



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**


Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Behavioral Wellness
Department No.: 043
Agenda Date: May 12, 2026
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director: Antonette Navarro, LMFT, Director 
Department of Behavioral Wellness

Contact: Melissa Wilkins, MPH, CADC-II, CCPS, Division Chief, Alcohol and Drug
Programs, Department of Behavioral Wellness

SUBJECT: Resolution Recommending the Application of Zona Seca to the California Department
of Health Care Services for a License to Operate a Driving-Under-the-Influence
Program

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution recommending the application of Zona Seca to the California Department of Health Care Services for a license to operate a "Wet and Reckless" and "First Offender" driving-under-the-influence program in the City of Santa Maria, California; and
- b) Determine that the above-recommended action is not a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5), finding that the action is an administrative activity of the government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to request the Board of Supervisors to adopt a Resolution recommending the application of Zona Seca, a local vendor that the Department of Behavioral Wellness (BWell) has contracted with since 2000, to the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Behavioral Health Licensing and Certification Division, Driving-Under-The-Influence Section. The application is for a license to operate a 12-hour driving-under-the-influence (DUI) education program (Wet and Reckless) and First Offender DUI programs of three, six, and nine-month durations of alcohol and drug education and counseling in Santa Maria, California.

Discussion:

In August 2025, the Department of Behavioral Wellness (BWell) conducted an analysis of DUI services county-wide and found that there is an increased need for DUI program services in Santa Maria that the current DUI provider's site capacity cannot handle. In accordance with California Code of Regulations (CCR), Chapter 9, Section 9805, the assessment was based on the following objective measurable criteria:

- a) Increased population in the County as a whole or in specific regions;
- b) Increases in DUI convictions;
- c) The voluntary or involuntary de-licensure of an existing program; and
- d) An identified demographic segment or population of the county that is not served by the existing licensed programs.

According to the United States Census Bureau (2025), Northern Santa Barbara County, including Santa Maria and Orcutt, has experienced significant population growth, increasing by more than 30,000 residents over the past decade.

Concurrently, BWell identified a notable increase in both DUI arrests and alcohol-involved crashes in the City of Santa Maria. While other regions of the County have seen a decrease in DUI arrests and alcohol-involved crashes, the number of DUI arrests in Santa Maria increased from 431 in 2017 to 489 in 2022 (Office of Traffic and Safety, 2025). Alcohol-involved crashes increased by 61% during that same timeframe with 95 alcohol-involved crashes in 2022 according to the Office of Traffic and Safety.

BWell also identified an increase in individuals who speak languages other than English or Spanish. The percentage of individuals who speak languages other than English or Spanish has increased from 0.0% to 4.3% (United States Census Bureau, 2025), including a growing number of Mixteco-speaking individuals seeking DUI program services.

This unique increase in population, change in demographic, and rise in DUI-related issues justifies the need to expand DUI Program services to meet community needs, reduce the likelihood of repeat DUI offenses, and promote public safety. Using this data, BWell has determined that expanding services will not jeopardize the fiscal integrity of existing DUI programs. Therefore, on October 1, 2025, BWell released a DUI Request for Proposal (RFP) to identify a qualified provider to operate a new DUI program in Santa Maria. Bidders applied to the RFP issued by BWell to provide the following DUI Program services:

- a) **Wet and Reckless:** 12-hour DUI education program.
- b) **First Offenders DUI:**
 - Three-month;
 - Six-month; and
 - Nine-month programs
- c) **Multiple Offenders:** 18-month program.

On November 19, 2025, the BWell Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP) Administrators presented to the BWell Commission (BWC), the BWell DUI RFP process and obtained support from the Commission to provide a formal recommendation in accordance with Chapter 9 CCR, Section 9801.5. The BWC, in a unanimous vote, provided a recommendation to:

- a) Agree to support the RFP Evaluation Committee's selected bidder for recommendation for DUI licensure; and

- b) Identified two Commission Members to join the RFP Evaluation Committee process.

In December 2025, an Evaluation Committee panel consisting of community stakeholders and subject matter experts, in alignment with BWell Policy and Procedures #13.013, reviewed all proposals submitted. Per DHCS, the applicant must demonstrate that it possesses the adequate administrative, fiscal, and operational capabilities to operate a DUI program; the program is clean, safe, and free of alcohol or illicit drug use; and will adhere to all applicable statutes and regulations. Based on the application proposal received, the Evaluation Committee agreed to recommend Zona Seca for DUI licensure to fill the expanded need in Santa Maria for the Wet and Reckless and First Offenders DUI program services. No bidder was selected for the Multiple Offenders program.

On February 18, 2026, the BWC Members reviewed Zona Seca's DUI Program application as a follow-up to the DUI RFP process. The BWell ADP Administrator reviewed the BWell ADP DUI RFP process surrounding the choice of Zona Seca and invited BWC Members to provide feedback/comments regarding Zona Seca's DUI Program application.

The BWC reviewed the application of Zona Seca to operate a DUI program for Wet and Reckless and First Offender services in the City of Santa Maria, California; adopted its comments on the application; and approved a recommendation for DUI program licensure. The BWC also directed staff to forward its comments and recommendation to the County Board of Supervisors. The motion carried with 11 votes in favor, no abstentions, and one opposing vote.

BWell ADP Administrators determined the need for DUI program services and are requesting formal recommendation from the Board of Supervisors for Zona Seca to apply to the State for DUI licensure.

In accordance with Chapter 9 CCR, Section 9801.5, the Board of Supervisors shall include a statement affirming the need for a new DUI program in the County and confirming that the establishment of an additional DUI program will not jeopardize the fiscal integrity of existing licensed DUI programs.

Background:

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) licenses programs, monitors for adherence to regulations, and approves participant fees and fee schedules. The Licensing and Certification Division DUI Section of DHCS, oversees the licensing of DUI programs and performs compliance monitoring for all DUI programs in California. The objectives of DUI programs are to reduce the number of repeat DUI offenses by persons who complete a state-licensed DUI program; and to provide participants an opportunity to address problems related to the use of alcohol and/or other drugs. Although DHCS is responsible for licensing all DUI programs statewide, the licensing process begins at the county level.

BWell is the administrative agency in Santa Barbara County for DHCS DUI program services. BWell is responsible for local monitoring of these programs and provides bi-annual monitoring reports to DHCS, which retains responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the programs in compliance with State regulations. BWell also determines whether applications for a new DUI program may be accepted based on regulatory criteria and reviews and approves any applications received to provide recommendation for DUI licensure.

Consistent with California Health and Safety Code Section 11836, following review and approval by County Behavioral Health, the Board of Supervisors shall review, at its option, any new DUI program licensure applications and provide a recommendation for licensure, to be submitted by the provider to DHCS along with their DUI licensing application.

California Driving-Under-The-Influence (DUI) legislation was enacted in 1978 which allowed Statewide implementation of programs for DUI offenders for individuals who drive while under the influence. Historically, only one licensed DUI program has been operating in Santa Maria since 1997, serving approximately 65 individuals on a monthly basis.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

State law requires Driving-Under-The-Influence (DUI) programs to be fully funded through client fees. DUI programs are self-supporting through participant fees.

Revenue will be added to budget in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 and revenue for future fiscal years will be included in the annual Final Budget process.

Fiscal Analysis:

Existing BWell staff will support the application process. If the application is approved by DHCS, BWell staff will provide local monitoring for the new DUI programs. BWell receives an administrative fee from DUI programs which support the cost of the oversight required as the County Alcohol and Drug Program (ADP) Administrator. In FY 2024-25, the County received \$50,970 in DUI administrative fees revenue, to support the cost of administrative expenses.

Special Instructions:

Please email one (1) Board letter, one (1) Minute Order, and one (1) complete, executed copy of the Resolution to sarriaga@sbcbswell.org and to bwellcontractsstaff@sbcbswell.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A – BWell DUI Zona Seca BOS Resolution FY 2025-26

Attachment B – Zona Seca, Inc. State Licensure Application – Part I, II, III & V

Attachment C – BWC Meeting Minutes from November 19, 2025, Recommendation for the DUI RFP Process

Attachment D – BWC Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2026, Recommendation for the DUI Licensure

Contact Information:

Denise Morales
Senior Contract Analyst
dmorales@sbcbswell.org

Svetlana Arriaga
Contract Analyst
sarriaga@sbcbswell.org