

# 2023-2024 Napa County Grand Jury



Continuity Report  
February 23, 2024

# Review of Responses to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Reports

## SUMMARY

California Penal Code Section 933 requires elected officials or agency heads to respond within 60 days of the issuance of a Grand Jury report that requires their response and requires governing bodies to respond within 90 days. Section 933.05 specifies the way the responding parties are to make their responses. The responses are transmitted to the presiding judge of the superior court.

The response to a *Finding* must be provided in one of the two following formats:

1. The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation for the reason therefore.

The response to a *Recommendation* must be provided in one of the following four formats.

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future with a timeframe for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis with 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 head of the agency or public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
4. The recommendation shall not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The 2022-2023 Napa County Grand Jury issued its Consolidated Report on June 30, 2023. The report consisted of 6 individual final reports.

## METHODOLOGY

The 2023-2024 Grand Jury evaluated responses to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury's recommendations to ensure compliance with Sections 933 and 933.05 using the statutory criteria.

933(c) Were responses by the presiding judge within the legal time limits from the date of each final report's release (90 days for a public agency and 60 days for an elected official)?

933.05(a) Did the response to a finding satisfy the requirement of Section 933.05?

1. The respondent agrees with the finding; or
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding in which case the respondent shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

933.05 (b) Did the response to a recommendation satisfy the requirement of Section 933.05(b)?

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implementation and action; or the recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation; or
2. The recommendation requires further analysis, with 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 head 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 the publication of the grand jury report; or
3. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or it is not reasonable, with an explanation thereof.

## DISCUSSION

### **Timelines Review of Responses 2022-2023 Publishing and Due Dates**

Details of the 2022-2023 publishing dates and responses by due dates are shown below.

- *Napa County Volunteer Firefighters Lack of Volunteers and Their Utilization Are Burning Issues*. Published April 26, 2023. Responses required from the Board of Supervisors, the Napa County Fire Chief and the Napa County Deputy Fire Chief. All responses received within the required timeline.
- *Napa County Jail Out With The Old In With The New Serving Time In The Meantime*. Published April 26, 2023. Responses required from the Director of the Department of Corrections and the Board of Supervisors. All responses received within the required timeline.
- *Napa County Juvenile Hall Compliance & Implementation Report 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report on Compliance & Implementation of Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations and Responses 2019-2020 "Napa County Juvenile Hall Exceptional Cost"*. Published June 21, 2023. Required responses from the Board of Supervisors. Invited responses from the Napa County Probation Officer and Superintendent of Napa County Juvenile Hall. All responses received within the required timeline.

- *Information Technology Services in Napa County*. Published June 21, 2023. Responses required from Board of Supervisors. Invited Responses from the Chief Information Officer and the Chief Operations Officer. All responses received within the required timeline.
- *Mental Health Crises Services in Napa County*. Published June 21, 2023. Required responses from the Board of Supervisors and Director of HHS. All responses received within the required timeline.
- *Napa County Groundwater Management*. Published June 21, 2023. Required response from Board of Supervisors and Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services. Invited response from Napa County Resource Conservation District. All responses received within the required timeline.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF APPRECIATION:**

The 2023-2024 Grand Jury would like to thank all responders to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury's findings and recommendations for their consideration and providing their responses in such a timely manner. This has allowed the current report to be completed and made available to the community and all interested parties without delay.

**Disclaimer:** The 2023-2024 Grand Jury has made a collective effort to edit original selected text in both the 2022-2023 Grand Jury reports as well as the responses from county offices with the sole intention of increased readability (e.g., formatting and spelling errors). Any edits were carefully reviewed by the Grand Jury to ensure the content and message of the text was maintained.

## **Napa County Volunteer Firefighters Lack Of Volunteers And Their Utilization Are Burning Issues**

### **FINDINGS**

**Finding 1:** The current structure of the volunteer monthly stipend does not reward the volunteers who respond to multiple calls.

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

**Finding 2:** The operational model of how volunteers are used in support of the Napa County Fire Department is ineffective because it does not hold volunteers accountable for not responding to emergency calls.

*The Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief agree with this finding.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

**Finding 3:** The low response rate from the Soda Canyon Volunteer Fire Station compromises its effectiveness to provide reliable fire protective service.

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

**Finding 4:** Napa County does not have a dedicated web page or program for the purpose of recruiting new volunteers from a broader group of potential applicants.

*The Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief agree with this finding.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

**Finding 5:** The Board of Supervisors representative for the Fire Service Advisory Committee has not changed in four years, creating a lack of representation from all five Supervisory Districts.

*The Napa County Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding that the FSAC representative has not changed in four years; however, the Board disagrees with the statement that all supervisory districts' perspectives are not heard within the committee.*

**Finding 6:** The selection process and criteria for the position of Volunteer Fire Chief is not standardized under state-mandated industrial guidelines.

*The Napa County Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief agree with this finding.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

**Finding 7:** The volunteers do not have a liaison officer to act as a spokesperson between them and the Napa County Fire Department, resulting in miscommunication and misunderstandings between both groups.

***The Napa County Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding that there is not a liaison. However, the Fire Services Advisory Committee provides a more direct and effective method of communication between the volunteer firefighters and the Napa County Fire Department.***

**Finding 8:** The volunteer firefighters have morale problems resulting from a perceived lack of appreciation by the Board of Supervisors and the Napa County Fire Department.

***The Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief agree with this finding that there are morale problems resulting from perceived lack of appreciation. Although both the Board of Supervisors and the Napa County Fire Department regularly demonstrate that they highly value the volunteer firefighters, staff will continue to explore other avenues to improve morale such as public recognition. Staff believes that issues related to morale reflect the ineffectiveness of the current volunteer firefighter model, which will be addressed once the model has been updated.***

**The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1:** By December 1, 2023, the Board of Supervisors develop a plan that calls for the volunteer's monthly stipend to be replaced with a Paid Per Call system.

***Board of Supervisors Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented. This recommendation is currently being reviewed by staff to implement a new pay-per-call system in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024. This new pay-per-call system will have potential fiscal and labor implications. The Napa County Human Resources Department is exploring the model which other counties have adopted and will return with the recommended best fit for Napa County Fire.***

**Recommendation 2:** By December 1, 2023, the Board of Supervisors establish a committee of volunteer firefighters, paid staff from the Napa County Fire Department, and members of the community to develop a new operational model that places more emphasis in responding to larger fires in a surge capacity. The new model would classify the volunteers as reserve firefighters.

***Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. This analysis will need to determine the best model for the volunteers (such as reserve vs. paid call firefighters). Furthermore, the structure of the volunteer companies will have to be addressed to ensure that the function of the volunteer companies and equipment is used in an effective and coordinated matter. This process will take several months to complete. The Board of Supervisors is also examining this issue as part of the recently presented Long Range Master Plan.***

***Board of Supervisor Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.***

**Recommendation 3:** By December 1, 2023, the Board of Supervisors authorizes the Napa County Fire Department to relocate and consolidate the volunteers assigned to the Soda Canyon Volunteer Fire Station to the Napa County Fire Department's paid fire station #25 on Monticello Road. The relocation and consolidation include moving the remaining fire apparatus equipment from the Soda Canyon Volunteer Fire Station to the paid station #25.

***Board of Supervisors Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented; The move will require logistics and coordination with Napa County Fire and volunteers assigned to the Soda Canyon Volunteer Fire Station. This consolidation will use equipment and volunteer firefighter time better and serve the community better. Much of the equipment of the Soda Canyon Volunteer Fire Station is already located at Fire Station 25 on Monticello Road. Implementing this recommendation will ensure that volunteers will respond from a station that is more centrally located, allowing for a more efficient and expedited response. This recommendation will be implemented by July 1, 2024.***

**Recommendation 4:** By December 1, 2023, the Napa County Deputy Fire Chief, in conjunction with the Volunteer Fire Chiefs, establish a County-wide dedicated web page for the purpose of providing information to the public about the volunteer firefighter program in Napa County. The information must include a mission statement, the minimum requirements to become a volunteer firefighter, and the level of training necessary to meet state-mandated fire and safety regulations.

***Napa County Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented. Napa County Fire, with the support of the Information Technology Services Department and the County Executive Officer, will establish a web page that serves this purpose by January 1, 2024. Staff will continue to explore other potential recruitment efforts such as advertising through social media, community events or expanding the Firefighter Explorer program.***

***Board of Supervisors Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.***

**Recommendation 5:** By September 30, 2023, the Board of Supervisors representative to the Fire Services Advisory Committee will be appointed on a yearly cycle with each supervisor serving on a rotating basis.

***Board of Supervisors Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented. The Board of Supervisors selects committee representatives each year in January based on interest and availability. This recommendation will be considered in January 2024, instead of September 2023.***

**Recommendation 6:** By December 1, 2023, the Napa County Deputy Fire Chief adopt and enforce the selection criteria for the position of Volunteer Fire Chief that follows state-mandated guidelines.

***Napa County Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Candidates for the Volunteer Fire Chief position must adhere to training requirements outlined in the 4001-training manual, which includes previous positions such as Firefighter, Fire Apparatus Operator, Company Officer, and Fire Captain. An application process followed by an interview will be conducted to select the right candidate.***

***Board of Supervisors Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.***

**Recommendation 7:** By December 1, 2023, the Board of Supervisors reinstate the volunteer liaison position with a retired firefighter.

***Board of Supervisors Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented. Napa County is hiring a Fire Administrator which will not be part of CalFire but will help support the volunteers. This Fire Administrator will be responsible for fire mitigation, contracts and supporting the volunteers. Additionally, the new CalFire Cooperative Agreement provides for county funded Battalion Chiefs which will be dedicated to the volunteers as part of their administrative oversight duties. The goals of this recommendation, to better support and coordinate with volunteers will be implemented by December 1, 2023, without the volunteer liaison position. These positions provide more staff than the volunteer liaison and will be able to provide better support to the volunteers.***

**Recommendation 8:** By December 1, 2023, the Board of Supervisors and the Napa County Deputy Fire Chief coordinate with the local media to publish a feature article for the general public highlighting the successes of the volunteer program.

***Napa County Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented. The Napa County Fire Department with the support of the County Executive Office will work with local media to feature the value of the volunteer firefighter program by December 1, 2023.***

***Board of Supervisors Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Napa County Fire Unit Chief and Deputy Fire Chief.***



**Napa County Jail, Out With the Old, In With the New  
Serving Time In the Meantime**

The 2022-2023 Napa County Grand Jury requested responses from the Napa County Department of Corrections (NCDC) for each of the Findings below.

**FINDINGS**

**Finding 1:** The Napa County Jail lacks adequate programming, especially for long term incarcerated persons. Now that the Covid-19 State of Emergency has been lifted (March 2023), it is not reasonable to wait for the new jail to provide broader programs for incarcerated persons

***Director of Corrections Response: The Director of Corrections partially agrees with this finding.** During the pandemic all in custody programs were suspended temporarily. In-custody social program providers are being allowed back on-site to facilitate programs. Since the Covid-19 State of Emergency was lifted, NCDC has worked to revamp its policies regarding program volunteers. As of May 15, 2023, NCDC has finalized its policy to reimplement volunteer program providers to return to NCDC. Volunteer programs include but are not limited to: Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and religious providers.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Corrections.***

**Finding 2:** Women are not offered equitable work opportunities at the Napa County Jail.

***Director. of Corrections Response: The Director of Corrections disagrees with this finding.** NCDC provides work opportunities to qualifying sentenced female inmates in the form of janitorial work in the booking area. This work location is in proximity to their housing unit (a consideration taken for safety & security reasons). The number of sentenced female inmates in the jail population who qualify for work opportunities changes daily and not all sentenced females are eligible for work as some have special housing classifications (due to behavioral issues or their safety needs) that disqualify them from work privileges. It is CDC's policy that only sentenced inmates being housed in qualifying classified housing units be given the opportunity to pursue work privileges.*

**Finding 3:** The Re-entry facility is not currently used and is likely not going to be used for its intended purposes.

***Board of Supervisors Response: The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding. The board is working with legislative leaders and the Governor's Office to explore alternative uses that better fit the needs of the community.***

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The 2022-2023 Napa County Grand Jury requested responses from Napa County Department of Corrections (NCDC) for each of the Recommendations below.

**Recommendations 1:** The Napa County Grand Jury recommends that the Director of Corrections increase programs for IPs by December 31, 2023. If the space constraints are a limitation, the jury recommends NCI increase online programs.

***Director of Corrections Response: This recommendation has been implemented. NCDC has collaborated with the Napa County Library to expand programming to include a literacy program available to all interested incarcerated Persons (IPs). Tutors from the Napa County Library work with IPs to determine their literacy skills. Tutors are additionally available to work with IPs to work towards obtaining their High School Equivalency (HSE) Test. Tutors from the library meet with participants weekly. Online programs are not an option within NCDC as wireless internet capabilities are limited within the facility.***

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Corrections.***

**Recommendation 2:** The Napa county Grand Jury recommends that the Director of Corrections implement work opportunities for women by December 31, 2023.

***Director of Corrections Response: This recommendation has been implemented. Work assignments are based on sentencing status and housing locations to minimize the flow of contraband throughout the facility. NCDC does not have combined (male and female) housing, nor do we allow combined work assignments. Therefore, the work opportunities available to incarcerated females depends on their being sentenced and housed in the general population dorm of the jail. Currently, the only location that females can safely work is in the booking area adjacent to their housing dorm where they can provide janitorial services.***

*NCDC continues to consider and pursue work opportunities for all qualified inmates. However, the consistently low number of eligible female IPs and current configuration of the jail, coupled with security concerns and the jail's policies on keeping male and female populations separate, prevent the participation of female IPs in other existing work opportunities. Female IPs are given work opportunities that are consistent with their sentencing and their housing locations.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Corrections.*

**Recommendation 3:** The Napa County Grand jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors continue to work diligently with the State to find and implement a long-term solution for the use of the re-entry facility and provide quarterly updates to the public until a long-term solution is implemented.

*Board of Supervisors Response: The recommendation has been Implemented. The Board and County staff continue to work with the State on a long-term solution for the re-entry facility. The Board will provide regular updates to the public on the re-entry facility's long-term plan once the county fully owns the facility.*

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

**Commendation 1:** The Napa County Grand Jury commends the NCJ for managing the Covid-19 pandemic with innovative solutions to keep the outbreaks at a minimum.

## **Response to Grand Jury Final Report on Napa County Juvenile Hall**

### **FINDINGS**

**Finding 1:** The overall staffing for NCJH has been reduced by 14% rather than 25%. The NCJH has based its staffing levels on Title 15 requirements and other factors and anticipates increasing staff.

*The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding. Staffing continues to be driven by Title 15 requirements, safety, and programmatic needs within the facility. The staffing percentage fluctuates with staff retirements and departures. The hiring process can take many months to onboard new staff which requires advanced planning. The Juvenile Hall anticipates opening a new camp program in January 2024 which requires vacant positions to be filled to provide intensive services to youth.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.*

**Finding 2:** The New Horizons Academy program has been discontinued and a new camp program is in development.

*The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding. The new camp program is slated to open by January 2024 with the goal of keeping most youth in our community close to their family in lieu of placing them in programs out of the county.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.***

**Finding 3:** The Shared Vision consulting firm is currently identifying resources for youths in Napa County and plans to report back with specific recommendations for program development for NCJH. The survey should include measures for program efficacy and evaluation.

***The Chief Probation Officer partially agrees with this finding.*** *The Department has contracted with Shared Vision Consulting and is in the process of identifying community programs and resources to further enhance programming and connections for youth including leveraging current resources and funding opportunities. However, Shared Vision Consultants has not been contracted to perform program efficacy and evaluation. This will be completed by the Department in the future outside of the Shared Vision Consulting contract.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.***

**Finding 4:** The NCJH is in discussions with the Napa County Library to increase reading resources and services in the NCJH library for the youth.

***The Chief Probation Officer agrees with this finding.*** *The Napa County Juvenile Hall, the Napa County Office of Education, and the Napa County Library are committed to continuing to enhance accessible reading materials to youth in Juvenile Hall. We are working together to identify services and equipment to create more opportunities for the youth to grow and learn. The library has offered to bring in new reading materials for all reading levels with enhanced access to assistive technology including audiobooks to increase accessibility to youth with different learning abilities. Additionally, the library has assisted the Juvenile Hall to increase study space for youth, specifically to attend community college classes in the facility.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.***

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

*The Napa County Probation Department appreciates the Grand Jury's recognition of the hard work of County staff to ensure youth and staff were safe in the Juvenile Hall throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.*

## Information Technology Services in Napa County

### **INTRODUCTION**

*The “Information Technology Services in Napa County” final investigative report (Report) of the 2022- 2023 Napa County Civil Grand Jury presents five (5) findings, five (5) recommendations and one (1) commendation related to ITS in Napa County. This letter represents the responses of the Napa County Board of Supervisors and County Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Information Officer (CIO), pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05.*

*Napa County Board of Supervisors and County Executive Officer would like to thank the Grand Jury for their work, and for the opportunity to respond to the findings and recommendations in the final investigative report.*

### **FINDINGS**

**Finding 1.** Napa County has insufficient network bandwidth for the increasing use of video conferencing, document imaging, and large file management.

***The CIO and CEO agree with this finding.** With the County's move to increased online access and to provide more digital services, data and video content has increased and will continue to increase into the future. ITS is assisting County departments to provide digital access and services, and ITS considers network bandwidth needs when moving to digital government. This includes monitoring network bandwidth and increasing bandwidth as limits (usage exceeding 70%) are reached for the entire County. There are other aspects that contribute to insufficient bandwidth, which ITS cannot control. These include remote offices in locations where provided internet services are underserved by the internet services providers, telework situations where personal home internet services are not sufficient, and certain cloud-based applications that can slow down during peak hours of usage. ITS will commit to reviewing network utilization data for the previous 30 days to identify possible network saturation.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding, and with the CEO and CIO.***

**Finding 2.** In at least one instance a County developed application took longer to implement and was more difficult to maintain than a packaged application.

***The CIO and CEO agree partially with this finding.** In the past ITS built custom applications for departments because there were limited vendor solutions available that fit department needs. This has changed greatly over the years and ITS has moved away from creating and maintaining custom built applications.*

*For example:*

- *ITS replaced an in-house website content management system with a vendor-based website content management system.*

- *ITS replaced an in-house ticketing system with a vendor-based solution.*
- *ITS replaced an in-house agenda management system with a vendor-based solution.*
- *ITS retired 11% of in-house electronic forms (e-Forms) used for financial and Human Resource requests and approvals with e-Form functionality in the County's new Enterprise Resource Planning system.*

*ITS continues to look for opportunities to replace custom-built applications with vendor applications, with a preference for cloud-based solutions, when making major upgrades in-house applications. Vendor cloud-based solutions are preferable over vendor solutions installed in our internal servers because supporting technical infrastructure for cloud applications are managed by the vendor, not ITS.*

*If a vendor solution is not available to meet the needs of departments, ITS will still need to consider a custom-build approach. Consideration factors will include the cost to build the solution and the cost of annual support. Annual support costs include application support staff, system support staff and related hardware and software tools licensing and maintenance.*

*With regards to the comment [that in one instance a] county application (CJNet) took longer to implement and is difficult to maintain, there were no vendor solutions available that fulfilled criminal justice department needs. Part of the implementation included improvements to business practices, which added more time to the overall project. In addition, these departments do not want to migrate off this platform currently.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.***

**Finding 3.** Multiple departments would benefit from a common data management system as part of the County infrastructure.

***The CIO and CEO agree with this finding.***

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.***

**Finding 4.** The County's focus on annual and department-level budgeting makes planning and adoption of longer term infrastructure and application development projects more difficult.

***The CIO and CEO agree with this finding.*** *Working with the CEO and Auditor-Controller's office, ITS will use functionality in the new financial system to budget for and track multi-year infrastructure and application projects, beginning in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.***

**Findings 5.** There is not a comprehensive County-wide strategy on IT infrastructure and applications.

*The CIO and CEO agree with this finding. This finding will be addressed either through a County-wide strategic plan or the ITS strategic plan as discussed in Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1:** By June 1, 2024, the Napa County CEO articulates a vision for digital government that facilitates cross department collaboration, community engagement and enhances government productivity.

*Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: The recommendation requires further analysis. The CEO and ITS will need to consider how best to articulate the County's vision for digital government, which could be part of the County's new strategic plan. Also, see Recommendation 2 regarding an IT strategic plan.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.*

**Recommendation 2:** Starting with the 2024-2025 budget cycle, the Napa County CEO adopt an annual IT strategic plan that includes multi-year objectives and investments in data integration, infrastructure, communication and digitization.

*Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: The recommendation will be implemented. ITS has a draft of a 3-year strategic plan completed. The plan does include multi-year objectives around big data, which includes data strategy and governance, data integration, infrastructure, communications, and digital initiatives. The plan, however, needs to be approved by the CEO before it can be integrated into the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget plan.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.*

**Recommendation 3:** By June 1, 2024, the Napa County CEO should initiate a project to implement a common data management system in order to share information across departments and applications.

*Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer: This recommendation will be implemented. Information Technology Services posted a request for proposal (RFP) for an enterprise data management system in May 2023 seeking proposals from respondents to provide an enterprise data management solution and related implementation services. The plan is to bring an agreement to the Board of Supervisors with the selected vendor in the Fall of 2023 and commence with the implementation after approval. This will be a 3-to-4-year implementation with multiple phases. The goal is to complete the first phase by the Spring of 2025.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.*

**Recommendation 4:** By December 1, 2023, the Napa County CEO should consider a policy that new proprietary (County developed) applications be deployed by exception only.

**Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer:** *This recommendation requires further analysis. CEO and ITS will consider a policy for this recommendation by December 1, 2023. As noted in the response to Finding 2 above, the policy will need to allow for new proprietary application development if a vendor solution is not available, or when the cost of vendor solutions is prohibitive.*

**The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.**

**Recommendation 5:** By December 1, 2023, The Napa County CEO should consider a policy that existing proprietary applications be replaced by package applications.

**Chief information Officer and County Executive Officer:** *The recommendation requires further analysis. CEO and ITS will consider a policy for this recommendation or combine this recommendation into the policy noted in the response to Recommendation 4. As noted in the response to Finding 2 above, the policy will need to allow for replacement proprietary application development if a vendor solution is not available, or when the cost of vendor solutions is prohibitive.*

**Board of Supervisors:** *The Board of Supervisors agrees with the CEO.*

## **Mental Health Crisis Services in Napa County**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*The Report of the 2022-2023 Napa County Grand Jury, “Mental Health Crisis Services in Napa County,” sets forth nine findings and eight recommendations directed to the Napa County Health and Human Services Agency (HHS). This response aims to respond to those findings and recommendations, and further explain the broader ecosystem that comprise the County's crisis services continuum of care and the many partnerships and initiatives already underway at HHS directed at enhancing those services.*

### **FINDINGS**

**Finding 1.** The mental health crisis needs of Napa County are not being fully met, despite the existence of the CSU and Mobile Response Team and the efforts of their teams.

**The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding.** *The mental health needs throughout the community, including the increased need for crisis services have escalated given factors associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The challenges faced by community members, especially youth, were exacerbated by social isolation heightened by remote*



*learning and pandemic related uncertainty. In understanding this, after months of planning, in February 2022, HHSA launched the Mobile Response Team (MRT) to provide community-based crisis intervention for community members of all ages. The Director acknowledges there is a statewide workforce shortage of mental health clinicians and those workforce challenges have included Napa County and impact the MRT. HHSA has engaged in continuous recruitments for these positions and strived to bring staff on as quickly as possible to fully staff the MRT.*

*The Director acknowledges there is more to do – and that work is already underway – to meet the increased mental health crisis needs of the community and using community feedback, utilization rates and integrated data we remain focused on scaling solutions that keep people stabilized in the least restrictive environment. First, while staffing is fluid, as of the submission of this response on July 17, 2023, the MRT positions are filled and the hours of coverage are Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. With the provision of staffing in place, over the next several months, the next phase of planned MRT expansion can be implemented with the goal of MRT coverage hours extending to 10 pm and including weekends. The anticipated expansion is targeted for the end of October 2023.*

*Second, by December 31, 2023, through a contracted provider, HHSA is committed to launching expanded mobile response services to cover 24/7, 365 days a year. HHSA issued a Request for Proposals earlier this Spring and is now in contract negotiations with Crestwood Behavioral Health; notably, Crestwood is the provider operating the CSU and this expansion will help bolster and optimize our continuum of crisis care. These services will remain community-based, including response to local emergency department (ED) to assist in alleviating concerns associated with crisis needs during after hours and weekend response.*

*Third, after an arduous application process that started in mid-2022, in June of this year HHSA received notification of a conditional award from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for approximately \$3.3M to expand the CSU by creating a separate children's stabilization unit within the CSU, creating four additional crisis beds.*

*Lastly, it is important to understand that meeting mental health crisis needs extends beyond the CSU and MRT cited in this finding. While the focus of this has been directed specifically at two services, HHSA, through its Behavioral Health Division, provides a full continuum of crisis management services including through mental health clinicians embedded with law enforcement staff who provide community-based field response, our crisis residential services provided through a contracted provider, Progress Foundation, and through the provision and management of psychiatric hospital placements and Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMDs) placements.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the director.***

**Finding 2.** The CSU's capacity constraints and exclusionary policies limit the CSU's ability to treat all individuals in need of mental health crisis services.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency partially agrees with this finding.*** *The CSU is operated by a County contracted provider, Crestwood Behavioral Health. Contracted providers set protocols and policies in alignment with overarching guidelines and practices set*

*forth through the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Licensing division with contractor oversight by HHSAs Behavioral Health Division. All CSU operate with specific exclusionary criteria for safety and precautionary reasons. The admission and exclusionary criteria are standardized and are designed by licensed physicians in conjunction with contracted provider leadership staff and set in accordance with CSU policies across like-operated sites.*

*Exclusionary criteria are important since, as the Grand Jury report notes, the CSU is not a medical facility, and, as such, it is not a facility designed or equipped to support medical needs; that is, it is not a hospital. Thus, people in need of medical support or stabilization, such as acute intoxication or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), as examples, cannot be adequately and safely treated in a CSU. In addition, certain conditions requiring medical assisted devices, such as sleep apnea or ambulatory needs, including walkers, cannot be managed in the CSU given safety concerns around use of medical devices as weapons or ligature risk. It is important to remember that a CSU is a place where individuals, for a period of less than 24 hours, experiencing a mental health crisis receive stabilizing services. This includes individuals deemed a danger to themselves or others. HHSAs regularly reviews exclusionary criteria with our contracted provider, our local emergency department's clinical staff, and law enforcement partners, and we work in partnership on the exclusionary criteria and in ensuring care is coordinated for those who cannot be safely treated in the CSU.*

***The Board of Supervisors partly agrees with the director.***

**Finding 3.** The CSU capacity to treat individuals in mental health crises is reduced by clients being treated that more appropriately need detox services.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency partially agrees with this finding.*** *At times it is difficult in assessment processes to deduce whether an individual is experiencing acute mental health symptoms or substance use (intoxication) related symptoms. It is also true that this challenge has been enhanced by the temporary unavailability of the in-county withdrawal management treatment facility. HHSAs immediately issued a Request for Proposals and has been working diligently with our newly selected treatment provider to bring their contract to the Board of Supervisors for approval, while the provider concurrently has submitted their request for licensure to the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS). HHSAs is working to ensure our new provider is operational as quickly as possible to provide withdrawal management services and upon the provider being licensed by DHCS to do so. HHSAs is also continuing to work in partnership with law enforcement, our local emergency department, our CSU provider, and ultimately with our new withdrawal management/residential treatment provider to ensure appropriate workflows exist for individuals to get to the right level of care at the right time and withdrawal management services to be readily accessible. HHSAs will continue utilizing our quarterly provider meeting as the forum for designing functional workflows and warm hands-offs to ensure individuals receive the appropriate level of care.*

***The Board of Supervisors partly agrees with the director.***

**Finding 4.** Individuals in mental health crises on a 5150 hold who cannot get into the CSU are usually diverted to the Emergency Department of the Queen of the Valley Medical Center which

is not staffed or designed to provide comprehensive mental health crisis treatment.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding.*** *When counties experience mental health crisis treatment that temporarily exceeds the capacity of a CSU, community members in need of psychiatric support typically receive treatment at the closest, local emergency department. The range of treatment available at local emergency departments vary depending upon the specialized services provided by that hospital. Here in Napa, it is true that QVMC has not opted to provide comprehensive mental health crisis treatment. However, all hospitals are legally required to provide emergency medical care and it is important that individuals in need of emergency care, including mental health care when they are at risk of self-harm, can obtain services in our community. Emergency departments are equipped with social workers, licensed physicians and other providers who are trained and capable of providing stabilization services, in addition to medication.*

*Finally, as noted previously, HHS is pursuing an expansion of the CSU and received notification of a conditional award from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for approximately \$3.3M to expand the CSU by creating a separate children's stabilization unit within the CSU, creating four additional crisis beds. Once the expansion is completed, the capacity of the CSU will be increased from 8 crisis beds to a total of 12. It is anticipated that this 50% expansion (to capacity levels of counties with much larger populations) will minimize the instances where the CSU is at capacity.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the director.***

**Finding 5.** Individuals in mental health crises who are diverted to the Emergency Department of the Queen of the Valley Medical Center reduce the hospital's capacity to treat medical emergencies.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency partially agrees with this finding.*** *Like any facility or unit, emergency departments operate with a given number of available beds, and thus an individual experiencing a mental health emergency might be utilizing a bed. However, a mental health or psychiatric emergency is nevertheless a medical emergency. Mental health is a part of health, and providers, agencies, organizations, families, and individuals work hard to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and the occurrence of a mental health crisis. The unintended consequence of characterizing mental health as something other than a medical condition is that it has a stigmatizing effect when mental health care should be placed on equal footing by all health care providers.*

*That said, HHS remains committed to expanding the crisis continuum and ensuring individuals receive the right level of services, in the right place at the right time, and in the most compassionate and respectful manner possible. While the emergency room might not appear to be the best place for someone in a mental health crisis to receive treatment, it remains the right place within the right context and circumstances since ensuring life-saving care is provided is paramount to all health care providers.*

*The Director also incorporates by reference the above response to Finding 4.*

***The Board of Supervisors partly agrees with the director.***

**Finding 6.** Individuals in a mental health crisis often also have substance abuse, medical, and/or homelessness issues. County services to meet these needs are fragmented resulting in individuals often not getting the services they need.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency disagrees with this finding.*** *It is true that individuals experiencing a mental health crisis may have been impacted by social, economic, and environmental factors over the course of their lifetimes bringing them to experience multiple concurrent life challenges. As noted previously, the stigma (still) associated with mental illness provides everyone with the opportunity to positively influence our community by removing judgment or shame and embracing parity, thereby increasing the likelihood that individuals will engage in wellness and recovery at the earliest possible point. There are many challenges in treatment of individuals with complex needs, both within and outside the realm of behavioral healthcare.*

*HHSA works closely with other health and social services providers, including through its vast network of contracted providers, other County departments, and other health care providers in the County, to collectively meet the needs of individuals in our community. In fact, County staff routinely come together in multi-disciplinary teams to collectively strategize to meet the complex needs of our shared clients; HHSA staff work with the Housing and Homeless Services Division of the County and the coordinated entry system to prioritize clients for housing; HHSA has two staff who are board members on the Continuum of Care; HHSA developed and implemented a universal release of information in early 2021 to promote information sharing for care coordination; and, as of 2023, HHSA enrolled with our managed care plan to become an Enhanced Care Management provider in order to provide an additional set of service focused exclusively on ensuring linkage to a wide array of services, including services not provided by the County. Finally, HHSA has worked with many County departments to pursue a shared goal of a master data system that can link our service and client data so that systems support the provision of care in an increasingly holistic and integrated fashion.*

***The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the director.***

**Finding 7.** The Mobile Response Team is often unavailable for mental health crises that occur outside normal business hours, resulting in the overuse of law enforcement, the CSU, and the Queen of the Valley Medical Center Emergency Department.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency partially agrees with this finding.*** *As noted previously, the MRT currently operates during normal business hours of Monday Friday from 8am-5pm. HHSA also contracts with CSU for after hours and weekend response needs. As mentioned before, now that HHSA has finally reached staffing capacity, we anticipate being able to reach our goal since the program's inception in early 2022 of expanding MRT hours by the end of October 2023. HHSA is also in the process of negotiating a new contract for after hours and weekend expanded mobile response services, thus covering 24/7 365 days a year, by December 31, 2023. This expanded contracted service will include community-based responses,*

*including local emergency department response. It is worth noting that California is facing an unprecedented behavioral health workforce shortage, which has made expansion of MRT challenging despite its steadfast prioritization by HHSA.*

*The Director also incorporates the above responses to Finding 1, 4, and 5.*

***The Board of Supervisors partly agrees with the director.***

**Finding 8.** Data on mental health crises in Napa County made available to the Jury was fragmented and incomplete.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding.*** *Data collection has been hindered with our prior electronic health record that was utilized by HHSA for the past 14 years as the platform for documenting and billing behavioral health services. After issuing a Request for Proposals in 2022, selecting a new vendor, engaging in contract negotiations, and embarking upon an implementation plan, as of July 1, 2023, HHSA transitioned to a new electronic health record called “Credible.” HHSA, in collaboration with a contracted provider, is prioritizing data collection, evaluation, and reporting requirements. Our goal is to align our internal and external data collection processes and prioritize the use of data in our decision-making focusing on system efficacy.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the director.***

**Finding 9.** The Crestwood contract is not an accurate representation of the duties being performed, and the performance outcome metrics don't align with the reporting required by the funding grant.

***The Director of Health and Human Services Agency partially agrees with this finding.*** *HHSA proactively monitors contract providers to ensure performance metrics and reporting requirements are met. Contracts for the provision of mental health services are reviewed annually and, where appropriate, revisions are made with a goal of continuous quality improvement and oversight through the provision of data. For context, the CSU which opened in 2017, was originally operationalized in part from funding through a grant secured by the California Health Facilities Financing Authority (CHFFA). A requirement of that grant funding includes ongoing annual reporting by HHSA, including providing data on performance, demographics, and community impacts. The reporting requirements are contractual obligations and our contracted provider, Crestwood Behavioral Health, provides our Behavioral Health Division with quarterly and annual data reports. In addition, our CSU works collaboratively with our community providers and shares summary demographic and other data regarding discharges in the previously referenced provider meetings to help ensure accountability and transparency in patient flow.*

*Finally, the recently approved Fiscal Year 2023-2024 contract with our CSU provider, Crestwood Behavioral Health, reflects a better-defined scope of work, adjustments to performance metrics, and formalizes additional data collection and reporting. HHSA’s Behavioral Health Division will continue to actively perform contract monitoring and*

collaborate on data needs.

***The Board of Supervisors partly agrees with the director.***

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1.** By December 1, 2023, HHS quantified the needed additional mental health crisis beds to meet the County’s mental health crisis needs and implemented a plan to secure them.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this recommendation.*** In fact, this number has already been quantified as part of the previously explained CSU expansion project that HHSA initiated in late 2021 and early 2022. The data evaluation showed that with an additional 2 adult beds and 2 children’s beds the County would meet the increased need. The evaluation process included analyzing past and current CSU diversion data, population demographics, current CSU census demands, the extent to which this level of care is made available through local hospitals, and psychiatric hospitalization placement utilization. As explained in prior sections of this response, after an arduous application process that started in mid-2022, in June of this year, HHSA received notification of a conditional grant award from the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) for approximately \$3.3M to expand the CSU by creating a separate children’s stabilization unit within the CSU, resulting in a net increase of four additional crisis beds. It should be noted that when this expansion is completed, and the CSU has 12 beds, it will have the same number of beds as neighboring counties with over twice the population. This process was coupled with information sponsored in a report by DHCS titled, “Assessing the Continuum of Care for Behavioral Health Services in California: Data, Stakeholder Perspectives and Implications.” This information was critical to understanding identified needs and both county and state-wide system capacity.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

**Recommendation 2.** By December 1, 2023, HHS establish a capability for individuals in need of detox to be directly treated at a detox facility and not the CSU.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this recommendation.*** HHSA experienced an unexpected loss of our withdrawal management and residential substance use disorder provider in March 2023. In April 2023, HHSA expedited issuance of a Request for Proposals, resulting in the selection of a new vendor to operate the County’s Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System (DMC-ODS) withdrawal management and residential substance use disorder treatment provider and with the goal of having the contract in place by the end of August 2023. Concurrently, the selected provider has already submitted its request for licensure to DHCS which is a necessary step to legally operate and open this treatment facility. The new provider will be working closely with HHSA’s Behavioral Health Division on workflows and pathways for entry directly into withdrawal management beds. In addition, HHSA has already identified and is exploring software that can assist in the creation of

*a live updated daily bed census for internal staff, contracted providers, and hospital partners to understand real-time bed capacity and direct bed admissions and warm hand-offs. It is critical that data collection and reporting be automated using software that provides our system with work collaboration tools to ensure efficiency, sustainability, and accuracy of real-time data.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

**Recommendation 3.** By December 1, 2023, HHS established a capability and policy such that individuals who are in a mental health crisis and medically stable only be treated at regional facilities where they can receive mental health treatment.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency disagrees with this recommendation because of its practical infeasibility.*** *Given the current state-wide bed shortage it is unrealistic and impossible for HHSA or any county to create a policy that “individuals who are in a mental health crisis and medically stable only be treated at regional facilities where they can receive mental health treatment.” The complexities associated with this request are many, including that HHSA cannot hold regional providers, including LPS designated facilities and State hospitals, accountable to receiving Napa County individuals for treatment on demand, as those facilities operate and are governed by their own rules and policies within their own agency, business, and/or hospital system. That said, as previously stated throughout this response, HHSA has been working diligently to increase capacity at the CSU and is in receipt of a conditional Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Project (BHCIP) grant award of \$3.3M to expand the existing CSU to create a separated children's treatment milieu that will provide care for up to four children. The two beds currently dedicated to children in the CSU will be transitioned to adult beds, for a new total of 12 beds.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

**Recommendation 4.** By October 1, 2023, HHS took leadership to coordinate all regional resources to provide a more comprehensive and integrated capability for treating individuals in a mental health crisis. Providers minimally to be included are Providence Queen of the Valley Medical Center, Adventist Saint Helena Hospital/Adventist Health Vallejo Center for Behavioral Health, CSU, law enforcement, and California State Hospital - Napa.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this recommendation and, notably, HHSA, through its Behavioral Health Division, already facilitates and coordinates a quarterly collaborative partner meeting including all the named providers except for Napa State Hospital. This meeting has been in existence for many years and includes the HHSA Director and Deputy Director of HHSA-Behavioral Health. With respect to Napa State Hospital, like most of the five operating Department of State Hospitals in California, they do not operate with capacity for the admission pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 5150. The beds at Napa State Hospital are for patients mandated for treatment in civil or criminal trials, having committed crimes because of their mental illness. According to the Department of State Hospitals, Napa State Hospital primarily treats clients in***

*the following categories: Lanterman-Petris-Short conservatorship, Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity, Incompetent to Stand Trial and Offender with a Mental Health Disorder. Given the specialization and specific treatment population at Napa State Hospital and the fact that they are not placement options for individuals on an involuntary hold pursuant to WIC section 5150, they are not viable participants in a meeting focused on local mental health crisis services and needs. In Summer 2023 this meeting will expand to include the new DMC-ODS withdrawal management and residential treatment contracted provider and by Winter 2023/2024 it will expand again to include the afterhours/weekend Mobile Response Team contracted provider.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

**Recommendation 5.** By October 1, 2023, HHS designate one or more appropriate Providence professionals with the authority to lift a 5150 hold at the Queen of the Valley Medical Center.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency disagrees with this recommendation.*** *MRT staff are already available to respond to our local emergency department during normal business hours to evaluate and lift a 5150 hold, where clinically appropriate and indicated. As stated previously, as of the writing of this response with the provision of staffing in place, over the next several months, the next phase of planned MRT expansion can be implemented with the goal of MRT coverage hours extending to 10 pm and including weekends. The anticipated expansion is targeted for the end of October 2023.*

*Further, in June 2023, through issuance of a Request for Proposals, a provider was chosen to begin contract negotiations with HHSA's Behavioral Health Division for after hours and weekend Mobile Response Team. This contract will augment the hours of operation for the county-operated Mobile Response Team, creating 24/7 response, availability, and ease of access into the CSU and withdrawal management or residential substance use disorder beds. This further MRT expansion will be operational no later than December 31, 2023. With the establishment of this expanded programming, there will be increased capacity to write and lift psychiatric holds 24/7, including weekends and holidays, and to respond to the local emergency department.*

*Accordingly, HHSA intends to meet the interest set forth in this recommendation through its existing County staff and a provider with whom it maintains a contractual relationship. This will allow for the County to engage in contracted provider oversight, evaluate outcomes, and manage patient flow to the appropriate level of care across its many contracted providers, including crisis residential treatment, psychiatric health facilities, and IMDs, that are part of its network and system of care. Similarly, it will allow for the County to ensure appropriate clinical follow-up occurs when individuals are released from an involuntary hold, including ongoing client and community safety, and assessing for the appropriateness of outpatient services offered by the County.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***



**Recommendation 6.** HHS publish in their Annual Report metrics on mental health crises in Napa County, which minimally includes the number of all 5150s, individuals treated by the MRT and CSU, and individuals diverted and excluded from the CSU.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response:*** *This recommendation is not yet implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this recommendation. HHSA will, through its Behavioral Health Division, publish in an annual report metrics on mental health crisis response in Napa County. The collected data will be through county-operated and contracted programs, including the MRT and CSU.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

**Recommendation 7.** By December 1, 2023, HHS establish a plan for 24/7 staffing for either the Mobile Response Team or embedded resources within law enforcement.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response:*** *This recommendation is not yet implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this recommendation and a planned December 31 implementation date. Please see the above responses to Findings 1 and 5 and to Recommendation 5, which are incorporated by reference.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

**Recommendation 8.** By June 30, 2024, contract renewal date for the Crestwood Contract, HHS ensure the contract is an accurate reflection of duties and performance required.

***Director of Health and Human Services Agency Response:*** *This recommendation has been implemented. The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this recommendation. The Crestwood Behavioral Health contract has been amended effective as of this Fiscal Year 2023-2024. Please see the above response to Finding 9, which is incorporated by reference.*

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.***

## **CONCLUSION**

*The County would like to acknowledge the work of the Grand Jury. It is apparent they have an interest in the important and complex work of HHSA and share in our goals of making mental health crisis services available and accessible to the community.*

**Napa County  
Responses To The Grand Jury Report On  
Napa County Groundwater Management**

**INTRODUCTION**

The “Napa County Groundwater Management” Report of the 2022-2023 Napa County Grand Jury sets forth eight (8) findings and five (5) recommendations relating to the management of groundwater resources in Napa County. This Memorandum comprises the responses of the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services (PBES), the County Executive Officer and the Board of Supervisors.

We would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of this year’s Grand Jury. We appreciate the Grand Jury’s interest in and focus on groundwater management in Napa County. It is a highly complex topic, especially with the overarching goals of ensuring that water resources are managed to protect communities and the environment, ensuring water supply reliability, and preparing for future weather extremes in the face of climate change and uncertainty.

**FINDINGS**

**Finding 1. Napa County officials do not know the number, location, or capacity of groundwater wells and storage tanks in the County.**

*Response of the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: We disagree wholly with the finding about number, location, and capacity of wells. We disagree partially with the finding about number, location, and capacity of groundwater tanks.* Groundwater storage tanks 5,000 gallons or larger are required to be installed under a permit obtained from the Building Division. However, due to complexities of the permit tracking system, the number and location of tanks cannot be estimated with a reasonable degree of certainty. However, the number of such tanks is not indicative of the relative abundance or scarcity of groundwater in the Napa Valley Subbasin, and no conclusions or inferences about the health of the Subbasin should be drawn from any knowledge, be it anecdotal or evidentiary, of the existence of such tanks. Moreover, in some ways tanks can be beneficial in that they allow water to be stored and dispensed as needed instead of continuously pumping during peak usage periods, typically morning and evening for most households. Storage tanks also provide water in case of an emergency, pump failure, power outage, or when maintenance of the well or pump is necessary.

With respect to the number and location of wells, the County has permitted well construction including new, replacement, and the destruction of wells since late 1970 (under Ordinance 335). It is unknown exactly how many wells may have been installed prior to this date; however, in 2022 GIS staff from PBES (including the GIS Coordinator and two GIS technicians) embarked on a rigorous, 500+ hour exercise to verify the existence of all wells for which records exist, either within PBES or DWR. Staff reviewed over 10,000 well locations provided by the publicly

available DWR *Well Completion Reports* online GIS layer. Many of the wells from the DWR layer were not located accurately. Where feasible, staff reconciled well locations by situs address and/or assessor's parcel number. The remaining wells lacking accurate site information were located by other means: 1) finding locations based on hand-drawn sketches in the well completion report, 2) matching well ID numbers to department-issued permits, or 3) utilizing visual matching means using engineering drawings or aerial photos as reference. As a result, GIS

staff estimates that over 90% of these wells have been located with a minimum parcel-level accuracy.

The well verification exercise was ongoing at the time the Grand Jury was conducting their investigation and concluded only recently. County staff estimate the current number of wells as shown in the table below. It is important to recognize the number of wells does not correlate to the amount of water being pumped from the aquifer. The amount of water being pumped correlates to the land uses on the parcel (e.g., vineyard, dwelling, winery, etc.).

		Grand Total	Total	
Well Type	Well Use + Cat.		GSA	Non-GSA
Water Supply	Domestic - Domestic	4,978	1,601	3,377
	Irrigation - Ag + Landscape	2,573	1,131	1,442
	Public (Locally Regulated)*	184	81	103
	Other - Combined	339	128	211
	<b>TOTAL, Water Supply</b>	<b>8,075</b>	<b>2,942</b>	<b>5,133</b>
Monitoring		691	505	186
Other or Unknown		879	435	444
<b>TOTAL WELLS</b>		<b>9,645</b>	<b>3,882</b>	<b>5,763</b>
*These wells are GPS'd and tracked by PBES Environmental Health staff				

Most of the wells' locations have been verified with parcel-level accuracy and are stored in the County's GIS. During inspections of new public supply wells and destructions of existing public wells, staff use GPS to locate the well in the field and upload the data to the GIS system. Additionally, during well permit review, the well locations identified on permit submittal materials are shared with GIS staff for use to check the work in the GIS system and update as needed.

It should be noted that while the estimate of the number of wells presented here is believed to be accurate within the practical limits of time and staff resources, the exact number can never be absolutely ascertained. County staff will, on an ongoing basis, review any new or newly obtained records and revise the well count accordingly.

As to the question of well capacity, well drillers often estimate the flow of water following well installation and during or at the conclusion of well development. Sometimes this information is recorded on the Well Completion Report. However, these estimates are found to be generally unreliable and do not represent the ongoing, reliable groundwater flow that can be produced from the well after installation is complete. Moreover, these estimates (absent other information and analyses) would not provide useful information as to the health of the underlying aquifer even if they were accurate and consistently reported.

Additionally, a well yield test is required prior to the issuance of a building permit for a new dwelling or replacement dwelling. The water supply must provide a minimum yield prior to

issuance of a permit to build a new dwelling (Napa County Code 13.04.040). A yield test must be conducted for a new small public water system prior to approval of a permit in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Chapter 16, Waterworks Standards, Section 64451. These yield tests are made available to the County when required to satisfy building permit requirements. These tests provide an indication of the amount of groundwater that can be reliably pumped from a well at a given location to meet the water demand for the intended use. This test is not an indication of the status of the regional groundwater system.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Finding 2.** Despite the 2022-2023 storms, drought is still a concern in Napa County.

***Response of the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: We strongly agree with the finding.*** As presented in Agenda Item 11A to the Board of Supervisors on May 30, 2023, the Governor issued a Proclamation of a State of Emergency declaring drought in several counties, including Napa on May 10, 2021. On March 8, 2022, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed a State of Local Emergency due to drought conditions in Napa County, pursuant to Resolution No. 2022-29. Since October 1, 2022, Napa has received nearly 32 inches of rain, which exceeds the normal Napa Valley annual rainfall for the water year and has prompted community members to ask if the region is still in a drought and whether an emergency is still needed. While drought conditions have ended and the Board terminated the State of Local Emergency on May 30, 2023, ongoing groundwater management efforts are required in the Subbasin and necessary countywide.

The Governor’s office continues to emphasize that “while recent storms have helped ease drought impacts, regions and communities across the state continue to experience water supply shortages, especially communities that rely on groundwater supplies that have been severely depleted in recent years.” The Governor’s office also stated that “next winter’s hydrology is uncertain and the most efficient way to preserve the State’s improved surface water supplies is for Californians to continue their ongoing efforts to make conservation a way of life” (Executive Order N-5-23). On March 28, 2023, a presentation to the Napa County GSA on the Water Year 2022 Annual Report concluded with the recommendation – whether it’s drought or deluge – that “conservation be a Napa way of life.”

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Finding 3.** Napa County does not have an umbrella water agency to coordinate, oversee, and set policy for its 14 public and 20 private water districts.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: We agree with the finding that the County does not have an***

*umbrella water agency.* The idea was preliminarily considered in the Napa Countywide Water and Wastewater Municipal Service Review issued by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in 2020. Examination of the pros, cons, level of effort and funding required to effectuate such an outcome will require further analysis. The creation of any such umbrella water agency would require approval by the 34 separate public and private entities, their customers, and the LAFCO.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Finding 4.** Groundwater over pumping can lead to land subsidence, saltwater intrusion, decreased water quality, and depletion of aquifers.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: We agree with this finding.*** The goal of the GSP is to achieve sustainability by ensuring that there are no Undesirable Results in the Napa Valley Subbasin by 2042. To accomplish the sustainability goal, the GSP includes six Sustainability Indicators for the purpose of avoiding significant and unreasonable effects on groundwater conditions throughout the Subbasin, including:

1. Chronic groundwater level decline;
- 2. Reduction in groundwater storage;**
- 3. Depletion of interconnected surface water;**
4. Land subsidence;
5. Degraded water quality; and
6. Seawater intrusion

Sustainable Management Criteria (quantitative metrics) are defined for each Sustainability Indicator, including the Measurable Objective, Minimum Threshold, and Undesirable Result. The Minimum Threshold defines when the indicators are declining to a point where the GSA should evaluate the conditions and determine the necessary responses needed to maintain or achieve sustainability, including implementing Projects and Management Actions (PMAs) to avoid Undesirable Results. An Undesirable Result indicates conditions that need to be avoided to protect the long-term health of groundwater in the Subbasin (including interconnections with surface water) and achieve sustainability.

In Water Year (WY) 2022, Minimum Thresholds were exceeded, at least in part, for five of the six indicators (all except seawater intrusion) and Undesirable Results were brought about for the two indicators shown above in bold print: reduction in groundwater storage and depletion of interconnected surface water. There were substantial groundwater level declines in more than 20% of the Subbasin representative monitoring site wells. Two monitoring wells at stream monitoring sites indicated consecutive fall occurrences in effects on the level of interconnected surface water at those locations. Groundwater declines in monitoring wells indicate the potential for subsidence, although InSAR (Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar) land surface

displacement data indicate that the Minimum Threshold of 0.2 feet of subsidence has not occurred.

Although overall groundwater pumping in the Subbasin decreased compared with WY 2021, pumping in WY 2022 was still significant enough to result in an Undesirable Result for the Sustainability Indicator for reduction in groundwater storage. The 7-year average of annual groundwater extraction exceeded the estimated sustainable yield of 15,000 acre-feet/year for the Napa Valley Subbasin. In WY 2022, groundwater storage increased across most of the basin by 11,910 acre-feet. This contributed to some groundwater replenishment; however, the Subbasin was still significantly affected by persistent drought conditions during WYs 2020, 2021, and 2022; groundwater levels exceeded Minimum Thresholds, and Undesirable Results occurred for two Sustainability Indicators. The large amount of precipitation in the first five months of WY 2023 is likely to result in significantly more groundwater replenishment in WY 2023 compared to WY 2022.

WY 2022 saw a continuation of drought conditions throughout Napa County and the Napa Valley Subbasin. WY 2020 and 2021 registered as the driest consecutive years since at least the 1890s, as measured by the precipitation gauge at the State Hospital in the City of Napa. Despite the early rains in October and December 2021, minimal precipitation occurred in later months in WY 2022. The precipitation total in WY 2022 was 21.24 inches and registered as a normal (below average) year.

Total water use (surface water, groundwater, and recycled water) in the Napa Valley Subbasin in WY 2022 is estimated to have been approximately 40,302 acre feet (approximately 4,000 acre-feet less than WY 2021), including uses by agriculture, cities, small public water systems, individual well users, Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs), and other native vegetation. This is within the range of total annual water use documented since 1988, which has varied between approximately 38,000 and 47,000 acre-feet per year.

Groundwater extraction by wells totaled approximately 18,790 acre-feet in WY 2022, representing 47% of total water use. The highest level of pumping was in WY 2021 (22,840 acre-feet) and the second highest year of groundwater pumping was in WY 2020, when 19,610 acre-feet of groundwater was used. For the third consecutive year, groundwater pumping exceeded the estimated sustainable Subbasin yield of 15,000 acre-feet per year. With reduced rain, especially in Spring 2022, landowners appeared to increase their use of groundwater compared to years prior to 2020. Direct uptake of groundwater by GDEs and native vegetation accounted for another 16% (approximately 6,000 acre-feet) of total water use.

As described in the GSP, once Minimum Thresholds and/or Undesirable Results have been exceeded, the Napa County GSA should assess the causal factors resulting in the exceedance(s), including the extent to which the drought has contributed to these conditions. This analysis is critical to ensure careful consideration of potentially changed groundwater conditions and inform steps to implement Projects and Management Actions (PMAs). GSP Section 11 describes PMAs; this section also describes an adaptive management process. Ongoing data analysis to assess the status of each Sustainability Indicator is key to determining whether conditions are changing, and actions are warranted to curtail a trend in conditions such that they do not become significant and

unreasonable and ultimately an Undesirable Result. It is useful to establish “early warning” metrics, which can be a specified, pre-defined trigger or an analysis approach to quantify a declining status or trend. This approach is designed to initiate a PMA well before the occurrence of an Undesirable Result. GSP Table 11-3 summarizes the criteria for the six Sustainability Indicators that trigger prompt analysis of basin conditions and possible implementation of PMAs to address the potential or actual exceedance of Minimum Thresholds or to mitigate Undesirable Results that have already occurred or are imminent. For WY 2022, Minimum Threshold exceedances, Undesirable Results, and response actions are summarized in Annual Report Table ES-6.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Finding 5.** Education of vineyard and winery owners, vineyard managers, farmworkers, wine production employees, landscapers, and residential users, is critical for improved groundwater management.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: We strongly agree with this finding.*** Education and outreach to the stakeholder community has been a priority for many years and efforts are underway to broaden and strengthen our engagement with the community. For example, the Communication and Engagement Plan (CEP, November 2020) prepared during GSP development is currently being updated and will include findings obtained through approximately 10-15 stakeholder interviews conducted by Stantec (under a facilitation support services agreement between DWR and the County) with a myriad of different stakeholder groups during the months of July and August 2023. The County maintains an email listserv of approximately 500 individuals who receive periodic emails about meetings of the GSA and TAG as well as water-related news and information. The County also convened a Drought and Water Shortage Task Force in 2021 in response to Senate Bill (SB) 552 and is developing a mitigation plan (“Drought Response Plan”) to address measures to assist owners of domestic wells in the event those wells go dry as a result of declining water levels.

In addition, the County is developing two (2) workplans whose intended audience is vineyard and winery owners, vineyard managers, farmworkers, vineyard and winery industry associations, the Farm Bureau, and owners of individual domestic wells. These workplans include: 1) Napa County Water Conservation Workplan: A Guide for Vineyards, Wineries and Other Sectors, and 2) Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan. Representatives of industry associations, the Farm Bureau and the public regularly participate in GSA and TAG meetings and County staff and consultants have participated in educational seminars conducted by Napa Valley Grape growers and Napa Green, fostering multi-directional communication and study.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***



**Finding 6.** Government, wine industry, and environmental groups do not consistently collaborate on groundwater management issues.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer. We disagree with this finding.*** As described in response to Finding 5, communication among these groups has been an ongoing theme and regular occurrence for many years. The County’s goal, as stated in the GSP, is to bring the Napa Valley Subbasin into a condition of “sustainability” as soon as possible and by 2042 at the latest (to be SGMA-compliant). We believe this is a goal shared by our partners in local environmental groups and the wine/vineyard industry who have regularly expressed their commitment to responsibly stewarding the land and water resources. GSP implementation has involved coordination and collaboration in many different forms; we have provided some examples below. As described in Finding 5, efforts are underway to increase communication and engagement, including productive collaboration, as described below:

- Outreach to vineyard and winery organizations seeking their input during the development of the outline for the Napa County Water Conservation Workplan;
- Meetings with the Napa County Farm Bureau, Winegrowers of Napa County, and others regarding GSP implementation activities and to address questions and receive input;
- Provided draft outline for Interconnected Surface Water and GDEs Workplan to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and NOAA to receive input on Workplan content;
- Collaboration with other Napa County governmental entities on the Drought Contingency Plan and response to SB 552, including assembling the Drought and Water Shortage Task Force;
- Coordination with Napa County Resource Conservation District (Napa County RCD) on development of a brochure that is being distributed to growers to encourage their participation in and volunteered contribution of land-based remote sensing data to help refine Subbasin water use estimates;
- Meetings with Sonoma Water to share concepts and information related to assessment of surface water and groundwater interconnectivity and refinement of Sustainable Management Criteria;
- Participation in a regional assemblage of Subbasins in Sonoma County, Lake County, Ukiah, Mendocino, Solano, and Yolo County areas to share concepts, ideas, information, and potential outreach strategies related to SGMA and GSP implementation;
- Coordination with other entities on grant funding pursuits, including GSP implementation, entities included but were not limited to Napa County RCD, University of California at Berkeley, University of California at Davis; letters of support requested and received from Senator Bill Dodd, CDFW, and NOAA;
- Coordination and initial meetings with researchers and others involved in the OpenET platform to examine approaches for refining water use estimates;
- Coordination with DWR regarding the establishment of a new CIMIS station in Napa County, including conversations with entities where the station might be sited; and
- Outreach to and collaboration with numerous entities including City of St. Helena, Town of Yountville and the Napa County Farm Labor Centers about participation in the GSP monitoring program, especially groundwater quality monitoring;

- Meeting with Sierra Club members during GSP development regarding Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs)
- Meeting with tribal representatives of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation regarding GSP development
- Meeting with ICARE (Institute for Conservation Advocacy Research and Education) and DWR regarding Airborne Electromagnetic Surveys (AEM)
- Meeting with SF Water Board, NOAA, CDFW and ICARE representatives regarding low flows in Napa River during drought

County staff firmly believe that collaboration among these groups is critical to our success and will endeavor to foster a collaborative spirit in all matters related to groundwater management.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Finding 7.** The County permitting process is inconsistent, inefficient, and confusing to applicants seeking groundwater well permits.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer. We disagree with this finding.*** Prior to March 2022, the County's permitting process was streamlined and efficient. Permits were issued in a timely fashion and the public was very familiar with County procedures. With the promulgation of the Governor's Executive Order (EO) N-7-22 in March 2022, as well as recent court decisions, the permitting procedures of every county in the State had to be re-considered, and in some cases (such as Napa County), completely re-designed. In consultation with legal counsel and in recognition of the multiple priorities of the EO, alignment and consistency with GSP requirements, CEQA, public trust and intensifying drought, the County developed and adopted interim procedures for reviewing and issuing well permits in June 2022. Although the Governor, through a subsequent EO N-5-23, rolled back some of the drought emergency provisions in late March 2023, due to current water conditions, the Governor's Emergency Order remains in place and the remaining criteria for the County's action remain. The reduced water use criterion currently in effect (0.3 acre feet per acre for new wells in the Subbasin) may be adjusted up or down in the future, as the County's Groundwater Ordinance and updates to the WAA are considered, the three groundwater management workplans underway are completed, and pending information from ongoing monitoring and analysis of the sustainable management criteria becomes available. The new procedures significantly increased the level of technical review and expertise required, both on the part of the applicant and staff, which likely resulted in some inconsistencies and confusion as staff and well drillers adapted to the new requirements. As with any new requirement or procedure, there can be a temporary lack of human and financial resources necessary to assimilate the range of legal considerations, establish performance metrics, and conduct outreach and trainings, etc. The new well permitting process has been functioning and running well, but this may not have been the case at the time the Grand Jury's investigation was conducted.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Finding 8.** The GSA has only just begun to address groundwater issues via the GSP. However, most public and private groups and agencies feel the plan needs to be implemented as soon as possible.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer. We strongly agree with the finding that the GSP needs to be implemented as soon as possible. We disagree with any characterization that GSP implementation has not already begun.*** In fact, County staff contend implementation began immediately upon GSP adoption in January 2022.

An early and significant GSP implementation action occurred in June 2022. During the June 7, 2022, Board of Supervisors meeting, the Director of PBES explained that while the Governor’s EO N-7-22 (issued on March 28, 2022) catalyzed the need for changes to the County’s well permitting procedures, the EO was by no means the only factor contributing to that need. Other factors included: recent court decisions including public trust considerations, the County’s own drought emergency and significantly, the GSP itself. The Director noted that PBES needs to be “*very nimble and very responsive as conditions change both for the environment and the regulatory area*” and recommended that the County revise its well permitting procedures along with a concomitant change to the water use criterion from 1 acre-feet /acre to 0.3 acre-feet /acre.

On June 7, 2022, the Board of Supervisors unanimously accepted the Director’s recommendation to revise groundwater well permitting procedures, including the reduced water use criterion and reinforced considerations of mutual well interference and interconnected surface water and groundwater, where the latter considerations were already included in the 2015 Water Availability Analysis (WAA).

The new water use criterion of 0.3 acre-feet /acre for land inside the Subbasin was derived by dividing the estimated sustainable yield of 15,000 AFY by the total Subbasin area of 45,900 acres. The determination of sustainable yield was made during GSP development. In short, the Governor’s EO was a catalyst for procedural revisions necessary to satisfy multiple needs and requirements. These procedural changes were made while revisions to the County’s Groundwater Ordinance and the WAA can be made to incorporate those factors. As of January 2023, Napa County PBES requires new and replacement well permit applications throughout the County to meet new regulatory requirements. The process of updating the WAA and ordinances has begun as of July 2022.

Additional examples of GSP implementation actions are below and can also be found in Finding 6.

The follow GSP implementation activities have been completed:

- ✓ GSP PMA Project #1 - Stormwater Resource Plan (May 2023) has been completed.
- ✓ The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) was formed and appointed – Eleven (11) meetings have been held since the first meeting in August 2022 and will continue.

- ✓ Four dual-completion groundwater monitoring wells were installed in Spring 2023 (equaling 8 new wells in total) for the purpose of enhancing understanding of interconnected surface water and groundwater at four sites around the Napa Valley Subbasin (i.e., Bale Lane, Rutherford Road, Petra Drive and Jefferson Street).
- ✓ Three or more potential (additional) monitoring sites are being evaluated for the purpose of installing more wells to advance understanding of groundwater-surface water interactions.
- ✓ Ongoing twice yearly (October and April) monitoring of approximately 115 public and private wells and dedicated monitoring wells in the County’s monitoring network (some monitoring wells are monitored monthly, and 18 dedicated monitoring wells are (or will soon be for the new wells) monitored continuously (two-hour interval).

GSP implementation activities underway include efforts related to the following Projects and Management Actions (PMAs):

1. GSP PMA/Project #1 Managed Aquifer Recharge, through development of the Stormwater Resource Plan and assessment of Subbasin areas that have physical characteristics suitable for potential recharge. Additional evaluation of potential recharge areas will involve consideration of other factors.
2. GSP PMA/Project #2 Expansion of Recycled Water Use.
3. GSP PMA/Management Action #1, the Napa County Water Conservation Workplan: A Guide for Vineyards, Wineries and Other Sectors, is under development with numerous public meetings to receive input from the TAG and stakeholders.
4. GSP PMA/Management Action #2, the Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan is under development with numerous public meetings to receive input from the TAG and stakeholders.
5. Interconnected Surface Water and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) Workplan is under development with numerous public meetings to receive input from the TAG and stakeholders.
6. GSP PMA/Management Action #3, revisions to the County’s Groundwater Ordinance and 2015 Water Availability Analysis. Modifications to the WAA process and water use allocations were initiated in July 2022 in response to EO N-7-22. Further modifications and revisions to the Groundwater Ordinance are in development.
7. Public outreach and community engagement.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1.** By December 31, 2023, the Board of Supervisors will fill current gaps in groundwater usage data by expanding groundwater monitoring in key locations and initiate and enforce procedures to enhance data collection from agricultural and residential users.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: The recommendation has been implemented.*** Four dual-completion monitoring wells were installed in the Spring of 2023, but opportunities for expansion will be an ongoing effort (see discussion in Background and also Finding 8). Groundwater level monitoring does not by itself provide accurate information on groundwater usage. As noted in Finding 6, many efforts are underway to develop refined information on groundwater use. The recommendation to initiate and enforce procedures to enhance data collection from groundwater users has been initiated but will take significant time to fully implement. Staff will continue to apprise the public about the progress of this recommendation.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Recommendation 2.** By June 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors in conjunction with all 14 public and 20 private water districts consider creating a single County-wide agency to oversee groundwater management.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: The recommendation requires further analysis.*** The County cannot unilaterally require that other local governments and private districts consider an action, much less within the specified timeframe. As several of the entities rely on water from the North Bay Aqueduct, it also involves state agencies. This is a very complex issue that affects the majority of all water users within Napa County. Examination of the pros, cons, level of effort and funding required to effectuate such an outcome will require further analysis.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Recommendation 3.** By December 31, 2023, the Board of Supervisors will create and implement a plan to increase awareness of groundwater preservation strategies through the education of winery and vineyard owners and managers, farmworkers, landscapers, and residential users.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: The recommendation has been implemented.*** As described in the response to Finding 6, the GSA has undertaken numerous efforts to increase public education, outreach, and awareness of water conservation. The GSA is also in the process of developing the Napa County Water Conservation Workplan: A Guide for Vineyards, Wineries, and Other Sectors, as well as the Groundwater Pumping Reduction Workplan, to be completed by the end of 2023. See also Findings 5 and 8.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Recommendation 4.** By June 30, 2024, the Napa County Planning Department will enable more effective communication with applicants during the permitting process.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: The recommendation has been implemented.*** In addition, opportunities for continued improvement exist and will continue to be explored. The applicants submitting well permits are licensed well drilling contractors as required by the California Well Standards and Napa County Code. During review of well permits over the last year, Environmental Health staff have communicated more closely with parcel owners than in previous years, but correspondence is primarily with the well drilling contractors submitting the application.

During the implementation of the changes triggered by the Governor’s EO N-7-22 in March 2022 (and other factors noted in Finding 7) and then following the Board of Supervisors acceptance of procedural changes in June 2022, conversations with the well drilling contractors working in Napa County occurred over the phone and during one-on-one meetings to discuss the overall requirements and project-specific requirements in particular. As new information was published, electronic mail was sent to well drilling contractors with handouts and information to help them understand the process.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***

**Recommendation 5.** By June 30, 2024, the Napa PBES research and communicate to the GSA the number of new or upgraded wells, their output, and the number of storage tanks.

***Response of Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer: The recommendation has been partially implemented.*** As described in response to Finding 1, PBES staff only just completed an exhaustive effort to confirm the existence of and map the locations of all wells in the County (to the extent historical state and county records were available) and created a GIS layer with the locations identified. County staff will, on an ongoing basis, review any new or newly obtained records and revise the well count accordingly. The recommendation to report the number of storage tanks is not warranted or reasonable for the reasons provided in response to Finding 1.

***The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services and County Executive Officer.***