



# OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF VENTURA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GREGORY D. TOTTEN  
District Attorney

RECEIVED

MAY 7 2018

Ventura County  
Grand Jury

JANICE L. MAURIZI  
Chief Assistant District Attorney

MICHAEL K. FRAWLEY  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Administrative Services

W. CHARLES HUGHES  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Special Prosecutions

MICHAEL R. JUMP  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Victim & Community Services

MICHAEL D. SCHWARTZ  
Special Assistant District Attorney  
Justice Services

R. MILES WEISS  
Chief Deputy District Attorney  
Criminal Prosecutions

MICHAEL BARAY  
Chief Investigator  
Bureau of Investigation

May 4, 2018

The Honorable Patricia M. Murphy  
Presiding Judge  
Ventura County Superior Court  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Response to 2017-2018 Grand Jury report, "Ventura County Use of Vehicle-Registration Fees."

Dear Judge Murphy:

This response to the 2017-2018 Grand Jury report regarding the use of vehicle registration fees is provided pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, and Chapter II-14 of the County of Ventura 2018 Administrative Policy Manual.

## CONCLUSIONS

The only Conclusion in the Report, which is "pertaining to matters under the control" of the District Attorney (Penal Code, § 933(c)), is Conclusion C-03:

*The Grand Jury concluded the Vehicle Theft Program's (sic) has a sizeable reserve balance of nearly \$408,000, and it is growing annually. The Grand Jury further concluded these funds could be kept in a trust account as recommended by the Auditor-Controller in order to provide additional oversight and transparency.*

We agree with this conclusion.

Revenue from a \$1.00 fee applied to vehicle registration funds a vehicle theft task force that played a role in helping to locate many of the 960 recovered vehicles in fiscal year 2016-2017. The revenue fluctuates with the number of vehicles registered in Ventura

Hon. Patricia M. Murphy  
May 4, 2018  
Page 2

County. In recent years, the fund has increased the size of reserves as the number of vehicles registered has risen.

At current operating costs, the reserve represents less than two years of sustainability. Though we do not expect a dramatic decrease in vehicle registration, the reserves are necessary to ensure continued efforts in deterring and investigating vehicle theft.

The District Attorney's Office meticulously tracks the revenue associated with the program and submits annual reports to the California State Controller's Office. In addition to the existing internal and external controls, we agree that the establishment of a trust with our county Auditor-Controller's Office will advance transparency and oversight.

On January 4, 2018, we asked the Auditor-Controller to establish a trust. The vehicle theft trust was established on January 23, 2018, and has a current balance of \$459,113.

#### SUMMATION

The District Attorney's Office is committed to financial stewardship and transparency. The newly established trust, in addition to the yearly report to the California State Controller's Office, will ensure transparency and oversight.

I appreciate the consideration of my comments by the court and the Grand Jury.

Very truly yours,



GREGORY D. TOTTON  
District Attorney

GDT:elb

cc: Andrew Ludlum, Grand Jury Foreperson  
Board of Supervisors  
Michael Powers, County Executive Officer  
Jeffery Burgh, Auditor-Controller