

July 24, 2023

Dear Editor,

This year the Calaveras County Grand Jury again investigated substandard conditions at the County's animal shelter. These conditions have persisted despite prior negative Grand Jury reports dating back to 1987.

The Grand Jury also recommended the county create and implement a plan to reduce damage from future storms like those in January that inundated homes with floodwaters in Valley Springs. The Grand Jury cited numerous public safety and environmental health issues that have been poorly administered or disregarded. Unfortunately, when it comes to Calaveras County's long-term neglect of critical issues, the Grand Jury Report is just the tip of the iceberg.

In 2008, County supervisors identified a number of critical issues to address in the update of the General Plan. It's not like they don't know what's needed. Nevertheless, in the 2019 General Plan update, the supervisors indefinitely deferred dealing with a long list of the issues they had identified such as funding for law enforcement and emergency services; identifying standards for emergency response times; identifying emergency evacuation routes; implementing fire safety measures; updating road and infrastructure funding; conserving water, agricultural land and wildlife corridors; funding parks; and restoring the eliminated community plans on the Highway 4 corridor.

The County's ongoing refusal to confront and resolve persistent critical planning issues is among the reasons for the legal challenge to the 2019 General Plan Update by the Calaveras Planning Coalition. The county's perennial neglect has and will continue to result in unnecessary harm to people, property and the environment from the devastation of events such as wildfire, crime, traffic collisions, and water shortages.

However, we need not stand idly by and become the next victims of the County's neglect. As individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations we can address these issues. To learn more about the list of neglected issues and the personal actions you can take to make a difference, please consult the CAP/CPC website at: calaverascap.com/list . Thank you for all that you do to make Calaveras County a pleasant place to live, work, and play.

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