



SACRAMENTO COUNTY GRAND JURY NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY IGNORES JAIL IMPROVEMENTS AS DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS PERSIST

After a months-long investigation, the Sacramento County Grand Jury found Sacramento County officials failed to implement critical changes at the downtown Sacramento County Main Jail and Rio Consumnes Correctional Center (RCCC) in Elk Grove despite a major class action lawsuit settlement agreement reached more than three years ago.

The settlement — reached in January 2020 and commonly referred to as the “Mays Consent Decree” — was in response to a lawsuit initially filed in July 2018 against the County citing inhumane conditions in the jails, lack of adequate staffing, poor medical and mental care for inmates, and violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Since then, the Grand Jury noted the County has been exceedingly slow to follow through with the agreed-upon changes at both jails.

“There’s really no excuse for the County and the Sheriff to slow-walk these changes,” said Norval Wellsfry, Foreperson of the Grand Jury.

“Failure to make the changes could be catastrophic,” Wellsfry continued. “This stalling increases the risk of serious illness for jail staff and inmates and heightens the possibility of more inmate suicides.

“Continuing to wait will cost taxpayers millions of dollars and could trigger a federal receivership where a court could appoint a neutral expert to be in control of the jails for an extended period of time.”

As recently as last September, the plaintiffs' attorneys co-authored a letter to the County Board of Supervisors that stated, "the conditions in the jails remain deplorable." The County responded in December agreeing "to develop a plan for addressing the physical plant deficiencies." But the Grand Jury found no evidence of a comprehensive plan.

Also, in December, the Supervisors approved the design of a two-story Annex adjacent to the Main Jail to address a portion of the deficiencies. Unfortunately, the Supervisors did not approve the funding source for construction of the Annex, which will take at least five years to design and construct.

There are no immediate plans to address the other outstanding violations.

The Sacramento County Grand Jury is the independent watchdog over public entities within the county. Concerned citizens can contact the Grand Jury on a confidential basis through written complaints that alert the Grand Jury to issues within public entities; we would like to hear from you at www.sacgrandjury.org.