

CALPELLA COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
MILLVIEW COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
WILLOW COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
HOPLAND PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT

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REDWOOD VALLEY COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

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The Mendocino County Grand Jury (GJ) requested responses to specific findings from the Water Districts (Districts) to the GJ report entitled "**FORMING AND REFORMING A COMMUNITY, APRIL 7, 2013**". The GJ has requested that the districts listed above respond to Findings F3, F4, and F6, and Recommendations R1, R2, R3, and R4. The following is a joint response from these Districts.

***FINDING #F3:** The significant areas of concern for LAFCO to address are the problems of water and sewer service in the valley.*

RESPONSE TO FINDING #F3: These Districts are unaware of any "problems of water service in the valley." and these districts are not aware of any reason for LAFCO to think that there is a significant issue or concern about water service. From Redwood Valley on the north to Hopland on the south the existing districts and the City of Ukiah are providing water through established water systems to all property owners who wish to have water delivered to their properties by a water system. The GJ report fails to mention any specific applicant who has been denied such services. Certainly, such applications are made from time to time to each of the water purveyors in the referenced areas and those applications are dealt with by the relevant purveyor as received. These respondents are unaware of any applicant who has filed an administrative or legal action against any of the existing purveyors for denial of service. Certainly moratoriums on additional connections have been imposed by the California Department of Health Services against some of the Districts because of lack of water available to supply such expansion. However, some of these moratoriums have already been lifted because of the long-term planning by these Districts and their communities by securing additional water over 50 years ago. It is important to point out that the Districts have faced tough opposition and even lawsuits in trying to secure additional water. There are those who view additional water as being growth inducing, which is not popular with a lot of people. To think that there would be more surplus water available if there were fewer districts, is just not the case. The fact is we have more water today in the valley because of the Districts, as some of the Districts have their own water rights.

***Finding #F4:** There is a proliferation of Special Districts in the Coastal and Valley areas of*

RESPONSE TO FINDING # F4:

These Districts have no wish to inject themselves into the issues facing the Special Districts on the Coast and at this time these Districts have no information or belief concerning Special Districts on the Coast relevant to this finding.

However, with respect to the Special Districts in the Ukiah Valley we believe that Finding #4 is false. Proliferation is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "1. To reproduce (new parts) in quick succession, 2. To produce or create in profusion, 3. To grow by multiplying new parts, as by budding, in quick succession, 4. To multiply rapidly, increase profusely." We are not aware of anything like a "proliferation" of Special Districts in the Ukiah Valley or the surrounding area. These respondents are informed and believe that the last Special District to be formed in the Ukiah area was the Redwood Valley County Water District which services an area of the county not serviced as a primary contractor by the Russian River Flood Control District or any of the other water purveyors in Ukiah Valley and that the RVCWD was formed nearly 40 years ago. The structure of water purveying districts and private purveyors in the Ukiah Valley has been in place for well over 50 years, albeit with some additions due to expansion into unserved territory as the need arose. The GJ seems to want to characterize the existence of Special Districts as a recent and infectious problem when nothing could be further from reality.

FINDING #F6: There is a need for more proactive outreach and coordination with local agencies by LAFCO.

RESPONSE TO FINDING #6:

We disagree with this finding. The GJ starts with a false premise (F3) by asserting that there is a significant problem of concern with the delivery of water in the Ukiah Valley when there is not. The GJ then compounds its error by declaring that there is a proliferation of Special Districts (F4) when there is not. Finally, based upon those false premises the GJ makes the flawed determination that there is a need for LAFCO to solve these non-existing problems when in fact LAFCO is perhaps the last organization that the purveyors would turn to for advice. LAFCO has little to no experience in dealing with day to day real world issues relating to water system construction, maintenance, water delivery or service to the public. The public agency water purveyors in the Ukiah Valley are certainly capable of working through any small differences they might have amongst themselves as they have done for many decades. Those purveyors have a great deal of knowledge, expertise and experience in handling issues relating to water systems and water supply and service to their ultimate consumers. Those purveyors have a long history of cooperation for the public good. They share information and equipment as needed, they have voluntarily intertied the entire water system from Burke Hill on the south to Tomki Road on the north so that they can provide water to each other in times of need. Calpella, Millview, Willow, Hopland, Russian River Flood Control and the Ukiah Valley Sanitation District all maintain offices in the same building and cooperate fully in emergencies and in many other instances. The GJ report ignores all of this and on the basis of false premises, false assumptions and false conclusions purports to create an environment of discontent, disaster and

dispute where none exists.

RECOMMENDATION #R1: *That LAFCO continue toward its goal and schedule of completing all required MSRs by the end of 2014, and pursue development of all related SOIs. (F1, F2, F5).*

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #R1:

We have no opinion on whether LAFCO should prepare its MSRs or SOIs but do insist that if it prepares MSRs relating to any of our jurisdictions or if it changes the SOI of any of our jurisdictions we be given proper notice, and an opportunity to participate in those processes.

RECOMMENDATION #2: *That LAFCO be more proactive in identifying interagency problems and assisting agencies in conflict resolutions (F3, F4, F6).*

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #2:

We disagree with the need for such proactive involvement by LAFCO and disagree that it is authorized to or is the best forum for resolving conflicts. As stated above the issue of conflicts between water agencies appears to be an issue manufactured by the GJ based upon a flawed and incomplete investigation. If the GJ wishes to do a proper investigation of water issues in Ukiah Valley and Redwood Valley then it is respectfully suggested that it at least attempt to get its facts straight by talking to the public agency water purveyors to find out what, if any, issues exist, how those issues are typically resolved, how serious those issues are and whether or not the purveyors think that the injection of LAFCO into the day to day dealings of the water purveyors is appropriate. If we had been asked those questions our answers would have been that what small issues there may be are being handled without LAFCO and that LAFCO would make a mess where none existed if it were to inject itself into the day to day operations of the purveyors.

RECOMMENDATION #3: *That LAFCO provide the leadership to facilitate the consolidation of some of the resources and services of the valley and coastal areas in order to reduce ratepayer costs and improve the level of services.*

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #3:

With respect to the coastal areas we have no opinion.

With respect to the inland areas and specifically with respect to water issues in the inland area it appears to us that the GJ failed in its primary responsibility to get its facts straight and that this is probably because it failed to discuss the matter with the water purveyors in the area or to inform itself about water issues in the area before leaping to unfounded conclusions.

The GJ assumes that such leadership is needed. It is not.

The GJ assumes that LAFCO has the breadth and depth of knowledge about water, water delivery systems, water rates and levels of service, water purveyor interaction and the day to day issues facing those purveyors. It does not.

The GJ assumes that there is a need to facilitate between the existing purveyors. There is no such need.

The GJ assumes that the meddling of LAFCO in the affairs of the purveyors will lead to reductions in ratepayer costs without even attempting to determine that ratepayer costs are

excessive or in need of reduction or capable of being reduced. It is respectfully suggested that the GJ make some effort to understand rates and ratepayer costs before considering itself to be an expert on the subject. These respondents are not aware of any widespread ratepayer dissatisfaction. The GJ has not reported even a single complaint on that subject before determining that LAFCO use that subject as an excuse for injecting itself into the arena.

Additionally, the GJ assumes that the meddling of LAFCO in the affairs of the purveyors will lead to improved levels of service without even attempting to determine that such improvements are required or capable of being improved by LAFCO's involvement. It is respectfully suggested that the GJ make some effort to understand the existing levels of service before considering itself to be an expert on the subject. These respondents are not aware of any widespread complaints about levels of service in its district. The GJ has not reported even a single complaint on that subject before determining that LAFCO use that subject as an excuse for injecting itself into the arena.

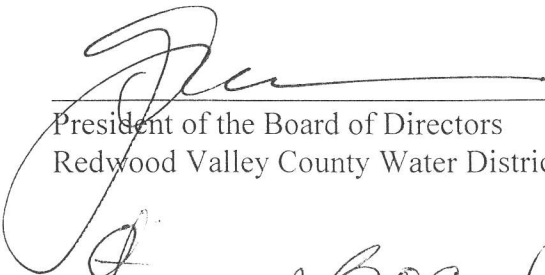
***RECOMMENDATION #4:** That LAFCO become visible and involved with all related agencies by conducting special work sessions dealing with specific concerns of these agencies.*

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION #4:

These respondents disagree with this recommendation. It is the opinion of these respondents that the GJ has the cart before the horse on this issue. Before recommending that LAFCO start conducting work sessions it might be a good idea to determine if there are specific concerns that need the involvement of LAFCO or could benefit from such involvement. These respondents are not aware of any such concerns. These respondents are of the opinion that LAFCO is ill equipped to handle such concerns if they should arise.

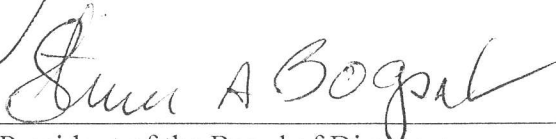
AUTHORIZATION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

After approval of the foregoing by vote of the Board of Directors of the named District, the District General Manager is authorized to deliver the above Response to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2013 Mendocino County Grand Jury.



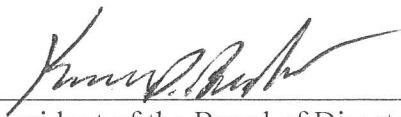
President of the Board of Directors
Redwood Valley County Water District

Date: 18 July 2013




President of the Board of Directors
Calpella County Water District

Date: 7-10-2013



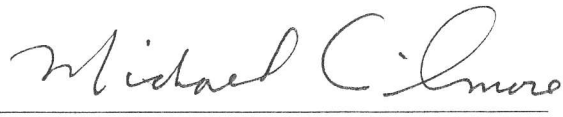
President of the Board of Directors
Millview County Water District

Date: 7-16-13



President of the Board of Directors
Willow County Water District

Date: 6-10-2013



President of the Board of Directors
Hopland Public Utility District

Date: 7-11-13