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## Summary of Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts

### Issue

To what extent are Special Districts in San Mateo County prepared to respond to a disaster?

### Summary

Special districts are governmental agencies that deliver specific services within defined geographic boundaries. The most common special districts fall into the following categories: Police or Fire Protection; Water; Sanitation/Sewer; Healthcare/Hospitals; and Resource Conservation. The functions implemented by special districts for a geographic region are similar to those performed by departments in larger municipalities.

The San Mateo Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) conducted interviews with staff and board members of 20 Special Districts to determine the level of emergency preparedness of each. In addition, the Grand Jury interviewed personnel from the San Francisco Airport, the California Water Service Company, and the County Office of Emergency Services (OES). (See appendix for a complete list of districts interviewed). Interviews included specific questions about the status of disaster plans, self-evaluations by the districts of their disaster preparedness, and open-ended questions about existing mechanisms for coordination within each jurisdiction and throughout the County.

Since the services performed by some special districts are especially critical in a disaster, the Grand Jury decided to focus this report to address water, fire protection and sanitary districts. In the event of a disaster, these special districts would be central response points to the “extraordinary fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, earthquake, or other similar public calamities” described by the Emergency Services Organization in its Joint Powers Authority (JPA) agreement.

Interviews conducted with special districts revealed recurring issues and concerns related to three topics: 1) their degree of emergency-preparedness; 2) the coordination of

emergency services with the municipalities they serve and with other districts; and 3) County-wide radio communication.

Grand Jury recommendations include: 1) ensuring that special districts become members of service associations that provide disaster response support assistance; 2) encouraging closer coordination between special districts and the municipalities they serve; 3) conducting a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality; and 4) educating special districts about County-wide digital radio systems.



## Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts

### Issue

To what extent are Special Districts in San Mateo County prepared to respond to a disaster?

### Background

State law defines a special district as “any agency of the state [created] for the local performance of government or proprietary functions within limited boundaries.” Special districts, therefore, are a form of government that delivers specific services within defined geographic regions. Inadequate tax bases and competing demands for existing taxes make it difficult for cities and counties to provide all the services their citizens require. When residents or landowners want new services or higher levels of existing services, they can form a district to pay for and administer them. The functions implemented by special districts for a geographic region are similar to those performed by departments in larger municipalities.

Special districts are as diverse as the communities they serve. In San Mateo County, special districts provide services in the following areas:

- Water
- Fire Protection
- Sanitation/Sewer
- Healthcare/Hospitals
- Harbor/Ports
- Mosquito Abatement/Vector Control
- Police Protection
- Recreation & Parks/Open Space
- Resource Conservation

Most special districts in California are independent districts that have their own boards of directors elected by the voters of the district. Although special districts are primarily accountable to the voters in their service area, they also receive critical oversight of district operations by state and county governments.

## Investigation

The Grand Jury conducted interviews with staff and board members of 20 special districts to determine the level of emergency preparedness of each. In addition, the Grand Jury interviewed personnel from the San Francisco Airport, the California Water Service Company, and the County Office of Emergency Services (OES). Interviews included specific questions about the status of disaster plans, self-evaluations by the districts of their disaster preparedness, and open-ended questions about existing mechanisms for coordination within their jurisdiction and throughout the County.

Since the services provided in a disaster by some special districts are more critical than those provided by other special districts, the Grand Jury decided to focus this report to address water, fire protection and sanitary districts. In the event of a disaster, these special districts would be central response points to the “extraordinary fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, earthquake, or other similar public calamities” described by the Emergency Services Organization in its JPA agreement.

## Findings

The following findings reflect recurring themes, issues, and problem areas raised by special districts in the course of their interviews.

### Emergency Preparedness

Not all districts have emergency preparedness plans. Those plans that exist vary significantly in scope, depth, and comprehensiveness.

Few of the districts interviewed evaluated themselves as being well prepared for a major disaster. Responses to the question “How well prepared is your district for a disaster?” included the following statements:

*“Disaster planning is limited.”*

*“Not well.”*

*“It really depends on the type of emergency.”*

*“Well prepared for our size.”*

*“Fairly well prepared.”*

This wide range of responses points to a decided lack of confidence and consistency on the part of special districts in their ability to respond appropriately in the event of a disaster.

Of all the special districts interviewed, the Menlo Park Fire District (MPFD) might serve as a model for others to emulate. MPFD and the city of Menlo Park are in the forefront of disaster preparedness. The fire district sponsors the California Task Force 3 Urban Search and Rescue Team and operates very successful Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

## **Coordination**

Wide-ranging responses to questions about coordination revealed major issues regarding the integration of special districts into local, regional, or County-wide emergency response systems. One water district described the problem in these words: *“We need better coordination among the special district, the fire department, PGE, the police department, and the city. We should all meet together and come up with a coordinated plan. Right now we feel isolated.”*

The OES is the day-to-day focal point of County emergency preparedness. It assists cities in preparation of emergency plans; represents the County’s interests in regional, state, and national forums; and applies for grants. It operates the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the event of a disaster. Municipalities have their own local emergency operations centers and coordinate with the County. However, municipalities often lack the resources and expertise needed to handle large-scale disasters.

The County OES/JPA is an agreement between municipalities and the County that does not include special districts as voting members. In the JPA, special districts are defined as participating partners, but with the exception of fire and police districts, their participation has been limited.

Few special districts have well delineated disaster preparedness agreements with the relevant departments of the municipalities they serve. In many instances, special districts are isolated from the jurisdictions they serve as well as from other like-districts. Special districts reported having uneven working relationships with the municipalities in their service areas.

Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) is an association whose mission is to support and promote emergency preparedness and mutual assistance for its members. While all water and sewer districts are eligible for membership in WARN, the following districts are not currently listed as members: Midcoast Sewer Authority; West Bay Sanitary District; Coastside County Water District; and Skyline Water District.

Due to the nature of their work and their training, fire districts are generally better prepared than other districts to respond to disasters. The Menlo Park Fire District described an upcoming plan to have the cities in its jurisdiction *“partner to build a single emergency center to collaborate in disaster preparedness. It could provide a seamless operation that brings together the police departments, the public works departments, and the fire department. It could bridge city borders and have autonomy beyond city limits. With such a single site, operated by the fire district working in partnership with each of the cities, all could share a mutual benefit based upon each agency’s size and ability to effectively provide for and support its own emergency operations center.”*

## **Communication**

Several special districts mentioned concerns about communication in the course of their interviews. The most commonly stated problems included: 1) the lack of a common communication frequency in the County and the finances to acquire it; 2) a lack of uniformity in the radio equipment used countywide; and 3) the fact that special districts cannot access the County mutual aid radio network used by other first responders but must rely on conventional and cellular telephones.

Staff from the Office of Emergency Services strongly recommends that “*special districts review their emergency communications systems and build redundant radio links to the County.*”

## **Conclusions**

Interviews conducted with special districts revealed recurring issues and concerns related to three topics: 1) their degree of emergency-preparedness; 2) the coordination of emergency services with the municipalities they serve and with other districts; and 3) County-wide radio communication issues.

Not all special districts have disaster preparedness plans or feel confident in their ability to respond adequately in an emergency.

Not all special districts belong to associations (such as the Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network [WARN] for water and sanitary districts) whose mission is to support and promote emergency preparedness, disaster response and mutual assistance among their members

Many special districts lack close coordination with the municipalities within their jurisdiction as well as with other emergency service providers such as fire departments and police departments.

The current OES/JPA structure for disaster response calls only for coordination between each municipality and the County, making special districts tangential to that interaction. Because this structure effectively excludes special districts and because special districts often serve more than one municipality, this could result in a lack of coordination, inefficiency, and duplication of effort in an emergency situation.

## Recommendations

The Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

1. The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District, and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.
2. The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should:
  - 2.1 Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area, and b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area.
  - 2.2 Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.
3. The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality.

# Appendix

## Special Districts Interviewed For This Report

Bayshore Sanitary District  
Broadmore Police Protection District  
Coastside County Water District  
Colma Fire Protection District  
Granada Sanitary District  
Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District  
Highlands Recreation District  
Ladera Recreation District  
Menlo Park Fire Protection District  
Mid-Peninsula Water District  
Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space District  
Montara Water and Sanitary District  
North Coast County Water District  
Point Montara Fire Protection District  
San Mateo County Harbor District  
Sewer Authority Midcoast  
Skyline County Water District  
West Bay Sanitary District  
Westborough Water District  
Woodside Fire Protection District



Bayshore Sanitary District  
36 Industrial Way  
Brisbane, CA 94005  
(415) 467-1144

Board of Directors:  
Iris Gallagher  
Walter V. Quinteros  
Norman Rizzi  
Mae Swanbeck  
Kenneth Tonna

John Bakker, Attorney  
Rich Landi, Maintenance Director  
TomYeager, District Engineer

August 25, 2006

Hon. Stephan M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Grand Jury Report

Honorable Judge Hall:

Following is the District's response to the recommendations made in the referenced report:

Recommendation #1

The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.

*The Bayshore Sanitary District is a member of WARN.*

Recommendation #2

2.1 The Board of Directors of each water, fire protection and sanitary district should:

Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: (a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area, and (b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area.

*Agree; Board will designate individual to coordinate with the cities within the District and the County.*

2.2 Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.

*Does not apply.*

Recommendation #3

The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality.

*Requires response from Sheriff.*

Sincerely,

*Joann E. Landi*

Joann E. Landi  
Clerk

September 27, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Hall:

The Coastside County Water District (CCWD) is in receipt of the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Report on Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts, which contains findings and recommendations pertaining to special districts generally, including Coastside County Water Districts. This will serve as CCWD's response to the Grand Jury's recommendations:

**Finding:**

*1. The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District, and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.*

**Response:**

Although we are in agreement with the Grand Jury's emphasis on the need for emergency preparedness and inter-agency cooperation, the Coastside County Water District is proud of its emergency preparations. CCWD has a comprehensive "Emergency Communication and Contingency Operation Plan" that was last updated in April, 2006. Additionally, CCWD is indeed a member of "another service association", the California Utilities Emergency Association (CUEA), which can provide assistance in the event of an emergency. We have determined that CUEA membership is preferable to membership in the WARN because of liability risks associated with the terms of WARN membership.

**Finding:**

*2. The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should:*

*2.1 Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area, and b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area.*

**Response:**

CCWD agrees with this recommendation. We already have an in-house staff member who serves as the District's emergency coordinator. Additionally, CCWD participates in EOC activities as part of the Coastside Emergency Services Committee, comprised of the Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District, Cabrillo Unified School District, City of Half Moon Bay Police Department, Montara Water and Sanitary District, Sewer Authority Mid-Coastside, California State Parks, California Department of Forestry and CCWD.

*2.2 Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.*

CCWD agrees with this recommendation, and is in the process of reviewing its communications links to the County OES and other agencies within our service area to ensure that reliable and redundant channels of communication are maintained.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Ed Schmidt  
General Manager

# COLMA FIRE DISTRICT

**November 7, 2006**

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, Ca 94063

Re: Disaster Preparedness Training for the Residents of Cities in San Mateo County

Dear Judge Hall

As requested, the following is the Colma Fire Protection District's response to the 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury report dated July 19, 2006.

The district agrees with the findings that Disaster Preparedness is a key issue which needs to be addressed to ensure the safety of our residents. We agree that the creation of an in-house emergency coordinator position is a valuable asset to coordinating efforts throughout our response area. We also agree that communications to county are a vital link in a disaster and they are currently under review.

**Recommendation 2.1:**

Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by a) Assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinators of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area and b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city town or county jurisdiction in its service area.

**Response to Recommendation 2.1:**

The district created the position of Disaster Preparedness Coordinator in July of 2006 and assigned that position to Sean O'Connor a firefighter / paramedic with an extensive background appropriate for the position. He is currently working with staff from the Town of Colma as well as Broadmoor to ensure adequate coordination of disaster response efforts. The district is also actively working with both communities' EOC activities and exercises as requested.

**Recommendation 2.2:**

Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the county are built.

**Response to Recommendation 2.2:**

The district currently utilizes existing VHF radio communications systems as well as cellular phones which have been in place for many years. We are currently exploring amateur radio HF and UHF options both for Station 85 as well as handheld communicators for our new CERT teams as a means to communicate with local as well as County EOC's.

Respectfully submitted

Geoff Balton  
Fire Chief

Cc: Janet Fisicaro, Fire Commissioner  
Gina Sheridan, Fire Commissioner  
Peter Dabai, Fire Commissioner  
Greg Love, Chief of Police, Broadmoor  
Helen Fisicaro - Mayor, Town of Colma



EAST PALO ALTO SANITARY DISTRICT

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Leroy Hawkins, General Manager

October 4, 2006

Hon. Stephan M. Hall

Judge of the Superior Court

Hall of Justice

400 County Centers, 2nd Floor

Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report for 2005/2006

regarding Disaster Preparedness

Dear Honorable Judge Hall:

After reviewing the 2005/2006 grand jury report recommendations regarding Disaster Preparedness, we offer the following responses. The report highlighted concerns in the following areas: emergency preparedness; coordination, and communications. The report recommendations and our responses are as follows:

1. The District should join the Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network

(WARN)

Response: the District is committed to intra agency cooperation especially in times of emergency/disaster and currently enjoys a working relationship with other agencies (Westbay Sanitary District, City of Palo Alto, and City of East Palo Alto). In addition, the District is considering joining the WARN network.

2. The District should coordinate closely with the City of East Palo Alto.

Response: the District is currently meeting regularly with the City of East Palo Alto, County of San Mateo, Ravenswood City School District, Menlo Park Fire Protection Agency and others to develop a Mutual Cooperation Agreement specifically for use during emergency/disaster type situations.



3. The District should review its capacity to maintain Critical Communications Links during an emergency/disaster.

Response: The District is in agreement with this recommendation and is currently working with the City of East Palo Alto and County of San Mateo to identify and ensure appropriate methods of communications during emergency/disaster situations are available.

If you have questions and/or require additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Lee Hawkins

General Manager

cc: Board of Directors

**GRANADA SANITARY DISTRICT**  
OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

504 Avenue Alhambra, Suite 304 ~ P. O. Box 335 ~ El Granada, California 94018  
Telephone: (650) 726-7093 ~ Facsimile: (650) 726-7099 ~ email: gsdsanitary@comcast.net

October 16, 2006

Hon. Stephan M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Dear Judge Hall,

In response to your letter requesting comments on the Grand Jury's Review of the Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Report, the Granada Sanitary District (GSD) Board of Directors has the following response to the recommendations contained in the report:

1. ***The Board of Directors of the Midcoast Sewer Authority, et al, should ensure their districts become members of WARN of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.***

GSD agrees with this recommendation. Because GSD utilizes Sewer Authority Midcoastside (SAM) staff as our daily operations staff by contract, SAM will be our contact point for disaster response assistance. SAM is already a member of WARN.

2. ***The Board of Directors of each Sanitary district, et al, should:***
  - 2.1 ***Assign an in-house emergency coordinator to work with applicable cities and counties.***

GSD agrees with this recommendation. Again, SAM staff will be our contact point for disaster response assistance. SAM already has an in-house emergency coordinator.
  - 2.2 ***Ensure that district emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.***


GSD agrees with this recommendation. Again, SAM staff will be our contact point for communication systems.

3. ***The Sherriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than municipality.***

GSD agrees with this recommendation.

Sincerely,

Granada Sanitary District

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chuck Duffy, General Manager

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October 10, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: **Response to Grand Jury Report**

Dear Judge Hall:

This letter is written on behalf of the Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District (hereinafter "District") in response to the recommendations contained in the Grand Jury Report issued on July 19, 2006, entitled "Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts."

**Finding No. 1:** *Not all districts have emergency preparedness plans. Those plans that exist vary significantly in scope, depth, and comprehensiveness.*

*Few of the districts interviewed evaluated themselves as being well prepared for a major disaster. Responses to the question "How well prepared is your district for a disaster?" included the following statements:*

*"Disaster planning is limited."*

*"Not well."*

*"It really depends on the type of emergency."*

*"Well prepared for our size."*

*"Fairly well prepared."*

*This wide range of responses points to a decided lack of confidence and consistency on the part of special districts in their ability to respond appropriately in the event of a disaster.*

*Of all the special districts interviewed, the Menlo Park Fire District (MPFD) might serve as a model for others to emulate. MPFD and the city of Menlo Park are in the forefront of disaster*

*preparedness. The fire district sponsors the California Task Force 3 Urban Search and Rescue Team and operates very successful Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).*

**Response:** Respondent cannot agree or disagree with this Finding because it has not seen or reviewed the interview information collected and reviewed by the Grand Jury to make this Finding.

**Finding No. 2:** *Wide-ranging responses to questions about coordination revealed major issues regarding the integration of special districts into local, regional, or County-wide emergency response systems. One water district described the problem in these words: “We need better coordination among the special district, the fire department, PGE, the police department, and the city. We should all meet together and come up with a coordinated plan. Right now we feel isolated.”*

*The OES is the day-to-day focal point of County emergency preparedness. It assists cities in preparation of emergency plans; represents the County's interests in regional, state, and national forums; and applies for grants. It operates the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the event of a disaster. Municipalities have their own local emergency operations centers and coordinate with the County. However, municipalities often lack the resources and expertise needed to handle large-scale disasters.*

*The County OES/JPA is an agreement between municipalities and the County that does not include special districts as voting members. In the JPA, special districts are defined as participating partners, but with the exception of fire and police districts, their participation has been limited.*

*Few special districts have well delineated disaster preparedness agreements with the relevant departments of the municipalities they serve. In many instances, special districts are isolated from the jurisdictions they serve as well as from other like-districts. Special districts reported having uneven working relationships with the municipalities in their service areas.*

*Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) is an association whose mission is to support and promote emergency preparedness and mutual assistance for its members. While all water and sewer districts are eligible for membership in WARN, the following districts are not currently listed as members: Midcoast Sewer Authority; West Bay Sanitary District; Coastside County Water District; and Skyline Water District.*

*Due to the nature of their work and their training, fire districts are generally better prepared than other districts to respond to disasters. The Menlo Park Fire District described an upcoming plan to have the cities in its jurisdiction “partner to build a single emergency center to collaborate in disaster preparedness. It could provide a seamless operation that brings together the police departments, the public works departments, and the fire department. It could bridge city borders and have autonomy beyond city limits. With such a single site, operated by the fire district working in partnership with each of the cities, all could share a mutual benefit based upon each agency's size and ability to effectively provide for and support its own emergency operations center.”*

**Response:** Respondent agrees that District, due to the nature of its work and training of employees, is well prepared to respond to disasters. District cannot agree or disagree with this

Finding because it has not seen or reviewed the interview information collected and reviewed by the Grand Jury to make this Finding.

**Finding No. 3:** *Several special districts mentioned concerns about communication in the course of their interviews. The most commonly stated problems included: 1) the lack of a common communication frequency in the County and the finances to acquire it; 2) a lack of uniformity in the radio equipment used countywide; and 3) the fact that special districts cannot access the County mutual aid radio network used by other first responders but must rely on conventional and cellular telephones.*

*Staff from the Office of Emergency Services strongly recommends that "special districts review their emergency communications systems and build redundant radio links to the County."*

**Response:** Respondent agrees that emergency communication systems should periodically be reviewed and that redundant radio links with the County should exist. Respondent cannot agree or disagree with this Finding because it has not seen or reviewed the interview information collected and reviewed by the Grand Jury to make this Finding.

**Recommendation No. 1:** *The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District, and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.*

**Response:** Although Respondent agrees with the recommendation, it has no application to the Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District.

**Recommendation No. 2:** *The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should:*

- 2.1 Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area*

**Response:** Respondent agrees with this recommendation. Implementation of the recommendation is on-going. The District houses and operates the local Coastside Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Our local operations are coordinated with the Office of Emergency Services in Redwood City during disaster events. The District has hosted and supported County Wide Disaster drills in testing and evaluating the use and operation of the local EOC.

District personnel participate as members of California Task Force 3 Urban Search and Rescue Team. The District has also conducted Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) classes for local citizen groups in Half Moon Bay and will be expanding these training classes to include the communities of El Granada and Point Montara.

2.2 *Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.*

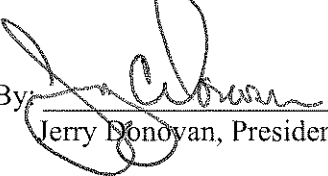
**Response:** Respondent agrees with this recommendation. Implementation of the recommendation is on-going. The District's training room supports the communication links and support services for emergency operations on the Coastsides. The District utilizes the Unified Incident Command System whereby allied local government agencies, with assigned agency representatives, address potential emergencies in a unified and coordinated effort.

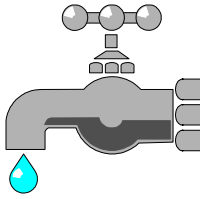
**Recommendation No. 3:** *The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality.*

**Response:** Respondent agrees that it would be useful for a study to be done but we would express some concerns over the concept of a regional organization that would completely replace a municipal EOC. Not all emergencies are regional in nature and regional emergencies usually have local impacts. Local officials staffing a municipal EOC may have better knowledge of local conditions, available resources, and methods of emergency response. This would be particularly important for the communities within the Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District, which are relatively isolated. We believe the study should instead focus upon the effectiveness of regional communications and the allocation of regional resources rather than the organizational structure of the EOC.

Very truly yours,

**HALF MOON BAY FIRE  
PROTECTION DISTRICT**

By  \_\_\_\_\_  
Jerry Donoyan, President



# LOS TRANCOS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

September 20, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

## **Re: Disaster Preparedness Of Special Districts Grand Jury Report**

This letter is a reply to the San Mateo Grand Jury's July 19, 2006 request concerning the status of Los Trancos County Water District emergency preparedness.

### **Water District Service Area**

The Los Trancos Water District sold the water delivery operations of the District to the California Water Service Company (CalWater) effective April, 2005. The District operates no plant or equipment and, as such, has no need for a disaster preparedness plan. CalWater has assumed responsibility for this element of disaster preparedness planning. Prior to the sale the District upgraded various elements of the water distribution system to improve resilience to earthquake activity.

### **Disaster Water Supply**

The District has established an Emergency Preparedness subcommittee that is working in conjunction with two local homeowners associations, (Vista Verde and Los Trancos Woods), the Woodside Fire Protection District and Community Emergency Response and Preparedness Planning (CERPP) to determine ways in which water from the District owned lake can be made available for fire fighting purposes, available for domestic water use and possibly as potable water in the event of major emergencies such as a wildland fire or catastrophic earthquake. As a partner in the on-going activities of these established groups, the District brings additional resources to bear on creating a resilient community within our jurisdiction. The activities of the subcommittee will be on-going with substantial progress in the current fiscal year.

Please contact District Board member Perry Blackmon for additional information.

Sincerely

Perry Blackmon  
25 Joaquin  
Portola Valley, CA 94028

CC: Clerk of the Court  
Grand Jury website  
Los Trancos County Water District



# Menlo Park Fire Protection District

300 Middlefield Road • Menlo Park, CA 94025 • Tel: 650.688.8400 • Fax: 650.323.9129  
Website: [www.menlofire.org](http://www.menlofire.org) • Email: [mpdf@menlofire.org](mailto:mpdf@menlofire.org)

Fire Chief  
Douglas Sporleder

Board of Directors  
Ollie Brown  
Peter Carpenter  
Rexford F. Ianson  
John Osmer  
Bart Spencer

October 10, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2nd Floor  
Redwood City, CA. 94063-1655

Re: Menlo Park Fire Protection District Response to the Grand Jury, County of San Mateo, Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Report issued on July 19, 2006.

Honorable Judge Hall,

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District Board of Directors reviewed the report by the San Mateo County Grand Jury and passed Resolution 1125, on October 10, 2006, authorizing this response to the Grand Jury, as required by law.

FINDING - The Board of Directors agrees with the Grand Jury report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

2. "The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should":

2.1 "Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area, and b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area."

**The Fire District has both a paid civilian in-house Community Emergency Coordinator and a Chief Officer in charge of Emergency Operations for the Fire District.**

**The District actively participates and coordinates with each of its cities and participates in each of their EOC exercises when advised of these events.**

2.2 "Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built."

**The Fire Board has directed the Fire Chief to work with other San Mateo County Fire Agencies and Public Safety Communications to continually upgrade and improve our capabilities.**

*"Excellence In Service"*



3. "The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than municipality."

**The Fire District supports this concept and is actively working with its cities to establish an Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) in addition to a mobile command and communications trailer to make this concept a reality.**

Sincerely,



Mr. John Osmer  
President, Board of Directors  
Menlo Park Fire Protection District

c.c. Board of Directors  
County Clerk  
Grand Jury Web Site  
District Clerk



# MID-PENINSULA WATER DISTRICT

3 DAIRY LANE – POST OFFICE BOX 129

BELMONT, CALIFORNIA 94002

PHONE (650) 591-8941

FAX (650) 591-4998

September 26th, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

**Re: Mid-Peninsula Water District Response to Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Report**

Dear Judge Hall:

This responds to the July 19, 2006 letter from John C. Fitton, Court Executive Officer, requesting written comments from the Mid-Peninsula Water District (“MPWD”) responding to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury’s Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Report (“Report”). The Report included three recommendations (one with two subsections), and MPWD’s responses are set forth below.

1. *Recommendation: The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District, and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.*

Reply: Although this recommendation is not directed at MPWD, please be advised that MPWD agrees with the finding. Recommendation #1 has been implemented: MPWD was the fifth agency to become a member of WARN in 1992.

- 2.1 *Recommendation: Ensure that the District coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by (a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area, and (b) actively participate in the EOC activities of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area.*

**DIRECTORS**

LOUIS J. VELLA  
PRESIDENT

DAVID ALTSCHER  
VICE-PRESIDENT

MATTHEW P.  
ZUCCA

MARK FELDMAN

PETER OHTAKI

**OFFICERS**

PAUL R. REGAN  
GENERAL MANAGER

CATHY REMELEH  
OFFICE MANAGER

JANINE O’FLAHERTY  
ENGINEER

JOAN L. CASSMAN  
ATTORNEY



Reply: MPWD agrees with the finding. Recommendation #2.1 has been and will continue to be implemented as described below.

(a) MPWD's Field Superintendent has been assigned as the in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town, or county jurisdiction within MPWD's service area. In addition, pursuant to MPWD's Emergency Operations and Response Plan, the Field Superintendent is responsible for coordinating with other political jurisdictions when emergencies occur. (b) MPWD actively participates in the EOC activities of each political jurisdiction within its service area. Specifically, for the City of Belmont, MPWD's General Manager and Field Superintendent attend the EOC meetings which are scheduled annually by the County of San Mateo. For the City of San Carlos, we have contacted the EOC coordinator to actively participate in future emergency operations meetings. In addition, MPWD has been in contact with the EOC coordinator at the Belmont Police Department to ensure we are on the updated contact list.

*2.2. Recommendation: Ensure that the District's emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.*

Reply: MPWD agrees with the finding. Recommendation #2.2 has been implemented as described below except where noted.

MPWD has a multi-faceted communications system in place with a broad range of communications facilities, to protect against disruption should an emergency cause individual methods of communication to fail. MPWD's communications facilities include landline telephones; 2-way hand held radio units stored at the MPWD office, mobile radio units (mounted in vehicles), a Transmitter-Receiver for the hand held and mobile units; office phones that also access the radio frequency; and cell phones. In addition, MPWD has alternate power sources at the Transmitter-Receiver site, to ensure continuity in the event of power outages, as well as portable power sources available at the MPWD office. MPWD recently completed a comprehensive, system-wide upgrade of its radio communications system. Upgrades included installation of a repeater; reprogramming of 16 mobile units; programming of 9 mobile transceivers, and modification/testing of mobile transceiver microphones. MPWD reviews its emergency communications system on an ongoing basis.

Note: Currently MPWD does not have a redundant radio link with the County. MPWD will investigate this recommendation.



Honorable Stephen Hall  
September 26th, 2006  
Page 3

3. *Recommendation: The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality.*

Reply: MPWD agrees with the finding. MPWD is willing to assist in any way it can with the implementation of Recommendation #3.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Grand Jury's review of the Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts and are pleased to provide this response to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Report. Please call me at (650) 591-8941 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Paul Regan  
General Manager

cc: Mid-Peninsula Board of Directors



# MONTARA WATER & SANITARY DISTRICT

Serving the Communities of Montara and Moss Beach

P.O. Box 370131

Tel: (650) 728-3545

8888 Cabrillo Highway

Fax: (650) 728-8556

Montara, CA 94037-0131

E-mail: [msd@coastside.net](mailto:msd@coastside.net)

Visit Our Web Site: <http://www.msd.montara.com>

August 9, 2006

Hon. Stephan M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

## **RE: DISASTER PREPAREDNESS OF SPECIAL DISTRICT GRAND JURY REPORT**

Dear Judge Hall,

This responds to the letter from John C. Fitton, Court Executive Office, Superior Court of San Mateo County, subject as above, dated July 19, 2006. We agree with the findings of the Report and would like to further emphasize the actions this District has taken for disaster preparedness:

- The District is entering into an agreement with the County of San Mateo. This would provide space at our Alta Vista Water Tank for another County radio transmitter in exchange for a UHF radio base station at the District office giving us emergency communications with County agencies.
- The District developed a low-interest home loan program for water plant operators in order to retain certified water plant operators and encourage them to live in close proximity to the District. They are then able to respond quickly in times of emergency. Two of our three operators have taken advantage of this program and now live in Montara. The third lives in Half Moon Bay.
- The District is installing, in cooperation with Chevron Energy Solutions, automated radio-read water meters which will allow the District to continue revenue collection during an emergency period when there is a shortage in staffing.
- We are installing solar-powered backup batteries in a building which will be renovated to store emergency supplies. This will have a dehumidifier and solar chargers for radios and other small electrical devices needed in an emergency. This is being done through our agreement with Chevron Energy Solutions.

- The District has also prepared an agreement with the operator of the fuel storage tanks at the County Harbor District in Princeton, CA to supply diesel fuel in an emergency for our generators as well as regular gasoline for our trucks. The Harbor District has about 24,000 gallons of diesel fuel at their facility and about 12,000 gallons of gasoline.
- All District wells and sewage pump stations have emergency generators for use during an emergency so that we can continue to operate. The District's main office also has an emergency generator.
- The District has filed an application and EIR with the California Coastal Commission to increase water storage by about 1.2 million gallons through additional capital improvements. This additional storage would be essential during an emergency. This storage would meet current earthquake standards.

The Board of Directors wanted to thank the Grand Jury for their Report and the concern given to this important topic.

Sincerely,

*/s/*

George F. Irving  
District Manager

**DIRECTORS**

BOB VETTER  
THOMAS J. PICCOLOTTI  
J. MASON BROWN, JR. P.E.  
ANNE DE JARNATT  
JOSHUA COSGROVE

RUSSELL CONROY  
*Director Emeritus*

2400 Francisco Blvd.  
P.O. Box 1039, Pacifica, CA 94044  
www.nccwd.com



**STAFF**

KEVIN O'CONNELL  
*General Manager*  
CARI C. LEMKE  
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
-ADMINISTRATION

Phone (650) 355-3462  
FAX (650) 355-0735

October 11, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Special District Report filed July 19, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall:

The North Coast County Water District (NCCWD) hereby submits its responses to the recommendations of the Grand Jury regarding its review of disaster preparedness of special districts. The Grand Jury made three (3) recommendations; each recommendation will be addressed separately.

1. *"The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District, and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance."*

This recommendation does not apply to the NCCWD.

2. *"The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should:*
  - 2.1 *Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area, and b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area.*
  - 2.2 *Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built"*

The NCCWD agrees with this finding and has implemented the recommendations of 2.1. The District has assigned staff to serve as its in-house emergency coordinator and has participated in EOC drills with the city within its jurisdictional service area and will continue to do so as feasible.

In response to recommendation 2.2:

- The District already reviews, on a continuous basis, its internal emergency communications systems.
- Staff is also exploring the feasibility of a redundant radio link to the County as is suggested in the report.

Furthermore, the District has begun discussions for the potential of a joint emergency communication system with other local agencies including the City of Pacifica, North County Fire Authority and various local school districts. The intent of the discussion is the implementation of a joint emergency communication system in Fiscal Year 2007/08.

3. ***“The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality.”***

NCCWD is interested in participating in the study and potential implementation.

The District appreciates this opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury report on disaster preparedness of special districts. Should you require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact Cari Lemke, Assistant General Manager – Administration at (650) 355-3462.

Sincerely,



Kevin O'Connell  
General Manager

Cc: Board of Directors



October 6, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Hall:

This letter is written on behalf of the Point Montara Fire Protection District in response to the recommendations contained in the Grand Jury Report issued on July 19, 2006, entitled "Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts." The Point Montara Fire Protection District has entered into a service agreement with the Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District pursuant to which fire protection services are provided by the Half Moon Bay District. References below to actions taken or operations conducted by "the District" generally refer to the Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District, operating under its service agreement with the Point Montara Fire Protection District.

**Recommendation No. 1:** *The Board of Directors of Midcoast Sewer Authority, West Bay Sanitary District, Coastside County Water District, and Skyline Water District should ensure that their districts become members of WARN or of another service association that can provide disaster response assistance.*

**Response:** Although Respondent agrees with the recommendation, it has no application to the Point Montara Fire Protection District.

**Recommendation No. 2:** *The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should:*

2.1 *Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordinator of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area*

**Response:** Respondent agrees with this recommendation. Implementation of the recommendation is on-going. The District houses and operates the local Coastside Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Our local operations are coordinated with the Office of Emergency Services in Redwood City during disaster events. The District has hosted and supported County Wide Disaster drills in testing and evaluating the use and operation of the local EOC.

District personnel participate as members of California Task Force 3 Urban Search and Rescue Team. The District has also conducted Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) classes for local citizen groups in Half Moon Bay and will be expanding these training classes to include the communities of El Granada and Point Montara.

- 2.2 *Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.*

**Response:** Respondent agrees with this recommendation. Implementation of the recommendation is on-going. The District's training room supports the communication links and support services for emergency operations on the Coastside. The District utilizes the Unified Incident Command System whereby allied local government agencies, with assigned agency representatives, address potential emergencies in a unified and coordinated effort.

**Recommendation No. 3:** *The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region rather than by municipality.*

**Response:** Respondent agrees that it would be useful for a study to be done but we would express some concerns over the concept of a regional organization that would completely replace a municipal EOC. Not all emergencies are regional in nature and regional emergencies usually have local impacts. Local officials staffing a municipal EOC may have better knowledge of local conditions, available resources, and methods of emergency response. This would be particularly important for the communities within the Point Montara Fire Protection District, which are relatively isolated. We believe the study should instead focus upon the effectiveness of regional communications and the allocation of regional resources rather than the organizational structure of the EOC.

Very truly yours,

**POINT MONTARA FIRE  
PROTECTION DISTRICT**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce MacKimmie, President

A PUBLIC AGENCY  
SERVING  
City of Half Moon Bay  
Granada Sanitary District  
Montara Sanitary District

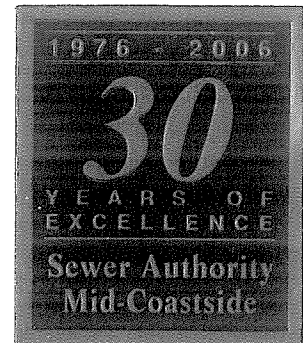
**SEWER AUTHORITY MID-COASTSIDE**

**FILE COPY**

1000 N. Cabrillo Highway  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
(650) 726-0124  
FAX (650) 726-7833

August 29, 2006

Hon. Stephan M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655



Dear Honorable Judge Hall:

We are in receipt of the 2005-2006 Grand Jury file report (Report) on Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts, dated July 19, 2006, which contains findings and recommendations pertaining to Special Districts, including the Sewer Authority Mid-Coastside (SAM) in San Mateo County. This letter constitutes SAM's comments on the Report's findings and recommendations. The Report's recommendations are listed in boldface; SAM's comments are listed in italics.

With respect to your finding on emergency preparedness, SAM has a disaster preparedness plan and a contingency plan, both of which have been in place since the 1980s.

In the Report, the Grand Jury makes three recommendations.

1. **SAM should join the Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN).**

*SAM agrees with this recommendation and has joined WARN. Further, SAM is considering joining CUEA, another public utility emergency response network.*

2. **SAM Board should ensure that SAM coordinates closely with the municipalities by:**

- 2.1 a) **assigning an in-house emergency coordinator, and**

*SAM agrees with this recommendation. SAM already has an in-house emergency coordinator, Tony Pullin, Technical Services Supervisor. Mr. Pullin has been SAM's in-house emergency coordinator for over 15 years.*

**2.1 b) actively participating in the EOC activities**

*SAM agrees with this recommendation. SAM currently participates in the EOC activities. On the Coastsides, SAM actively participates in the Coastsides Emergency Services Committee. This group is comprised of Half Moon Bay Fire Protection District, Cabrillo Unified School District, City of Half Moon Bay Police Department, Coastsides County Water District, Montara Water and Sanitary District, San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services, California State Parks and the California Department of Forestry. Further, SAM has been the treasurer of the Coastsides Emergency Services group for over 15 year.*


**2.2 SAM Board should ensure that SAM's emergency communication systems are reviewed and that redundant links to San Mateo County are built.**

*SAM agrees with this recommendation. SAM Board has directed its staff to review its emergency communications systems, including the inclusion of redundant links to San Mateo County, and to report, including on findings and recommendations by November 2006*

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

SEWER AUTHORITY MID-COASTSIDE

  
John F. Foley III  
Manager



# COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

400 COUNTY CENTER

• REDWOOD CITY

• CALIFORNIA 94063

TELEPHONE (650) 599-1664

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO THE SHERIFF

October 10, 2006

Hon. Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063

RE: **Amended** - Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Hall:

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Area Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security (OES/HS) wishes to thank and acknowledge the San Mateo Grand Jury for their time and dedicated efforts to this investigation. We will embrace the Grand Jury's findings and will add them to the growing number of supporters that acknowledge the fact that emergency preparedness is not only the responsibility of OES/HS, but also of every government entity and their employees, but more importantly: that of every individual person.

**Recommendation:**

3. **The Sheriff should direct the County Office of Emergency Services to commission a study to determine the potential advantages of organizing local Emergency Operations Centers by region, rather by municipality.**

**Response:** The idea of regional Emergency Operations Centers has been discussed. There is no case decision if this function is in fact a violation of the Standardized Emergency Management System, (SEMS) law. SEMS calls for five levels of response: **Field, Local, Operational Area, Regional (State Region), and State.** There is no place for a response level above local and below Operational Area. State OES reports there is no place in California that practices this notion.

OES/HS will continue to research this recommendation.

In conclusion we appreciate the effort the Civil Grand Jury placed in this very important topic. We can never rest or feel we have completed our task. Threats from both natural and man made events are real and probable. Emergency Preparedness is a constant effort which must be at the forefront of our efforts; after all, "California is an act of God theme park".

Sincerely,

Don Horsley, Sheriff

cc: The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Grand Jury Website  
Court Executive Officer



Skyline County Water District  
14944 Skyline Blvd.  
Woodside, CA 94062-4746  
Phone: 650.851.0529 Fax: 650.851.0531

July 27, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Skyline County Water District response to the Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Grand Jury Report 2005

Dear Sir:

Skyline County Water District (SCWD) respectfully submits the following response to the above referenced report. The subject of the report as stated, "To what extent are Special Districts in San Mateo County prepared to respond to a disaster?"

**FINDINGS**

- A) Emergency Preparedness
- B) Coordination
- C) Communication

**SCWD agrees with the Findings with the following exception:**

**Communications**

SCWD disagrees partially with the following portion of the finding, "Staff from the Office of Emergency Services strongly recommends that "special districts review their emergency communications systems and build redundant radio links to the County", for the following reasons:

1. The three statements prior to this comment reflect the special district's inability to access the County communication network.
2. The Office of Emergency Services should take the initiative to assist special districts in the creation of radio links to the County.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. SCWD will investigate the financial impact of a membership with WARN.
- 2.1 SCWD has and will continue to interact closely with adjoining agencies
  - 2.1.a) SCWD does not have the staff to assign a full time staff person to this tasks
  - 2.1.b) SCWD serves an area protected by three separate fire protection entities and cannot commit to participating in all activities due to a limited staff. However, 7/12/06 a joint meeting was held by SCWD. All three fire protection agencies were represented at the meeting.
- 2.2 SCWD does not have the ability to ensure the County communication links are established without the County providing expertise and equipment.
3. The County Office of Emergency Services is the appropriate agency to manage the recommendation.

This response is submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Skyline County Water District.

Sincerely,

Tamara J. Hannon  
General Manager



The Honorable Stephan M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

**Re: Consideration of San Mateo Civil Grand Jury Report on “Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts”**

Dear Justice Hall:

At its Regular Meeting of August 14, 2006, the District Board of the West Bay Sanitary District considered in depth the referenced report of the Grand Jury. Of particular concern to the Board was the statement that “Not all special districts have disaster preparedness plans or feel confident in their ability to adequately respond in an emergency.”

The Board has asked me to assure you, the Grand Jury, and our customers that the District does indeed have in place a Disaster Response Plan that incorporates the procedures for all foreseeable emergencies and disasters, including earthquakes, hazardous materials spills and floods. Additionally, the plan establishes those employees who comprise the Disaster Response Planning Group. The group monitors the plan and preparedness training.

The Plan specifically addresses such issues as: Plan Activation and Notification, Communication Systems, Emergency Resources, Damage Assessment and the Family Relocation Plan.

Although not specifically addressed in the Grand Jury Report, the District believes that in addition to an appropriate Disaster plan, it is vitally important to properly train individuals to carry out that plan and to fund the equipment and materials necessary to address any disaster. The District conducts a minimum of two formal safety/disaster training sessions per month along with impromptu training as situations arise. Employees attending the training are required to state in writing that they have attended the training and are encouraged to participate fully. Another important aspect of our planning is the acquisition and maintenance of the equipment necessary to act quickly and efficiently in the event of a disaster. Over the past ten years, the District has expended tens of millions of dollars to ensure that its subsurface and mobile equipment are maintained to the highest standard. The District is confident that it can and will respond to an emergency.

The report specifically noted that West Bay Sanitary District was not a member of the WARN Network, “not all special Districts belong to associations (such as the Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network [WARN] for water and sanitary Districts) whose mission is to support and promote emergency preparedness, disaster response and mutual assistance among their members.”

The West Bay Sanitary District is now a member of the WARN Network, along with other organizations with which the District has been associated for many years, dedicated to the sharing of information and resources. These include the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (BACWA), California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) and the California Utilities Emergency Association (CUEA). The CUEA in particular provides a structure for efficient communications and coordination among government agencies, public and private utilities, and community based organizations throughout the State. The Association's activities focus on emergency preparedness, response, restoration and recovery as well as mitigation activities. The Association assists with operational and business continuity for gas, electric, water, wastewater, telecommunications and pipeline restoration and recovery.

The West Bay Sanitary District is pleased to provide this response to the report, and the District Board has asked that it be made available to our customers to assure them, as we wish to assure the Grand Jury, that the District stands ready to ensure continuance of its services at all times.

If I may be of any further assistance to you, please contact me at 650 321 0384.

Very truly yours

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

Timothy Clayton  
District Manager

---

**Report to the District Board for the Regular Meeting of August 14, 2006**

August 15, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

Re: Westborough Water District Response to Grand Jury Report on Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts

Dear Judge Hall:

This responds to the July 19, 2006 letter from John C. Fitton, Court Executive Officer, requesting written comments from the Westborough Water District (“District”) responding to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury’s Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts Report (“Report”). The Report included one recommendation that was directed to the District. The District’s response are set forth below.

1. *Recommendation:* 2. *The Board of Directors of each Water, Fire Protection and Sanitary District should:*
  - 2.1 *Ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves by: a) assigning an in-house emergency coordinator to work with the emergency coordination of each city, town or county jurisdiction in its service area, and b) actively participating in the EOC activities of each city, town, or county jurisdiction in its service area.*
  - 2.2 *Ensure that their emergency communications systems are reviewed and that redundant radio links to the County are built.*

Reply: The District agrees with the finding.

Recommendation #2.1 has not yet been fully implemented. The District has designated General Manager Darryl Barrow as its in-house emergency coordinator. The District has been in contact with the City of South San Francisco and is in the process of setting up a meeting with its Fire Department to discuss coordination in the event of an

Honorable Norman J. Gatzert

August 15, 2006

Page 2

emergency. It plans to hold that meeting within the next two months. The District plans to actively participate in the EOC activities of the City of South San Francisco, the jurisdiction in which its entire territory is located.

Recommendation #2.2 has not been fully implemented. The District will conduct a review of its emergency communications systems in the next three months with the aim of coordinating communications with the County, as well as the City of South San Francisco and the City of Daly City, which provides wastewater treatment for the District through the North San Mateo County Sanitation District. The District's radios currently share a frequency with the City of Daly City, through which contacts are made in the event of a sewer emergency.

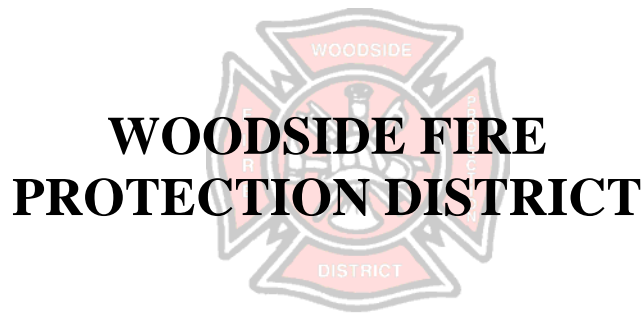
We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Grand Jury's review of the Emergency Preparedness of Special Districts and are pleased to provide this response to the 2005-2006 Grand Jury Report. Please call me at (650) 589-1435 if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Darryl A. Barrow  
General Manager

cc: Board of Directors

Attachments



October 16, 2006

Honorable Stephen M. Hall  
Judge of the Superior Court  
Hall of Justice  
400 County Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063-1655

This letter is in response to the San Mateo County's Civil Grand Jury recommendations of Disaster Preparedness of Special Districts 2.1.

In response to the Civil Grand Jury's recommendation 2.1 to ensure that the district coordinates closely with the municipalities it serves, Woodside Fire Protection District hired a full time emergency preparedness coordinator in March of 1999. The primary duties of this employee is to work with the citizens living within the Woodside Fire Protection District, in addition to the Town of Woodside, Portola Valley, public and private schools, churches, and businesses.

To date a citizens group has been formed, CERPP, Citizens for Emergency Response and Preparedness Program, for the Woodside Fire Protection District. It is governed by a board of directors, adopted by-laws, and is a register 501.3c. Training has been conducted with and between the citizens, Portola Valley's Public Schools, Woodside Elementary School, and the Towns of Portola Valley and Woodside. Training is based on and around the FEMA format and standards for NERT, Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams.

In response to the Grand Jury's recommendation 2.2 to ensure emergency communications systems links to the County, CERPP member's developed a tiered communication system that allows the 25 divisions established within the Woodside Fire Protection District, to maintain communications within their divisions and have the ability to communicate with their respective towns, and county EOC. In addition the public schools within the fire protection district are also equipped and trained to use the radio system. The system uses UHF 45.MHz channels and VHF 165.MHz channels. To further enhance the communities capability to communicate, there are numerous licensed ham radio operators within each division and the two town center who have the capability to transmit necessary information within the district and to San Mateo County's OES. This system is tested biannually, during the fall and spring exercises.

By conducting biannual exercises we have identified and eliminated many systemic problems. The Woodside Fire Protection District and the participating members of CERPP, feel this program is 100 % operational.

The Fire District would also like to thank the Grand Jury for their efforts with this Grand Jury report and ensuring we are prepared for any man made or natural disasters.

Sincerely,

Armando Muela  
Fire Chief  
Woodside Fire Protection District

3111 Woodside Road · Woodside, CA · 94062 · Main 851.1594 · Fax 650.851.3960