

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

September 11, 2026

Derek Johnson
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Honorable Stephen Freccero
Presiding Judge
Marin County Superior Court
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San Rafael, CA 94903

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Dear Judge Freccero,

The Marin County Board of Supervisors' response to the FY 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Report "Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin" (June 11, 2026) is attached. The report was delivered to the Board of Supervisors and responds to all the requests made under law and requested by the Grand Jury.

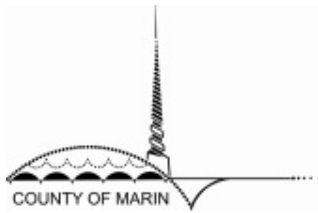
As always, thank you to the Court for overseeing this important part of local government and democracy. Please reach out if we can be of service to either the Civil Grand Jury or the Court.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek Johnson
Marin County Executive

ENC:

Marin County Board of Supervisors Response to Civil Grand Jury Report "Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin" (June 11, 2026)



RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT TITLE: Better Service at Lower Cost – Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin
REPORT DATE: June 11, 2026
RESPONSE BY: County of Marin Board of Supervisors

GRAND JURY FINDINGS

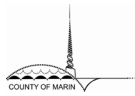
- We agree with the findings numbered: **F3, F5-F6**
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: **F1-F2, F4, F7**

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered **R1-9** will not be implemented because they are not warranted or reasonable.

Date: September 8, 2026

Signed: 
President, Board of Supervisors



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RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS

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

Response: Partially Disagree

The governance, organization, and administration of independent special districts are the responsibility of their respective governing boards and the [Marin Local Agency Formation Commission](#) (LAFCo). Per Marin LAFCo,

“Marin LAFCo is a subdivision of the State of California and currently responsible for directly administering the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (CKH). This legislation marked a comprehensive rewrite of pre-existing LAFCo law dating back to 1963 and marked by substantively expanding LAFCos’ planning responsibilities. Examples include now regularly preparing studies – titled municipal service reviews – to independently evaluate the availability, need, and performance of local governmental services relative to current and future community needs and ahead of updating local agencies’ spheres of influence every five years. CKH also expanded LAFCo’s regulatory powers to now oversee outside service extensions as well as the authority to directly initiate certain government reorganizations, such as forming, consolidating, or dissolving special districts.”

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that special districts vary substantially in their legal authority, governance, services, funding, and operational requirements. Although public agencies may voluntarily share services through authorized agreements (Gov. Code § 6502), no district-by-district or function-by-function analysis was conducted to establish that existing administrative functions are unnecessarily duplicative or inefficient. However, the Board also recognizes that opportunities may exist for increased collaboration and shared administrative services among local agencies.

To assist residents in identifying the jurisdiction of special districts, Marin County maintains a District Service Area Map on the County [homepage](#), searchable by address.

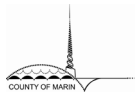
F2. Some districts perform competently but lack sufficient scale to support long-term strategic investment in infrastructure, technology, staffing, and resilience.

Response: Partially Disagree

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that the inherent size of some smaller agencies may face challenges associated with limited scale. Evaluating whether an individual district has sufficient capacity to provide long-term investment in infrastructure, technology, staffing and resilience is addressed through each district’s governance and LAFCo’s periodic Municipal Service Reviews.

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

Response: Agree



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The Board of Supervisors agrees that staffing and operational resilience are important considerations for all public agencies. However, the Board of Supervisors cannot independently verify this finding as it applies across all districts. Independent special districts are responsible for determining appropriate staffing levels, mutual aid arrangements, and emergency preparedness. LAFCo's Municipal Service Reviews are specifically intended to evaluate service capacity and governance issues affecting special districts.

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.

Response: Partially Disagree

The Board of Supervisors appoints two members to the Marin LAFCo Commission alongside two members of local Marin County City Councils, two members from Special Districts, and one public member. The Board, through members of the LAFCo Commission, support efforts of the agency to pursue consolidation when deemed appropriate. However, the Board of Supervisors cannot evaluate the motivations or decision-making of independently elected special district boards and therefore cannot conclude that the identified governance factors broadly discourage consolidation.

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

Response: Agree

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that rates and service levels vary among independent special districts. Those differences reflect varying infrastructure needs, financing mechanisms, service obligations, and locally adopted policies established by each district's governing board. The Board of Supervisors also notes that regulation of those rates or service standards is not under the Board's jurisdiction.

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.

Response: Agree

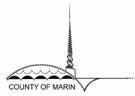
The Board of Supervisors agrees that standardized performance metrics are not available for all special districts in Marin County.

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

Response: Partially Disagree

California law establishes a process through Marin LAFCo for evaluating reorganizations and consolidations when locally supported and determined to be appropriate. The Board of Supervisors supports LAFCo's role and likewise acknowledges that strategic planning can benefit special districts' potential consolidation efforts.

For example, the County of Marin expressed support for the potential annexation of the San Quentin Village Sewer Maintenance District (SQVSM) into the Ross Valley Sanitary District



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(RVSD) due to the RVSD’s status as a larger, well-established sanitary district with in-house expertise in system operations, regulatory compliance, emergency response and planning long-term costs and needs.

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends the following:

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors cannot implement this recommendation because it cannot direct independent special district boards to conduct consolidation meetings. Decisions regarding collaboration among districts are made by the districts themselves, and any formal consolidation process is initiated and reviewed pursuant to LAFCo's statutory authority. The Board of Supervisors directs the County Executive to provide assistance to special district boards, if requested, to facilitate semi-annual consolidation meetings.

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.

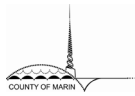
This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because it is not reasonable in the time frame recommended. The Board of Supervisors acknowledges that the County already provides shared services to several special districts and directs the County Executive to conduct outreach to all special districts in Marin by October 1, 2026, to gauge interest in the above-mentioned services to initiate additional shared service agreements. For example, the Alto Sanitary District utilizes Marin County Department of Finance treasury and banking services and Marin County Counsel for legal services, and the Tamalpais Community Services District utilizes County of Marin employee health plans.

However, determining whether any shared services would be feasible and cost-effective would require substantial district-specific analysis, participation by interested districts, and evaluation of the legal, operational, staffing, fiscal, and liability impacts to the County.

Any shared service offerings must comply with the existing legal framework, including:

- **Government Code § 25265:** authorizes the County to contract with special districts to provide accounting, payment processing, and related fiscal services.
- **Government Code § 27013:** authorizes the County to recover costs from special districts to manage and invest public funds.



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- **Government Code § 23008:** authorizes counties to provide equipment, perform work, or furnish goods to cities, districts, or other municipal corporations within the county on a cost-reimbursement basis

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors supports transparency and meaningful reporting of Key Performance Indicators by special districts. For example, to achieve these goals for the County of Marin, the County has undertaken a series of other transformational efforts across the organization to establish the [County Budget and Workplan](#) to strengthen cross-departmental coordination, establish clear outcomes and ownership, and more directly align with the Board’s highest priorities. The Board of Supervisors directs the County Executive to provide assistance to special district boards or LAFCo, if requested, to develop and publish Key Performance Indicators. However, the Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because it cannot require independent special districts to adopt standardized Key Performance Indicators or prescribe the information published on district websites.

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.

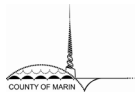
This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because it cannot require independent special districts to report publicly on consolidation activities or submit progress reports to the Board. Such reporting decisions remain within the authority of each district, and formal consolidation activities proceed through LAFCo’s established statutory process. However, the Board continues to monitor efforts to consolidate local special districts that improves service efficiency and effectiveness, and reduces costs for taxpayers, per the County’s [2026 Legislative Platform](#).

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

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because it does not possess statutory authority to oversee or enforce compliance by independent special districts with the Civil Grand Jury’s recommendations.



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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.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors encourages voluntary collaboration among local agencies where appropriate. However, it will not implement this recommendation because it cannot direct independent special districts to undertake functional consolidation or shared operational practices.

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.

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

The Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because it cannot require independent special districts to publish governance or compensation information beyond applicable statutory requirements. Website content and governance transparency are matters for each district’s governing board. The Board of Supervisors directs the County Executive to provide assistance to special district boards, if requested, to update their respective websites with information about board compensation, benefits, length of service, date of term end, and expenses related to board work. The County of Marin maintains and publicizes a [California 806 Form](#) that summarizes appointment compensation of the Board of Supervisors to external public agencies, as required by state law. Some special districts, such as the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitation District, publish comprehensive information regarding board compensation on their [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.

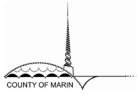
This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

This Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because the adoption of board member term limits is a governance decision reserved to each independent special district or, where authorized, the voters or the Legislature. Neither the Board of Supervisors nor LAFCo possesses authority to impose term limits on independent district boards.

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).

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable.

This Board of Supervisors will not implement this recommendation because compensation for members of independent special district governing boards is established pursuant to the statutes applicable to each district. The Board has no authority to review or modify those compensation structures, nor is that function assigned to LAFCo. The County of Marin



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