



City of Salinas

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR • 200 Lincoln Ave • Salinas, California 93901

(831) 758-7201 • (831) 758-7368 (Fax) • www.ci.salinas.ca.us

July 7, 2015

The Honorable Judge Marla O. Anderson
Presiding Judge, Superior Court
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, California 93901

**Re: City of Salinas's Responses to Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report
No. 2 "Over Militarization of Local Police Departments: Myth or Fact?"**

Dear Judge Anderson:

This letter is the City of Salinas's response to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2014-2015 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports No. 2—"Over Militarization of Local Police Departments: Myth or Fact?" ("Final Report No. 2"). I would first like to thank the members of the Civil Grand Jury for their time and effort taken to assist us in improving our ability to provide services to our community. In Final Report No. 2, the Civil Grand Jury overall made a total of eight Findings and one Recommendation, with four Findings and no Recommendations specific to the Salinas Police Department.

With these times of budget cuts the City of Salinas and the Salinas Police Department has been forced to look to the Federal Government to help provide much needed safety equipment in a way that is fiscally responsible. The Salinas Police Department had been in need of a new ballistic resistant vehicle for years prior to the 1033 program offering the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. The acquisition of the MRAP, and its subsequent repurposing as an Armored Rescue Vehicle (ARV) allowed the Salinas Police Department to acquire a much needed piece of safety equipment which the Department otherwise could not afford. When acquiring the ARV the Salinas Police Department recognized the possibility of negative public perception and took great care to not deploy the vehicle until it had been modified from the Military configuration to a configuration more appropriate to a civilian Rescue Vehicle. The Police Department developed a policy for the use of the MRAP which restricts its use only to situations that may require ballistic protection or rescue capabilities. This policy has been reviewed by the Police Community Advisory Committee in a public meeting.

With respect to concerns of "Over Militarization of Local Police Departments," the Salinas Police Department has responded in a manner appropriate for municipal law enforcement to both tactical/SWAT incidents and to civil unrest. With respect to civil unrest, the Salinas Police Department has been very intentional about responding to demonstrations only when necessary to preserve life and property, and while fully acknowledging, protecting and defending the First Amendment rights of protesters.

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The Civil Grand Jury accurately addressed and accessed the procurement, purpose and deployment of the MRAP vehicle by the Salinas Police Department.

As requested by the Civil Grand Jury, the City of Salinas respectfully submits the following responses to the Findings identified for a response in Final Report No. 2.

Final Report No. 2

Finding 1: *The Salinas Police Department currently deploys its ARV vehicle on all SWAT operations, and during 2014 it was not used for any rescue, barricade, or hostage situations.*

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding.

Finding 2: *The deployments of the Salinas Police Department's SWAT team and Monterey Peninsula Regional SRU appear reasonably limited to potentially dangerous situations.*

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding as it pertains to the Salinas Police Department's SWAT team. The City Council has no opinion with respect to deployment of the Monterey Peninsula Regional SRU.

Finding 3: *Monterey Peninsula area and Salinas police departments have received only small numbers of military surplus weapons or equipment from the Department of Defense.*

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding

Finding 8: *The problems noted in the American Civil Liberties Union's 2014 report, in which they concluded that American policing has become "unnecessarily and dangerously militarized," do not appear to be present in the Monterey area police departments reviewed by the MCGJ or in the Salinas Police Department.*

Response: The City Council agrees with this finding.

Thank You for the opportunity to respond to the Civil Grand Jury's Report.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe Gunter
Mayor