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July 28, 2025

The Honorable Maureen F. Hallahan
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
Central Courthouse
1100 Union Street
Tenth Floor
San Diego, CA 92101

RECEIVED
AUG 04 2025
PRESIDING

Dear Judge Hallahan,

The 2024-25 San Diego County Grand Jury issued one report during their tenure that addressed findings and recommendations to the County of San Diego. On July 22, 2025, the County Board of Supervisors approved responses to the report listed below and directed me to forward these responses to your office, as required by California Penal Code.

These responses, which are enclosed, correspond to the following report:

- Fire Country: Forging a United Defense in the Backcountry

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Natalia Bravo, CAO Chief of Staff, at (619) 531-6271.

Sincerely,

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment
cc: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2024-2025 GRAND JURY REPORTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The Grand Jury report listed above and the County of San Diego's corresponding response addresses matters associated with the County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Initiatives of Community and Justice.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ebony N. Shelton', written in a cursive style.

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A – 2024-25 County of San Diego Grand Jury Responses



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

VACANT
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: July 22, 2025

02

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

RESPONSE TO 2024-2025 GRAND JURY REPORTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The 2024-2025 San Diego County Grand Jury recently completed its term and filed one report with recommendations requiring a response from the County.

California Penal Code Section 933(c) requires:

- That the governing body of agencies that are the subject of Grand Jury reports respond in writing to the Findings and Recommendations addressed to such agencies; and
- Elected officials such as the Sheriff respond on behalf of their respective agencies.

Therefore, this is a request for the Board of Supervisors (Board) to review and approve the draft Finding and Recommendation responses prepared by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and authorize the CAO to transmit the responses to the Grand Jury via the Superior Court Presiding Judge. The proposed response addresses the recommendations and findings contained in the following report:

- Fire Country: Forging a United Defense in the Backcountry

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Approve the proposed response and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to transmit the response to the Grand Jury via the Superior Court Presiding Judge.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to submit a copy of the Past Grand Jurors Association Implementation Review Committee's 2026 Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors, no later than December 31, 2026, which provides updates to the County's responses to the 2024-2025 Grand Jury report recommendations.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Grand Jury is a body of 19 residents selected by the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego under the supervision of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Members of the Grand Jury are charged and sworn to investigate county matters of civil concern and may examine any aspect of county government and city government, including special legislative districts and

joint powers agencies, to ensure that the best interests of San Diego County residents are being served.

Today's actions to approve the proposed response and direct the Chief Administrative Officer to transmit the response to the Grand Jury continues the County's commitment to transparency, open government, and collaboration across agencies, ensuring that the County continues to function in the best interest of the public it serves.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed actions support the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goal of engaging the community in meaningful ways and continually seeking stakeholder input to foster inclusive and sustainable communities. The Grand Jury plays a vital role in providing input on various aspects of County government and its role within the community. This process continues to center the County on the core aspect of Community Engagement within the General Management System.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The 2024-2025 San Diego County Grand Jury recently completed its term and filed one report which includes recommendations requiring a response from the County of San Diego (County).

California Penal Code Section 933(c) requires the governing body of agencies that are the subject of Grand Jury reports to respond in writing to the Findings and Recommendations addressed to such agencies. Copies of all Grand Jury reports and the subject agencies' responses to them are posted on the Grand Jury website.

This is a request for the Board of Supervisors to review and approve the draft Findings and Recommendation responses prepared by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and authorize the CAO to transmit the response to the Grand Jury via the Superior Court Presiding Judge. The proposed response addresses the recommendations and findings contained in one Grand Jury report.

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSES
TO
2024-2025 GRAND JURY REPORTS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSE TO 2024-25 GRAND JURY
REPORT

“Fire Country: Forging a United Defense in the Backcountry”
Published May 14, 2025

FINDINGS

Finding 01: FPDs should expect to require increased resources to effectively prevent and respond to wildfires in the unincorporated areas given rising costs of personnel, construction, and equipment.

Response: The County of San Diego agrees with this finding for itself but cannot respond on behalf of other agencies. The County of San Diego increased resources to County Fire in the Recommended Operational Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-27 to respond to wildfires in the unincorporated areas.

Finding 02: Consolidation has improved response times, upgraded equipment, augmented staff, and in other ways improved fire prevention and response across SDCFPD's area of responsibility.

Response: The County of San Diego agrees with this finding.

Finding 03: Uniform defensible space and burn permit codes contribute to fire prevention efforts across unincorporated San Diego County.

Response: The County of San Diego agrees with this finding for itself but cannot respond on behalf of other agencies.

Finding 04: Homeowner participation in the Firewise, Fire Risk Reduction Community and potentially the Wildfire Prepared Home program enhance community fire safety and improve potential access to fire insurance.

Response: The County of San Diego agrees with the finding that these initiatives enhance community fire safety, but the County cannot respond on behalf of the California Department of Insurance, which has jurisdiction over access to fire insurance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2024-2025 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that San Diego County Fire:

Recommendation R1: Explore consolidation of additional willing FPDs to improve overall efficiency and community safety

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The County of San Diego cannot respond on behalf of other agencies. Consolidation could be explored if an independent fire protection district takes action to file an application for dissolution with the Local Agency Formation Commission and the San Diego County Board of Supervisors supports expanding the boundary of the San Diego County Fire Protection District.

Recommendation R2: Lead an effort with current FPDs to standardize defensible space requirements and controlled burn permitting across the unincorporated areas

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The County of San Diego cannot respond on behalf of other agencies. Every three years the San Diego County Consolidated Fire Code is updated. To promote consistency across the unincorporated area, San Diego County Fire leads recurring meetings of fire protection district fire marshals to minimize fire code differences between agencies. In 2025, San Diego County Fire will explore this recommendation with the fire marshals, but it will be up to each independent fire protection district to take action.

Recommendation R3: Increase cooperation with FPDs (and their respective fire safety councils) to maximize opportunities for homeowners and communities to meet wildfire hardening standards, receive home inspections, and enhance access to fire insurance

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. The County of San Diego cannot respond on behalf of other agencies, including the California Department of Insurance, which has jurisdiction over access to fire insurance. In 2025, San Diego County Fire will engage with independent fire protection districts on opportunities to increase home hardening standards and home inspections, but it will be up to each independent fire protection district to take action.