

Response to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Temporary Food Facilities in Ventura County

Report Date: April 18, 2014 Responding Agency/Dept. Board of Supervisors

Response Drafted by: Michelle Yamaguchi Title: CEO Management Analyst

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: FI-01
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: FI-06 & FI-08
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-07 & R-08 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R-06 require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: July 15, 2014 Signed: 

Number of pages attached: _____



Responses to 2013-2014 Grand Jury Final Report
Temporary Food Facilities in Ventura

FINDINGS

FI-01 The Temporary Food Facility (TFF) program has been operating at a significant loss of revenues for the past several years. (FA-07, FA-18, FA-19, FA-29)

The Board of Supervisors agree with this finding.

FI-06 The Environmental Health Division (EHD) was not able to conduct inspections on all TFFs because the EHD had insufficient staff complement, possibly allowing for potentially unsafe conditions. (FA-08)

The Board of Supervisors disagree with this finding. Although the number of Community Events (CE) has increased since 2002, EHD has been able to adapt in order to keep up with the demand. EHD has adopted a risk based inspection protocol which resulted in an emphasis on TFF inspections of food preparation during the event rather than inspection during set up and permit issuance. This has allowed EHD to better monitor and identify any unsafe food handling conditions. The County's priority has always been the protection of the public's health and safety and as stated at the May 14, 2013 Board of Supervisors meeting, there have been no confirmed foodborne illness outbreaks at CEs in Ventura County over the past twelve years.

FI-08 The blurred lines between public and private CEs and profit and nonprofit CEs make it difficult for the EHD to distinguish the differences; therefore, more time is required for the permitting process. (FA-11, FA-12)

The Board of Supervisors disagree with this finding. The Board of Supervisors addressed this issue at the May 14, 2013 Board meeting. In addition to recognizing the list of the 400+ community events, a set of criteria was also established in order to determine whether events not on that list would qualify. We believe the criteria established will help provide clarity and assist in the definition of a Community Event so that the "blurred lines" no longer exist.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-06 The Grand Jury recommends that the EHD hire additional full-time staff in order to better handle the increase in CEs. (FI-01, FI-06)

This recommendation requires further analysis. As stated before, EHD's emphasis on a risk based inspection protocol has assisted in addressing the demand created with the increase in CEs. This shift in protocol coupled with an anticipated streamlining of the application process is intended provide an effective approach to meeting the increase in

demand for services. Once the changes have been implemented and information is gathered we will be better able to determine if additional staffing is required.

R-07 The Grand Jury recommends that the BOS terminate the policy that offers any waivers or reductions in permit fees. (FI-01)

This recommendation has been partially implemented. On May 20, 2014 the Board of Supervisors adopted various countywide rates and fees for FY14-15. The rates and fees package for the Resource Management Agency reflects the fact that beginning July 1, 2014, EHD will no longer be offering the 50% reduction for a for-profit CE Organizer or for-profit TFF Operator.

R-08 The Grand Jury recommends that the EHD eliminate the distinctions between profit and non-profit events in the permit policy.

This recommendation has been partially implemented. As stated earlier, at the May 14, 2013 Board hearing, criteria was adopted to assist in determining the eligibility of a Community Event. This action helps to clarify ambiguity related to the California Health and Safety Code definition for a Community Event. We believe the adopted criteria will provide much needed guidance for determining the eligibility of events requesting permits.