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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

August 26, 2014

Honorable Arthur A. Garcia
Presiding Judge
Santa Barbara Superior Court
312-C East Cook Street
Santa Maria, California 91454

RE: Response to the 2013-2014 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report entitled "*Santa Barbara County Take Home Vehicle Use-Clarify and Comply*"

Dear Judge Garcia,

Please find attached the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (Board) response to the above referenced Grand Jury Report. The Grand Jury requested the Board respond to Findings 1, 2, 3 and 4, as well as Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4. The Board appreciates and thanks the Grand Jury for its investigative work in this matter, as well as its ongoing efforts to improve County government.

Sincerely,

Steve Lavagnino, Chair
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

CC: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
Sandi Miller, Foreperson, 2014-2015 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
RESPONSE TO THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY GRAND JURY 2013-2014 REPORT
“SANTA BARBARA COUNTY TAKE-HOME VEHICLE USE –
CLARIFY AND COMPLY”

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1: The Santa Barbara County policy *Administration of Vehicle Fleet and Employee Use of County Vehicles* is found in two sections of the County of Santa Barbara On-Line Policies and Procedures Manual on the County intranet.

Response to Finding 1: The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1: That Santa Barbara County revise its *Administration of Vehicle Fleet and Employee Use of County Vehicles* sections into one unified policy that makes it clear that the two sections are to be applied and enforced together.

Response to Recommendation 1: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. No later than December 31, 2014, General Services will submit to the Board of Supervisors for approval a revised County Vehicle Policy which combines the *Administration of Vehicle Fleet and Employee Use of County Vehicles* sections into one unified policy.

Finding 2: The current Santa Barbara County policy *Administration of Vehicle Fleet and Employee Use of County Vehicles* does not contain an issue date, effective date, or any other means to identify it as the most current version.

Response to Finding 2: The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

Recommendation 2: That the Santa Barbara County’s *Administration of Vehicle Fleet and Employee Use of County Vehicles* policy be revised to provide an issue date or effective date to identify the document specifically as the current version.

Response to recommendation 2: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. No later than December 31, 2014, General Services will submit to the Board of Supervisors for approval a revised County Vehicle Policy which includes information identifying it as the current version.

Finding 3: The Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s office does not comply with the County policy requiring the annual reporting of take-home vehicle information.

Response to Finding 3: The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with the Finding.

As noted in the Grand Jury report, information related to the approval and reporting of take-home vehicles is found in two separate sections of the *County of Santa Barbara On-Line Policies and Procedures Manual*. The first section is titled ‘Administration of Vehicle Fleet’, and the

second is titled 'Employee Use of County Vehicles'. In part, the two sections require the following;

- Department Heads may only authorize the use of take-home vehicles under certain conditions. This includes use by 'Employees whose duties require them to be on 24 hour 'standby' status (e.g. Sheriff, Fire Chief, Emergency Services personnel).
- The General Services Director will maintain information on the storage location, designated use, purchase criteria and the responsible line supervisor of each vehicle under its control.

In an effort to comply with these requirements, the Sheriff's Office reported the Department Head (The Sheriff) has authorized the designation of 70 vehicles as take-home vehicles, citing the 'standby' status of the employees as justification for this decision. However, based on concerns that providing specific information on each vehicle would create potential danger to the public's safety, the Sheriff's Office has not complied with the requirement to provide to the General Services Director information on each vehicle.

Recommendation 3: That the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office comply with the County policy requiring the annual reporting of take-home vehicles by providing the prescribed information Form for each vehicle.

Response to Recommendation 3: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

As stated in the Board's response to Recommendations 1 and 2, no later than December 31, 2014, General Services will submit to the Board of Supervisors for approval, a revised County Vehicle Policy. This revised policy will be developed in conjunction with several County departments, including the Auditor-Controller and Sheriff's Office. The revised policy will include a 'Take-Home Vehicle Information Form' that satisfies the concerns of the Sheriff's Office regarding public safety, while fulfilling the requirement for The General Services Director to maintain adequate information on each authorized take-home vehicle

Finding 4: The Santa Barbara County Executive Office has not enforced the take-home vehicle policy by failing to require the Department of General Services to obtain, and the Sheriff's Office to provide, the necessary documentation for each vehicle so assigned

Response to Finding 4: The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors partially disagrees with the Finding.

As stated in the Response to Finding 3, the General Services Department has obtained information from the Sheriff's Office regarding the specific number of authorized take-home vehicles, as well as the justification for that designation. However, citing the concern that providing specific information on each vehicle would create potential danger to the public's safety, the Sheriff's Office has not complied with the requirement to provide to the General Services Director specific information on each vehicle.

Recommendation 4: That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors direct the County Executive Office to enforce the take-home vehicle policy by requiring the Department of General Services to obtain, and the Sheriff's Office to provide, the necessary documentation for each vehicle so assigned.

Response to Recommendation 4: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

As stated in the Board's response to Recommendation 3, the Board will consider approval of a revised County Vehicle Policy no later than December 31, 2014. This revised policy will include a 'Take-Home Vehicle Information Form' that satisfies the concerns of the Sheriff's Office regarding public safety, while fulfilling the requirement for The General Services Director to maintain adequate information on each authorized take-home vehicle. Once approved, the Board will direct the County Executive Office to implement and enforce the policies provisions.