

County of Lassen
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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JASON INGRAM
District 5

County Administration Office
221 S. Roop Street, Suite 4
Susanville, CA 96130
Phone: 530-251-8333
Fax: 530-251-2663

October 14, 2025

The Honorable Mark Nareau
Presiding Judge, Lassen Superior Court
2610 Riverside Dr.
Susanville, CA 96130

Dear Judge Nareau,

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933(c), please accept the Lassen County Board of Supervisors' and County Administrative Officer's combined response to the 2024-2025 Lassen County Grand Jury report. Our response is attached.

While we may or may not be able to implement every recommendation as a result of other limitations, the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrative Officer welcome the constructive criticism offered by the Grand Jury, considers it seriously, and takes to heart the recommendations brought forth. The Board of Supervisors joins the Grand Jury in trying to make local government as efficient and effective as possible.

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Court and the 2024-2025 Lassen County Grand Jury for a job well done.

Respectfully,

TOM NEELY, Chairman
Lassen County Board of Supervisors

MAURICE ANDERSON,
Lassen County Administrative Officer

Introduction

The California Grand Jurors Association states that the mission of a civil Grand Jury is to “help local government be more accountable and efficient.” They also state that their mission is to “facilitate positive change....”. The Lassen County Board of Supervisors applauds this goal and would like to thank the citizens who have given of themselves to serve as Lassen County Grand Jurors. The Lassen County Board of Supervisors recognizes the considerable contribution of time and energy by private citizens for the benefit of Lassen County as a whole.

The Board of Supervisors welcomes the constructive criticism offered by the Grand Jury, considers it seriously, and takes to heart the recommendations brought forth by the Grand Jury. The Board of Supervisors joins the Grand Jury in trying to make local government as efficient and effective as possible.

Over the next pages the Lassen County Board of Supervisors will be presenting its response to this year’s Grand Jury report.

Grand Jury Report: Staffing Shortages: Board of Supervisors of Lassen County

Recommendation Number 1: “The Lassen County Board of Supervisors should reestablish the Public Defender’s Office staffed by salaried employees.”

Response/Comment: Efforts to recruit a Public Defender were made prior to entering into a contract with outside attorneys. No one applied for that position. There were no qualified internal candidates.

Recommendation Number 2: “The Lassen County Board of Supervisors and the Susanville City Council should procure the services of a professional mediator to improve communication between the DA’s Office and SPD.”

Response/Comment: The Board of Supervisors does not direct the District Attorney’s office and cannot force the DA to engage in mediation with the SPD.

Recommendation Number 3: “The Lassen County Board of Supervisors should move to mitigate the staffing shortage in the DA’s Office and ensure it is fully appropriately staffed.”

Response/Comment: During the budget approval process on September 23, 2025, a staffing report was given during a public hearing. The Board of Supervisors passed the budget and has committed, not in response to this Grand Jury report, to make every effort to alleviate staffing shortages and address retention. By way of example, in 2023 or 2024, the County provided salary increases to all employees to address retention issues. The Board has approved department head requests for signing bonuses on occasion and has authorized the hiring of individuals at higher steps to attract more qualified candidates for hard-to-fill positions.

As an update to staffing levels, please note that all but one position is now staffed. It should also be noted that staffing issues are a problem state-wide, not just in Lassen County.

Recommendation Number 4: “The Lassen County Board of Supervisors should increase the budget for the DA's office in order to increase salaries and benefits for prosecutors and support staff.”

Response/Comment: The budget approved on September 23, 2025 contemplates increases in range changes that will require Board approval. During the budget process, all department heads, including the District Attorney, presented their proposed budget and provided support for their requests. The resources for Lassen County are limited. The State of California has imposed many unfunded mandates tying up the County's resources. Discretionary funding is limited.

Recommendation Number 5: “The Board of Supervisor should direct county staff to launch a targeted recruitment campaign, including outreach to law schools and lateral hiring from other jurisdictions.”

Response/Comment: The Board of Supervisors is continually recruiting, including in targeted locations.

Finding Number 1: “The lack of a Public Defender's Office staffed by salaried employees increases the workload of the DA's office, as it results in an increased number of jury trials and there is no central office with which to communicate.”

Response/Comment: Neither Agree nor Disagree: The Board cannot speak to the District Attorney's perspective, but it can advise that the County has made efforts to recruit a Public Defender prior to entering into a contract. Renewing the contract was not fiscally feasible.

Finding Number 2: “Communication and cooperation between the DA's Office and SPD has broken down to the point where it has become a threat to public safety.”

Response/Comment: Neither Agree nor Disagree: The Board of Supervisors cannot comment on the status of the District Attorney's relationship with SPD.

Finding Number 3: “There is no joint training between the DA's Office and the SPD on evolving legal standards, report writing, or evidence collection best practices.”

Response/Comment: Neither Agree nor Disagree: The Board of Supervisors cannot comment on the status of the District Attorney's relationship with SPD.

Conclusion

The Board of Supervisors would like to once again take this opportunity to thank those who have served as Grand Jurors for the 2024-2025 year. It is a considerable commitment, and can, from what we have seen, be frustrating at times. This Board of Supervisors wishes to acknowledge our shared interest in making Lassen County a safer, happier and more productive place to live and work. We pledge to continue to work with future Grand Juries in reaching this goal.