



## TIBURON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

1679 TIBURON BOULEVARD, TIBURON, CALIFORNIA 94920  
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THOMAS HELLYER, FIRE CHIEF

August 12, 2026

Hon. Stephen P. Freccero  
Marin County Superior Court  
P.O. Box 4988  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Massey Bambara, Foreperson  
Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Dr., Rm. 275  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Subject: 2025–2026 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report: Better Service at a Lower Cost: Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin

Dear Judge Freccero and Foreperson Bambara,

I have been directed by the Board of Directors of the Tiburon Fire Protection District to respond to the Marin Civil Grand Jury Report titled, Better Service at a Lower Cost: Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin dated June 11, 2026. Attached please find our response.

The Tiburon Fire Protection District conducted this response in accordance with Penal Code section 933 (c) and was subjected to the notice, agenda, and open meeting requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas Hellyer  
Fire Chief

## **RESPONSES TO GRAND JURY REPORT**

**Report Title:** 2025–2026 Better Service at a Lower Cost: Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin

**Respondent/Agency Name:** Tiburon Fire Protection District

**Your Name:** Thomas Hellyer

**Title:** Fire Chief

### **FINDINGS:**

I (we) agree with the findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) disagree *partially* with the findings numbered: **F1-F7**

I (we) disagree *wholly* with the findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Recommendations numbered **R7, R9** have been implemented. (Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)

Recommendations numbered **R3, R8** require further analysis.

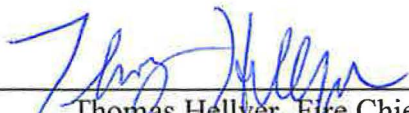
(Attached an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the grand jury report.)

Recommendations numbered **R1-R2, R4-R6** will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 8/13/2026

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Thomas Hellyer, Fire Chief

Number of pages attached: 3

## **FINDINGS –**

**F1.** The current fragmented structure of special districts results in unnecessary duplication of administrative services and operational inefficiencies.

**F1. Disagree partially.** Fire agencies operate on highly efficient, integrated mutual/automatic aid systems, joint training, and a central dispatch center to optimize emergency responses. Administrative services are functionally necessary, and scaling an organization structurally scales its administrative requirements.

**F2.** Some districts perform competently but lack sufficient scale to support long-term strategic investment in infrastructure, technology, staffing, and resilience.

**F2. Disagree partially.** While this may be true for some districts, it does not apply for the Tiburon Fire Protection District (“District” “TFPD”). The District’s board has always made fiscal responsibility and stewardship a top priority and the District believes it does have enough scale to achieve its long term strategic and capital goals as evidenced by TFPD’s ability to maintain a very strong balance sheet, and equipment and building reserves over a long period of time.

**F3.** Smaller districts are disproportionately vulnerable to staffing disruptions and catastrophic events that could rapidly impair service delivery.

**F3. Disagree partially.** The District believes this is true for some districts but disagrees for TFPD. TFPD prioritizes and focuses on operational resilience against staffing disruptions and consistently prepares for catastrophic events.

**F4.** Although consolidation is a popular idea among many elected board members, current governance structures, absence of board member term limits, and fear of loss of political influence discourage boards and administrators from initiating consolidation even when they recognize its benefits.

**F4. Disagree partially.** While political factors may discourage other districts, TFPD management and its Board actively explore shared-service opportunities with neighboring agencies to drive efficiencies and cost savings without compromising its core service quality.

**F5.** Service and pricing inequities currently exist across Marin and may increase if consolidation and functional collaboration do not accelerate.

**F5. Disagree partially.** General countywide inequities may exist, but the District and its board are committed to excellent customer service, emergency response, and managing budgetary needs.

**F6.** Performance metrics for essential, mission-specific services exist but they are not readily available and standardized, which prevents meaningful public comparison of district effectiveness and undermines accountability.

**F6. Disagree partially.** TFPD encourages, and is open to, standardized performance metrics for measurement and transparency and agrees that establishing operating and financial metrics and goals is important. The District has already done this as evidenced in its recent strategic planning exercise.

**F7.** Without proactive reform, future consolidations are more likely to occur through crisis-driven intervention, resulting in greater disruption and higher costs.

**F7. Disagree partially.** This may be a situation for other districts, but TFPD sees low risk of consolidation through crisis intervention. TFPD management and board are actively seeking positive reforms for cost and improved efficiency.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS –**

**R1.** By January 1, 2027, all special district boards should have conducted their first semi-annual consolidation exploration meeting with similar districts and will have established a regular meeting schedule moving forward.

**R1. Will not be implemented.** If other special districts form efforts to increase efficiencies, TFPD and the Board would support and participate in these efforts. However, we do not currently have any material efficiency problems so we cannot commit precious limited resources to meet the specific dates and timelines suggested.

**R2.** By October 1, 2026, the Board of Supervisors should direct the development of comprehensive, cost-efficient shared services (such as IT, legal, finance, HR/payroll, harmonized compensation/benefits package, insurance) for special districts to optimize expenses and secure a Marin-wide acceptable quality standard. First limited-service offerings are encouraged to be made available by January 1, 2027.

**R2. Will not be implemented.** While the District prefers to navigate service-sharing opportunities on a flexible schedule tailored to local operational needs rather than adhering to the proposed countywide timeline, should other special districts form efforts to increase efficiencies, TFPD would support and participate in these efforts.

**R3.** By January 31, 2027, with the assistance of the County, all districts should develop and publish on their website standardized, comparable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with regard to service pricing, finance, staffing, operations, and customer satisfaction.

**R3. Requires further analysis.** TFPD is interested in, and continually analyzes transparency and data driven metrics and strives to utilize industry-standard practices and data transparency.

**R4.** By January 31, 2027, each district should publicly update findings and progress regarding consolidation opportunities and share those findings with the Board of Supervisors and the public on a semi-annual basis.

**R4. Will not be implemented.** Current administrative workloads and staffing constraints make semi-annual public reporting on consolidation metrics operationally impractical.

**R5.** By January 31, 2027, the Board of Supervisors should oversee compliance with R1–R4 and update the public on the districts’ performance.

**R5. Will not be implemented.** The District cannot implement recommendations R1 through R4 due to the stated constraints.

**R6.** By October 1, 2026, in the process of implementing R1 and R2, districts should prioritize functional consolidation in operations, procurement, training, and administration as a precursor to formal consolidation.

**R6. Will not be implemented.** TFPD addresses shared service opportunities fluidly based on community impact rather than following an expedited, rigid timeline.

**R7.** By October 1, 2026, the district's board compensation, benefits, length of service, date of term end, and expenses related to board work should be clearly and prominently posted on each district's website and updated annually.

**R7. Implemented.** Board compensation structures are continuously reviewed, fully transparent, and readily accessible on the District's website.

**R8.** By June 1, 2027, special districts should adopt term limits of two consecutive four-year terms for all board members. Staggered implementation of term limits to avoid disruptions is encouraged.

**R8. Require further analysis.** The TFPD Board will formally engage in discussions to evaluate the structural advantages and disadvantages of adopting consecutive term limits; however, the District will determine its own timeline for this evaluation rather than adhering to the specific dates proposed in the report.

**R9.** By June 1, 2027, board compensation structures should be reviewed across districts, and considered for adjustment. All components of board compensation should be posted on their website (see best practice example in Appendix B).

**R9. Implemented.** See R7 response.