

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Agenda Management Support](#)
Subject: Item 8 comment_Gelblum, P
Date: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 6:32:28 AM

From: Peter Gelblum <santacruzacu@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 19, 2025 5:06 PM
To: Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Item 8 May 20, 2025 Agenda - CONTINUE TO JUNE 10

******CAUTION:**This is an EXTERNAL email. Exercise caution. DO NOT open attachments or click links from unknown senders or unexpected email.****

Dear Supervisors - I write to urge you to continue to your next regular meeting June 10, Item 8 regarding the Sheriff's Office's AB 481 report for 2024. The matter should be continued because (1) there is no urgency in hearing it on May 20, and (2) the Sheriff's Office failed to give the public adequate notice of the publication of the report and of the statutorily required public meeting to discuss the report.

Public knowledge and involvement are at the heart of AB 481. Section 1(b) states "***The public has a right to know*** about any funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment by state or local government officials, ***as well as a right to participate*** in any government agency's decision to fund, acquire, or use such equipment." Section 1(e) states: "***The lack of a public forum to discuss the acquisition of military equipment jeopardizes the relationship police have with the community***, which can be undermined when law enforcement is seen as an occupying force rather than a public safety service."

To satisfy these ends, AB 481 created Government Code Section 7072(b), which provides:

"Within 30 days of submitting and publicly releasing an annual military equipment report pursuant to this section, the law enforcement agency shall hold at least one ***well-publicized*** and conveniently located ***community engagement meeting***, at which the general public may discuss and ask questions regarding the annual military equipment report and the law enforcement agency's funding, acquisition, or use of military equipment."

Here, the SO apparently published the 2024 AB 481 report on its website on May 2, and set the required public hearing for just six days later, May 8. However, the meeting was not "well publicized" by any definition of that term. The only public notices were postings on the SO's Facebook and Instagram pages. Thus, the only members of the public who could have received notice were people who took it upon themselves to look at the SO's pages and noticed one or those postings. (As you might imagine, it appears that all or most of the people who follow the SO's pages are vocal supporters of the SO, who are not the people who would be most interested in the AB 481 reports.) There was no notice in any newspaper, radio or TV show, popular general information social media such as NextDoor, or otherwise, and, apparently no press release. Not surprisingly, ***not one person attended the May 8 public meeting***.

Moreover, a group of ACLU and SURJ members met with Sheriff Clark on May 5, for a quarterly meeting that the Sheriff has graciously agreed to hold. Although on May 5 we discussed various aspects of AB 481, including Sheriff Clark reaffirming his agreement to hold the public meeting before the BOS meeting where the AB 481 report was agendized, the Sheriff did not mention that the report had been published three days earlier or that the public meeting was scheduled for three days later. The people at the May 5 meeting were all committed activists, including regarding AB 481 issues, but not one of them learned of the May 8 public meeting until Sheriff Clark happened to mention it in a May 12 email. The Sheriff has since said that he did not mention the publication or public meeting because he assumed on May 5 that we knew about the May 2 publication and the May 8 meeting.

As a result of the SO's failure to follow the law and hold a "**well-publicized**" community meeting, we have been unable to adequately review, analyze, and address the lengthy 2024 AB 481 report, which contains, among other things, 120 separate incidents of the use of military equipment.

Consequently, I urge the Board to continue this Item until June 10, 2025, to follow the spirit of AB 481 and to allow the public a meaningful opportunity to review, analyze, and address the 2024 AB 481 report. There is no downside to continuing the hearing on this item.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

--

Peter Gelblum
Chair, Santa Cruz County Chapter
ACLU of Northern California