





**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER**

*Steve McClary, City Manager*

*401 S. Ventura Street, Ojai, CA 93023*

August 9, 2017

Ventura County Grand Jury  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Attn: Ms. Pamela Riss, Foreperson of  
the 2016-2017 Ventura County Grand Jury

Dear Ms. Riss,

The City of Ojai received the report titled "Water Considerations for Cities" dated May 8, 2017. Enclosed please find the City of Ojai's response form.

The City of Ojai greatly appreciates the opportunity to further the discussion about water, not just in our community, but in the entire incorporated area of Ventura County. The Ojai Area of Interest includes the largest surface reservoir in the county. With proper management and infrastructure construction, this reservoir could provide critical emergency relief for the entire County should a catastrophic event occur during which the water supply from the State Water Project was severed.

While Ojai and Moorpark are the only cities in Ventura County that do not directly provide water to its residents, the City of Ojai obviously has a vital interest in water security as the only municipality within the Ojai Area of Interest which incorporates the entire Valley.

We do have an agreement with Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD) to provide water to our community and have a few concerns regarding its UWMP. Both the CMWD UWMP and the Golden State Water (GSW) UWMP are now obsolete. There were significant errors of analysis in the GSW UWMP such as using 2000 census data when 2010 census data was already available. With its recent acquisition of Golden State Water Company's water distribution rights following an overwhelming voter referendum, we believe its past UWMP is no longer valid and we would respectfully state that we wish to see a new plan which would be more responsive to our 5-year drought than their past 3-year study. A new UWMP is needed which covers the dramatically different consolidated water utility inclusive of the newly acquired GSW system which integrates reservoir storage with aquifer storage in a manner not previously attainable.

The City of Ojai also recognizes the Ojai Groundwater Basin and the Upper Ventura River Groundwater Basin as important components of water security for the entire Ojai Area of

Interest. The City of Ojai will study the existing UWMP's and submit a request to the CMWD to update a consolidated UWMP consistent with your recommendations R-02 through R-05.

The City of Ojai has been asked to respond to Conclusions Nos. 1 through 7 in the report. We suggest C-01, C-02, C-03, C-05 and C-07 change the wording from "Cities" and "city plans" to "water purveyors" and "city, water purveyors, and regulatory agencies", respectively. The City of Ojai agrees with the substance of the conclusions C-01 to C-07 except for the correction limiting conclusions to "Cities."

Not only do we agree with these conclusions, we would like to state that we completely agree with your evaluation, both its methodology and its recommendations.

The City has also been asked to respond to Recommendations Nos. 1 through 5 in report. The City's responses are as follows:

R-01 The Grand Jury recommends the 10 city councils collaborate with all the County water purveyors to develop long term plans to respond to catastrophic disruptions of water supplies.

Response: The City completely agrees with this recommendation and looks forward to future discussion with our neighboring communities, water purveyors, and regulatory agencies within the county towards a goal of integrated water security planning.

R-02 The Grand Jury recommends the 10 city councils use the same data source when making population projections.

Response: The City completely agrees with this recommendation. Not only should we look at population data from the same source and time cohort, but all future water discussions should also use the same data.

R-03 The Grand Jury recommends the 10 city councils develop drought plans that extend at least five years.

Response: The city completely agrees with this recommendation. The County of Ventura has experienced a much longer drought than most communities in California. Meeting minimum standards in our past UWMP's did not help us provide comprehensive information, which could have been relevant to our dire needs over these past five years. Our preference would be for drought plans to extend well past five years.

R-04 The Grand Jury recommends the 10 city councils extend drought conservation measures during non-drought years; and

Response: The city completely agrees with this recommendation Through proper water management practices, such as water-wise ordinances, following the state- mandated water conservation practices ( MELOW) requiring extended ( 5 year vs 3 year) UWMP, public awareness and education, and developing additional back up sources for water, we can meet and manage our most serious needs.

R-05 The Grand Jury recommends the 10 city councils ensure all future water availability plans clearly identify any potential water sources that are based on unfunded or unpermitted infrastructure.

Response: The city completely agrees with this recommendation. It is one of the most important responsibilities of our city and others throughout Ventura County that we share in the gathering of facts and information regarding water reliability, future water resources, and access and methodologies, whether unfunded or unpermitted, in acquiring new water sources for our communities.

Not being a water purveyor directly, the City of Ojai can only contribute towards implementation of all of the recommendations provided in the Grand Jury Report by working in partnership with other agencies. Through our franchise authority, we will and should provide direct influence over CMWD in regards to their future UWMP and other practices. We will continue to be a leader in water conservation methodologies. Within the sphere of influence of the entire Ojai Valley, we will continue to lead, engage and hold public meetings to foster a greater understanding of our water environment, both its current and future needs.

If you have any further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve McClary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "S" at the beginning.

Steve McClary,  
City Manager