BOARD OF DIRECTORS BETTY H. OLSON, PH.D CHARLEY WILSON SAUNDRA F. JACOBS BILL LAWSON ROGER FAUBEL

IOHN L SCHATZ GENERAL MANAGER



Santa Margaríta Water District

September 7, 2011

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Thomas J. Borris, Presiding Judge Superior Court 700 Civic Center Drive West Santa Ana, California 92701

SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT RESPONSE: "COMPENSATION RE: SURVEY OF ORANGE COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICTS"

Honorable Presiding Judge Borris:

Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) appreciates the Grand Jury's efforts and insight with respect to preparing the above-captioned report. In conformance with California Penal Code Section 933(c), attached are SMWD's responsive comments.

If additional information is required or if there are any questions regarding SMWD's comments please contact me. SMWD appreciates the opportunity to respond and values the Grand Jury's review concerning the operations of public agencies such as SMWD.

Sincerely,

SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT

John J. Schatz General Manager

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26111 Antonio Parkway, Suite A, Las Flores, CA 92688 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 7005, Mission Viejo, CA 92690-7005 Customer Service (949) 459-6420 • Administration (949) 459-6600 • Operations (949) 459-6430

COMPENSATION SURVEY OF ORANGE COUNTY WATER AND SANITATION DISTRICTS

Distributed June 10, 2011

Santa Margarita Water District Response September 7, 2011

Findings

F.1: District websites often do not provide easy public access to compensation and financial data of the district, if available at all.

The District <u>agrees</u> with this finding. While posting financial statements and other information on websites is widely regarded as "transparency", the question for purposes of providing meaningful information directed to the customer's question or inquiry is if it is useful, understandable and responsive.

The District has found on the infrequent occasions when customers make requests for financial or compensation information, it is for very specific data or reasons that typically require discussion, explanation and in some cases the preparation of other documents or reports. For this reason, posting financial and compensation information on a website should not be regarded as <u>the</u> touchstone of accessibility. If the agency is responsive, open and has adopted policies and practices to pro-actively assist customers who make inquiries, this is far superior to posting prophylactic information as a surrogate for meaningful full disclosure.

F.2: District websites were sometimes not updated to reflect public meeting changes or cancellations.

The District <u>wholly disagrees</u> with this finding. The District regularly updates its website regarding public meeting changes and cancellations.

Recommendations

R.1: Provide in an easily accessible format on the district's website, data on compensation for the board of directors and general manager, as well as current budget and financial reports.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the next 60 days. The District has nearly completed a substantial revision of its website format to facilitate intuitive navigation and expand the scope of information.

R.2: *Maintain and update agendas, minutes, meeting schedules and location on the district's website.*

The recommendation has been implemented (preceding this Grand Jury Report) with respect to meeting agendas, schedules and location. Regarding meeting minutes, the recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the next 60 days in connection with posting the information addressed in R.1.above.