

City of Palo Alto
Office of the Mayor and City Council

August 25, 2015

FILED

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DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY BRITNEY HUELBIG DEPUTY

The Honorable Rise Jones Pichon
Presiding Judge
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Subject: Response to Final Grand Jury Report entitled "A Slow Moving Emergency – Sea Level Rise"

Dear Judge Pichon:

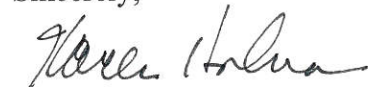
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Santa Clara County Grand Jury Report entitled "A Slow Moving Emergency – Sea Level Rise." The City of Palo Alto agrees that climate change and sea level rise are a serious issue and thank the Grand Jury for their report and raising awareness on this important issue.

This letter was prepared based on instructions from the California Penal Code; Section 933.05. As directed by the cover letter to the report dated June 17, 2015, the City of Palo Alto responded to Findings 1 and 3. The response was approved by the City Council on Monday, August 24, 2015.

The City of Palo Alto is already actively engaged in preparation for Sea Level Rise and is coordinating its efforts with neighboring jurisdictions. The City provided funding to the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority's SAFER Bay project, a regional feasibility analysis for a levee system that will include protection from Sea Level Rise. The City also coordinates with the City of Mountain View and the salt pond restoration project and is a partner in the Shoreline Study.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Sartor, Director of Public Works at (650) 329-2270 or mike.sartor@cityofpaloalto.org.

Sincerely,



Karen Holman
Mayor, City of Palo Alto

Attachment: Response to Grand Jury Report

P.O. Box 10250
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650.329.2477
650.328.3631 fax

City of Palo Alto's Response to the Civil Grand Jury Report on A Slow Rising Emergency – Sea Level Rise
(7/15/15 DRAFT)

Finding 1

The cities of Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale want to retain control of Sea Level Rise related efforts within their jurisdictions, but would like to have an organization assume responsibility for coordinating the plans and activities involved in addressing Sea Level Rise.

RESPONSE to Finding 1:

The City agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1

The Santa Clara Valley Water District should take a more proactive role in coordinating with cities that will be affected by Sea Level Rise, unifying, integrating and directing efforts in Santa Clara County.

RESPONSE to Recommendation 1:

Consistent with Finding 1, the City agrees that the Santa Clara Valley Water District should assume responsibility for coordinating plans, unifying and integrating. However, the City would like to see a collaborative multi-jurisdictional effort rather than the District "directing" efforts as stated in the recommendation. The City of Palo Alto already collaborates with neighboring jurisdictions and the Water District on the SAFER Bay project and Shoreline Study, two efforts focusing on enhancing the area's levee system. In addition, the City of Palo Alto also believes that a Bay Area-wide effort will be needed to coordinate a response to Sea Level Rise regionally.

Finding 2

The City of Milpitas does not have a Climate Action Plan which addresses Sea Level Rise.

RESPONSE to Finding 2:

NA

Recommendation 2

The City of Milpitas needs to develop a Climate Action Plan which addresses Sea Level Rise.

RESPONSE to Recommendation 2:

NA

Finding 3

The City of Palo Alto's 2014 "Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment" did not identify the effects of Sea Level Rise as one of the hazards.

RESPONSE to Finding 3:

The City does not agree with this finding. The City's "Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment" (THIRA) already addresses climate change and Sea Level Rise (SLR), see www.cityofpaloalto.org/thira:

p. 24: Section 5.3 Flood/Severe Winter Storm Hazard Summary

"Palo Alto, along with the entire Bay Area, is also subject to increasing flood risk as a result of rising sea levels, requiring city planners to collaborate with regional organizations and projects, such as the SCVWD, SFCJPA, the US Army Corps of Engineers' South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Study, and the State Coastal Conservancy Salt Pond Restoration Project, who have each initiated studies on impacts of sea level rise in the vicinity of Palo Alto."

p. 40: Section 6.1 Planning, Recommended Actions:

"Continue to collaborate with regional planning efforts to mitigate impacts of sea level rise/ climate change."

In addition, the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) addresses climate change and related issues, including Sea Level Rise:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/oes/PlansPublications/Pages/LHMP.aspx>. While the THIRA tends to address threats and hazards that are evolving (cyber terror) and/or to which shorter-term mitigation measures could be applied based on federal criteria, the LHMP focuses on longer-term planning issues.

Climate Change and associated Sea Level Rise will also be addressed in the City's updated Sustainability and Climate Action Plan and Comprehensive Plan (General Plan), which are currently under development and are scheduled to be completed in 2016.

The Bay Area Security Initiative (UASI) also has a number of regional catastrophic planning efforts that relate to these topics:

<http://www.bayareauasi.org/programs/rcpgp/working-groups>

Recommendation 3

The City of Palo Alto needs to identify Sea Level Rise as a hazard in its "Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment".

RESPONSE to Recommendation 3:

The City has implemented the recommendation. Furthermore, the THIRA and LHMP are both due for revision in 2016. SLR and related topics will continue to be given appropriate coverage in the revised versions of these documents.

Finding 4

The Santa Clara Valley Water District, which is by law tasked with the responsibility for flood control in Santa Clara County, has not coordinated Santa Clara County's efforts to address Sea Level Rise and all of the cities in Santa Clara County that abut the Bay.

RESPONSE to Finding 4:

NA

Recommendation 4

The Santa Clara Valley Water District should coordinate Santa Clara County's effort to address Sea Level Rise for all of the cities in Santa Clara County that abut the Bay.

RESPONSE to Recommendation 4:

The City agrees with this recommendation (see Finding and Recommendation 1)

Finding 5

According to the Santa Clara Valley Water District's website, since July 2012, it has held only one public meeting to share information about Sea Level Rise.

RESPONSE to Finding 5:

NA

Recommendation 5

The Santa Clara Valley Water District should provide more information for the residents of Santa Clara County about Sea Level Rise.

RESPONSE to Recommendation 5:

The City agrees with this recommendation and is willing to collaborate on such outreach.