county of ventura

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Grand Jury
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Ventura County
Grand Jury

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Ventura, CA 93009
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grandjury.countyofventura.org

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Ventura County Dam Safety

Report Date: May 10, 2018

Response by: Glenn Shephard Title: Director

FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

- I (we) agree with the findings / conclusions numbered: C-02
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings / Conclusions numbered: F-07, F-09, C-08 & C-10
  (Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings / Conclusions that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered _____ have been implemented.
  (Attach a summary describing the implemented actions and date completed.)
- Recommendations number _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
  (Attach a time frame for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
- Recommendations numbered R-01 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Date: 7/20/18 Signed: Glenn Shephard

Number of pages attached: 2

Ventura County
Watershed Protection District

PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY
JEFF PRATT
Agency Director

Glenn Shephard, Director
Watershed Protection District

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Design & Construction

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Watershed
Planning & Permits

July 20, 2018

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

Subject: Grand Jury Report: 2017-2018 "Ventura County Dam Safety"

Dear Judge Murphy:

This letter is in response to the May 21, 2018 letter transmitting the Ventura County Grand Jury 2017-2018 Final Report – "Ventura County Dam Safety", and requesting response to the report's Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations from the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. The District's narrative responses are provided below, and the Grand Jury Report Form is enclosed.

FINDINGS

Finding (F-07): The Ventura County Watershed Protection District (VCWPD) owns and operates the Matilija Dam [capacity 3,800 acre-feet], which received a "Poor" rating by the DSOD. The DSOD rating was based on concerns as to the ability of the dam, specifically issues related to the wing walls, to withstand a 7.5 magnitude earthquake. While the analysis did not appear to indicate complete failure, it indicated a likelihood of significant weakening. VCWPD's subsequent analysis did not indicate the same level of damage. Even so, the VCWPD, with concurrence from DSOD, agrees that removing the upper wing walls could significantly stabilize the dam. For that reason, VCWPD has applied for a $2-million hazard mitigation grant from FEMA to remove the wing walls. The district is continuing its quarterly monitoring program of the dam and will be taking core samples later this year to ensure that it has up-to-date information as to the dam's integrity.
Response: One correction. VCWPD's subsequent analysis did not indicate the same level of damage, reaffirming results from its 2011 structural analysis.

Finding (F-09): There are roughly 8 million cubic yards of debris behind Matilija Dam.
There is a concern that a big storm will push huge amounts of mud and water over the top, overwhelming bridges, culverts and roads below. (Ref-09)
Response: There remains about 15 feet of sediment capacity in Matilija reservoir; equating to roughly 1 million cubic yards of future sediment storage capacity. Also, storms that occurred after the Thomas Fire mobilized large amounts of sediment which were fully contained in the watershed/reservoir. There were no downstream hazard conditions observed due to sediment flow.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion (C-02): The Grand Jury concluded that VCWPD has identified structural issues regarding the Matilija Dam. The district is working to remove the dam. Pending obtaining funding and final approval of required environmental clearances, the dam may continue to be a threat. (FA-07, FA-08, FA-09)
Response: VCWPD *agrees* with this conclusion.

Conclusion (C-08): The Grand Jury concluded there does not appear to be any effort by the dam owners or the OES to educate the public as to potential inundation areas, evacuation routes, or what to do in the event of a dam failure. (FA-14, FA-15, FA-16, FA-17, FA-18)
Response: VCWPD *disagrees partially* with this conclusion. VCWPD provides the Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) all hazard preparedness information, enabling OES to convey related information to Ventura County communities. This information is accessible via community meetings and the ReadyVenturaCounty website. This includes dam hazard preparedness information and dam inundation maps.

Conclusion (C-10): The Grand Jury concluded that while inspections are required by the DSOD, there is no local monitoring or public awareness as to the status of the dams and the actions taken by their owners to improve their reliability and safety. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06)
Response: VCWPD *wholly disagrees* with this conclusion. VCWPD conducts annual pre-winter inspection of all of its dams and also inspects dams during and after each storm. Dams are also inspected if they are within predefined radius of an earthquake. Quarterly monitoring and surveys for any movement of Matilija Dam are also conducted. In addition, the VCWPD Flood Warning System provides predictive and real time storm flow data throughout the County watersheds and specifically for the Matilija Dam area to include: Matilija Creek, North Fork Matilija Creek and at the dam during all storm events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation (R-01): The Grand Jury recommends that the OES track the progress of remedial action taken at Matilija Dam, Santa Felicia Dam, Castaic Dam, and Bouquet Canyon Dam. Reports of progress should be made to the BOS annually. (C-01, C02, C-03, C-04, C-05)
Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Sheriff's OES is not responsible for monitoring or regulating dam safety. This is the responsibility of dam operators and state and federal regulatory organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this Grand Jury report. If additional explanation is needed, please feel free to contact Ventura County Watershed Protection District's Dam Safety Officer, Mr. Karl Novak (805) 672-2106 or karl.novak@ventura.org

Sincerely,

Glenn Shephard, P.E.
Director

Enclosure