



# COUNTY of VENTURA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
**MICHAEL POWERS**  
County Executive Officer

**Mike Pettit**  
Assistant County Executive Officer

**Kaye Mand**  
County Chief Financial Officer

**Shawn Atin**  
Assistant County Executive Officer/  
Human Resources Director  
Labor Relations

September 14, 2021

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**Subject: Approval of Response to the 2020-2021 Ventura Grand Jury Report  
Entitled "Policing by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office" for Submittal  
to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.**

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that your Board consider and approve, with or without modification, the response to the 2020-2021 Ventura County Grand Jury Report, entitled "Policing by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office" (Exhibit 1), for submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with Penal Code section 933(c).

**Discussion:**

Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05 require that your Board comment on the Findings and Recommendations of the Civil Grand Jury pertaining to County Government under your authority.

The 2020-2021 Grand Jury issued a report dated April 30, 2020 entitled "Policing by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office" (Report). The Grand Jury Report requested responses from your Board and from the Ventura County Sheriff concerning the discretionary formation of a civilian board to provide for oversight of policing by the Sheriff as allowed by newly enacted California Assembly Bill 1185 (AB1185). The Grand Jury recommended in their report that the Ventura County Board of Supervisors consider creating a Sheriff oversight board with respect to Ventura County Sheriff operations as authorized by AB1185.

The proposed response from your Board was prepared by the County Executive Office (Exhibit 1) and presented for your Board's consideration at your July 27, 2021 meeting. At that meeting your Board and CEO requested that the Public Safety and Racial Equity

Advisory Group (PSREAG) consider the proposed response and that the item be continued for consideration at your next meeting.

On July 29, 2021 and August 26, 2021, the PSREAG met and considered the proposed response to the Grand Jury and discussed the contents of the Grand Jury report. The PSREAG has provided the attached letter (Exhibit 2) communicating their comments regarding the Grand Jury Report and their support for continuing their work as an advisory group, and that they will continue to assess the need for an oversight board as prescribed by Assembly Bill 1185 in an ongoing manner.

### **Recommendation**

The proposed response to the Grand Jury for your consideration identifies that your Board, at its November 10, 2020 meeting considered and adopted a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis and pledging to promote equity, inclusion and diversity in housing, employment, economic development, health care and public safety in the County of Ventura. In the Board letter for that November 2020 item, as well as in the resolution, your Board did consider establishing a community advisory committee to engage with the County's law and justice agencies including the Sheriff, DA and Probation Departments. Specifically, in the resolution, your Board made clear that it pledges to collaborate with the county's law and justice agencies and the community to establish an advisory group to help foster meaningful discussions and to identify public concerns related to policing policies and procedures with regard to matters such as misconduct, training and hiring.

The resolution was passed unanimously by your Board and since that time PSREAG was formed with the support of the County Executive Office, including the County Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Phin Xaypangna, who has facilitated planning meetings of the group. Early foundational work on the advisory group began with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Ventura County Chapter (NAACP), Black Lawyers of Ventura County and the membership that is now known as Santa Paula Latino Townhall. The PSREAG members currently consist of the Sheriff, city of Oxnard's Chief of Police, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Agency, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Ventura County Chapter (NAACP), Santa Paula Latino Townhall, Black Lawyers of Ventura County, Mexican American Bar Association, Ventura County Asian American Bar Association, Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Diversity Collective of Ventura County, Pacific Clinics, We Belong 805, and Conejo Valley Interfaith Association.

Working together, PSREAG has already defined its purpose as: "To provide a forum where public safety and community stakeholders collaborate to improve communications and understanding amongst the parties and the greater public and identify potential solutions to improving law enforcement policies and procedures and community

engagement. The PSREAG will provide valuable input on issues surrounding public safety, equity, and justice-oriented best practices to enhance policies, procedures, and community interactions, while increasing transparency and fostering a mutual understanding.”

AB1185 was approved by the Governor on September 30, 2020. AB1185 does not impose mandatory obligations on the County and its implementation is left to the discretion of the Board or a vote of County residents. Prior to AB1185 being enacted by the state, work was already underway in our County with community partners to address community concerns, collaborate on ideas for improving law enforcement policies and community engagement. The PSREAG purpose and goals to work together in a two-way communication link between public safety and community organizations that share an interest in advancing an equitable justice system and create a community forum by which information, education and ideas are encouraged and exchanged will help increase public understanding of public safety policies and procedures, as well as identify areas of concern and offer potential solutions for enhancements. This open and transparent work will enhance accountability and trust with the community with respect to policing by the Sheriff and across public safety in our county.

Given the work that had already occurred with the community to form the PSREAG and the existing relationships between the County, Public Safety, and community groups, our recommendation is to continue on this course.

The response pertaining to County government under your control will serve as your Board's response to the subject 2020-2021 Grand Jury Report to be filed as indicated in the recommended action along with any additional comments your Board may wish to make. If your Board elects to amend a response prepared on your behalf to the subject reports before you for approval, then CEO staff, at your direction, will make such changes or additions prior to submitting the response to the Presiding Judge.

The Sheriff, as an elected official, is required to submit a response directly to the Presiding Judge. The Sheriff's response is attached as Exhibit 4 and provided here only for informational purposes as your Board's approval is not required of the Sheriff's response. The Grand Jury Report is provided for reference as Exhibit 3.

(continued on next page)

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office and County Counsel. If you have any questions, please contact me at 654-2681 or Mike Pettit at 654-2864.



Mike Pettit  
Assistant County Executive Officer



Michael Powers  
County Executive Officer

- Exhibit 1 – County Board of Supervisors Response to Grand Jury Report on Policing by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office
- Exhibit 2 – Public Safety Racial Equity Advisory Group Comment Letter to the Board of Supervisors
- Exhibit 3 – Grand Jury Report - Policing by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office
- Exhibit 4 – Ventura County Sheriff Response to Grand Jury Report on Policing by the Ventura County Sheriff's Office