

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: "Fireworks: One Spark Away From Disaster?"

Report Date: June 23, 2026

Response by: County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors **Title:** _____

FINDINGS

1. I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F2, F3, F4, F8
2. I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F1, F5, F6, F7
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendations numbered R3, _____ have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implementation actions.)
2. Recommendations numbered R1 _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
3. Recommendations numbered _____ require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of the publication of the Grand Jury report.)
4. Recommendations numbered R2, R4 _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 7/28/2026

Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: 4

Findings

F1. Despite their efforts, County and local governments have been ineffective in controlling the use of illegal fireworks, including in known hotspots for fireworks activity.

☒ We Wholly or Partially Disagree with the Finding for the following reasons:

In 2025, the County strengthened its fireworks ordinance, established enhanced penalties and social-host liability, conducted targeted public outreach, and coordinated a multi-agency enforcement operation involving the Sheriff's Office and County Fire/CAL FIRE personnel. During the July 3–6 enforcement period, the Sheriff's Office issued 24 notices of violation and seized more than 350 pounds of fireworks. County Fire/CAL FIRE law enforcement personnel conducted approximately 100 contacts, issued three citations, and confiscated more than 250 pounds of dangerous fireworks.

In 2026, the County conducted an increased level of targeted public outreach, including posted signage and flyers in both Spanish and English and social media campaign, and coordinated a multi-agency enforcement operation involving the Sheriff's Office and County Fire/CAL FIRE personnel. During the July 3–6 enforcement period, the Sheriff's Office issued 21 notices of violation and seized 69 pounds of fireworks. County Fire/CAL FIRE law enforcement personnel conducted approximately 230 contacts, issued five citations. County Fire/CAL FIRE responded to 124 incidents countywide including two fireworks related calls and reported no fires. Sheriff's Office and County Fire/CAL FIRE personnel noted that activity in historically high-use areas of the county were significantly decreased in 2026 compared to prior years. This data highlights the effectiveness of the County in controlling the use of illegal fireworks.

F2. All fireworks, including "Safe and Sane," are potentially dangerous if not used properly.

☒ We Agree with this Finding

F3. The potential impacts of careless use of fireworks are amplified by the hotter environment the County is continuing to experience.

☒ We Agree with this Finding

F4. There is a patchwork of regulations within the County that can potentially lead to confusion as to where and which fireworks are legal for the public to use.

☒ We Agree with this Finding

F5. Current resource levels are insufficient for County law enforcement and fire protection services to stem the use of illegal fireworks, resulting in increasing the risk of fire and safety hazards.

☒ We Wholly or Partially Disagree with the Finding for the following reasons:

Data from calendar year 2025 and 2026 indicate that County law enforcement and fire protection services are effective in stemming the use of illegal fireworks. See outcomes described under "F1". The results demonstrate that existing resources, when strategically deployed and supplemented through interagency coordination, can produce meaningful enforcement outcomes. The persistence of some illegal activity does not establish that staffing is necessarily inadequate, because no reasonable level

of staffing can guarantee immediate observation and apprehension of every person discharging fireworks throughout the County.

F6. Considering the size of the problem and the need to issue citations as a means of deterrent, the small number of citations issued in 2025 appears to be disproportionate to the reported use of illegal fireworks.

☒We Wholly or Partially Disagree with the Finding for the following reasons:

The number of citations issued does not, by itself, accurately reflect the scope or effectiveness of fireworks enforcement. Enforcement activity also includes criminal investigations, seizures, citizen contacts, drone-supported investigations, warnings, and referrals for follow-up action. The County's 2025 and 2026 enforcement results and widely reported decline in use of illegal fireworks in historical hotspots demonstrate the breadth of these efforts.

Additionally, comparing citations with the number of reported fireworks does not provide a complete measure of enforcement effectiveness. Call volume is not directly proportional to the amount of fireworks activity, as multiple reports may relate to the same incident, while other incidents may generate few or no calls. Further, a report of fireworks activity is not necessarily a legally supportable violation which necessitates sufficient evidence to withstand administrative review.

F7. The sources of illegal fireworks extend beyond the local law enforcement's jurisdiction requiring engagement with other State and Federal agencies for enforcement.

☒We Wholly or Partially Disagree with the Finding for the following reasons:

While illegal fireworks may be purchased, manufactured, and transported across county lines, the finding does not identify a specific deficiency in the County's existing coordination or establish that additional engagement is required.

F8. The introduction of social host ordinances in the County shows potential for reducing a number of community issues, including the improper use of fireworks, especially when combined with the use of drones for enforcement.

☒We Agree with this Finding

Recommendations

R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors work with the committee of fire and law enforcement officials representing the County, and also each city, and CSD, to reevaluate whether all fireworks should be banned throughout the County including the four locations where they are now allowed.

☒ The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.

The County will use the existing Fireworks Taskforce or a similar interagency forum to reevaluate whether the sale and use of all consumer fireworks should be prohibited throughout San Luis Obispo County, including within the jurisdictions where State-approved "Safe and Sane" fireworks remain permitted, currently City of Arroyo Grande, City of Grover Beach and Templeton CSD.

The County anticipates completing the interagency review and presenting any recommended County actions to the Board before the 2027 Independence Day season.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors adopt a process before the end of 2026 to annually evaluate the need for surge support to law enforcement and fire preventions services to effectively suppress illegal fireworks activities during the most problematic times of the year.

☒ The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The substantive purpose of this recommendation is already being met through the Fireworks Taskforce and the County's existing annual operational and budget-planning processes. The Taskforce, in coordination with the County Executive Office and participating public-safety agencies, has established a practice to annually evaluate anticipated conditions, enforcement priorities, known problem areas, personnel availability, technology needs, and competing emergency-response obligations before the Independence Day holiday.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors work with the Cities and CSDs to develop and facilitate the publication and distribution of educational materials in English and in Spanish on the dangers and harm of fireworks, as well as the laws and penalties associated with illegal fireworks use. This may include material focusing on fireworks safety for children.

☒ The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.

The County provides centralized public information explaining where fireworks are prohibited, the applicable fines and criminal penalties, social-host and parental liability, seizure and disposal authority, and response-cost recovery. Public signage posted in high use areas are posted in English and Spanish.

The County will continue to update and redistribute English- and Spanish-language materials annually and coordinate with cities, community services districts, community organizations, and other partners when practicable.

R4. The Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors direct that local fire and law enforcement departments become more actively engaged in the statewide committees involved with controlling the influx of illegal fireworks into the County.

☒ The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.

The Grand Jury identifies the General Fireworks Advisory Committee and the Public Safety Fireworks Enforcement Task Force as the relevant statewide bodies. However, a Board directive requiring increased participation in these bodies is not necessary or sufficiently defined.

The General Fireworks Advisory Committee is an Office of the State Fire Marshal advisory body intended to facilitate communication among the State Fire Marshal, the fireworks industry, the public, and the fire service and to obtain input on proposed regulations and technical issues. It is not primarily

an operational enforcement body responsible for intercepting illegal fireworks entering individual counties.

The Public Safety Fireworks Enforcement Task Force was convened by the Office of the State Fire Marshal following the July 2025 explosion at a fireworks facility in Esparto. It brought together representatives of police, sheriff, fire, and statewide professional associations for a concentrated review of State fireworks laws, regulations, licensing, inspections, training, and enforcement strategies. The Task Force met in November 2025 and issued its recommendations in a March 2026 report, which was subsequently reviewed by the General Fireworks Advisory Committee. The available State information does not identify the Task Force as a standing committee in which individual counties may obtain continuing membership.

Decisions regarding participation in the General Fireworks Advisory Committee, professional-association representation, or future Office of the State Fire Marshal working groups are most appropriately made by County Fire and Sheriff's Office leadership based on membership eligibility, staffing availability, the subject under consideration, and the anticipated benefit to local enforcement.