

**SATICOY SANITARY DISTRICT**  
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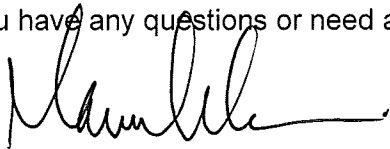
August 6, 2018

Andrew Ludlum, Foreperson  
2017-2018 Ventura County Grand Jury  
Ventura, California

**RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT ON INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS**

Please find attached Saticoy Sanitary District's (SSD's) response to the Grand Jury letter request dated 5/10/2018. SSD concurs with the Grand Jury's transparency goals and is endeavoring, to the extent possible, to implement them. However, due to current regulatory challenges that have placed a strain on the District's financial capabilities, SSD is limited in its ability, at this time, to implement all of the Grand Jury's recommendations. Transparency will remain a high priority goal for the District and will be further addressed as funding permits.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (805) 658-4621



MARK NORRIS – GENERAL MANAGER

## Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Independent Special Districts

Report Date: April 26, 2018

Response by: Mark Norris Title: General Manager

### FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

- I (we) agree with the findings / conclusions numbered: \_\_\_\_\_
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings / Conclusions numbered: C-01 (in part), C-04 (in part)  
(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 R-01 require further analysis.
- Recommendations numbered R-02, R-03 (in part), R-04 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Date: 8/7/18

Signed: 

Number of pages attached: 3

**VENTURA COUNTY 2017-2018 GRAND JURY**  
**Independent Special Districts**  
**Saticoy Sanitary District's Response to Grand Jury**  
**Report Form Attachment**

**We disagree wholly or partially with the following findings/conclusions:**

**C-01.** The Grand Jury concluded there is a lack of transparency and accountability when there is:

- An absence of competitive elections
- No general publication of elections other than in County election materials
- An election giving the electoral advantage of incumbency to a person who has been appointed solely to fill out the remaining months of another's term

The Grand Jury concluded that these practices, while legal under present election codes, are not conducive to the best interest of the public or the interest of the special districts themselves. (FA-01, FA-03)

*While Saticoy Sanitary District agrees that the public would be best served by competitive elections, it has experienced difficulty in finding constituents who are interested and/or eligible to run and serve on its Board from within its service area community. Recent efforts to fill a vacancy included multiple postings within the District's small service area, as well as Board members interacting directly with the community in an effort to elevate interest in serving on the Board. In addition, the SSD Board has committed to conducting an interview process for appointments.*

**C-04.** The Grand Jury concluded that the absence of websites or the lack of public information on existing websites defining the policies, practices, and missions of independent special districts is not in the public interest nor does it promote public accountability. (FA-01, FA-02, FA-04, FA-05)

*The Saticoy Sanitary District is a very small sanitation agency, serving a community which the State Water Resources Control Board classifies as*

*economically “severely disadvantaged”. Over the past several years, the primary focus of the District has been to bring its wastewater treatment plant into regulatory compliance. The community it serves has had wastewater user fees almost tripled over the past five years. These increases were necessary to support the debt associated with major rehabilitation of the District’s wastewater conveyance and treatment system. There are currently no funds available for the creation and ongoing maintenance of a website.*

## **Recommendations**

**R-01.** The Grand Jury recommends all independent special districts in the County reach out and communicate with the public on opportunities to serve on boards. Elections should be broadly publicized, along with a description of the nature and mission of the districts. (C-01, C-04)

*The Saticoy Sanitary District will take this recommendation under advisement, and will consider identifying affordable options to expand its efforts to publicize Board seats up for election.*

**R-02.** The Grand Jury recommends independent special district boards discontinue the practice of appointing new board members a few months prior to a public election, giving incumbent status to a virtually new board member. (C-01)

*The Saticoy Sanitary District does not agree with the Grand Jury’s recommendation to discontinue the practice of appointing new board members a few months prior to public election. The District does agree that electing board members in lieu of the appointment process would always be the best option. However, the community’s lack of interest to run for seats on the Saticoy Sanitary District Board continues to pose a significant challenge the District.*

**R-03.** The Grand Jury recommends that all independent special districts have a published policy for reserve funds, including the size and purpose of reserves and how they are invested. These policies should be readily available for public review. (C-02, C-03, C-04)

*The Saticoy Sanitary District will be adopting its Reserve Policy at its August 22, 2018 board meeting. The policy will be available for public review by contacting the Clerk of the Board, as the Saticoy Sanitary District does not maintain a website at this time.*

**R-04.** The Grand Jury recommends every independent special district in the County have a website.

Key components should include:

- Name, location, contact information, and services provided
- Governance structure of the district, including election information and the process for constituents to run for board positions
- Compensation details including staff salaries, pensions, and benefits, or a link to this information on the State Controller's website
- Annual revenues and the sources of such revenues, including fees, property taxes and other assessments, bond debt, expenditures, and reserve amounts
- Reserve fund policy
- Geographic area served
- Most recent Municipal Service Review, and the most recent annual financial report provided to the State Controller or a link to this information on the State Controller's website
- Link to LAFCO

*See the response for C-04.*