

# TRINITY COUNTY

Board of Supervisors

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TO: The Honorable Michael B. Harper  
Judge of the Superior Court

FROM: Trinity County Board of Supervisors

CC: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: Response to DER 2022-001 – 2022 Trinity County Civil Grand Jury Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Report

DATE: July 18, 2023

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The Grand Jury has requested a written response to their final report on the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Report (DER 2022-001). The response of the Trinity County Board of Supervisors is as follows:

## FINDINGS

**Finding 1.** The Abandoned Vehicle Abatement (AVA) Program can complete "Private Abatements" efficiently with its existing resources and program structure, assisting residents with vehicles they wish to abate themselves.

**Response.** Agree

**Finding 2.** The AVA Program is not able to complete all reports of Abandon vehicles on roads and highways with its existing resources and program structure due to the limitations of its budget.

**Response.** Agree

**Finding 3.** The current AVA Program is only able to respond to reports and cannot locate Abandon vehicles daily to prevent the buildup of the Public Nuisance Vehicles (PVNs).

**Response.** Agree

**Finding 4.** Due to the AVA Program's self-funding capability, without using General Funds, there is currently no routine annual evaluation of the AVA Program by the BOS or "oversight" by any board or community stakeholders.

**Response.** Agree. Starting January 2024, establish annual program evaluation and CAO report to the BOS.

**Finding 5.** In the past five fiscal years, the AVA Program's revenues from the State DMV fees have been insufficient to cover all the AVA Program expenses.

**Response.** Agree.

**Finding 6.** The Clean California grant is available to supplement the AVA Program, but Trinity County has no funding for the request and administration of this grant opportunity.

**Response.** Agree. The county AVA program staff will assess the Clean California Grant for possible program applicability and the assessment will be included in the first annual program evaluation in January 2024.

**Finding 7.** Over time, the cost to abate an Abandoned vehicle increases and the scrap value decreases, leading to a PNV that is left in place for lack of funds.

**Response.** Agree.

**Finding 8.** There is a lack of information available in the media (newspaper, social media) or on the County website for Trinity County residents to report an Abandoned vehicle or legally abate an Abandoned vehicle on their property.

**Response.** Agree. The count AVA program staff will evaluate methods to increase program awareness and ways to enhance access to program information for county residents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1.** The BOS should revisit the financial and personnel structure of the AVA Service Authority in Trinity County to include other departments to assist in locating and tagging Abandoned vehicle to assist the Abatement Officer by October 1, 2023 (F3).

**Response.** Requires further analysis. The AVA County staff will evaluate use of other department resources in determining and locating Abandoned vehicle owners. The analysis will be included in the first overall program evaluation and be completed by January 2024.

**Recommendation 2.** The BOS should examine the AVA Programs in Butte and Lake Counties to consider a future revision of the AVA Service Authority to include an "AVA Board" made up of community stakeholders by October 1, 2023 (F4).

**Response.** Will implement in the future. The BOS will establish a committee. On an as needed basis, the committee will review the AVA program, assist the AVA county staff and provide direction to the CAO. The committee and BOS appointment will be completed by January 2024.

**Recommendation 3.** The BOS should do a cost/benefit analysis of using additional General Funds to pay for grant writing for other departments, specifically General Services and Solid Waste by October 1, 2023 (F2, F5, F6, F7).

**Response.** Will not implement at this time. The real issue is not about the grant writing or grant application process. The real issue is grants associated with AVA require some level of a county general funds match and staff time to administer the grant.

**Recommendation 4.** The BOS should do a cost/benefit analysis of a Public Relations Campaign (press release, social media posts, ad campaign) to highlight Private Abatement options for Trinity County residents and how to report an Abandoned vehicle on public roadways by October 1, 2023 (F8).

**Response.** Will implement in the future. The County web page already outlines how to access the AVA program functions and how to obtain a Private Abatement certificate. The county is in the process of evaluating different platforms to improve the ability to highlight private abatement options for county residents and should have improved methods by January 2024.

**Recommendation 5.** The BOS should instruct the Information Technology and General Services departments to update the County website to include a downloadable "Report an Abandoned Vehicle" form, and "I Want To ..." menu option to assist the public in navigating to the AVA Program page, a set of FAQs, a list of businesses to assist with private abatements, and all relevant program information by October 1, 2023 (F8).

**Response.** The county is in the process of evaluating different platforms to improve the ability to highlight private abatement options for county residents and should have improved methods by January 2024.

**Report Date:** December 16, 2022

**Response by:** Supervisor Jill Cox and submitted to Trinity County Board of Supervisors for review and correction/adoption on February 22, 2023.

**Date Due:** March 20, 2023 **To:** Michael B. Harper, Judge of Trinity Superior Court

**Findings**

I (we) agree with the Finding numbered: F4, F6, F8

F4. Due to the AVA Program's self-funding capability without using General Funds, there is currently no routine annual evaluation of the AVA Program by the BOS or "oversight" by any board or community stakeholders.

F6. The Clean California grant is available to supplement the AVA Program but Trinity County has no funding for the request and administration of this grant opportunity.

F8. There is a lack of information available in the media (newspaper, social media) or on the County website for Trinity County residents to report an AV or legally abate an AV on their property.

I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered: \_\_\_\_\_  
(attach a statement specifying any portions of the Findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore.)

**Recommendations**

Recommendations numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ have been implemented.  
(attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)

Recommendation numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. (attach a time frame for implementation)

Recommendations numbered: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5 require further analysis.  
(attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of the planned analysis, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared, discussed and approved by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed. This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)

Recommendations numbered: \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not deemed reasonable. (attach an explanation.)

Date: 2/22/23 Signed: Jill Cox

**Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Report**

**Report Date:** December 16, 2022

***Explanation and scope, parameters of planned analysis and time frame for the matter to be prepared:***

Being unreasonable for a 10-week interim CAO to make a programmatic decision of ongoing outcomes on behalf of the incoming CAO, all 5 recommendations will be evaluated for program development by the incoming CAO, Trent Tuthill, and returned no later than June 22, 2023.

The analysis will include information provided by Trinity County General Services and the local California Highway Patrol Abatement Officer and will be further informed by the status of Trinity County staff capacity along with projected availability of General Fund dollars.