



# City of Santa Barbara

Office of the Mayor

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August 21, 2025

**Randy Rowse**

Mayor

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The Honorable Patricia Kelly  
Presiding Judge  
Santa Barbara Superior Court  
1100 Anacapa Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Response to Santa Barbara County Grand Jury report titled, "Water Management in Santa Barbara County Keep Up the Good Work"  
(Published June 13, 2025, Grand Jury Website: <https://www.sbcgj.org>)

Dear Judge Kelly,

Please find attached the City of Santa Barbara's response to the above-referenced Civil Grand Jury Report. As directed by the Grand Jury, all responses are provided in accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code.

Sincerely,

Randy Rowse, Mayor  
City of Santa Barbara

DH:JS:sjc

cc: City of Santa Barbara Councilmembers  
Dale Kunkel, Foreperson, 2024-2025 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury



Please consider the environment before printing this letter.

**Response to Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report Titled:  
“Water Management in Santa Barbara County Keep Up the Good Work”**

**Finding 1:** Despite community concerns about water scarcity, all of the public entities the Jury investigated that provide and manage water in Santa Barbara County have made proactive plans to fortify against future droughts and provide sufficient water necessary to support future housing growth and commerce.

**City Response:** *The City agrees with this finding.*

*Over the past several decades, the City has invested in diversifying its water supply portfolio. Additionally, water conservation remains a useful tool for stretching the City’s water supplies, especially when future rainfall is unpredictable and future drought conditions are always possible. The City recognizes the necessity of continued investment in water system infrastructure, especially as the City’s systems continue to age. The City regularly conducts rate studies to ensure the system is adequately funded and adopts Capital Improvement Plans to ensure water system reliability. The City’s regular long term water supply planning efforts include coordination with the Community Development team to help inform development and housing growth assumptions.*

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**Finding 2:** Despite a 2016-17 Grand Jury finding that limitations existed in coordinating water management, the Jury finds that coordination among different water management entities in the County has improved significantly.

**City Response:** *The City agrees with this finding and intends to continue to work cooperatively with all Santa Barbara County water agencies.*

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**Finding 3:** The City of Santa Barbara has gone beyond the basic management of water resources for its residents by utilizing desalination to innovatively expand local water availability.

**City Response:** *The City agrees with this finding.*

*The City greatly appreciates the Grand Jury’s recognition of the City’s efforts. The City’s 2020 Enhanced Urban Water Management Plan (EUWMP) promotes the continued use of desalination to allow the City to protect and optimize the City’s other water supplies, most notably surface water stored in Lake Cachuma as carryover water, and to improve the City’s ability to prepare for and respond to future drought conditions. Note that the City is not currently in the process of expanding the desalination plant. Santa Barbara City Council has not given direction to expand. However, the EUWMP does identify desalination expansion as the next best available water supply for the City, and outlines water supply and demand triggers for the timing of desalination expansion initiation.*