

May 10, 2005

The Honorable Judge Anderson
Santa Barbara Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Grand Jury Request to Consider Sobering Center for Lompoc

Dear Judge Anderson:

I am replying on behalf of the City of Lompoc and the Lompoc Police Department to the 2004-2005 Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury report which was forwarded to Lompoc City Administrator Gary Keefe.

The Santa Barbara Community Sobering Center is an excellent alternative to booking alcohol related arrestees into an already over crowded Santa Barbara County Jail. I am sure it is professionally run and results in significant booking fee savings to the City of Santa Barbara which would otherwise accrue through conventional bookings into the County Jail.

For the City of Lompoc, however, the idea of a sobering center would be impractical and unreasonably expensive to our community. The City of Lompoc differs from the City of Santa Barbara in that it maintains and staffs its own Type 1 Jail . As such we do not book anyone arrested for alcohol-related offenses directly into Santa Barbara County jail facilities. During the 2004 calendar year, members of our agency arrested and booked a total of 342 persons for alcohol related offences, all of whom were cared for by our well qualified, Board of Corrections-trained jailers. Such arrest volume -- less than one person per day on average -- simply does not justify the expense of establishing staffing and maintaining a sobering center in our community. Furthermore, we are not experiencing any overcrowding problems in our jail facility.

In conclusion, while we agree that the Santa Barbara Community Sobering Center is a fine project which improves conditions for alcohol-impaired persons and reduces costs to the City of Santa Barbara, a similar facility would be neither practical nor financially beneficial to the City of Lompoc and its citizens.

Respectfully yours,

WILLIAM F. BROWN, JR.
Chief of Police

c: Santa Barbara Grand Jury (printed & computer disk)
City Administrator Gary Keefe
Capt. Timothy Dabney, Support Services Division Commander
Nancy Faust, Dispatch / Jail Supervisor