

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

August 1, 2006

TO: City Council

FROM: City Manager

Prepared by: Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT ON FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT – PREPARED FOR WINTER STORMS?

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Review staff's recommendations for the City's response to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report regarding *Flood Control and Water Conservation District – Prepared for Winter Storms?*; and
2. Instruct the Director of Public Works/City Engineer to sign and transmit the City's response (Attachment B) to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court and the Grand Jury, and to file a copy with the City Clerk's Office.

BACKGROUND:

The Santa Barbara Grand Jury recently released its 2005-06 Final Report, which includes ten Grand Jury Reports. Of those ten Grand Jury Reports, the City is mentioned in four of the reports, and is required to respond to these four reports. Many of these reports were released as interim reports during the year. This agenda item is the last of four reports that the City will be responding to.

On May 11, 2006, the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury issued a report on *Flood Control and Water Conservation District – Prepared for Winter Storms?*, and the Department of Public Works was named as an affected agency. The City is required to respond to this Grand Jury's Report within 90 days of receiving it, which gives the City until August 9, 2006 to reply to the Grand Jury's Report.

DISCUSSION:

The Grand Jury investigated the County Flood Control and Water Conservation Districts' operations, programs, and annual maintenance projects to determine if their programs and projects are well-planned, proactive and comprehensive. The Grand Jury also investigated the District's flood control program to assess how the District administers its flood control program in order to assess its effectiveness in responding

to recurring problems such as winter rains and other natural emergencies. The Grand Jury reviewed documents as well as interviewed City, County and District personnel and then subsequently produced a report called *Flood Control and Water Conservation District – Prepared for Winter Storms?*

In total, the Grand Jury Report made five findings and two recommendations. However, only one finding and one recommendation affected the City of Santa Maria which necessitates a response. The following, for your consideration, is staff's responses to the finding and recommendation that's applicable to Santa Maria:

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT – PREPARED FOR WINTER STORMS?

Finding 1: The deterioration of the rock facing on the Santa Maria Levee exposes the City of Santa Maria to the risk of widespread flooding.

City Response: The City of Santa Maria's Department of Public Works agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1: Now that a comprehensive engineering study of the Santa Maria Levee is available, the funding to reinforce the levee should be secured and applied to the solutions in the study report.

City Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future once the City works with the County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District to secure funding to reinforce the levee. The City has already initiated this recommendation in early April. A consortium of officials from the County and the Cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe went to Washington, D.C., to meet with Federal Legislators and the Army Corps of Engineers. The City is currently seeking funding in the Federal Budget from the Corps of Engineers to prepare a feasibility report on the Levee which is required to secure Federal construction money of a much larger amount. The City has also gone one step further and engaged the services of a legislative advocate to assist the City in obtaining such funding.

Concurrently with the above efforts, the City has also been engaging the State of California for funding; with the State actively investigating its ability to fund levee improvements. Although the State's interest is clearly in the Sacramento area, the City continues to push for funding for the Santa Maria Levee. Once funding is secured, it will be applied to the reinforcement and repair efforts.

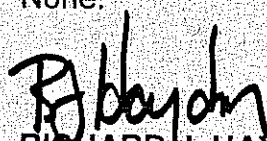
The above concludes the City's response to the Grand Jury's Report.

Fiscal Considerations

None.

Impact to the Community

None.



RICHARD J. HAYDON
Assistant City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Grand Jury Report dated May 11, 2006
- B. Rick Sweet's Draft Letter of Response to the Grand Jury Report