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August 21, 2012

FILED

SEP 04 2012

The Honorable Eric L. DuTemple
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
41 W. Yaney Street
Sonora, CA 95370

Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

By: *[Signature]* Clerk

Re: Response to Grand Jury Report - Environmental Health/Twain Harte
Interceptor Pipeline

Dear Judge DuTemple:

The following is offered in response to the 2011-12 Grand Jury Report as it pertains to Environmental Health and the Twain Harte Interceptor Pipeline.

Grand Jury Findings

- F1** The Twain Harte Interceptor pipeline is reaching its limits. Each hook-up in the PLB area weakens the line and increases the potential for a major spill.

Response: This should be responded to by TUD and not the County.

- F2** If the Twain Harte Interceptor pipeline were to fail along the large inverted siphon, especially around Phoenix Lake, it would result in a major catastrophe to the PLB and potentially to the water supply to Sonora.

Response: This should be responded to by TUD and not the County.

- F3** TUD has identified potential solutions to eliminating the large inverted siphon in the Twain Harte Interceptor, but has not yet put a plan in place to do so.

Response: This should be responded to by TUD and not the County.

Grand Jury Recommendations

- R1** It is recommended that TUD and EHD limit septic system hook-ups to the PLB interceptor pipeline to only cases of extreme hardship, where no viable alternatives exist.

Response: This recommendation has already been implemented to the extent that TUD only allows hook-ups when there is no other viable option available to property owners. For example, if a standard septic system in this area fails and there is no expansion area available to the property owner, their primary options are to: 1) pursue an engineered septic system with installations costs that could range between \$30,000 to \$50,000; or 2) seek permission from TUD to connect to the interceptor and abandon their septic system with costs that could range between \$10,000 to \$12,000. Acknowledging the financial burden this could place on property owners, TUD has been gracious in allowing residents to connect to the interceptor.

- R2** The County should consider an ordinance requiring septic system property owners to file a report signed by the septic pumping contractor that the septic tank is pumped at least once every five years. Failure to file the report should result in a fine and other appropriate action by the County at the expense of the property owner.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented in that the Board disagrees with adding a new, unnecessary regulation and potential fine on County residents. The Board would prefer addressing this issue using public education. See the response to Recommendation #3 below.

- R3** The Jury is convinced that public enlightenment is key to improving septic system maintenance within Tuolumne County. Therefore, the County should establish and continue a public education program via newspaper, radio, and internet on proper septic system maintenance and other preventive measures.

Response: This recommendation has not been fully implemented, but will be in FY 2012-13. The Environmental Health Division has previously developed and made available to the public a handout on proper septic system operations and maintenance. The Division also plans to hold free septic system training classes for homeowners on September 19, 2012. One session will be held in the Sonora area and another in Groveland. These training classes will be led by Division staff, consultants, utility district representatives and septic contractors. The success of this outreach will determine the content, frequency and location of future trainings.

Notwithstanding the above, should TUD wish to pursue modifications to the interceptor and/or establish new public sewer infrastructure into these areas of the County, the Board of Supervisors would support TUD in efforts to secure federal, state and/or grant funds to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above findings and recommendations. Please feel free to contact the County Administrator Craig Pedro should you have any questions regarding same.

Yours truly,



RICHARD PLAND
Chairman

Cc: Beverly Shane, CRA Director
Rob Kostlivy, Env. Health Director
Pete Kampa, TUD General Mgr.

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code Section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

By:  ALICIA L. JAMAR
Clerk of the Board