

## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

**Report Title:** Restaurant Inspection Information System: Food for Thought

**Report Date:** June 16, 2008

**Response by:** Marin County Board of Supervisors

### FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: 2, 3, 4
- We disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: 1, 5, 6

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation Number 4 has been implemented.
- Recommendations Numbered 1, 2, and 5 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
- Recommendation Number 3 requires further analysis.

Date: September 9, 2008

Signed: 

Number of pages attached 3

**Marin County Board of Supervisors**

Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report  
"Restaurant Inspection Information System: Food for Thought," June 16, 2008

**FINDINGS**

- F1. For years, county officials have delayed establishing a website for consumers to conveniently view health-inspection reports on food purveyors. The county at last has a goal of providing a website with at least some data by this fall.**

Response: Disagree in part.

We agree that the County has a goal of providing web posting of food inspection results by the fall of 2008 and that establishing a website for the overall results of food facility inspections has been delayed.

The Community Development Agency extensively evaluated the steps necessary to implement such a system, including analysis of the selection of a stand-alone environmental health department system versus a larger system serving the entire agency. In order to select the best combination of database capabilities, price and performance, the County issued and evaluated the responses to a comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP) from a number of leading vendors.

Initially, the agency sought to include the permit tracking and reporting needs of Consumer Protection and the other environmental health programs into a comprehensive permit information system serving the entire Community Development Agency. Budget limitations required a reevaluation of this approach and the eventual decision to proceed with a less costly first phase of the agency's updated permit tracking system. There have been numerous steps in finalizing a detailed work program for the first phase environmental health system and in the design and implementation of the system.

- F2. Marin officials have not yet decided whether to establish a health-inspection rating system.**

Response: Agree.

- F3. An antiquated county database fails to offer adequate health-inspection data.**

Response: Agree.

- F4. The county has a contract for an electronic inspection system called Digital Health Department (DHD) limited to providing a consumer website. Delivery of other DHD system capabilities will require a master contract not yet approved by the Board of Supervisors.**

Response: Agree.

- F5. The county has not consistently enforced state law mandating that every food establishment post a sign alerting customers that its latest health-inspection report is available on site.**

Response: Disagree in part.

Inspectors are generally diligent in enforcing signage requirements, including display of the health permit, hand washing signs and the sign advising patrons of their right to review the health inspection report. However, the extent to which the required signage actually remains continually posted between regular facility inspections is dependent upon the facility operator or manager. The agency's ability to confirm the proper posting of signage is limited to the normal cycle of 1-3 inspections per year.

- F6. The county has been tentative about future improvements to the food-inspection process.**

Response: Disagree.

A comprehensive set of improvements to the food facility inspection process is underway. These include web posting of inspection results, establishing a numeric rating system based upon individual facility inspection results, launching an award of excellence program as successfully used by several other jurisdictions and ongoing evaluation of the merits of the results of these measures. During 2009, County staff will brief the Board of Supervisors on these matters, including an analysis of options for a food facility grading program in Marin County.

As part of the upcoming web posting of inspection results this fall, a scoring system will be developed to facilitate the selection of restaurant operators eligible for the award of excellence program to be initiated in 2009. Should the Board of Supervisors elect to establish a food facility grading program, this numerical scoring date would provide an excellent basis for rating the performance of the food facilities within our jurisdiction.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The county meet the goal of having a consumer health-inspection website by this fall.**

Response: Not yet implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

The County has committed to the goal of launching a web site in the Fall of 2008 offering easy access to food facility inspection results.

- R2. The food-inspection website, when it is established, be linked to the county's website home page for easy and rapid access.**

Response: Not yet implemented, but will be implemented in the future

Once established, the website will be prominently featured on the County's main website home page.

**R3. The Board of Supervisors expeditiously decide whether to have a health-inspection rating system and, if so, which one to select.**

Response: Requires further analysis.

During 2009, County staff will brief the Board of Supervisors on the effectiveness of the web posting of food facility inspection results and the rollout of the Award of Excellence program. Staff will also prepare a number of options for the Board to consider pertaining to the possible adoption of a food facility grading program, including the estimated costs, staffing needs, potential benefits and drawbacks of such a program. Out of the 62 jurisdictions in California, eleven have a food facility grading program of some type and there are no Statewide requirements or standards for such programs. Staff will gather information from other jurisdictions to present to the Board of Supervisors in the context of the options for a grading program.

Staff will further continue to consult with industry representatives to seek their input and recommendations regarding the posting of inspection results and the rating of facilities.

**R4. The county strictly enforce state law by mandating that each restaurant in Marin prominently display at its entrance a sign indicating that the latest health-inspection report is available on site. When the food-inspection website for consumers is established, the website address should be included on the sign.**

Response: Implemented.

**R5. An action plan be adopted by January 1, 2009, to help coordinate county efforts at implementing the full potential of the Digital Health Department system in the health-inspection process.**

Response: Not yet implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

By January 1st, 2009 the County will issue a work program designed to coordinate and facilitate the full implementation of the DHD database system within the Consumer Protection program.



## THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIN

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September 9, 2008

Honorable Verna Adams  
Presiding Judge  
Marin County Superior Court  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Adams:

Forwarded herewith is the Marin County Board of Supervisors' response (incorporating those for the County Administrator) to the 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury Report, "Restaurant Inspection Information System: Food for Thought." The Board of Supervisors' response addresses all Findings and Recommendations for which a response was requested from the Board of Supervisors, the County Community Development Agency and the County Information Systems and Technology Department..

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles McGlashan".

Charles McGlashan  
President, Board of Supervisors

cc: Civil Grand Jury

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SUSAN L. ADAMS SAN RAFAEL 1ST DISTRICT	VICE-PRESIDENT HAROLD C. BROWN SAN ANSELMO 2ND DISTRICT	PRESIDENT CHARLES MCGLASHAN MILL VALLEY 3RD DISTRICT	STEVE KINSEY SAN GERONIMO 4TH DISTRICT	2ND VICE-PRESIDENT JUDY ARNOLD NOVATO 5TH DISTRICT	CLERK MATTHEW H. HYMEL
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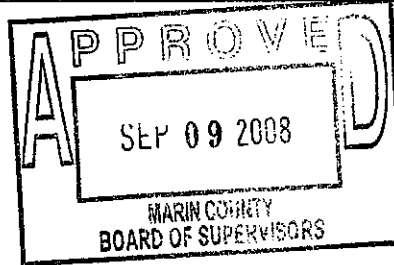
COUNTY OF MARIN  
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

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September 9, 2008

Board of Supervisors  
Marin County Civic Center  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, California 94903



Matthew H. Hymel  
County Administrator

**SUBJECT:** Response to 2007-2008 Grand Jury Report, "Restaurant Inspection Information System: Food for Thought" (June 16, 2008)

Dear Board Members:

**RECOMMENDATION:** Concur in and adopt the attached proposed response to the 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury report regarding Marin County Restaurant Inspection Services and authorize the Board President to forward the response to the Presiding Judge of the Marin County Superior Court.

**SUMMARY:** The 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury published a report on June 16, 2008 entitled, "Restaurant Inspection Information System: Food for Thought." The report included a request for response from your Board, which incorporates those of the County Administrator, the Community Development Agency and the Information Systems and Technology Department. Attached for your consideration, in accordance with §933 of the California Penal Code, is a proposed response. A copy of the Grand Jury report is also attached for your information.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ALTERNATIVE:** The Board may amend any suggested response.

**REVIEWED BY:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	County Counsel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Auditor-Controller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Hymel".

Matthew H. Hymel  
County Administrator

cc: County Counsel