-makers consider, on an ongoing basis, if additional treated water can be used to replace current water supplies.

Response to Recommendation #1

RECOMMENDATION HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

The City of Benicia completed the "City of Benicia Water Reuse Project Feasibility Report" in June 2017 which explored the potential to reuse wastewater effluent from the Benicia Wastewater Treatment Plant (Benicia WWTP) for nonpotable water uses. Currently, there is no funding to implement this project, but the City continues to search for funding to reuse Benicia WWTP effluent for human-related beneficial uses.

Finding #2

The Benicia and Dixon wastewater treatment plants release methane directly to the atmosphere, which could be used as fuel for co-generation.

Response to Finding #2

DISAGREE

The City of Benicia is prohibited from releasing methane directly into the atmosphere by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD).

Recommendation #2

Explore options to capture methane released by wastewater treatment, such as generating electrical power.

Response to Recommendation #2

RECOMMENDATION HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

The City of Benicia WWTP already uses methane gas produced in the wastewater treatment process to heat digester boilers (used to aid sludge digestion). Using methane gas in this fashion partially offsets the need to use electrical power at the Benicia WWTP. Small amounts of unused methane gas are flared at the Benicia WWTP when methane is not needed at the boilers; this amount of methane gas is not enough to create electrical power at economic scale beneficial to the City.

Finding #3

Not all wastewater treatment plants utilize renewable sources of electrical power.

Response to Finding #3

AGREE

Recommendation #3

Consider solar and wind power as alternative energy sources.

Response to Recommendation #3

RECOMMENDATION HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED

The City already installed photovoltaic cells (“solar panels”) at multiple sites throughout the city. The City opted to install photovoltaic cells instead of wind turbines for ease of use, standardization, resiliency, and aesthetic considerations.

Please contact me should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



LORIE TINFO

City Manager, City of Benicia

CC: William Tarbox, Public Works Director, City of Benicia
Benjamin Stock, City Attorney, City of Benicia
Kyle Ochendusko, Deputy Public Works Director, City of Benicia