

The 2015 – 2016 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury

For Immediate Release

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News Release

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA HARBOR OPERATIONS

Are Boat Owners' Property Taxes Slipping Away?

The 2015-16 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury (Jury) received requests for investigation from citizens concerning certain operations of the Waterfront Department (Department); specifically, some questions concerning the Harbor in the City of Santa Barbara (Harbor). Citizens expressed concern with the fact that the Department not only collects a slip transfer fee and monthly rent on slips; but property taxes are also collected from boat owners, despite the fact that the slips are city property. Questions were also raised about Harbor policies concerning vessel operability and people living on their vessels. Lastly, a concern was raised about vessel registration numbers (CF numbers). The Jury found that, on these particular issues, the Department and the Harbor are operating within applicable state and local regulations, as well as within their internal policies.

The Jury has written a report on its investigation. The Jury's report, titled "City of Santa Barbara Harbor Operations, Are Boat Owners' Property Taxes Slipping Away?" can be found on its website at 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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