

STRAWBERRY RECREATION DISTRICT

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July 15, 2026

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

Dear Honorable Judge Freccero:

Please find attached the Strawberry Recreation District's response to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury 2025.2026 report, *Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin*, submitted pursuant to California Penal Code section 933.05.

This response was approved by the Strawberry Recreation District Board of Directors at its meeting on July 14, 2026.



Best Regards,
Nancy Shapiro
General Manager
Strawberry Recreation District

From: Strawberry Recreation District

To: Marin Civil Grand Jury

**Re: Response to 2025–2026 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report:
*Better Service at Lower Cost — Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin***

Date: July 14, 2026

Strawberry Recreation District Introductory Statement

Strawberry Recreation District respectfully submits that the findings and recommendations in this report are premised on governance models and operational characteristics that are primarily applicable to agencies providing essential utility, infrastructure, emergency response, and public safety services. SRD is a recreation district formed under California Government Code Section 5780 and provides discretionary recreational programs, facilities, memberships, and community services. Because SRD's mission, statutory authority, and operations differ fundamentally from the districts evaluated in the report, the findings are generally not applicable to SRD.

Unlike agencies that primarily rely on tax revenues to provide mandated public services, the District operates as a fee-supported recreation agency. Approximately 85 percent of the District's revenue is generated through user fees, memberships, program registrations, facility rentals, discretionary recreational services, and other fees. Property taxes make up between 12 – 15% of annual revenue. Through prudent fiscal management and active oversight of its operations and fee structure, the District has maintained positive operating results while remaining financially self-sustaining.

Additionally, the District's facilities and programs are available to all members of the public and are not limited to residents within the District's boundaries or tax rate area. Because the District's statutory authority, funding model, mission, and operational responsibilities differ fundamentally from those of the districts evaluated in the report, the findings and recommendations are generally not applicable to Strawberry Recreation District.

FINDINGS

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

Answer 1: SRD is a recreation district that provides discretionary recreational programs and facilities, not essential utility, infrastructure, or public safety services; therefore, this finding is not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: SRD is structured to support long-term resilience and has an operational structure to adjust to economic and environmental changes. SRD is not required to perform essential functions to the community.

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

Answer 1: SRD's facilities support recreational programs and activities rather than essential community services; therefore, this finding is not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: SRD infrastructure investment is done as an enhancement to district offerings and can be postponed if funds are not available. SRD infrastructure is not used to perform essential functions for the community.

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

Answer 1: While staffing disruptions may affect recreational programming, SRD does not provide essential services whose interruption would impact public health, safety, or utility operations. Therefore, this finding is not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: None of SRD programs/activities/memberships/events are mandatory or essential services, and do not align with the other agencies in this report.

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.

Answer 1: SRD is the only recreation district in Marin County formed under California Government Code Section 5780. Because its mission, services, and statutory authority differ substantially from the community service districts discussed in this report, consolidation opportunities are limited and this finding is not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: SRD is the only agency in Marin County formed under the same statute - California Government Code Section 5780. We are a Recreation District, not a Community Service District. Our operations do not align to effectively/efficiently consolidate with other agencies in this report.

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

Answer 1: SRD provides optional recreational programs, memberships, and facility access rather than essential public services. Accordingly, the service and pricing concerns identified in this finding are not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: None of SRD programs/activities/memberships/events are mandatory or essential services, and do not align with the other agencies in this report.

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.

Answer 1: SRD does not provide essential utility, infrastructure, or public safety services. Therefore, the performance metric concerns described in this finding are not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: Strawberry Recreation District does not supply essential services.

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

Answer 1: Because SRD's recreational services, facilities, and programs differ fundamentally from the essential services provided by the districts discussed in this report, the consolidation concerns identified in this finding are not applicable to SRD.

Answer 2: Strawberry Recreation District does not supply essential services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Answer: No other agency in Marin County is formed under the same statute. We are a Recreation District, not a Community Service District. We only have one charter – to provide recreational services, not community services. Strawberry Recreation District (SRD) is an independent special district organized pursuant to California Government Code Section 5780.

Strawberry Recreation District differs from essential service districts listed in this report because the recreational programs and facilities we provide are discretionary services, not mandated public services. Additionally, our facilities and programs are open to everyone, regardless of where they live. Unlike many local government agencies that primarily serve residents within their jurisdiction, Strawberry Recreation District welcomes participants from throughout the region, and a significant portion of our revenue is generated from user fees paid by both residents and non-residents.

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.

Answer: Strawberry Recreation District uses Marin County legal services, finance, and insurance. If County offers an HR or payroll system for SRD to utilize on an as needed basis, we will strongly consider using them.

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.

Answer: As a Park and Recreation District, we are not currently using KPIs. It is not standard practice for Park and Recreation Districts to post KPIs on their websites. Strawberry Recreation District is not a utility provider and would not be able to standardize KPIs with the other agencies in this report.

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.

Answer: Strawberry Recreation District uses Marin County legal services, finance, and insurance. If they ever offer an HR or payroll system for SRD to utilize, we will strongly consider using them.

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

Answer: SRD utilizes services available from Marin County. The Board of Supervisors is aware of this arrangement.

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.

Answer: SRD does not provide essential services and does not align with the other agencies in this report.

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.

Answer:

Peter Teese – December 2010

Sohrab Saghezchi – December 2022

Christian Michael – September 2024

Sarah Waterfield – December 2024

Doug Twillman – September 2025

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.

Answer: For further SRD Board discussion.

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).

Answer: SRD provides a nominal stipend (\$100 per Board Meeting, once per month – members may opt out). Current compensation structure is within range of park and recreation districts. SRD does not provide additional pay.

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: Strawberry Recreation District Response to Marin Civil Grand Jury Report:
2025.2026 Better Service at Lower Cost — Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin

Respondent/Agency Name: **Strawberry Recreation District**

Your Name: **Nancy Shapiro** Title: **General Manager**

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: **disagrees wholly with Findings F1 through F7**

evaluated in the report. The District's existing governance practices, financial management, and operational policies already provide appropriate accountability, transparency, and effective oversight.

Explanation R8: The Board of Directors will conduct a comprehensive review of the recommendation regarding Board term limits. The analysis will include consideration of the District's governance structure, statutory authority, operational needs, succession planning, institutional knowledge, board continuity, recruitment of qualified candidates, and potential impacts on effective governance. The Board will discuss the recommendation at a public meeting and determine whether any action is warranted. This review will be completed within six months of the publication of the Civil Grand Jury Report.

- Findings and Recommendations numbered F1 through F7, R1 through R7, R9_will not be implemented because they are not applicable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Statement/Explanation: The Board carefully considered each recommendation and concluded that implementation is not warranted because the recommendations are based on assumptions and governance models that are not applicable to the Strawberry Recreation District. The District is a fee-supported recreation district that provides discretionary services and operates under a business model that differs significantly from agencies providing essential public services. The District's existing governance practices, financial management, and operational policies already support accountability, transparency, and sound stewardship of public resources while allowing the flexibility necessary to effectively manage a self-sustaining recreation district.

Board Approved Date: July 14, 2026

Date: July 15, 2026

Signed:

Name: Nancy Shapiro

Title: General Manager

Number of pages attached: 7