

  
KEVIN G. DeNOCE  
JUDGE

RECEIVED  
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

AUG 30 2023

OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDING JUDGE

August 7, 2023

Honorable Kevin G. DeNoce, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of Ventura  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93003

**RE: THE 2022-2023 VENTURA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT TITLED WATER AVAILABILITY FOR WILDFIRES IN VENTURA COUNTY**

Honorable Judge DeNoce:

The City of San Buenaventura (City) received the 2022-2023 Ventura County Grand Jury Report titled "Water Availability in Ventura County". This response was reviewed and received by the City Council on August 7, 2023, and I was authorized to submit the response as the Ventura Water General Manager.

The City of Ventura has made considerable progress in addressing response and resources during wildfire events. Further information on the City's activities can be found with the link below to a presentation, which begins at 2:50:50 marker:

[https://cityofventura.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=17&clip\\_id=1715](https://cityofventura.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=17&clip_id=1715)

The City appreciates and welcomes the efforts of the Grand Jury's review and respectfully provides the following responses to the Grand Jury Findings and Recommendations in accordance with Penal Code Section 933.05(f):

**Findings**

**F-01:** The Grand Jury finds that an adequate supply of water is essential for successful suppression of wildfires. (SF-01, SF-02, SF-03, SF-04)

**Response to F-01: Agree.** The City agrees that adequate supply of water is essential for suppressing wildfire in order to protect and preserve human life.

**F-02:** The Grand Jury finds that the limited number of Fire Weather Watch (FWW) advisories amplifies the importance of establishing written procedures, protocols and training. (SF-01, SF-05, SF-07, SF-10)

**Response to F-02: Agree.** Additionally, the City feels that regardless of the number of FWW advisories, there is the importance of establishing written procedures, protocols and training.



# COUNTY of VENTURA

## Grand Jury

800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009  
Tel (805) 477-1600  
Fax (805) 658-4523  
grandjury.countyofventura.org

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### 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

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VENTURA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT

Responding Entity: Mayor Joe Schroeder, City of San Buenaventura, City Council

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#### FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered: F-01, F-02, F-04, F-10, F-12, F-13, F-14
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered: F-03, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08, F-09  
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed;  
include an explanation of the reasons.)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-01, R-02, R-07, R-08, R-09 have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered R-05, R-06, have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a summary indicating the timeframe for implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R-03 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: 08.24.2023

Signed: [Signature]

Title: Ventura Water General Manager

Number of pages attached: 14

**F-03:** The Grand Jury finds that written procedures for actions taken by water purveyors during the Fire Weather Watch event is a best practice that is lacking in Ventura County. (SF-01, SF-05, SF-07, SF-10)

**Response to F-03: Partially disagree.** The City does not have access to other County agency written procedures and cannot agree nor disagree with this finding or determine if they are lacking. The City believes that it has written procedures in place that are not lacking.

**F-04:** The Grand Jury finds that the limited number of Red Flag Warning (RFW) events amplifies the importance of establishing written procedures, protocols, and training. (SF-01, SF-06, SF-07, SF-10)

**Response to F-04: Agree.** Additionally, the City feels that regardless of the number of RFW advisories there is the importance of establishing written procedures, protocols, and training.

**F-05:** The Grand Jury finds that written procedures for actions taken by water purveyors during A Red Flag Warning event is a best practice that is lacking in Ventura County. (SF-01, SF-06, SF-07, SF-10)

**Response to F-05: Partially disagree.** The City does not have access to other County agency written procedures and cannot agree nor disagree with this finding or determine if they are lacking. The City believes that it has written procedures in place that are not lacking.

**F-06:** The Grand Jury finds that written procedures for actions taken by water purveyors during an active fire event is a best practice that is lacking in Ventura County. (SF-01, SF-08, SF-10)

**Response to F-06: Partially disagree.** The City does not have access to other County agency written procedures and cannot agree nor disagree with this finding or determine if they are lacking. The City believes that it has written procedures in place that are not lacking.

**F-07:** The Grand Jury finds that written procedures for actions taken by water purveyors during Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events is a best practice that is lacking in Ventura County. (SF-01, SF-09, SF-10)

**Response to F-07: Partially disagree.** The City does not have access to other County agency written procedures and cannot agree nor disagree with this finding or determine if they are lacking. The City believes that it has written procedures in place that are not lacking.

**F-08:** The Grand Jury finds that backup power to critical infrastructure is not always available. (SF-01, SF-11)

**Response to F-08: Partially disagree.** The City does not have access to other County agency critical infrastructure and cannot agree nor disagree with this finding or determine if backup power to other agency infrastructure is always available. The City has backup power available for all of its critical infrastructure.

**F-09:** The Grand Jury finds that SCADA systems are not equipped with backup power in all instances. (SF-01, SF-12)

**Response to F-09: Partially disagree.** The City does not have access to other County agency SCADA systems and cannot agree nor disagree with this finding. The City has backup power available for all of its critical infrastructure including SCADA.

**F-10:** The Grand Jury finds that inadequate communication between adjoining water purveyors limits the ability to coordinate needed actions such as available water transfers. (SF-13, SF-14)

**Response to F-10: Agree.** The City agrees that inadequate communication limits the ability to coordinate available water transfers. The City does have open communication with other water purveyors. In addition to communication there are infrastructure limitations of systems to be able to transfer water between purveyors. Water Systems are hydraulically designed to accommodate the community they service and not meant to allow for outside connections, to ensure the protection of water quality. The City receives water from Casitas Municipal Water District and is implementing the State Water Interconnection Project, which will be the first infrastructure within the City that will allow for flow to or from Calleguas Municipal Water District's system in the case of an emergency.

**F-11:** The Grand Jury finds that notification to water purveyors of FWWs and RFWs is inconsistent due to out-of-date contact lists. (SF-13, SF-14)

**Response to F-11: Abstain.** The City of Ventura is listed as an exception to this finding.

**F-12:** The Grand Jury finds that enrolling in GETS and WPS would allow Ventura County water purveyors priority access to landline and cellular telephone networks in emergency situations. (SF-16, SF-17)

**Response to F-12: Agree.** The City has updated enrollment in GETS and WPS and is awaiting verification into the programs.

**F-13:** The Grand Jury finds that enrolling in Cal-Warn would allow Ventura Water purveyors access to statewide resources. (SF-18)

**Response to F-13: Agree.** The City of Ventura is enrolled in the Cal-Warn system.

**F-14:** The Grand Jury finds that Ventura County Fire Code section 4907.8 regarding brush clearance around water tanks, water supply pumps, pump houses and related infrastructure applies to all rural and unincorporated communities, and all cities except Fillmore, Oxnard and Ventura. (SF-19, SF-20, SF-21)

**Response to F-14: Agree.** The City addresses brush clearance in its local ordinance Section 4907.1 General: Defensible space will be maintained around all buildings and structures in State Responsibility Area (SRA) as required in Public Resources Code 4290 and "SRA Fire Safe Regulations" California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 2, Section 1270.

Buildings and structures within the High and Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zones of a Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) shall maintain defensible space as outlined in Government Code 51175 - 51189 and Appendix Q.

Fire abatement landscaping is required by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year per the City's landscape contracts. This is overseen by both the City's Parks Department and Ventura Water Department.

**Recommendations:**

**R-01:** The Grand Jury recommends that water purveyors establish written operational procedures and training to provide for increased water supply for fire flow during FWWs, RFWs, active fires and PSPS. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-07)

**Response to R-01: Recommendation numbered F-01 has been implemented.** The City of Ventura has had in place a Red Flag PSPS Response Procedure. In this procedure, FWWs, RFWs, active fires and PSPS are treated as the same threat level with the same response. Staff is trained on the procedure upon hiring and the procedure is reviewed at the beginning of each event activation. The procedures were recently revised to update contact numbers. The updated version can be found in the provided Attachment.

**R-02:** The Grand Jury recommends that water purveyors have emergency power on site for all critical water infrastructure including SCADA systems. (F-08, F-09)

**Response to R-02: Recommendation numbered R-02 has been implemented.** The City completed the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) for Emergency Generators in 2022. Every critical water site has backup generator power that powers the equipment and programming hardware and software, including SCADA systems. In addition to generator power, the SCADA servers are on UPS with at least 1.5 hours of battery backup.

**R-03:** The Grand Jury recommends that water purveyors establish common communication protocols with adjoining water purveyors to coordinate needed actions, including water transfers during active fires (F-10).

**Response to R-03: Recommendation numbered R-03 will require further analysis.** There are infrastructure limitations between agencies that may not make water transfers during active fires a possibility. Communication during an active event should take place at the County OES level to allow local agencies to focus on what their system demand is. The City of Ventura will attend OES Operations Training scheduled for August 8 and August 9, 2023 at the Ventura County Government Center.

A recent partnership workshop was hosted by Calleguas Municipal Water District that broached the subject of emergency water supply. Water agencies discussed and developed a list of challenges that regional water supply interconnections present. Next steps include additional quarterly meetings to prioritize water supply needs and identify solutions.

**R-04:** The Grand Jury recommends that Ventura County Sheriff's OES develop a current contact list of water purveyors, updated at least once a year. (F-11)

**Response to R-04: Abstain.** The City of Ventura was not required to respond to recommendation numbered R-04.

**R-05:** The Grand Jury recommends that water purveyors enroll their employees in the FCC Wireless Priority Service (WPS) providing cell phone priority in emergencies. (F-12)

**Response to R-05: Recommendation numbered R-05 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.** The City has submitted employee cell phone numbers to the FCC program and are awaiting verification into the program. It is anticipated that this will be complete within 6 months.

**R-06:** The Grand jury recommends that water purveyors enroll in the Government Emergency Telecommunications System (GETS) providing cell phone landline phone priority in emergencies. (f-12)

**Response to R-06: Recommendation numbered R-06 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.** The City has submitted employee cell phone numbers to the GETS program and are awaiting verification into the program. It is anticipated that this will be complete within 6 months.

**R-07:** The Grand Jury recommends that all water purveyors enroll in CalWARN, a network of water and wastewater agencies that can provide emergency resources. (F-13)

**Response to R-07: Recommendation numbered R-07 has been implemented.** The City has updated enrollment with CalWARN and provided new emergency contacts.

**R-08:** The Grand Jury recommends that all water purveyors provide brush clearance around water tanks, water supply pumps, pump houses and related infrastructure. (F-14)

**Response to R-08: Recommendation numbered R-08 has been implemented.** Fire abatement landscaping is required by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year per the City's landscape contracts. This is overseen by both the City's Parks Department and Ventura Water Department.

**R-09:** The Grand Jury recommends that Ventura City Fire Department, Oxnard Fire Department, and Fillmore Fire Department adopt the Ventura County standard for brush clearance around water tanks, water supply pumps, pump houses and related infrastructure. (F-14)

**Response to R-09: Recommendation numbered R-09 has been implemented.** The Grand Jury recommendation the Ventura City Fire Department adopt the Ventura County Standard for "brush clearance around water tanks, water supply pumps, pump houses and related infrastructure" has been implemented and enforcing the same requirements through existing language in the San Buenaventura Municipal Code. The San Buenaventura Municipal Code states:

Section 4907.1 General. Defensible space will be maintained around all buildings and structures in State Responsibility Area (SRA) as required in Public Resources Code 4290 and "SRA Fire Safe Regulations" California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Subchapter 2, Section 1270.

Buildings and structures within the High and Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zones of a Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) shall maintain defensible space as outlined in Government Code 51175 - 51189 and Appendix Q.

The specific items identified in the Ventura County Standard meet the definition of "structure" in the Ca. Building Code. Ventura City Fire Department has enforced brush clearance around "water tanks, water supply pumps, pump houses and related infrastructure" as part of its annual defensible space inspection program.

**Attachment**

# Ventura Water (VW) Water Operations Response Procedures

## Red Flag Warnings & SCE Public Safety Power Shutoff's (PSPS's)

When humidity is low, temperatures are high, and strong winds are predicted, the National Weather Service (NWS) issue Red Flag Warnings to alert affected communities and public safety agencies. The issuance of a Red Flag Warning may trigger City, County, agencies and utilities to take precautionary steps to prepare for fire that could quickly spread out of control under these conditions.

When Red Flag conditions are present, Southern California Edison (SCE) may also issue a Public Safety Power Shut-Off (PSPS). A PSPS means SCE shuts off power in Red Flag affected areas that have potential for their energized infrastructure to create a fire where it could spread into a wildfire.

### **SCE Contact Information:**

**Mary Ann Larrieu, CEM**, SCE Acct Rep. will be in constant contact with the City of Ventura in a PSPS event. Cell: (805) 231-5439 Email: [maryann.larrieu@sce.com](mailto:maryann.larrieu@sce.com)

Report an outage: 1-800-611-1911 or [www.sce.com/outage](http://www.sce.com/outage)  
Public Safety Power Shutoff — Am I Impacted? [www.sce.com/pspss](http://www.sce.com/pspss)  
General Business Customer Service: 1-800-990-7788  
SCE's website: [www.sce.com](http://www.sce.com)

**The following Ventura Water employees will receive PSPS notification before, during, and after a PSPS event:**

	<u>First</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>Email</u>
1*	Gina	Dorrington	<a href="mailto:gdorrington@cityofventura.ca.gov">gdorrington@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
2	Ignacio	Rodriguez	<a href="mailto:irodriguez@cityofventura.ca.gov">irodriguez@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
3	Eric	Dettloff	<a href="mailto:edettloff@cityofventura.ca.gov">edettloff@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
4	Frank	Herrera	<a href="mailto:fherrera@cityofventura.ca.gov">fherrera@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
5	John	Willis	<a href="mailto:jwillis@cityofventura.ca.gov">jwillis@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
6	Devin	Bishop	<a href="mailto:dbishop@cityofventura.ca.gov">dbishop@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
7	Vince	Inez	<a href="mailto:vines@cityofventura.ca.gov">vines@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
8	Amanda	DeLeon	<a href="mailto:adeleon@cityofventura.ca.gov">adeleon@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
9	Jerrod	Wilson	<a href="mailto:jewilson@cityofventura.ca.gov">jewilson@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
10	Jeremy	Hanson	<a href="mailto:jhanson@cityofventura.ca.gov">jhanson@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>
11	Robert	Barretto	<a href="mailto:rbarretto@cityofventura.ca.gov">rbarretto@cityofventura.ca.gov</a>

\* SCE Primary Contact

**Email List as of 06/29/2023**



**When a Red Flag Warning is issued by the National Weather Service, Ventura Water Operations Staff are to take the following actions:**

**A. General Procedures –Ventura Water Treatment, Production, Distribution and SCADA**

- Check City vehicles and critical equipment and ensure that they are fully fueled.
- Perform portable & vehicle radio checks for charge and functionality.
- Charge cell phones and review employee contact list.
- Supervisors review current working staff and determine available after-hours staff.
- Supervisors to verify list of all standby staff and phone #'s.

**B. Treatment Division**

- Change the tank/reservoir level setpoints to the Red Flag Levels.
- Email to Treatment Operators, Lead, Supervisor, Manager and Assistant General Manager when levels have been changed.
- Call Casitas' operations staff to determine if they have any restrictions or issues of concern.
- Check chemical levels and inventories at treatment plants and order as necessary.

**C. Production Division**

- Test all backup generators for functionality and check fuel levels.
- Communicate with Fleet, vendor and upper management on any issues
- Evaluate the need to stage portable generators or other equipment at key locations.
- Communicate the location(s) of portable generators to Fleet once deployed.
- Perform a visual inspection of all Booster Pump stations and report any issues.

**D. Distribution Division**

- Assist with other Divisions as needed.
- Check availability of dump trucks and backhoes.
- Check on obtaining cell phones for all active/on-call staff

**E. SCADA Division**

- Prepare to stage suitcase generators/other equipment at key locations.

**When a PSPS Notification is issued by Southern California Edison, Ventura Water Operations Staff are to take the following actions:**

**A. General Procedures - Ventura Water Employees**

- All supervisors review current working shifts and prepare to go to 12 hr. shifts.
- Recheck City vehicles and ensure that they are fully fueled.
- Have portable & vehicle radios ready and available for use.
- Recheck cell phones for charge.

**B. Treatment Division**

- Verify reservoirs/booster stations are operating within the "red-flag" set points.
- Call Casitas to determine if they have any operational restrictions or issues of concern.
- Report problems to the Supervisor and Water Utility Manager.

**C. Production Division**

- Deploy portable generators to their designated locations.
- Communicate location of portable generators to Fleet once deployed.
- Monitor functionality of wells and booster stations (On SCADA).
- Report and coordinate any repairs as necessary.
- Report problems to the Supervisor and Water Utility Manager.

**D. Distribution Division**

- Work with other divisions as needed.
- Perform inspections of the distribution system.
- Coordinate repair of distribution system line breaks or other distribution system failures.
- Report problems to the Supervisor and Water Utility Manager.

**E. SCADA Division**

- Deploy suitcase generators/other equipment at key locations.
- Monitor system and report problems to the Supervisor and Water Utility Manager.

## When Power is Shut-Off by Southern California Edison, Ventura Water Operations Staff are to take the following actions:

### A. General Procedures - Ventura Water Employees

- All supervisors create teams to cover 12 hr. shifts until power is fully restored.
- Continue to check City vehicles to ensure that they are fully fueled.
- Have portable & vehicle radios ready and available for use.
- Maintain charged radios and cell phones.

### B. Treatment Division

- Verify reservoirs/booster stations are operating within the "red-flag" set points.
- Call Casitas to determine if they have operational restrictions or issues of concern.
- Report problems to the Water Utility Manager and the EOC/DOC (if activated).

### C. Production Division

- Deploy portable generators to their designated locations.
- Communicate location of portable generators to Fleet once deployed.
- Monitor functionality of generators and booster stations.
- Coordinate with Fleet to implement refueling operations.
- Report and coordinate any repairs as necessary.
- Report problems to the Water Utility Manager and the EOC/DOC (if activated).

### D. Distribution Division

- Work with other divisions as needed.
- Perform roving inspections of distribution system and on SCADA.
- Coordinate repair of system line breaks or other distribution system failures.
- Report problems to the Water Utility Manager and the EOC/DOC (if activated).

### E. SCADA Division

- Continue to monitor SCADA system, suitcase generators and key equipment.
- Report problems to the Water Utility Manager and EOC/DOC (if activated).

**When Power is restored, PSPS Notifications/Red Flag Warnings are Cancelled, Ventura Water Operations Staff are to take the following steps:**

**A. General Procedures - Ventura Water Employees**

- Treatment, Production and SCADA supervisors to verify system functionality
- Report issues to the Supervisor and Water Utility Manager.
- Schedule repair of any nonfunctioning equipment.
- Reinstate normal working shifts.

**B. Treatment Division**

- Call Casitas to inform them of our status and ask if they have any issues.
- Reset tank/reservoir operating set points back down to the normal operating levels.
- Email to Treatment Operators, Lead, Supervisor, Manager and Assistant General Manager when levels have been changed back to normal.

**C. Production Division**

- Perform a visual inspection of all water tanks, booster pump stations and generators.
- Make a list of all functional and nonfunctional equipment.
- Move portable generators back to staging areas.

**D. Distribution Division**

- Complete any repair work and cleanup efforts.

**E. SCADA Division**

- Move suitcase generators/other equipment that was deployed back to staging area.
- Repair any non-functional equipment.

# **GENERATOR INFORMATION**

**VENTURA WATER STAFF CONTACT LIST**

## CONTRACTOR/EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER INFORMATION

### **Generator Rental Contact Information**

United Rentals - Dennis Ryan

Cell: [REDACTED] dryan1@ur.com

### **On-Call Contractors**

#### **Well & Pump Services**

General Pump – Ray Reece

Office: (805) 482-1215

reece@genpump.com

Layne Christensen – Mark Howard

Office: (805) 933-1209

Cell: [REDACTED]

Mark.Howard@gcinc.com

#### **Main Break Assistance**

Toro Enterprises – A.J. Coccillos

Office: (805) 483-4515

ajcoccillos@toroenterprises.com

Sam Hill & Sons – Scott Anderson

Office: (805) 644-6278

Cell: [REDACTED]

scott@samhillandsons.com

#### **Electrical Repairs**

Taft Electric Company – Mark Tovias

Office: (805) 654-7925

Cell: [REDACTED]

mtovias@taftelectric.com

Sam Hill & Sons – Scott Anderson

Office: (805) 644-6278

Cell: [REDACTED]

scott@samhillandsons.com