



COUNTY of VENTURA

Grand Jury

800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009
Tel (805) 477-1600
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grandjury.countyofventura.org

Response to 2022-2023 Ventura County Grand Jury Report Form (Please See California Penal Code Section 933.05)

Report Title: Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County

AUG 17 2023

Responding Entity: Sheriff James Fryhoff, Ventura County Sheriff

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered: F-01 through F-14
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered: N/A
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered N/A have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered N/A have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a summary indicating the timeframe for implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R-04 require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation to include: scope and parameters of the analysis or study and timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion with the agency or department head. The timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the report.)
- Recommendations numbered R-04 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 8/16/2023

Signed: 

Title: Director - Sheriff's Emergency Services

Number of pages attached: 2



Ventura County **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



150
YEARS
OF SERVICE

Jim Fryhoff - Sheriff | **John Reilly** - Undersheriff
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 | 805.654.2385 | VenturaSheriff.org

August 14, 2023

The Honorable Kevin G. DeNoce
Presiding Judge, Superior Court of California
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Grand Jury Report, Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County
(June 12, 2023)

Dear Judge DeNoce:

This letter is in response to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations pertaining to their report "Water Availability for Wildfires in Ventura County." The Ventura County Sheriff's Office appreciates the time and effort the Grand Jury exerted to examine the reliability of local water systems. We certainly share similar concerns for the safety and reliability of local water systems given the crucial role they play in fire suppression. The Grand Jury's concern on the topic is evident from its careful review of pertinent information and the thoughtful recommendations outlined in the report.

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered: F-01 through F-14

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I (we) agree with the Recommendations numbered R-01 through R-03 and R-05 through R-09
- I (we) partially agree with the Recommendation number R-04

Recommendation R-04:

The Grand Jury recommends that the Ventura County Sheriff's OES develop a current contact list of water purveyors, updated at least once a year.

Response R-04:

Partially Agree. Recommendation R-04 suggests Ventura County Sheriff's OES develop a contact list of all 150+ water purveyors and update that list annually. While not directly stated, it is our opinion that this recommendation also implies it is the responsibility of Ventura County Sheriff's OES to notify water purveyors of inclement weather, including Red Flag Warnings. While Ventura County Sheriff's OES does play a role in operational area coordination, assuming the responsibility of notifying every public and private agency of adverse weather conditions is impractical.

The National Weather Service offers a variety of text message and email alerts capable of being sent to purveyors ahead of inclement conditions, free of charge. This Federal Agency is charged with the responsibility to alert and warn the public about hazardous weather conditions, including fire weather. It is incumbent upon water purveyors to sign up for these alerts and make an effort to stay informed on conditions that may impact the demand or stability of their systems. Purveyors have a statutory responsibility to provide safe, reliable water to their customers. To that extent, purveyors are responsible for taking steps to ensure systems are functioning properly and are equipped to provide the water capacity needed during an emergency.

Ventura County Sheriff's OES routinely hosts operational area conference calls and/or distributes information via a situation update email list. The goal of sharing information through these methods is to increase situational awareness with municipalities, often acting as catalyst to initiate preparedness activities. Presently, most major water purveyors are a part of these coordination calls, and the opportunity remains open to all other purveyors to participate.

Lastly, Ventura County Sheriff's OES is actively working with the Association of Water Agencies and several other major water purveyors to develop an opt-in communication system capable of sharing additional information with purveyors, should they choose to participate.

In conclusion, we are confident we are taking the necessary steps to address the concerns raised in the Grand Jury's report. Ventura County Sheriff's OES is committed to the safety and security of the communities we serve and continually strives to enhance the delivery of the service we provide. Again, we thank the members of the Grand Jury for their concerns and thoughtful consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,


Jim Fryhoff
Sheriff

CC: Ventura County Grand Jury