



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 500, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4069
(831) 454-2200 FAX: (831) 454-3262 TDD/TTY - Call 711

MANU KOENIG
FIRST DISTRICT

KIMBERLY DE SERPA
SECOND DISTRICT

JUSTIN CUMMINGS
THIRD DISTRICT

FELIPE HERNANDEZ
FOURTH DISTRICT

MONICA MARTINEZ
FIFTH DISTRICT

September 4, 2025

The Honorable Katherine Hansen
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**RE: Response to the 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report "Climate Action'
Demands Outreach – County staff alone cannot meet our County's
climate goals"**

Dear Judge Hansen,

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors' response to the 2024-2025 Grand Jury Report "Climate Action' Demands Outreach – County staff alone cannot meet our County's goals."

Sincerely,

FELIPE HERNANDEZ, Chair
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

Attachments

CC: Clerk of the Board
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



**The 2024-2025 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Requires the**

County Board of Supervisors

to Respond by September 2, 2025

**to the Findings and Recommendations listed below
which were assigned to them in the report titled**

“Climate Action” Demands Outreach

**County staff alone cannot meet our County’s climate
goals.**

Required Responses apply to elected officials, elected agencies or department heads, elected boards, councils, and committees. The respondent is **required** to respond and to make the response available to the public under California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#). A required response will be considered **compliant** under [PC §933.05](#) if it contains an appropriate comment on **all** findings and recommendations **which were assigned to you** in this report.

Invited Responses are encouraged but are not required by the California Penal Code.

Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

1. ***For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:***
 - a. **AGREE** with the Finding, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
 - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
2. ***For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:***
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
3. ***(For groups or boards) Please confirm the date on which the assigned responses were approved during an official meeting:***

We approved these responses in a regular public meeting as shown in our minutes dated August 19, 2025.

4. ***Please attach a PDF version of your completed responses to an email sent to:***

The Honorable Judge: Katherine Hansen Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org
and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury: grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling (831) 454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

- F1 .** The County's need for Outreach to raise awareness of passenger vehicle greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals is not being addressed by staff in significant ways.

—

AGREE

X

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

—

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The County has undertaken several efforts to inform the public about greenhouse gas reduction goals related to passenger vehicles, including public meetings of the Board of Supervisors and the Commission on the Environment, as well as engagement with community stakeholders. Staff have also pursued grant opportunities to support the expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, which includes public communication components. General messaging about transportation sector-related emissions can be increased through additional collaboration with other public agencies in the transportation sector.

F2 . Responsibility for the County's Outreach efforts isn't clearly defined.
Even interested citizens have trouble finding updates.

☐ **AGREE**
☒ **PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
☐ **DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The County established the Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience (OR3) in 2020 to lead countywide efforts related to climate resilience and sustainability, including the implementation of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). OR3 serves as the central point of coordination for climate-related initiatives, including public engagement activities. The OR3 website provides access to the CAAP and related resources, and efforts are currently underway to improve the site's content, organization, and accessibility to enhance public understanding and usability. Climate-related outreach is also effectuated through all departments' Operational Plan objectives related to the CAAP, as well as through the County Commission on the Environment.

F3 . The County Staff and the Commission on the Environment (COE) charged with reporting to superiors (i.e., Board of Supervisors) don't stay current in publicly publishing their actions regarding the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP).

<input type="checkbox"/>	AGREE
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTIALLY DISAGREE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

County staff and the Commission on the Environment (COE) regularly collaborate to provide updates on the progress of Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP) strategies and objectives during publicly noticed meetings. These meetings are conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, and all related materials—including agendas, staff presentations, and minutes—are posted on the COE website. In addition, departmental updates are periodically communicated through press releases and other public channels to ensure transparency and accessibility.

F4 . Staff charged with instigating/tracking/coordinating efforts required by the CAAP do not consider public Outreach part of their task.

<input type="checkbox"/>	AGREE
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTIALLY DISAGREE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience (OR3) actively incorporates public outreach into its work, including participation in community events, stakeholder meetings, and direct engagement on the County's climate initiatives. Public engagement is considered an integral part of advancing the goals of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), consistent with available resources.

F5 . Money was spent to create progress trackers on the CAAP Storymap Website, but no one is updating the progress.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	AGREE
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTIALLY DISAGREE
<input type="checkbox"/>	DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

OR3 is in the process of developing a new tracking and reporting dashboard and has identified a vendor to implement the system. The updated platform will support more timely updates by County departments and improve accessibility for the public.

F6 . Money has been spent to create another interactive website (Resilient Santa Cruz) for the interested citizen, but that website is not being publicized, and the modest participation goals have not been met.

<input type="checkbox"/>	AGREE
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTIALLY DISAGREE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The County of Santa Cruz is not a fiscal sponsor of the Resilient Santa Cruz website and does not fund or manage its content. The Resilient Santa Cruz County platform is powered by BrightAction engagement software, which provides technology infrastructure for user engagement. Funding for the platform is provided by participating municipalities.

F7 . County web pages and social media specifically created for reporting to the public have been allowed to languish and are not populated with recent news items on CAAP goal progress.

X **AGREE**

— **PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

— **DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

OR3 is currently updating its website and developing a new CAAP progress dashboard to enhance public engagement and transparency.

Recommendations

- R1 .** The Board of Supervisors should assign an office to own the task of proactive Outreach related to the CAAP. This assignment can either be County-only or in coordination with other agencies and local counties. (For example, working with MBARD or putting flyers into residents' utility bills.) Completion date: January 31, 2026. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| X

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— | HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED – summarize what has been done

HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED – explain why |
|-------------------------------------|--|

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

OR3 is the designated lead for CAAP implementation and coordination, including public outreach. OR3 works with County departments, regional agencies, and community-based organizations to support communication and engagement on climate-related initiatives. Outreach activities are conducted through public meetings, stakeholder events, and communications coordinated with the County's Public Information Office.

R2 . The Board of Supervisors should require OR3 to update all public-facing websites every quarter and post on their social media to reflect the CAAP actions being taken within the County offices. Completion date: October 1, 2025, and ongoing. (F3, F4, F5, F7).

- ☐ **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- ☒ **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- ☐ **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- ☐ **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

The OR3 website is currently undergoing a comprehensive update, with a relaunch planned by the end of 2025. Moving forward, OR3 will provide updates as new information, initiatives, or resources become available. While OR3 does not maintain its own social media accounts, it will continue coordinating with the County's Public Information Office to share relevant content through existing County channels. OR3 is not resourced to provide a standalone, ongoing public information campaign regarding the local impacts of climate change; however, all County departments conducting climate-related work as part of their operations communicate their activities accordingly, contributing to broader public awareness and engagement.

R3 . When the County spends money or staff time on any climate efforts addressing the state-mandated CAAP, the Board of Supervisors should ensure these actions are publicized to inspire and inform the taxpaying citizens. Completion date: within 90 days of any significant expenditure. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F7).

- X HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

OR3 provides biannual progress reports on CAAP implementation to the Board of Supervisors, which are publicly accessible through standard County channels. Climate-related grant applications and awards are typically included in Board meeting materials, and major grant awards are also shared through press releases and County social media in coordination with the Public Information Office.