



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

2023–2024 CIVIL GRAND JURY

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grand Jury: Flood Management “Come Hell or High Water”

2023–2024 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Report identifies unpreparedness for climate change.

SAN FRANCISCO (PR NEWSWIRE) JUNE 5, 2024—Climate change is bringing higher seas and greater storms that threaten to inundate San Francisco with flooding, and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) has reported that the city’s sewer system cannot handle the change, the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury reported today.

A new jury report released findings that San Francisco lacks a comprehensive funding plan for climate change adaptation, that interdepartmental coordination is hampered by siloed agency planning, that the city pays for avoidable flooding costs, and debt policies impose limits on the city’s ability to fund essential adaptation projects. All of this is aggravated by a lack of transparency about what is currently being done, and what will need to be done, to maintain resilience in the face of climate change.

In 2021, ClimateSF, a partnership of the SFPUC and the Port, along with the Planning Department, the San Francisco Environment Department, and the Office of Resilience and Capital Planning, was created by the Mayor’s Office to coordinate and oversee existing and

future climate resilience projects. The partnership's charter includes the objectives of "coordinated planning and performance management," and "aligned communications and engagement."

The Jury's report evaluates the city's progress towards these objectives, with an emphasis on flood management.

The report's recommendations include:

- Reforming the process of decision making in the Climate Resilience Program;
- Providing more transparency in planning for climate adaptation in the city;
- Reassessing likely shortfalls in funding to respond to climate change;
- Improving interdepartmental coordination by the city to address expected flooding; and
- Stronger messaging by the city to notify the public about flood insurance options and to identify the areas of the city most likely to be affected.

"With at least 23,700 residents likely harmed by inland flooding, the city needs a more comprehensive and integrated plan to adapt to climate change," said Michael Carboy, Jury Foreperson. "How the city will pay for the adaptation and execute the projects should be made transparent to all residents."

To read the full report, please visit

<https://www.sf.gov/resource/2024/civil-grand-jury-reports-2023-2024>.

About the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury

The Superior Court selects 19 San Franciscans to serve year-long terms as Civil Grand Jurors. The Jury has the authority to investigate City and County government by reviewing documents and interviewing public officials and private individuals. At the end of its inquiries, the Jury issues reports of its findings and recommendations. Agencies identified in the report must respond to these findings and recommendations within either 60 or 90 days, and the Board of Supervisors conducts a public hearing on each Civil Grand Jury report after those responses are submitted. For more information, visit the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury website:

<https://www.sf.gov/departments/civil-grand-jury>.

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