

**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT 1989-1990**  
P.O. Box 5397  
Napa, California 94581-0397

June 19, 1990

The Honorable W. Scott Snowden  
Presiding Superior Court Judge  
Superior Court of Napa County  
825 Brown Street  
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Judge Snowden:

The 1989-90 Napa County Grand Jury herewith submits its findings and recommendations. The jury viewed its responsibilities as twofold: 1) to complete the four-year cycle of county government reviews suggested by the 1985-86 Grand Jury; and 2) to examine complaints regarding governmental conduct and procedure from the citizens of Napa County.

Committees of jury members were formed to review various city and county governmental agencies. Every effort was made to complete the cyclical review begun in 1986, but that effort was hampered by the number of uncompleted agency reviews carried forward from previous grand juries. The 1989-90 Grand Jury did complete all 16 of its assigned reviews and four from previous years. Only four of the reviews from the 1986 schedule will be carried forward.

The committees also looked into citizen complaints as they were received. Many of these complaints had merit, were investigated and the findings are contained in this report. For example, complaints from numerous county residents led the Grand Jury to conduct an extensive investigation of an alleged violation of open meetings laws, the Brown Act, by some members of the Board of Supervisors. A final report on this subject was released on February 2, 1990, and it is also a part of this report.

As the jury's work progressed, it was noted that some committees had a heavier workload in comparison to other committees. Therefore, some agency reviews were reassigned. A review of Child Protective Services was conducted by the Education Committee, for example, rather than by the Health and Welfare Committee.

As each committee reported its findings, a common issue emerged. It was decided that it would be mentioned once in this letter rather than repeatedly in the findings. In general, the county of Napa pays salaries that are low by comparison with other Bay Area counties.

The Audit Committee of the Grand Jury worked with the Office of County Auditor/Controller to select the firm that will conduct three annual audits of the county.

County Auditor Pam Kindig and her staff are to be commended for their assistance and cooperation.

The Grand Jury found the elected officials and employees of the city and county to be most cooperative and helpful. We express our sincere gratitude to each of them. We are particularly grateful for the assistance we received from our legal advisor, County Counsel Robert Westmeyer, and his staff. Court Executive Officer Janice Norton and her staff were also most helpful and supportive. District Attorney Jerry Mautner and his staff were always available when the need arose. In addition, the advice, assistance and counsel of the judges of the Superior Court were invaluable. We admire their professionalism and expertise. Often overlooked when praise is handed out are those for whom this process exists. We sincerely thank the citizens of Napa County for their cooperation and support.

A very special thank you to Vice-Foreman Tony Holzhauer for so competently stepping in on short notice during my extended illness.

This report is a result of the dedication and professionalism of the 1989-90 Grand Jury. It has been a high honor to serve with people of this caliber. I gratefully thank them for making the foreman's job an easy one.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signed original on file]

Brenda Prather  
Foreman, 1989-90 Grand Jury

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Brenda Prather, Foreman  
Tony Holzhauer, Vice Foreman  
Chris Piper, Secretary  
Charles R. Harper, Sergeant-at-Arms

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John F. Dunlap  
Jim Hunt  
Christine Sholders  
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## **NAPA COUNTY MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Napa County Mosquito Abatement District was established in 1925. From that time to the present, the district has served Napa County by controlling populations of nuisance and disease-carrying mosquitoes, as well as other pests.

The operations of the district are overseen by a five-member board of trustees. Each of the county's four incorporated cities appoints a trustee to the board. The fifth member represents the county at large and is appointed by the Napa County Board of Supervisors. The trustees' primary function is to set policy and allocate funds for the operations administered by a five-member staff that includes a manager, foreman, secretary/bookkeeper and two certified technicians. The manager and the foreman are also certified and, therefore, able to receive and respond to calls requesting the district's services.

To reduce and control mosquito populations, the district uses various water management, biological and chemical controls. Water management involves the redirection of water flows into and out of wetlands. Biological control consists of planting mosquito fish, a natural predator, in water sources. Chemical control involves the use of approved pesticides to reduce or eliminate mosquito sources.

As a district, Mosquito Abatement is separate from the administrative functions of county government. Its 1989-90 budget is \$331,460. Funding comes from property taxes and fees assessed to other governmental agencies.

### **FINDING**

Since the advent of Proposition 65, many of the chemicals and pesticides used by the district have been prohibited. This has reduced the means available to the district and has required them to take alternative measures for controlling mosquitoes.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Grand Jury recognizes that the district has actively pursued the use of non-chemical measures for pest control. The district should make the public aware of the prohibitions of Proposition 65 and the constraints under which the district must operate.

### **FINDING**

Mosquito Abatement is limited in its use of pesticides in residential areas due to the close proximity of the property owners. The general public is unaware of these limitations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The district should make the public aware that it is not able to administer pesticides in residential areas. Further, the district should provide the public with a list of acceptable remedies which homeowners may administer themselves.

## **FINDING**

Mosquito Abatement's operations often take them onto state owned lands and areas controlled by the state Department of Fish and Game. These areas tend to be ecologically sensitive wetlands. There has been past disagreement as to the proper method of mosquito management in these wetlands.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Mosquito Abatement and the Department of Fish and Game should meet at the beginning of each mosquito season to decide upon a strategy for controlling mosquitoes in the wetlands.