

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - CLUE

3



From: Pamela Flynt Tambo <pambotambo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 15, 2025 2:09 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Fwd: Submission for Item D-3 on December 16, 2025

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Please see email forwarded below.

thanks, Pam

Pam Flynt Tambo
805.451.4340
pambotambo@gmail.com

Now is not the time to despair, it is the time to engage.

-Heather Cox Richardson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Pamela Flynt Tambo <pambotambo@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 15, 2025 at 1:16 PM
Subject: Fwd: Submission for Item D-3 on December 16, 2025
To: <Clerk@santabarbaraca.gov>, Laura Capps <lcapps@countyofsb.org>, Joan Hartmann <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>, <Nelson@bos.countyofsb.org>, Steve Lavagnino <steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org>, Roy Lee <roylee@countyofsb.org>

An earlier version was sent with two attachments which were sent in error. The correct letter is with only the CLUE letterhead. I apologize for any confusion!

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aBFfyKFsxASzt-aoHAXziRx3lUS9x9ot/edit>

All the best,
Pam

Pam Flynt Tambo
805.451.4340
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-Heather Cox Richardson

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Pamela Flynt Tambo** <pambotambo@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Dec 15, 2025 at 12:45 PM
Subject: Submission for Item D-3 on December 16, 2025
To: Cc: Laura Capps <lcapps@countyofsb.org>, Joan Hartmann <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>, <Nelson@bos.countyofsb.org>, Steve Lavagnino <steve.lavagnino@countyofsb.org>, Roy Lee <roylee@countyofsb.org>, Larry Severance <laurenceseverance@gmail.com>, Clerk@santabarbaraca.gov <Clerk@santabarbaraca.gov>

Please see attached letter: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aBFfyKFsxASzt-aoHAXziRx3IUS9x9ot/edit>

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-Heather Cox Richardson



CLUE (Clergy & Laity United for Economic Justice) Santa Barbara

To: Chair and Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

From: CLUE Santa Barbara

Date: December 15, 2025

Subject: FY Budget Agenda Item – What Matters Most in the FY Budget Decision

The Board has now received the CCP Jail Data Analysis Report, which documents current and projected reductions in the jail population through specific, measurable strategies. That report compels a reassessment of the proposed 1.5-pod North Branch Jail (NBJ) expansion, particularly because only the costs of the larger expansion have been presented to date, without a full comparison to a 1.0 housing unit alternative.

We have concluded that Santa Barbara County can meet public safety needs, comply with constitutional and court-ordered standards, and treat justice-involved people humanely without building excess jail capacity. The County's FY budget should fund what works financially, what is lawful, and what reflects our County's values—not decades of debt and operating costs for unnecessary jail beds.

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION

We respectfully urge the Board to:

- Direct the CEO to provide a formal, side-by-side comparison of capital, debt service, and operating costs for a 1.5-housing-unit versus 1.0-housing-unit North Branch Jail expansion.
- Reassess jail capacity needs using documented jail Average Daily Population (ADP) reduction outcomes and projections.
- Analyze funding for CCP Jail Data Analysis Report recommendations that deliver measurable jail reduction and long-term fiscal savings.
- Require CCP monthly reports and Board quarterly reports on progress implementing jail-reduction recommendations, with measurable ADP outcomes.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Budget decisions reflect County values and define how public safety resources are used. County values at stake include:

- Humane and necessary jail capacity that protects public safety.
- Compliance with constitutional and court-ordered standards, including *Murray v. County of Santa Barbara*.
- Constitutionally required legal representation, including adequate Public Defender staffing and physical access to clients to reduce length of stay.
- Results-based, measurable community alternatives that reduce unnecessary incarceration.
- Fiscal responsibility, avoiding long-term costs for excess jail capacity.

KEY DATA FINDINGS

- 44 people (one-day snapshot) and up to 109 people (annualized) are jailed solely while waiting for treatment or housing beds (Release on Bed Availability). Expanding appropriate community resources would directly reduce jail population.
- READY program expansion can reduce jail ADP by an estimated 14–24 people.
- State reporting identifies a Public Defender staffing shortfall (approximately +6 attorneys and +3 investigators), which contributes directly to court delays and longer jail stays.
- CCP report data on cite-and-release shows overuse of booking. Our December 7 Board letter documents that Santa Barbara County’s arrest rate is approximately 32% higher than the statewide average, and that 33% of misdemeanor arrests are not charged by the District Attorney—indicating missed opportunities for cite-and-release and alternatives to incarceration.
- Implementing the recommended jail-reduction strategies could match or exceed the 128-bed capacity of the proposed half-pod expansion.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

COST COMPARISON: NORTH BRANCH JAIL EXPANSION OPTIONS

NBJ Expansion – Capital, Debt Service, and Operating Cost Comparison

Scenario	Capital Cost	Annual Cost	20-Year Impact
Approved Plan (384 beds)	\$165 million	\$8.5 million / year (debt service)	\$170 million (debt payments)
Reduced Plan (256 beds; -128 beds / 0.5 pod)	\$121 million (-\$44 million)	≈ \$5.25 million / year (debt service)	≈ \$105 million (debt payments)
Estimated Ongoing Operating Impact of Eliminating 0.5 Pod	—	≈ \$4.0 million / year savings	≈ \$80 million savings over 20 years

Debt Service Assumptions

- Based on County budget materials and the April 1, 2025 Board action approving a \$165 million North Branch Jail (NBJ) expansion.
- Estimated debt service: approximately \$8.5 million per year for 20 years, assuming a \$50 million cash contribution (Attachment B).
- Reduced-capacity scenario reflects a \$44 million lower construction cost from eliminating 128 beds (0.5 pod), with debt service scaled proportionally.
- Assumes compliance with Murray v. County of Santa Barbara and replacement of beds affected by Main Jail renovations, without building excess long-term capacity.

Operating Cost Savings – Basis

- Jail operating costs are driven primarily by required staffing levels, not by whether beds are full.
- County NBJ staffing analyses indicate the additional 0.5 pod (128 beds) would require approximately 18–20 additional custody staff (deputies, supervisors, and relief coverage).
- Using conservative fully loaded cost estimates (salary, benefits, overtime backfill, training, and equipment), this staffing would cost about \$3.2–\$5.0 million per year.
- A reasonable and defensible planning estimate is approximately \$4.0 million per year in ongoing operating savings from not building or staffing the additional 128 beds.

We estimate that approximately \$7 million or more per year reallocated from the budgeted 0.5 jail housing unit could fund the CCP jail-reduction recommendations and achieve sufficient jail reduction equivalent to at least 128 beds.

CONCLUSION

Budget decisions made now will lock in construction, debt service, and operating costs for decades. Before moving forward, the Board should determine whether public funds are better invested in additional jail beds or in proven strategies that safely reduce jail population while improving justice outcomes.

Sincerely,

Maureen Earls

CLUE Santa Barbara

Pam Flynt Tambo

Robert Ornstein, J.D.

Laura Pina