

The 2015 – 2016 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury

For Immediate Release

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News Release

### **County of Santa Barbara EOC Activation**

Following the oil spill at Refugio State Beach in May 2015 questions were raised concerning the perceived “take over” of the County of Santa Barbara’s (County) Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by a non-governmental entity, Plains All American Pipeline. In addition, an inquiry was received by the 2015-16 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury (Jury) pertaining to the EOC’s use, which the Jury also examined. Members of the Jury toured the EOC, reviewed documents and media reports, interviewed staff, and attended a public meeting of the County’s Disaster Council.

The Jury learned that in this case, the County was acting as a “landlord” to the Unified Command that was formed in response to the oil spill. This operational method is typical of such incidents as mandated by federal, state, and local laws and conformed to the Santa Barbara County Operational Area Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP). As a result of its investigation, the Jury found that the activation of the EOC was done in compliance with the aforementioned laws.

The Jury wrote a report on their investigation titled “Emergency Operations Center Activation”. The report may be found on the Grand Jury’s website at [www.sbcgj.org](http://www.sbcgj.org).

The Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury is a basic part of government within the judicial branch. The Grand Jury acts independently, yet is under the general control of the Superior Court Presiding Judge to assure that it acts in accordance with the Penal Code of the State of California.

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