

**Response to 2020-2021 Ventura County Grand Jury Report Form
(Please See California Penal Code Section 933.05)**

Report Title: Cybersecurity of Water Providers in Ventura County

Report Date: May 11, 2022 (Delivered June 6, 2022)

Responding Entity: Ventura County Public Works Agency

FINDINGS

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered: F-01 and F-07
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered: F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-08, and F-09

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-01, R-02, R-03, R-04, R-05, and R-06 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 summary indicating the timeframe for implementation.)

- Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.

(Attach an explanation to include: scope and parameters of the analysis or study and timeframe/or the matter to be prepared/or discussion with the agency or department head. The timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the report.)

- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 6/24/22

Signed: 

Title: Director of Public Works

Number of pages attached: _____

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Report Date: May 11, 2022 (Delivered June 6, 2022)

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Findings

F-02, F-03, F-04, F-05, F-06, F-08, F-09. These findings make broad general statements of inconsistencies across water providers in Ventura County. These are not applicable to County of Ventura and the Public Works Agency, as explained in the below responses to the Grand Jury Recommendations.

Recommendations

R-01. The Grand Jury recommends that the investigated public water providers regularly assess their cybersecurity, addressing both IT and SCADA, consistent with EPA and CISA recommended best practices. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-05)

Response: The County utilizes the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to perform weekly external vulnerability testing. Results are reviewed and remediated based on report recommendations and upon an assessment of the risk. Penetration testing is performed at least annually by contracted vendors. Additionally, agencies have the capability to run ad-hoc vulnerability scans to further secure their environment. The County is currently working with agencies to incorporate credentialed scanning into their environment which would provide enhanced reporting and identification of vulnerabilities. Additionally, the SCADA system operated by the Public Works Agency Water and Sanitation Department utilizes the County's microwave backbone and VPN

R-02. The Grand Jury recommends that the investigated public water providers regularly share and exchange information regarding cybersecurity threats, attacks, protections and remedies, and provide training, using such forums as the AWAVC. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04, F-06, F-07)

Response: County agencies are subscribed to receive vulnerability alerts from the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC). This organization provides alerts and information related to threats and vulnerabilities which could impact the IT and SCADA environments within local government. The Public Works Agency is a paying member of the AWAVC and actively participates in sharing of information and best practices relevant to water providers operating in Ventura County.

R-03. The Grand Jury recommends that the investigated public water providers use free federal and state expert assistance to enhance cybersecurity. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-05, F-06, F-07, F-08)

Response: In coordination with CISA, the County is participating in multiple programs including Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, Remote Penetration Test, and Architecture Design Reviews, to name a few. We have made inquiries to add additional services such as the web scanning tools to enhance our functionality and security coverage.

R-04. The Grand Jury recommends that the investigated public water providers regularly conduct cybersecurity awareness training. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-04)

Response: The County provides biennial security awareness training for employees which provides fundamental concepts in cybersecurity, logical access, and physical security. In addition, users are provided additional training and coaching as part of remediation efforts during a phishing attack where employees click on a link. The County Chief Information Security Officer also provides period training sessions and Countywide distributions to provide employees with education affecting cybersecurity. At least annually, the County also performs simulated, social engineering attacks designed to reinforce cybersecurity concepts and assess the County's overall progress on stopping such attacks.

R-05. The Grand Jury recommends that the investigated public water providers address recovery from cybersecurity incidents in their business recovery plans. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-09)

Response: The County has established protocols for identifying and reporting cybersecurity incidences within the environment. Depending on the severity and scope of impact, the business continuity plan or disaster recovery plan may be executed as part of a declared disaster.

R-06. The Grand Jury recommends that each investigated public water provider establish a CISA-compliant internal protocol for reporting cyber incidents. (F-01, F-02, F-03, F-06)

Response: Based upon impact severity and scope, the County has defined reporting protocols during a cyber related incident to include communication with government authorities (e.g., CISA, FBI, DOJ, etc.), local law enforcement, regulatory bodies, insurance companies, County agencies, and the residents we serve.

Central Services
Joan Araujo, Director

Engineering Services
Christopher Cooper, Director

Roads & Transportation
Christopher Kurgan, Director

Water & Sanitation
Joseph Pope, Director

Watershed Protection
Glenn Shephard, Director

June 24, 2022

The Honorable Bruce A. Young
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93003

Subject: Response to Ventura County Grand Jury Report: *Cybersecurity of Water Providers in Ventura County*, May 11, 2022

Honorable Judge Young:

In accordance with State requirements, the responses from the Ventura County Public Works Agency to the 2020-2021 Ventura County Grand Jury report titled "Cybersecurity of Water Providers in Ventura County" is contained herewith.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 654-2073

Sincerely,



Jeff Pratt, P.E.
Director

Cc:
Assistant CEO Mike Pettit

Enclosures:
Grand Jury Report Form: Cybersecurity of Water Providers in Ventura County

