

February 3, 1999

Supervisor Susan Lacey
Chair, Ventura County Board of Supervisors
Hall of Administration

Subject: Reply to County Response to Grand Jury Report on Cable TV

Dear Supervisor Lacey:

On December 1, 1998, the CAO responded to the October 15, 1998 Grand Jury Interim Final Report on *Cable TV Public Access and Televising of Public Meetings*. We appreciate this timely action. The response concurred with all findings with minor exceptions. The Grand Jury accepts these comments.

The response, however, did not concur with our recommendation that the county should encourage public access in the unincorporated areas managed by the county. We are disappointed in this comment and have further evaluated the situation.

Most unincorporated areas do, in fact, have the capability of viewing public access because their service is the same as the neighboring city. The chart provided by the county during the study phase, enclosed as Figure A, is instructive in this regard. Virtually all of the 20,096 subscribers in the county can view public access in their neighboring city.

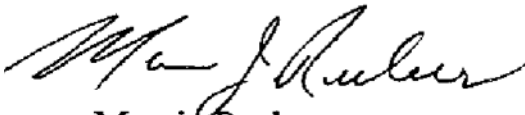
What subscribers in unincorporated areas do not have is the authority to produce public access programs. This capability exists only in the franchise agreements with the cities in which these rights are granted to city residents only. An example of this is TCI in Thousand Oaks where TCI, the public access producer, makes it very clear that only residents of Thousand Oaks have the right to produce public access programs.

While we acknowledge that it is difficult to negotiate and grant these rights to county areas, we continue to encourage the county to do these at franchise negotiation time. Most county franchise agreements are patterned after city agreements, so this should not be an onerous chore.

The response indicates continuing study of issues regarding televising of Board meetings but does not indicate any timetable. We continue to encourage the Board of Supervisors to televise their meetings and to provide video tapes to all franchises in the county for viewing at the convenience of the individual government channels.

The CAO referred recommendation 3 to the County Clerk for comments. This office assumed that the Grand Jury was recommending formal legal notices for publicizing board agendas and commented that this would not be practical. The Grand Jury did not mean to imply such a requirement and concurs that current practices are adequate.

Very truly yours,



Marvin Reeber
Foreman

cc: Lin Koester, Chief Administrative Officer
Paul Ruffin, Public Works Agency