



# City of Del Mar

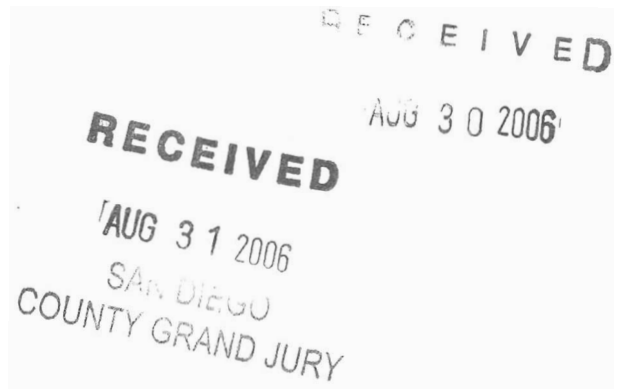
1050 Camino Del Mar · Del Mar, California 92014-2698

Where the Turf meets the Surf



August 28, 2006

The Honorable Janis Sammartino  
Presiding Judge  
P.O. Box 122724  
San Diego, CA 92112



Dear Judge Sammartino:

**Subject: Response to the Grand Jury Report "Lack of San Diego County Evacuation Preparations"**

This letter is on behalf of the City of Del Mar in response to the San Diego County Grand Jury Report 2005/06 filed on May 31, 2006.

The Grand Jury's report states that appropriate systems are not in place to conduct emergency evacuations in the event of a tsunami in the greater San Diego area. The report states that the public is in danger from these disasters, due in part, to a lack of understanding and complacency on the part of the public regarding the forces that might precipitate them. The report states that the public is not being educated as to how they should proceed if a tsunami or other disaster occurs. The Grand Jury has made recommendations in anticipation that these recommendations, if implemented, will achieve greater public readiness in case of such disasters.

This letter will address each finding and recommendation that is pertinent to the City of Del Mar. Additionally, as you may be aware, the City of Del Mar receives law enforcement services via contract with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and they have responded to the Grand Jury Report separately.

## Lack of San Diego County Preparations

### Grand Jury Finding:

Tsunamis pose a significant threat to life and property.

### City of Del Mar Response:

The City of Del Mar agrees with this finding.



### Grand Jury Finding:

Inundation maps showing possible San Diego County shoreline which might be submerged by tsunami waters is not adequate.

### City of Del Mar Response:

The City of Del Mar disagrees with this finding. The City of Del Mar relies on OES (Office of Emergency Services) in providing the best possible tsunami evacuation planning maps (via the University of Southern California (USC) Tsunami Research Group) for emergency preparedness. The USC methodology for the mapping process meets the standard for both the State of California and the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

### Grand Jury Finding:

The San Diego Police Department needs to be on the same systems as the rest of the county for emergency communications.

### City of Del Mar Response:

The City of Del Mar agrees with this finding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

06-67: The City of Del Mar install emergency signage along the San Diego coastal corridor, directing citizens and visitors to safety in case of a tsunami emergency

### City of Del Mar Response

The City of Del Mar is in partial agreement with this finding. First of all, we are open to the suggestion that signage be installed at primary beach access points in areas most at risk of the threat of a tsunami. The purpose of this signage would be to increase awareness for beachgoers of the potential need to evacuate the area quickly.

The City of Del Mar does not agree with the recommendation that signage is required “on all main thoroughfares” to communicate “avenues of escape and shelter from a tsunami.” In our view, the most effective method of tsunami evacuation in Del Mar will be an evacuation of low lying areas “by foot” to higher ground. Roadway signs are not necessary in Del Mar’s particular situation in which only the northern section of the community is at risk of coastal flooding.

06-68 The City of Del Mar find funding sources for the installation of warning sirens for an imminent devastating tsunami.

### City of Del Mar Response

The City of Del Mar agrees with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and OES that this recommendation is not warranted. Although warning sirens appear to be an immediate system of warning, sirens do not direct citizens where to go and what to do specifically. The City of Del Mar believes that a combination of warning systems are better ways of warning citizens and providing information and specific and exact directions to the public.

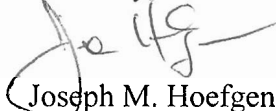
It is important to note that the City of Del Mar has year round lifeguard staffing with numerous individuals on call 24 hours a day. Del Mar's three permanent lifeguard towers are equipped with public address (P.A.) systems, which are an effective way of communicating specific information to beach patrons. Additionally, all emergency vehicles are equipped with P.A. systems and can quickly provide evacuation instructions to area residents.

Additionally, the San Diego County Sheriff's Department currently utilizes a community emergency notification system and has future system upgrades in progress. For example, Reverse 911 is capable of making emergency community notifications, specifically weather related evacuations as noted in the Grand Jury Report. The implementation of this system alone allows law enforcement to notify the community with rapid and specific instructions should evacuations be required. Notifications can be made in conjunction with other emergency broadcast systems such as the Emergency Alert Systems (EAS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radios.

Lastly, the City of Del Mar is working with local citizens as part of the "Are you Ready Del Mar?" community education campaign and part of the presentation materials highlight the risk of tsunamis in our community. Numerous community meetings have been held which have served to heighten awareness of the tsunami threat and appropriate actions for Del Mar citizens to take in the event of an evacuation.

Should you desire additional information from the City of Del Mar, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Hoefgen  
Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Safety

CC: Mayor and City Councilmembers  
City Manager