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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JUNE 23, 2025

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2024-2025 SAN JOAQUIN CIVIL GRAND JURY RELEASES REPORT ON WASTEWATER INEFFICIENCY IN LINNE ESTATES

Stockton, CA — Today, the 2024-2025 San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) released its report investigating wastewater inefficiency in Linne Estates, a community in unincorporated San Joaquin County. It is situated outside the City of Tracy and is not serviced by the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP); and therefore, an independent WWTP was constructed by the developer to serve this area. The complaint from a homeowner in the Linne Estates, which was received late in the 2023-2024 term, was forwarded to the current Grand Jury for investigation.

The complaint alleged that the San Joaquin County Department of Public Works (DPW) mismanaged the operation of the independent WWTP resulting in continued rate hikes. In 2020, the homeowners received a letter from the county indicating that the CSA 44 Zone G fund had a deficit of \$411,000. The county informed homeowners that a significant rate increase would eliminate the deficit over five years, and they agreed, but it continues to rise. They were in regular contact with the DPW but remained frustrated because the deficit continued to grow due to high maintenance and operational costs. The homeowners reported concern about an impending sewer rate increase set to begin in fiscal year 2025-2026.

The San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury conducted a comprehensive investigation into the matter by researching public documents and interviewing homeowners, employees from DPW, staff from the City of Tracy, and elected officials from San Joaquin County. Additionally, Civil Grand Jury members toured the WWTPs.

The 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury did not find any evidence of mismanagement; rather, it determined that the rate hikes resulted from operational and design inefficiencies. Over the past 20 years, homeowners' sewer rates for maintaining and operating the WWTP have consistently increased. Despite these rising sewer rates, there remains a funding deficit from previous repairs, which homeowners attribute to the County approving a poorly designed WWTP.

The Grand Jury made several recommendations to resolve operational and design inefficiencies. The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors (BOS) should consider consolidating the two smaller WWTPs into a single, more efficient facility, create a plan to replace or upgrade the facilities, create a plan with current and projected discharge requirements to reduce operating costs, and assess the feasibility of establishing a satellite office to serve the south county.

The Grand Jury encourages the public to review the full findings and recommendations in the complete report. The report is available for viewing on the [Grand Jury's website](#).

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