AMENDED IN COMMITTEE
9/17/2026

FILE NO. 260704 RESOLUTION NO. 553-26

[Board Response - Civil Grand Jury Report – The Sounds of Silence: San Francisco's Outdoor Public Warning System and the Cost of Not Deciding]

Resolution responding to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations contained in the 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Report, entitled "The Sounds of Silence: San Francisco's Public Warning System and the Cost of Not Deciding;" and urging the Mayor to cause the implementation of accepted findings and recommendations through his department heads and through the development of the annual budget.

WHEREAS, Under California Penal Code, Section 933 et seq., the Board of Supervisors must respond, within 90 days of receipt, to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations contained in Civil Grand Jury Reports; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with California Penal Code, Section 933.05(c), if a finding or recommendation of the Civil Grand Jury addresses budgetary or personnel matters of a county agency or a department headed by an elected officer, the agency or department head and the Board of Supervisors shall respond if requested by the Civil Grand Jury, but the response of the Board of Supervisors shall address only budgetary or personnel matters over which it has some decision making authority; and

WHEREAS, Under San Francisco Administrative Code, Section 2.10(a), the Board of Supervisors must conduct a public hearing by a committee to consider a final report of the findings and recommendations submitted, and notify the current foreperson and immediate past foreperson of the Civil Grand Jury when such hearing is scheduled; and

WHEREAS, In accordance with San Francisco Administrative Code, Section 2.10(b), the Controller must report to the Board of Supervisors on the implementation of

recommendations that pertain to fiscal matters that were considered at a public hearing held by a Board of Supervisors Committee; and

WHEREAS, The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Report, entitled "The Sounds of Silence: San Francisco's Public Warning System and the Cost of Not Deciding" ("Report") is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 260704, which is hereby declared to be a part of this Resolution as if set forth fully herein; and

WHEREAS, The Civil Grand Jury has requested that the Board of Supervisors respond to Finding Nos. F6, F7, F9, F10, F11 and F12, as well as Recommendation Nos. R1 and R2, contained in the subject Report; and

WHEREAS, Finding No. F6 states: "Any siren-based approach to emergency warnings still requires San Francisco to maintain and use its existing digital messaging systems for emergencies including WEA, AlertSF, and social media.;" and

WHEREAS, Finding No. F7 states: "Restoring OPWS would add a layer of infrastructure and operational complexity to emergency warnings without providing the specific, actionable instructions that discourage milling behavior;" and

WHEREAS, Finding No. F9 states: "The status quo, in which OPWS is inoperable and no institutional actor has committed to either restoring or retiring the OPWS, produces ongoing cost without progress to restore OPWS or to confirm its retirement;" and

WHEREAS, Finding No. F10 states: "The unresolved question of whether to restore or retire the OPWS consumes DEM capacity, including staff time and leadership attention, that could be spent improving the city's emergency warning systems;" and

WHEREAS, Finding No. F11 states: "The public has not been given a clear explanation of OPWS's historical importance or its current status, and the public information that does exist is outdated and contradictory;" and

WHEREAS, Finding No. F12 states: "The absence of a clear explanation of OPWS's status has negative implications, including negative media coverage, and public uncertainty;" and

WHEREAS, Recommendation No. R1 states: "By 1 July 2027, the Department of Emergency Management should formally advise the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors whether to restore or permanently retire the OPWS;" and

WHEREAS, Recommendation No. R2 states: "By 1 January 2028, the Department of Public Works, in coordination with property owners where applicable, should remove or secure remnant siren hardware identified as a physical safety hazard;" and

WHEREAS, In accordance with California Penal Code, Section 933.05(c), the Board of Supervisors must respond, within 90 days of receipt, to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on Finding Nos. F6, F7, F9, F10, F11 and F12, as well as Recommendation Nos. R1 and R2, contained in the subject Report; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court that they partially disagree with Finding No. F6 for the following reasons: This report outlines the ways existing siren systems struggle. It is in SF's best interest to investigate a way to alert its populace in an effective, accessible, timely matter; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court that they agree with Finding No. F7 for the following reasons: The siren system has been inoperable since 2019, and there has been zero formal commitment in resources for its restoration; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court that they partially agree with Finding No. F9 for the following reasons: While funding has been requested over the years, no actual efforts or expenditures were implemented, per the report's findings; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court that they agree with Finding No. F10 for the following reasons: the ongoing limbo of the OPWS consumes attention that could be spent elsewhere. We should try coming to a solution--restore or retire--so the question can be put to rest either through the end of the system or through its restoration; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court that they agree with Finding No. F11 for the following reasons: The current state of OPWS is confusing and public information is unclear. We Should be more transparent about its standing. Its historical importance, while interesting, is not relevant to its function as it is now; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court that they agree with Finding No. F12 for the following reasons: it is important for us to always remain clear and transparent for the public, and it is in our best interest to have a clear explanation of OPWS' status; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports that Recommendation No. R1 should not be implemented because it is not warranted or reasonable. A review of this nature requires cross-departmental coordination and context outside of the Department of Emergency Management's purview and would need to be weighed against other emergency-response needs and programs. A recommendation of this nature needs to be made in conjunction with elected and department leadership; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reports that Recommendation No. R2 has already been implemented; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Mayor to cause the implementation of the accepted findings and recommendations through his department heads and through the development of the annual budget.

City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Resolution

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 260704 **Date Passed:** September 29, 2026

Resolution responding to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations contained in the 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury Report, entitled "The Sounds of Silence: San Francisco's Outdoor Public Warning System and the Cost of Not Deciding;" and urging the Mayor to cause the implementation of accepted findings and recommendations through his department heads and through the development of the annual budget.

September 17, 2026 Government Audit and Oversight Committee - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING SAME TITLE

September 17, 2026 Government Audit and Oversight Committee - RECOMMENDED AS AMENDED

September 29, 2026 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Chen, Dorsey, Fielder, Mahmood, Mandelman, Melgar, Sauter, Sherrill, Walton and Wong

File No. 260704

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 9/29/2026 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Unsigned

Daniel Lurie
Mayor

10/09/2026

Date Approved

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without his approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

10/09/2026
Date

File No. 260704