

	reflecting when any official or representative of the County must declare recusal.	
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The following governing boards are required to respond within 90 days pursuant to Penal Code sections §933 and §933.05:

Board of Supervisors: F1, R1

The following appointed officials are invited to respond within 60 days:

County Counsel: F1, R1

Per Penal Code §933.05(a)(1) and (2), responses must include acceptance, refusal, and/or clarification of the findings, and a commitment to implementing the recommendations, as appropriate, per Penal Code §933.5(b)(1)(2)(3) and (4).

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

Rural Disparity in Combination with State Reimbursements

As one of California's six entirely rural counties, Mariposa contends with an unbalanced supply of public service demands and federal/state reimbursement structures. While County leadership cannot fully control these imbalances, there are no reasons for not taking positive action that would have a measurable affect for the County.

For example, Mariposa County relies heavily on the tourism industry. A large percentage of this derives from visitors (4 million per year) to Yosemite National Park. Use of public roads by large number of visitors has an effect on public road conditions. In the past few years, investment in local maintenance of public road surfaces has continued to be a challenge for the County. MCCGJ found that road conditions are consistently the most significant concern for County staff and residents.

In recent years, the Pavement Conditions Index (PCI) for Mariposa County has become "Fair." The Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is a numerical rating that measures the condition of a road's pavement on a scale of 0 to 100. A score of 100 indicates a newly paved road, while 0 is the worst possible condition. The PCI is calculated based on the type and severity of distresses observed on the pavement surface, such as potholes, cracking, spalling, rutting, and scaling. This will not be going away in the near future. In order to maintain a "Fair" rating the State recommendations for Mariposa County are to invest a minimum of \$8,000,000 annually. To be able to reach a higher rating of "Good" it is suggested \$12,000,000 be spent annually.

Review of budgets from the last few years for DPW indicate that it was a challenge to even be able to budget \$4,000,000 per year for this activity. California gas tax is a reimbursement given to local authorities specifically for road maintenance activities. This reimbursement is calculated by registered

car ownership (specific to gas-powered vehicles) in the County. The roughly 20,000 registered vehicles in Mariposa does not equate to the number of vehicles that use the public roadways within the County. Further, there is a percentage of registered vehicles that are “non-operational” or electric, for which no tax reimbursement is generated.

A lack of representation for rural counties such as Mariposa makes it difficult for leaders to allocate funds effectively. In the California State Assembly Mariposa County shares one elected representative with six other counties. In the State Senate, Mariposa County shares representation with twelve other counties. The existence of rural disparity is amplified when urban areas have multiple elected officials advocating for their concerns.

For Mariposa County's leadership, managing these challenges requires a nuanced approach that balances the needs of residents with the realities of its tourism-driven economy. The impact of millions of annual visitors on local government resources underscores the urgent need for sustainable planning and cannot go unrecognized.

Parallels Between County Government and JCFHD

The MCCGJ accepted the opportunity to examine two entities governed by an elected board during the 2023-2024 term. These entities, the John C. Fremont Healthcare District and Mariposa County, both experienced accounting issues that led to a budget shortfall, debt, and or ultimately, a mismanagement of the funds belonging to the institution. A common thread of systemic problems created the accounting issue, such as difficulties navigating the Brown Act, a lack of cooperation and accountability between Board members, inaccessible information, untimely action, and more.

Similar to the discussion on Mariposa County's workplace culture above, John C. Fremont board members were also observed to operate individually rather than a team. Opinions regarding operations were often withheld and board members accused others of inaction. Board members did not feel personally responsible for resolving issues. This lack of teamwork and responsibility is unacceptable when it comes to leadership, whether it be government, a special district, or organization. Leaders must make the effort to communicate with one another and make the attempt to understand all perspectives. When it comes to County operations, leaders must have a greater understanding of how different departments participate in processes by learning and accepting interdepartmental roles. In addition, both elected boards expressed concerns with obtaining information regarding the operations of their respective institutions, which should be resolved by regular communication between leaders.

The Brown Act is often used as an excuse for a lack of communication between elected board members. It is true that the Brown Act has strenuous noticing and quorum requirements that make it difficult for board members to discuss important issues outside of in-person scheduled meetings. It is understandable that the rules can slow down communication. Both County and JCFHD board members receive training(s) on the Brown Act and comply with the law, yet a lot of concern was expressed around violating the Brown Act. It is problematic that the Brown Act is cited as a reason for inadequate communication and subsequently, poor leadership, when the purpose of the Brown Act is to allow for transparent engagement.

There seems to be a general reticence to discuss controversial issues publicly during meetings. MCCGJ found that Board members wanted to be able to discuss situations privately prior to a public