

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Ventura County Grand Jury Announces Release of the Report *Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County***

In the 2017 Thomas fire and the 2018 Woolsey fire, water shortages hampered firefighters' ability to protect structures. Ventura County frequently experiences conditions of low humidity, high winds and dry brush, conducive to dangerous wildland fires. Ventura County has ninety-six percent of its rural and unincorporated lands classified as very high fire zones.

The 2022-2023 Ventura County Grand Jury conducted an investigation of current protocols and procedures utilized by 15 Ventura County public water purveyors to supply adequate water for wildland fire suppression.

The Grand Jury finds that:

- Most public water purveyors lack written procedures for actions to be taken during a Fire Weather Watch, Red Flag Warning and/or Public Safety Power Shutoff.
- Most public water purveyors do not have adequate backup power in the event of disruptions due to fire damage or loss of utility power.
- Notification is inconsistent to public water purveyors of impending conditions conducive to wildland fires.
- Inadequate communications between adjoining public water purveyors limits their ability to coordinate available resources, including water transfers.
- Brush clearance is lacking around some water tanks, pumps and valves, increasing the risk of fire damage.

The Grand Jury's report makes recommendations for correction of these deficiencies. To read the entire report please go to <https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/fiscal-year-2022-2023/>

The Ventura County Civil Grand Jury is a panel of 19 local citizens established to investigate public complaints about county, city or special districts management, policies, practices and processes. More information about the Grand Jury can be found here: <https://www.ventura.org/grand-jury/>