

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

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August 5, 2022

Sent via email

Honorable Wendy G. Getty
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Solano
600 Union Ave., Fairfield, CA 94533
(707) 435-2575 | CDClower@Solano.Courts.Ca.Gov

Re: County Administrator's Office Response to Grand Jury Report – *Solano County is Not Prepared for Future Emergencies*

Honorable Judge Getty:

The County Administrator's Office appreciates the attention the Grand Jury has placed on the importance of emergency preparedness in Solano County. The report stresses the need for countywide attention to several priority areas, including fire district consolidation, improved communications, and consolidated dispatch. The report discusses in its findings and recommendations, the need to have one centralized and countywide emergency management function and to develop evacuation plans.

The County's responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations below reflect the County's ongoing commitment and efforts to address emergency response to increasing threats. This includes working with the fire districts to explore opportunities for reorganization / consolidation and coordination of resources and opportunities for increasing short and long term revenue sources.

Under Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the County Administrator's Office is responding to the following recommendations and findings contained in the 2021-2022 Grand Jury Report titled, "Solano County is Not Prepared for Future Emergencies."

Findings and Recommendations

Finding #1 – *Solano County needs a countywide approach to Emergency Management to coordinate emergency planning and response activities before, during, and after a major disaster or emergency incident.*

Response to Finding 1: The County Administrator’s Office agrees with this finding, while also noting various actions and investments toward combining the county-wide emergency response. The Office of Emergency Services (OES), located within the Office of the Sheriff, is the centralized office to provide emergency management services, including emergency planning and response. This office was enhanced by the addition of two new Emergency Services Coordinator positions, approved by the Board of Supervisors on March 9, 2021, and June 23, 2022. In addition, as the Report indicates the County recently completed its first Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), which was led by the Office of Emergency Services, and comprises all incorporated cities within the county as well as the City of Vallejo Flood and Wastewater District and the Solano County Water Agency, through its Annex documents. This was approved by the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services Hazard Mitigation Office and FEMA, then by the Board of Supervisors on March 2022, and will guide formation and implementation of future policies related to emergency preparedness. The Solano County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) facilitates multi-jurisdictional and interagency coordination in emergency situations, particularly between local governments, and appropriate State and Federal agencies and entities. In the event of a regional emergency, the EOP would dictate the County serve as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), over activated city EOCs, acting as the central hub for emergency response coordination, including to several cities in the County. There are also ongoing efforts toward consolidated fire dispatch.

Recommendation 1 – *Consolidate all existing Solano County emergency management, planning, and prevention services into one Department of Emergency Management, providing an umbrella to coordinate existing county and city functions related to emergency and disaster events.*

Response to Recommendation 1: This recommendation has been implemented. The County created the office of Emergency Services, housed within the Sheriff’s department rather than serving as a stand alone Department. The office functions as the central umbrella for emergency management, countywide.

Finding 2 – *There is a need for a coordinated city and countywide evacuation plan for Solano County.*

Response to Finding 2 – The Board of Supervisors received a CAL FIRE grant award in the fall of 2021, and received notice to proceed with grant operations in January 2022. The County completed a sole source contract with Zonehaven, a regional leader in emergency evacuation planning. OES began work with the vendor in July, completing a subject matter expert exercise to determine ideal zones for evacuation purposes. This effort will continue through the summer into the fall, and will result in an all-hazards countywide evacuation plan.

Recommendation 2a – *Develop compatible evacuation zones and routes throughout the county.*

Recommendation 2b – *Create public awareness of evacuation zones and routes.*

Response to Recommendation 2a - As noted in the response to Finding 2 above, as it pertains to the County, this recommendation is underway.

Response to Recommendation 2b - The County and the Solano Resource Conservation District partnered and sponsored a countywide kickoff for the newly establishing countywide Fire Safe Council, where information was provided to the public on the progress being made with regard to evacuation planning. As this effort continues, OES will continue to develop a public awareness campaign to ensure evacuation zones are known and utilized during future events.

On behalf of the County of Solano, I would like to express appreciation to the Solano County Civil Grand Jury for conducting a review of emergency preparedness in Solano County. Thank you for the opportunity to address your findings and recommendations on this issue and all the work the Grand Jury conducts for the benefit of residents in Solano County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Emlen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Emlen,
County Administrator

Cc: Board of Supervisors
Office of the Sheriff
Office of the Sheriff/Office of Emergency Services