

S A S M
SEWERAGE AGENCY OF
SOUTHERN MARIN

A Joint Powers Agency

- Almonte S.D.
- Alto S.D.
- City of Mill Valley
- Homestead Valley S.D.
- Richardson Bay S.D.
- Tamalpais C.S.D.

June 28, 2018

The Honorable Judge Paul Haakenson
Marin County Superior Court
PO Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Ron Brown, Foreperson
Marin County Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275
San Rafael, CA 94903

RE: 2017-2018 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: "Consolidation of Sanitation Districts", April 2018

Dear Judge Haakenson and Mr. Brown,

Attached is the requested response from the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM) regarding the referenced topic. The response to the report's recommendations was approved by the SASM Board of Commissioners on June 21, 2018.

SASM appreciates the time and effort the Grand Jury invested in developing this report. Our staff strives to meet our community's desires and needs in a proactive and cost-effective manner. SASM regularly collaborates with our member agencies (City of Mill Valley, Almonte Sanitary District, Alto Sanitary District, Homestead Valley Sanitary District, Richardson Bay Sanitary District, and Tamalpais Community Services District) and is always open to exploring ideas for improving efficiencies. Staff will continue to reach out to the member agencies to see if there are alternate means or methods that may help improve our levels of service or efficiency in an effort to address the intent of the report's recommendations.

Sincerely,

Mark Grushayev
WWT Manager



cc: Shonn Dougherty, Manager Almonte Sanitary District
Bill Hansell, Manager Alto Sanitary District
Andrew Poster, Director of Public Works, Mill Valley
Bonner Beuhler, Manager Homestead Valley Sanitary District
Johnny Tucker, Manager Richardson Bay Sanitary District
Heather Abrams, Manager Tamalpais Community Services District

AGENCY RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: **Consolidation of Sanitation Districts**

Report Date: **April 13, 2018**

Response Date: **July 13, 2018**

Agency Name: Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin Agenda Date: June 21 2018

Response by: Lew Kious Title: President of the Board

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: NA
- I (we) disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: NA
- I (we) disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: NA

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefor.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered NA have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered NA have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered NA require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered R3 will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 7/2/18 Signed: 

Number of pages attached 1

EXPLANATION

The Board of Commissioners of the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM) does not agree with the assumption that a larger organization would necessarily provide better customer service or be more cost effective. On May 17, 2018, the SASM Board voted to oppose the consolidation, reflecting the wishes of their constituents as evidenced by a special vote in 2013.

The SASM Board and its member agencies believe that they together have achieved an excellent and efficient form of collaboration. A good example is the adoption of the Model Private Sewer Lateral Ordinance in 2014. This ordinance provided a model for each of the six SASM member agencies who, in turn, all adopted a similar ordinance. As a result of this collaboration, over 800 private sewer laterals have been repaired or replaced within the SASM jurisdiction since 2014.

Routinely, the district managers of SASM's Member Agencies meet to review, discuss and coordinate common issues and to develop and execute collaborative actions leading to greater efficiency for each agency. Some examples include: 1) development of a public education and outreach brochure on fats, oil and grease (FOG), 2) collaboration on the Marin County Zero Waste program to support its implementation, 3) implementation of a Flow Monitoring Study in 2015 to evaluate the impact of the Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) on the SASM WWTP, and 4) discussions leading to the 2016 \$38 M Bond issue, providing funding for the WWTP rehabilitation and improvements to SASM pump stations and sewer lines. Additionally, the SASM Board directed staff to develop and present for adoption in 2018 the Sewer Design and Construction Standards for SASM and its member agencies.

Based on the above, the SASM Board doesn't believe that there is enough evidence demonstrating that consolidation into a single sanitary agency will provide better service or will be more cost-effective for the rate payers.

