



EL DORADO COUNTY GRAND JURORS ASSOCIATION

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November 10, 2010

Supervisor Ron Briggs
Supervisor John Knight
Supervisor Ray Nutting
Supervisor Norma Santiago
Supervisor Jack Sweeney

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Dear Board of Supervisors,

This letter is a follow-up to my comments to you at the November 1st Budget Workshop meeting. As I will be unable to attend next Tuesday's BOS meeting, I am expressing my thoughts to you in writing.

In our opinion, the CAO's office has generally provided sound recommendations to you relative to managing the county budget. However, the recommendation to take the Grand Jury budget from \$84,000 (already reduced 21% from historical spend levels) all the way down to \$20,000 is neither prudent nor practical. A reduction to that level will virtually eliminate any substantive activity from the Grand Jury in our County. As I stated at the November 1st meeting, as an arm of the California Superior Court system, we are mandated by California Penal Code to seat 19 jurors, perform a number of mandatory duties, and provide a report. The recommended budget adjustment will not provide the minimum funding needed for that to be accomplished. Further, I cannot believe that the Presiding and Supervising Judges of the Superior Court will support the virtual dismantling of the grand jury process here in our County, and presume that they would mandate appropriate funding.

The result of such actions would be that (1) the recommended budget savings would not be realized anyway, and (2) adopting such a reduced budget, along with the fact that this county has exploited the State Mandate affecting Penal Code responses (the only known county in the state to do so) may well lead to the perception on the part of our citizens (whether intended or not) that the County is attempting to minimize the impact of the Grand Jury, and therefore its function as the "watch-dog" agency for the citizens of El Dorado County.

The Grand Jury, while mandated by law, is still a great value to the citizens of our county. For the approximate total cost of one employee, you get 19 engaged and talented citizens to help navigate the tough issues that many public agencies face today. I look forward to your continuing support.

Sincerely,

Chuck MacLean
President, El Dorado County Grand Jurors Association

cc: Judge Suzanne Kingsbury, Judge Steven Bailey, CAO Gayle Erbe-Hamlin, Foreman Steve Baker