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TRANSCRIPTION OF RECORDED INTERVIEW

OF

Paul Romero

September 24, 2012

Sacramento, California

Investigation of Department of Parks &
Recreation - Financial Irregularities

Interviewed by: Thomas M. Patton
Deputy Attorney General
Office of the Attorney
General
State of California

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1 MR. PATTON: All right. This is
2 Thomas M. Patton, Deputy Attorney General.
3 It's 12:58 p.m., Monday, September 24. With
4 me is Investigator Michael Mattson of the
5 Department of Justice.

6 I'm going to give you my card.
7 And we have with us today --
8 If you could, say your name and
9 spell it.

10 MR. ROMERO: Yeah. It's Paul
11 Romero, R-O-M-E-R-O.

12 MR. PATTON: Okay. Thanks for
13 coming down, Mr. Romero.

14 And I see from organization charts
15 that the Parks Department gave me, it looked
16 to me like you were at one time the Chief
17 Deputy Director.

18 MR. ROMERO: That's correct.

19 MR. PATTON: From -- can you -- do
20 you remember what dates you served in that
21 capacity?

22 MR. ROMERO: I think I started
23 sometime in mid to late March or 2004, and I
24 left in June of 2008, I retired.

25 MR. PATTON: Okay.

1 MR. ROMERO: So it was essentially a
2 four-year period that I was in that capacity.

3 MR. PATTON: And how did you end up
4 taking that position for that four-year
5 period?

6 MR. ROMERO: Well, actually I
7 applied for a position on the State Park
8 Commission.

9 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

10 MR. ROMERO: And the appointments
11 officer called me and asked if I'd be
12 interested in applying for the deputy job
13 so -- Chief Deputy. So after talking with --

14 MR. PATTON: The appointments who?

15 MR. ROMERO: The appointment
16 secretary for the governor.

17 MR. PATTON: Governor. Okay.

18 MR. ROMERO: Well, I'm sure it was
19 an assistant; it wasn't the appointment
20 secretary himself but --

21 MR. PATTON: That was during --

22 MR. ROMERO: Schwarzenegger.

23 MR. PATTON: That was the
24 Schwarzenegger administration.

25 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

1 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

2 MR. ROMERO: So I applied and
3 interviewed and selected.

4 MR. PATTON: And who selected you?

5 MR. ROMERO: Well, it was an
6 appointment by the governor.

7 MR. PATTON: Who did you interview
8 with?

9 MR. ROMERO: Mike Christman, Karen
10 Scarborough, which was the secretary and
11 assistant secretary of resources, a young
12 fellow who was the governor's appointee to the
13 resources agency and the appointment
14 secretary.

15 MR. PATTON: Did you interview with
16 the Director, Ruth Coleman?

17 MR. ROMERO: I had lunch with her
18 prior to the interview with the agency folks.

19 MR. PATTON: So really your
20 interviews were at the agency and governor
21 office levels?

22 MR. ROMERO: Right, right. From
23 what I understand, the Chief Deputy and the
24 Director are appointees of the governor --

25 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

1 MR. ROMERO: -- not from the
2 Director.

3 MR. PATTON: And you say you applied
4 for what kind of a position with the --

5 MR. ROMERO: For the Park and
6 Recreation Committee.

7 MR. PATTON: Oh, that's right. And
8 then they asked if you want to be considered
9 for -- okay.

10 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

11 MR. PATTON: And what was your
12 background prior to that?

13 MR. ROMERO: Well, I had spent
14 numerous years in regional parks systems. I
15 was the Deputy Director -- I'm sorry -- the
16 Director of Riverside County and then the
17 Director of Santa Clara Park Systems.

18 MR. PATTON: Okay.

19 MR. ROMERO: Then I went to become
20 the Director of the Resources Agency for Santa
21 Clara County. From there, I went to become
22 the CAO of the Valley Water District, and from
23 the water district, I went to the State.

24 MR. PATTON: When you were at -- so
25 your only experience then with State Parks was

1 that four-year stint --

2 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

3 MR. PATTON: -- as Chief Deputy
4 Director.

5 MR. ROMERO: That's correct.

6 MR. PATTON: Okay. And you
7 obviously worked with Ruth Coleman.

8 MR. ROMERO: I did.

9 MR. PATTON: And did you -- you
10 remember who was -- who you interacted with in
11 the Administrative Services side?

12 MR. ROMERO: Well, initially it was
13 Michael Harris.

14 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

15 MR. ROMERO: He was the Admin
16 Deputy.

17 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

18 MR. ROMERO: And I think he held
19 that position -- he ultimately [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

21 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

22 MR. ROMERO: -- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

24 MR. PATTON: We don't want to know
25 what [REDACTED]

1 to --

2 MR. ROMERO: Okay. Well, anyhow,
3 he --

4 MR. PATTON: I understand he took
5 some time off.

6 MR. ROMERO: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] We put him in a position to the
8 side, and Ruth brought in Lopez from
9 Transportation --

10 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

11 MR. ROMERO: -- as the manager.

12 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

13 MR. ROMERO: And so that's how Lopez
14 came in. Most of the directors -- or the
15 deputies, I should say, if not all, were
16 direct appointments of Ruth.

17 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

18 MR. ROMERO: I had very little
19 involvement with that.

20 MR. PATTON: So you -- in terms of
21 any interaction you had with Administrative
22 Services, at first it was with Mike Harris has
23 the head of Admin Services --

24 MR. ROMERO: Right.

25 MR. PATTON: -- and then with Manny

1 Lopez.

2 MR. ROMERO: Yeah, and actually very
3 little. Most of the interaction was at staff
4 meetings.

5 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

6 MR. ROMERO: Ruth was very much of a
7 hands-on Director, especially with the
8 financial stuff.

9 MR. PATTON: Say more about that.
10 What did you observe in terms of her hands-on
11 with financial? Would she sit and meet with
12 Admin Services people?

13 MR. ROMERO: Yeah, she -- well, one
14 of the pluses and minuses with Ruth's status
15 was that she had been at the department for
16 quite a while, so she knew a lot of the people
17 in their various capacities.

18 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

19 MR. ROMERO: So a lot of finance
20 people worked with her in her earlier
21 capacities, so they went and directly reported
22 to her. And same thing was true with Harris.
23 She brought him in from Fish and Game, and he
24 reported directly to her and --

25 MR. PATTON: What other finance

1 people did you become aware reported directly
2 to her?

3 MR. ROMERO: It was primarily
4 Harris, but then he had some staffers --

5 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

6 MR. ROMERO: -- that did analytical
7 work, and they would report to her -- I mean,
8 they wouldn't report directly, but they would
9 react to her.

10 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

11 MR. ROMERO: I mean, they worked
12 directly for Harris.

13 MR. PATTON: Do you remember any of
14 those staffers' names?

15 MR. ROMERO: You know, I don't.
16 It's been a long time.

17 MR. PATTON: Did you work with Becky
18 Brown? Do you remember her?

19 MR. ROMERO: Oh, Becky was one of
20 them, yeah.

21 MR. PATTON: Do you remember Freda
22 Luan-Dun?

23 MR. ROMERO: No.

24 MR. PATTON: Okay. Becky was one of
25 them that you recall that would have

1 interaction directly with Ruth?

2 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

3 MR. PATTON: Okay.

4 MR. ROMERO: I had very little, if
5 any, contact with them except during staff
6 discussions.

7 MR. PATTON: So these staff meetings
8 you talked about, were -- are these what we
9 understand are the large and small executive
10 committee meetings?

11 MR. ROMERO: The large executive
12 committee was when she brought all of her
13 deputies in and a lot of the line supports,
14 and the small staff was just the deputies --
15 myself and the deputies. And the deputies met
16 usually weekly. And the large staff met, I
17 think, probably about monthly.

18 MR. PATTON: And large staff was all
19 the Deputy Directors plus who?

20 MR. ROMERO: Second line reports.

21 MR. PATTON: Okay. Their first
22 lieutenants.

23 MR. ROMERO: Right.

24 MR. PATTON: Okay. In these
25 meetings, do you recall anything being

1 discussed about finances and budget?

2 MR. ROMERO: Most of that was done
3 in Ruth's office. I mean, we would talk about
4 budgets when -- during budget period.

5 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

6 MR. ROMERO: The way the budget
7 structure was at Parks was the superintendants
8 would roll up their budgets, send them into
9 Admin. Admin would roll them up, they'd put a
10 book together, and then that book would be
11 discussed at budget discussion time period
12 and --

13 MR. PATTON: Were you ever involved
14 in those?

15 MR. ROMERO: I was -- pretty much
16 sat in most of them.

17 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

18 MR. ROMERO: The last couple years
19 that I was there, we didn't do that anymore.
20 When Lopez came, we didn't get into that roll
21 up. It was decided to bypass that part of it.

22 MR. PATTON: So when you say we --
23 it would get rolled up from Admin, and then
24 you say we would have a budget discussion --

25 MR. ROMERO: The leadership.

1 MR. PATTON: That would be that
2 small executive committee?

3 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

4 MR. PATTON: Okay. So until the
5 last few years when things apparently changed,
6 kind of the final budget discussions were had
7 at that small executive committee level.

8 MR. ROMERO: Yeah, except for -- I
9 think that changed somewhat in '07. We didn't
10 get into those discussions. Things were so
11 routine, we just didn't get into them. Most
12 of the discussions were with Ruth and the
13 Admin people.

14 MR. PATTON: Okay. So the topic of
15 any disparity between reports going to the
16 Controller versus reports going to the Finance
17 Department --

18 MR. ROMERO: We didn't usually talk
19 about reports in that case.

20 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

21 MR. ROMERO: It was more about what
22 we were going to do, how was the money going
23 to be distributed. That was the key.

24 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

25 MR. ROMERO: Oftentimes, we'd find

1 that the distributions were lopsided in
2 balance depending upon the districts, so we
3 tried to move it around a little bit to help
4 balance out some of the demands in the
5 organization.

6 MR. PATTON: So the subject of any
7 disparity in numbers being reported never came
8 up in any meetings?

9 MR. ROMERO: Not in front of me.

10 MR. PATTON: Did -- was there ever
11 any discussion about reserve funds in the
12 State Parks account?

13 MR. ROMERO: We had very little
14 discussion about reserves --

15 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

16 MR. ROMERO: -- during budget
17 discussions whatsoever. I mean, there was --
18 I don't recall many discussions. I had a
19 discussion when I first started about the SPRF
20 account with Harris.

21 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

22 MR. ROMERO: And he told me what it
23 was about, and he told me that it couldn't be
24 used; it has to be appropriated. So I asked
25 him why don't we go do the appropriation

1 process which we started doing because we were
2 finding revenues coming in at a greater level
3 than what we anticipated. And so we started
4 talking about, well, let's go ahead and go to
5 the legislature and get authorization to
6 spend, which we did, and they gave us fifty-
7 five to ten million dollar, you know -- I
8 guess the right word is leverage. If we
9 brought more money in, we could spend it based
10 on the appropriation authority.

11 MR. PATTON: So if I'm understanding
12 right, you would look at, like, last year's
13 performance and forecast anticipated SPRF
14 revenue the next year with an expectation
15 there was a good chance that actually might
16 come in a little bit higher?

17 MR. ROMERO: Yeah, because we would
18 either raise fees or we were looking at the
19 trends in the user patterns in the parks, and
20 so then we would make predictions and the --

21 MR. PATTON: And you'd ask for an
22 appropriation at a slightly higher number than
23 in case --

24 MR. ROMERO: Right.

25 MR. PATTON: -- those revenues did

1 come in.

2 MR. ROMERO: Let's just say, for
3 example, we saw a hundred million projected
4 and I -- you know, I'm fabricating that
5 number --

6 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

7 MR. ROMERO: -- but let's say we had
8 a hundred million projected, and so we would
9 go forward and say, okay, maybe we'll get five
10 more million, so we'd do a 105 million
11 appropriation authority.

12 MR. PATTON: Um-hum. And if you
13 didn't see that much revenue, then you just
14 obviously aren't going to spend 105 million.

15 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

16 MR. PATTON: But what about there
17 ever being any reserve amount?

18 MR. ROMERO: I wasn't in any
19 discussion about reserves.

20 MR. PATTON: Okay.

21 MR. ROMERO: So that was not really
22 that much of the topic of the day because we
23 were always pretty close, the way I recall.

24 MR. PATTON: Okay. Because we've --
25 and it's really a separate issue than any

1 disparities in numbers. We've heard that sort
2 of the practice was to, as a safety net, to
3 not allocate out to Operations, you know, a
4 hundred percent of what the allocation was, to
5 allocate a little bit less to create a cushion
6 in case --

7 MR. ROMERO: Well, I think there
8 were two things they did. That was one of
9 them. I had heard that. I mean, that was one
10 of the strategies. And then the second was to
11 always have a salary savings, never fill the
12 number of positions that were vacant so that
13 you always had a little buffer there.

14 MR. PATTON: Okay.

15 MR. ROMERO: I mean, the way it
16 worked at Parks, and I suspect at all of State
17 government, is you just never filled your
18 position because of the time frame trying to
19 go through the --

20 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

21 MR. ROMERO: -- recruitment process
22 and so on.

23 MR. PATTON: Okay.

24 MR. ROMERO: So we always had a
25 little -- and that's pretty common of all

1 parks. It wasn't just State government. It
2 was pretty common in all, you know, local
3 government as well.

4 MR. PATTON: During the years that
5 you were there, were -- was the SPRF revenue
6 annually sort of continuing to increase?

7 MR. ROMERO: I was never given
8 numbers on SPRF.

9 MR. PATTON: Okay. So you don't
10 even know.

11 MR. ROMERO: I don't know if there
12 was -- how much money there was in SPRF at any
13 one time. I suspect it changed because there
14 were very visible park user seasons --

15 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

16 MR. ROMERO: -- times of the year
17 when parks were busy. Summertime very busy,
18 wintertime less so. So I suspect the amounts
19 would go up and down because originally SPRF
20 was a place, from what I understand, for park
21 revenues to be deposited --

22 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

23 MR. ROMERO: -- revenues collected
24 at the parks.

25 MR. PATTON: So you don't really

1 have a grasp of numbers with SPRF revenue in
2 particular that you can recall whether there
3 was a growth year by year?

4 MR. ROMERO: No. The thing that I
5 was concerned about primarily was did we make
6 our revenue estimates.

7 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

8 MR. ROMERO: That's what I was
9 concerned about.

10 MR. PATTON: Although you do recall
11 some discussion about getting a slightly
12 increased allocation?

13 MR. ROMERO: We talk -- Harris and I
14 talked about that philosophy early in my
15 tenure there.

16 MR. PATTON: Did you ever get from
17 the legislature increased allocation based on
18 anticipated increases in SPRF revenue?

19 MR. ROMERO: I think we did.

20 MR. PATTON: Yeah?

21 MR. ROMERO: I think we did.

22 MR. PATTON: Okay. So it sounds
23 like if you got it -- but you just don't
24 recall whether or not you actually saw that
25 increased revenue.

1 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

2 MR. PATTON: Okay.

3 MR. ROMERO: My direct reports were
4 in the areas of concessions, planning, the
5 personnel transactions. I was kind of a
6 troubleshooter --

7 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

8 MR. ROMERO: -- in my respects in
9 the department. A lot of the deputies would
10 come to me for advice, but they reported to
11 Ruth. I had the history in Parks and
12 Recreation in the department, so if there was
13 something going on in a park setting, they'd
14 talk to me about it, but when it came to
15 allocations, money, things of that nature, I
16 wasn't in the discussion.

17 MR. PATTON: So really then, the
18 line of communication was going to be the head
19 of Admin Services, Mike, Harris, when you
20 first started there directly to Ruth.

21 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

22 MR. PATTON: And you witnessed that
23 communication --

24 MR. ROMERO: Well, she had regular
25 meetings with them.

1 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

2 MR. ROMERO: I mean, I --

3 MR. PATTON: You were aware she was
4 meeting with them?

5 MR. ROMERO: Oh, by all means. I
6 would talk to Harris in sidebars, but I --

7 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

8 MR. ROMERO: -- I wasn't in the
9 meetings.

10 MR. PATTON: So your understanding
11 was budget -- and prior to budget submissions,
12 prior to going to the legislature to defend
13 the budget, all the communications Michael was
14 having directly with Ruth?

15 MR. ROMERO: Right. Yeah. I was
16 never in budget discussions with the
17 legislature or any of those things.

18 MR. PATTON: And the two of them
19 would go and testify, defend the budget
20 proposal?

21 MR. ROMERO: Usually it was Harris.

22 MR. PATTON: Okay.

23 MR. ROMERO: And the same thing
24 happened when Lopez came in; it was pretty
25 much the same format.

1 MR. PATTON: He would brief Ruth
2 directly?

3 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

4 MR. PATTON: And then who would go
5 to legislature during the Lopez --

6 MR. ROMERO: Usually Harris.

7 MR. PATTON: Still Harris.

8 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

9 MR. PATTON: But he was out for a
10 while.

11 MR. ROMERO: For about six months,
12 and that was the time period where we really
13 didn't have -- well, Ruth brought in Manuel,
14 but I don't think that was during the budget
15 defense time period.

16 MR. PATTON: Did Manny get --
17 because he eventually got appointed to
18 Harris's spot.

19 MR. ROMERO: Right.

20 MR. PATTON: And Harris got
21 appointed to yours, I guess. I guess Harris
22 got appointed to yours when you left, and
23 that's when Manny got appointed to Harris --

24 MR. ROMERO: Well, I was told Harris
25 was always acting. I don't think the governor

1 ever appointed him.

2 MR. PATTON: Okay.

3 MR. ROMERO: So he -- I told Ruth to
4 do that when I left. I said, save some money,
5 don't fill the position.

6 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

7 MR. ROMERO: Harris -- she asked me,
8 what was Harris's capabilities, and I said,
9 well, from an administrative perspective he'd
10 always done it, so I think he could do parts
11 of that. He didn't have any direct reports
12 that I'm aware of --

13 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

14 MR. ROMERO: -- but I'm not sure --
15 exactly sure what he did for her, and I was
16 surprised when he got the title "acting".
17 That surprised me because what is an acting
18 Chief Deputy.

19 MR. PATTON: You were never aware
20 what he did for her in the role of acting
21 Chief Deputy?

22 MR. ROMERO: Right, right. I don't
23 know how he assisted her or what he did.

24 MR. PATTON: Okay.

25 MR. ROMERO: I don't think it was

1 traditionally what I did.

2 MR. PATTON: And it was after you
3 left.

4 MR. ROMERO: It was after I left,
5 and it was none of my business; it was their
6 business at that point in time.

7 MR. PATTON: Yeah, yeah. So what
8 you did know was that he consulted with her
9 about financial matters when he was head of
10 Admin Services.

11 MR. ROMERO: Yes.

12 MR. PATTON: Yeah. And he went and
13 defended the budget.

14 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

15 MR. PATTON: Okay. So you just
16 never got -- you never heard anything about --
17 nobody ever told you, guess what, there's been
18 a history of different numbers getting
19 reported in the account balance statement that
20 the Controller gets for finance documents?

21 MR. ROMERO: I had never heard
22 anything about it.

23 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

24 MR. ROMERO: And quite honestly, if
25 there was a disparity in the numbers, they

1 kept it to themselves but --

2 MR. PATTON: Okay.

3 MR. ROMERO: -- but no, it was
4 never --

5 MR. PATTON: Okay.

6 MR. ROMERO: -- it was never
7 highlighted or daylighted.

8 MR. PATTON: And in the Off Highway
9 Vehicle Fund, did you ever -- were you ever
10 briefed about anything having to do with the
11 Off Highway Vehicle budget?

12 MR. ROMERO: That was a separate
13 unit, and there was a deputy there that was
14 Dabney and --

15 MR. PATTON: Um-hum. Daphne Green?

16 MR. ROMERO: Daphne Green.
17 Dabney -- Daphne. And she and Ruth were the
18 only ones that talked about OHV. I would hear
19 stuff when all hell broke loose, complaints,
20 things of that nature.

21 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

22 MR. ROMERO: But no, I wasn't at all
23 involved in that.

24 MR. PATTON: So Daphne would
25 communicate directly with Ruth --

1 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

2 MR. PATTON: -- about OHV?

3 MR. ROMERO: Correct.

4 MR. PATTON: Okay.

5 MR. ROMERO: Like I say, I was
6 surprised that there was any money in the SPRF
7 fund from OHV because they are really very
8 distinctly different units.

9 MR. PATTON: No, I don't think that
10 that's the case. There's two different --
11 there's an issue about misreporting to Finance
12 as to both of those funds.

13 MR. ROMERO: I see.

14 MR. PATTON: There's not been any
15 suggestion that OHV funds have been comingled
16 into SPRF.

17 MR. ROMERO: Okay. I got that
18 impression from the newspapers, so it was a
19 surprise.

20 MR. PATTON: Yeah, I know. No. In
21 fact, just, I guess, so you can see what it is
22 we're talking about and what has been reported
23 is that these are spreadsheets Finance had
24 been working on that may or may not be the
25 final word, but it's pretty close. And the

1 first is an examination of the SPRF fund, the
2 second is the OHV fund. And the issue --
3 what's been reported is fifty-four million in
4 undisclosed funds. Well, that apparently
5 comes from combining the product of this SPRF
6 balance of twenty million -- 20.3 million and
7 this OHV reported balance of 33.5 to get to
8 about fifty-four.

9 MR. ROMERO: Where was the source of
10 money for this twenty million?

11 MR. PATTON: All right. So here's
12 what these are showing, is that they're
13 showing that at the end of the year the
14 reported amount -- let's go to -- let's start
15 here at about '98.

16 The reported amount has the adjusted
17 balance with the Controller, and we're told
18 that this is your annual cash -- your
19 closer -- year-end closing statement, and the
20 fund balance in SPRF is fifteen-and-a-half
21 less, four-and-a-half million for
22 encumbrances, leaving about eleven million as
23 the balance reported as the status of the fund
24 with the Controller. And this is an accurate
25 number, that these are reconciled

1 continuously.

2 Both at Controller's office and the
3 accounting people at Parks are looking -- you
4 know, they're sharing numbers and that this is
5 an accurate number. The balance reported in
6 the fund condition statement as part of the
7 budgeting process was about 9.3 million
8 dollars less. So this bottom line number
9 represents an underreport in the fund
10 condition statement.

11 Did you ever look at a fund
12 condition statement?

13 MR. ROMERO: No.

14 MR. PATTON: No. So you've not --
15 you've never even studied these documents.

16 MR. ROMERO: No.

17 MR. PATTON: Okay. So I'm just
18 educating you a little bit. Over the years,
19 there's been some number of millions right --
20 and in the last six years or so, pretty
21 consistently right around twenty million
22 different in terms of what's reported to
23 Finance in SPRF as opposed to what the balance
24 that the Controller shows.

25 MR. ROMERO: Um-hum.

1 MR. PATTON: Don't know about that.

2 OHV, some very significant swings
3 where the last year ending 2011 suggests a
4 thirty-four million dollar underreport to
5 Finance, other years twenty million dollar
6 overreport. So suffice it to say that the
7 numbers that we're seeing for OHV are fairly
8 erratic in comparison to a consistency that we
9 see here. And so my question was whether or
10 not you'd ever receive -- you ever heard
11 anything about our numbers in OHV are not
12 matching up.

13 MR. ROMERO: No, no, I never have.
14 In fact, the way we handled it, if I recall
15 properly, was that OHV paid the Admin Division
16 for the services that they provided.

17 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

18 MR. ROMERO: And I never was privy
19 to any of their activities --

20 MR. PATTON: Okay.

21 MR. ROMERO: -- funding in OHV so --

22 MR. PATTON: Okay. Have you --
23 anybody from Parks contacted you or have you
24 talked to anybody from Parks since all of this
25 broke?

1 MR. ROMERO: Well, to be honest, I
2 have.

3 MR. PATTON: Who'd you talk to?

4 MR. ROMERO: I talked to Ted
5 Jackson.

6 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

7 MR. ROMERO: I talked to Roy
8 Stearns.

9 MR. PATTON: And Roy is the
10 Communications Deputy Director.

11 MR. ROMERO: Yeah. I called him,
12 and I asked him what the hell's going on. I
13 had just gotten back from Africa.

14 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

15 MR. ROMERO: And all of a sudden, my
16 e-mail started -- I was in Seattle, and my --
17 the e-mail on my phone started going crazy
18 and --

19 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

20 MR. ROMERO: -- you know, it was
21 telling me about the Director resigning -- or
22 going to resign that day and this, that, and
23 the other. So I -- when I got back, I called
24 Roy and said, what's going on. And he said,
25 well, this is what they found. And I said,

1 really, tell me about it. And he says, I
2 don't know anything about it. I said, well,
3 what did Ruth try to do? And his comment was,
4 well, she wanted to defend the department, she
5 thought it was something she could help with,
6 but apparently that didn't work out so --
7 okay, Roy, thanks a lot.

8 MR. PATTON: So you reached out to
9 Roy.

10 MR. ROMERO: As a communications guy
11 and as a friend.

12 MR. PATTON: And then Ted Jackson,
13 what was his job?

14 MR. ROMERO: Ted was the Deputy of
15 Operations when I was there.

16 MR. PATTON: Oh, that's right,
17 before Tony Perez.

18 MR. ROMERO: Yeah, and he left just
19 shortly after I left.

20 MR. PATTON: Did you talk with Ted?

21 MR. ROMERO: We both talked about
22 the calamity, the problems with the department
23 from the perspective of the employees' morale.
24 We talked about --

25 MR. PATTON: As a result of these

1 reports?

2 MR. ROMERO: Yeah, yeah. We didn't
3 talk about money. We just talked about how
4 sad it was that the department was going
5 through such a mess.

6 MR. PATTON: Um-hum. Okay. He
7 indicate anything about -- did you talk at all
8 with him about what's been reported in terms
9 of the financial discrepancy?

10 MR. ROMERO: No. He actually was
11 the one that told me about Lopez vacation
12 pay-offs.

13 MR. PATTON: Uh-huh.

14 MR. ROMERO: I didn't know about
15 that, and he told me that that happened.

16 MR. PATTON: Jackson didn't talk
17 would you about the disparity in financial
18 reporting?

19 MR. ROMERO: No, no, not at all.

20 MR. PATTON: Okay. So has
21 anybody -- anybody else at Parks you've talked
22 to?

23 MR. ROMERO: No, that was it.

24 MR. PATTON: So nobody's told you
25 anything about, yeah, we had this issue where

1 we were off in our numbers and --

2 MR. ROMERO: No. All my information
3 has been from the newspaper.

4 MR. PATTON: Yeah.

5 MR. ROMERO: Yeah.

6 MR. PATTON: Okay. Well, I think
7 that's all we have for you.

8 You got any questions, Michael?

9 MR. MATTSON: No, I don't.

10 MR. PATTON: Okay. We appreciate
11 your time.

12 MR. ROMERO: Certainly.

13 MR. PATTON: And we're going to go
14 off the record here at 1:22.

15 MR. ROMERO: All right.

16 (Brief break)

17 MR. PATTON: We're back on the
18 record with Paul Romero for just a minute.

19 We were talking off the record a
20 little bit about the atmosphere during the
21 years you were there and Ruth's management
22 style, and you mentioned something about there
23 was a period of time whether Rob Boriskin came
24 in in charge of the Administrative Services
25 side. And describe for me what his -- how the

1 relationships were, what his experience was
2 and how long he lasted.

3 MR. ROMERO: Well, Rob came in with
4 the intention of fixing some of the problems
5 that we had on the inside and --

6 MR. PATTON: What kind of problems
7 were there?

8 MR. ROMERO: Well, dysfunctional
9 problems amongst people, personality
10 conflicts. He was trying to create some new
11 policies in the Admin side --

12 MR. PATTON: Um-hum.

13 MR. ROMERO: -- get better control
14 over definition of duties and
15 responsibilities. And in that process, he
16 probably ruffled the feathers of a few people
17 who started complaining. And I think he was
18 given some direction by Harris to clean things
19 up, and as a result, he lost favor so --

20 MR. PATTON: With the people under
21 him?

22 MR. ROMERO: With the people under
23 him who started pushing upwards to the
24 Director. So the Director was very skeptical
25 at that point in time about his strengths, and

1 she found that she wanted to move him off.

2 MR. PATTON: Okay. I think that's
3 all we need to cover on that. Thank you.

4 MR. MATTSON: And it is 1:34.

5 (End of audio)

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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE
Paul Romero interview on 9-24-12

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO)

 This is to certify that I
transcribed the foregoing pages 1 to 34 to the
best of my ability from an audio recording
submitted by Heidi Webb at the California
Department of Justice, in Sacramento,
California.

 I have subscribed this certificate
at New York, New York, this 3rd day of
October, 2012.

David Rutt
eScribers, Inc.

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[& - common]

<p>&</p>	<p>administrative 6:11</p>	<p>atmosphere 32:20</p>	<p>c</p>
<p>& 1:10</p>	<p>7:21 22:9 32:24</p>	<p>attorney 1:14,15 2:2</p>	<p>calamity 30:22</p>
<p>0</p>	<p>advice 19:10</p>	<p>audio 34:5 35:12</p>	<p>california 1:8,17</p>
<p>07 12:9</p>	<p>africa 29:13</p>	<p>authority 14:10</p>	<p>35:6,13,15</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>agency 4:13,18,20</p>	<p>15:11</p>	<p>called 3:11 29:11,23</p>
<p>1 35:11</p>	<p>5:20</p>	<p>authorization 14:5</p>	<p>cao 5:22</p>
<p>105 15:10,14</p>	<p>ahead 14:4</p>	<p>aware 9:1 20:3</p>	<p>capabilities 22:8</p>
<p>12:58 2:3</p>	<p>allocate 16:3,5</p>	<p>22:12,19</p>	<p>capacities 8:17,21</p>
<p>1:22 32:14</p>	<p>allocation 16:4</p>	<p>b</p>	<p>capacity 2:21 3:2</p>
<p>1:34 34:4</p>	<p>18:12,17</p>	<p>back 29:13,23 32:17</p>	<p>card 2:6</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>allocations 19:15</p>	<p>background 5:12</p>	<p>case 12:19 14:23</p>
<p>20.3 26:6</p>	<p>amount 15:17 26:14</p>	<p>balance 13:2,4</p>	<p>16:6 25:10</p>
<p>2004 2:23</p>	<p>26:16</p>	<p>23:19 26:6,7,17,20</p>	<p>cash 26:18</p>
<p>2008 2:24</p>	<p>amounts 17:18</p>	<p>26:23 27:5,23</p>	<p>certainly 32:12</p>
<p>2011 28:3</p>	<p>analytical 9:6</p>	<p>based 14:9 18:17</p>	<p>certificate 35:2,16</p>
<p>2012 1:7,21 35:18</p>	<p>annual 26:18</p>	<p>becky 9:17,19,24</p>	<p>certify 35:10</p>
<p>24 1:7 2:3</p>	<p>annually 17:6</p>	<p>best 35:12</p>	<p>chance 14:15</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>anticipated 14:3,13</p>	<p>better 33:13</p>	<p>changed 12:5,9</p>
<p>3 1:21</p>	<p>18:18</p>	<p>bit 13:3 14:16 16:5</p>	<p>17:13</p>
<p>33.5 26:7</p>	<p>anybody 28:23,24</p>	<p>27:18 32:20</p>	<p>charge 32:24</p>
<p>34 35:11</p>	<p>31:21,21</p>	<p>book 11:10,10</p>	<p>charts 2:14</p>
<p>3rd 35:17</p>	<p>anymore 11:19</p>	<p>boriskin 32:23</p>	<p>chief 2:16 3:13 4:23</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>apparently 12:5</p>	<p>bottom 27:8</p>	<p>6:3 22:18,21</p>
<p>9-24-12 35:3</p>	<p>26:4 30:6</p>	<p>break 32:16</p>	<p>christman 4:9</p>
<p>9.3 27:7</p>	<p>applied 3:7 4:2 5:3</p>	<p>brief 21:1 32:16</p>	<p>clara 5:17,21</p>
<p>98 26:15</p>	<p>applying 3:12</p>	<p>briefed 24:10</p>	<p>clean 33:18</p>
<p>a</p>	<p>appointed 21:17,21</p>	<p>broke 24:19 28:25</p>	<p>close 15:23 25:25</p>
<p>ability 35:12</p>	<p>21:22,23 22:1</p>	<p>brought 7:8 8:23</p>	<p>closer 26:19</p>
<p>account 13:12,20</p>	<p>appointee 4:12</p>	<p>10:12 14:9 21:13</p>	<p>closing 26:19</p>
<p>23:19</p>	<p>appointees 4:24</p>	<p>brown 9:18</p>	<p>coleman 4:16 6:7</p>
<p>accounting 27:3</p>	<p>appointment 3:15</p>	<p>budget 11:1,4,6,11</p>	<p>collected 17:23</p>
<p>accurate 26:24 27:5</p>	<p>3:19 4:6,13</p>	<p>11:24 12:6 13:16</p>	<p>combining 26:5</p>
<p>acting 21:25 22:16</p>	<p>appointments 3:10</p>	<p>20:11,11,13,16,19</p>	<p>come 14:16 15:1</p>
<p>22:17,20</p>	<p>3:14 7:16</p>	<p>21:14 23:13 24:11</p>	<p>19:10</p>
<p>activities 28:19</p>	<p>appreciate 32:10</p>	<p>budgeting 27:7</p>	<p>comes 26:5</p>
<p>adjusted 26:16</p>	<p>appropriated 13:24</p>	<p>budgets 11:4,8</p>	<p>coming 2:13 14:2</p>
<p>admin 6:15 7:23</p>	<p>appropriation</p>	<p>buffer 16:13</p>	<p>comingled 25:15</p>
<p>8:12 11:9,9,23</p>	<p>13:25 14:10,22</p>	<p>business 23:5,6</p>	<p>comment 30:3</p>
<p>12:13 19:19 23:10</p>	<p>15:11</p>	<p>busy 17:17,17</p>	<p>commission 3:8</p>
<p>28:15 33:11</p>	<p>areas 19:4</p>	<p>bypass 11:21</p>	<p>committee 5:6 10:10</p>
<p>administration 3:24</p>	<p>asked 3:11 5:8</p>		<p>10:12 12:2,7</p>
	<p>13:24 22:7 29:12</p>		<p>common 16:25 17:2</p>
	<p>assistant 3:19 4:11</p>		
	<p>assisted 22:23</p>		

[communicate - game]

<p>communicate 24:25 communication 19:18,23 communications 20:13 29:10 30:10 comparison 28:8 complaining 33:17 complaints 24:19 concerned 18:5,9 concessions 19:4 condition 27:6,10 27:12 conflicts 33:10 considered 5:8 consistency 28:8 consistently 27:21 consulted 23:8 contact 10:5 contacted 28:23 continuing 17:6 continuously 27:1 control 33:13 controller 12:16 23:20 26:17,24 27:24 controller's 27:2 correct 2:18 6:2,5 10:2 12:3 15:15 19:1,21 25:3 county 5:16,21 35:8 couple 11:18 cover 34:3 crazy 29:17 create 16:5 33:10 cushion 16:5</p>	<p>daylighted 24:7 decided 11:21 defend 20:12,19 30:4 defended 23:13 defense 21:15 definition 33:14 demands 13:4 department 1:10 2:5,15 8:15 12:17 19:9,12 30:4,22 31:4 35:14 depending 13:2 deposited 17:21 deputies 7:15 10:13 10:14,15,15 19:9 deputy 1:14 2:2,17 3:12,13 4:23 5:15 6:3,16 10:19 22:18 22:21 24:13 29:10 30:14 describe 32:25 different 23:18 25:8 25:10 27:22 direct 7:16 19:3 22:11 direction 33:18 directly 8:21,24 9:1 9:8,12 10:1 19:20 20:14 21:2 24:25 director 2:17 4:16 4:24 5:2,15,16,17 5:20 6:4 8:7 29:10 29:21 33:24,24 directors 7:14 10:19 discrepancy 31:9 discussed 11:1,11 discussion 11:11,24 13:11,14,19 15:19 18:11 19:16 discussions 10:6 12:6,10,12 13:17,18 20:16 disparities 16:1</p>	<p>disparity 12:15 13:7 23:25 31:17 distinctly 25:8 distributed 12:23 distributions 13:1 district 5:22,23 districts 13:2 division 28:15 documents 23:20 27:15 doing 14:1 dollar 14:7 28:4,5 dollars 27:8 dun 9:22 duties 33:14 dysfunctional 33:8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">e</p> <p>e 2:11 29:16,17 earlier 8:20 early 18:14 educating 27:18 either 14:18 eleven 26:22 employees 30:23 encumbrances 26:22 erratic 28:8 escribers 1:20 35:22 especially 8:7 essentially 3:1 estimates 18:6 eventually 21:17 exactly 22:15 examination 26:1 example 15:3 executive 10:9,11 12:2,7 expectation 14:14 experience 5:25 33:1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">f</p> <p>fabricating 15:4 fact 25:21 28:14</p>	<p>fairly 28:7 favor 33:19 feathers 33:16 fees 14:18 fellow 4:12 fifteen 26:20 fifty 14:6 26:3,8 fill 16:11 22:5 filled 16:17 final 12:6 25:25 finance 8:19,25 12:16 23:20 25:11 25:23 27:23 28:5 finances 11:1 financial 1:11 8:8 8:11 23:9 31:9,17 find 12:25 finding 14:2 first 7:22 10:21 13:19 19:20 26:1 fish 8:23 five 14:7 15:9 fixing 33:4 folks 4:18 forecast 14:13 foregoing 35:11 format 20:25 forward 15:9 found 29:25 34:1 four 3:2,4 6:1 26:3,8 26:21 28:4 frame 16:18 freda 9:21 friend 30:11 front 13:9 fund 24:9 25:7 26:1 26:2,20,23 27:6,9 27:11 funding 28:21 funds 13:11 25:12 25:15 26:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">g</p> <p>game 8:23</p>
---	--	--	--

[general - michael]

<p>general 1:14,16 2:2 getting 18:11 23:18 give 2:6 given 17:7 33:18 go 13:25 14:4,4 15:9 16:19 17:19 20:19 21:4 26:14 32:13 going 2:6 12:15,16 12:22,22 15:14 19:13,18 20:12 29:12,17,22,24 31:4 32:13 good 14:15 gotten 29:13 government 16:17 17:1,3 governor 3:16,17 4:6,20,24 21:25 governor's 4:12 grasp 18:1 greater 14:2 green 24:15,16 growth 18:3 guess 14:8 21:21,21 23:17 25:21 guy 30:10</p>	<p>heidi 35:13 held 6:18 hell 24:19 hell's 29:12 help 13:3 30:5 higher 14:16,22 highlighted 24:7 highway 24:8,11 history 19:11 23:18 honest 29:1 honestly 23:24 huh 6:17,21 7:10,12 7:17 8:5 29:14 31:13 hum 3:9 4:25 8:18 9:5,10 11:5 12:24 13:15,21 15:6,12 17:15,22 19:7 22:6 22:13 24:15,21 27:25 28:17 29:6,19 31:6 33:12 hundred 15:3,8 16:4</p>	<p>investigator 2:4 involved 11:13 24:23 involvement 7:19 irregularities 1:11 issue 15:25 25:11 26:2 31:25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">j</p> <p>jackson 29:5 30:12 31:16 job 3:12 30:13 june 2:24 justice 2:5 35:14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">k</p> <p>karen 4:9 kept 24:1 key 12:23 kind 5:4 12:6 19:5 33:6 knew 8:16 know 6:24 9:15 14:7 15:4 16:3 17:2,10 17:11 22:23 23:8 25:20 27:4 28:1 29:20 30:2 31:14</p>	<p>16:13,25 27:18 32:20 local 17:2 long 9:16 33:2 look 14:12 27:11 looked 2:15 looking 14:18 27:3 loose 24:19 lopez 7:8,13 8:1 11:20 20:24 21:5 31:11 lopsided 13:1 lost 33:19 lot 8:16,19 10:13 19:9 30:7 luan 9:22 lunch 4:17</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">h</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">i</p> <p>impression 25:18 increase 17:6 increased 18:12,17 18:25 increases 18:18 indicate 31:7 information 32:2 initially 6:12 inside 33:5 intention 33:4 interacted 6:10 interaction 7:21 8:3 10:1 interested 3:12 interview 1:1 4:7,15 4:18 35:3 interviewed 1:13 4:3 interviews 4:20 investigation 1:10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">l</p> <p>large 10:9,11,16,18 lasted 33:2 late 2:23 leadership 11:25 leaving 26:22 left 2:24 21:22 22:4 23:3,4 30:18,19 legislature 14:5 18:17 20:12,17 21:5 level 12:7 14:2 levels 4:21 leverage 14:8 lieutenants 10:22 line 10:13,20 19:18 27:8 little 7:18 8:3 10:4 13:3,13 14:16 16:5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">m</p>
<p>half 26:20,21 handled 28:14 hands 8:7,10 happened 20:24 31:15 harris 6:13 7:22 8:22 9:4,12 13:20 18:13 19:19 20:6,21 21:6,7,20,21,23,24 22:7 33:18 harris's 21:18 22:8 head 7:23 19:18 23:9 hear 24:18 heard 16:1,9 23:16 23:21 28:10</p>	<p>impression 25:18 increase 17:6 increased 18:12,17 18:25 increases 18:18 indicate 31:7 information 32:2 initially 6:12 inside 33:5 intention 33:4 interacted 6:10 interaction 7:21 8:3 10:1 interested 3:12 interview 1:1 4:7,15 4:18 35:3 interviewed 1:13 4:3 interviews 4:20 investigation 1:10</p>	<p>large 10:9,11,16,18 lasted 33:2 late 2:23 leadership 11:25 leaving 26:22 left 2:24 21:22 22:4 23:3,4 30:18,19 legislature 14:5 18:17 20:12,17 21:5 level 12:7 14:2 levels 4:21 leverage 14:8 lieutenants 10:22 line 10:13,20 19:18 27:8 little 7:18 8:3 10:4 13:3,13 14:16 16:5</p>	<p>m 1:13 2:2,11 mail 29:16,17 management 32:21 manager 7:11 manny 7:25 21:16 21:23 manuel 21:13 march 2:23 matching 28:12 matters 23:9 mattson 2:4 32:9 34:4 mean 9:7,11 11:3 13:17 16:9,15 20:2 means 20:5 meet 8:11 meeting 20:4 meetings 8:4 10:7 10:10,25 13:8 19:25 20:9 mentioned 32:22 mess 31:5 met 10:15,16 michael 2:4 6:13 20:13 32:8</p>

[mid - quite]

<p>mid 2:23 mike 4:9 7:22 19:19 million 14:7 15:3,8 15:10,10,14 26:3,6 26:6,10,21,22 27:7 27:21 28:4,5 millions 27:19 minuses 8:14 minute 32:18 misreporting 25:11 monday 2:3 money 12:22 14:9 17:12 19:15 22:4 25:6 26:10 31:3 monthly 10:17 months 7:7 21:11 morale 30:23 move 13:3 34:1</p>	<p>observe 8:10 obviously 6:7 15:14 october 1:21 35:18 office 1:15 4:21 11:3 27:2 officer 3:11 offs 31:12 oftentimes 12:25 oh 5:7 9:19 20:5 30:16 ohv 24:18 25:2,7,15 26:2,7 28:2,7,11,15 28:21 okay 2:12,25 3:17 5:9,18 6:6 7:2 9:24 10:3,21,24 12:4,14 15:9,20,24 16:14,23 17:9 18:22 19:2 20:22 22:2,24 23:15 24:2,5 25:4,17 27:17 28:20,22 30:7 31:6,20 32:6,10 34:2 ones 24:18 operations 16:3 30:15 opposed 27:23 organization 2:14 13:5 originally 17:19 overreport 28:6</p>	<p>particular 18:2 parts 22:10 patterns 14:19 patton 1:13 2:1,2,12 2:19,25 3:3,9,14,17 3:21,23 4:1,4,7,15 4:19,25 5:3,7,11,18 5:24 6:3,6,9,14,17 6:21,24 7:4,10,12 7:17,20,25 8:5,9,18 8:25 9:5,10,13,17 9:21,24 10:3,7,18 10:21,24 11:5,13,17 11:22 12:1,4,14,20 12:24 13:6,10,15,21 14:11,21,25 15:6,12 15:16,20,24 16:14 16:20,23 17:4,9,15 17:22,25 18:7,10,16 18:20,22 19:2,7,17 19:22 20:1,3,7,10 20:18,22 21:1,4,7,9 21:16,20 22:2,6,13 22:19,24 23:2,7,12 23:15,23 24:2,5,8 24:15,21,24 25:2,4 25:9,14,20 26:11 27:14,17 28:1,17,20 28:22 29:3,6,9,14 29:19 30:8,12,16,20 30:25 31:6,13,16,20 31:24 32:4,6,10,13 32:17 33:6,12,20 34:2 paul 1:5 2:10 32:18 35:3 pay 31:12 people 8:12,16,20 9:1 12:13 27:3 33:9 33:16,20,22 percent 16:4 perez 30:17 performance 14:13 period 3:2,5 11:4,11 21:12,15 32:23</p>	<p>personality 33:9 personnel 19:5 perspective 22:9 30:23 philosophy 18:14 phone 29:17 place 17:20 planning 19:4 plus 10:19 pluses 8:14 point 23:6 33:25 policies 33:11 position 3:4,7 5:4 6:19 7:7 16:18 22:5 positions 16:12 practice 16:2 predictions 14:20 pretty 11:15 15:23 16:25 17:2 20:24 25:25 27:20 primarily 9:3 18:5 prior 4:18 5:12 20:11,12 privy 28:18 probably 10:17 33:16 problems 30:22 33:4,6,9 process 14:1 16:21 27:7 33:15 product 26:5 projected 15:3,8 properly 28:15 proposal 20:20 provided 28:16 pushing 33:23 put 7:7 11:9</p>
n			
<p>name 2:8 names 9:14 nature 19:15 24:20 need 34:3 net 16:2 never 13:7 16:11,17 17:7 20:16 22:19 23:16,16,21 24:4,6 27:15 28:13,18 new 1:22,22 33:10 35:17,17 newspaper 32:3 newspapers 25:18 nobody's 31:24 number 14:22 15:5 16:12 26:25 27:5,8 27:19 numbers 13:7 16:1 17:8 18:1 23:18,25 27:4 28:7,11 32:1 numerous 5:14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">p</p> <p>p.m. 2:3 pages 35:11 paid 28:15 park 3:7 5:5,17 17:14,20 19:13 parks 1:10 2:15 5:14,25 11:7 13:12 14:19 16:16 17:1,17 17:24 19:11 27:3 28:23,24 31:21 part 11:21 27:6</p>		
o			
<p>o 2:11,11 o0o 1:25 35:23</p>			
			q
			<p>question 28:9 questions 32:8 quite 8:16 23:24</p>

[r - state]

<p>r</p> <p>r 2:11,11 raise 14:18 reached 30:8 react 9:9 really 4:19 15:21,25 17:25 19:17 21:12 25:7 30:1 recall 9:25 10:25 13:18 15:23 18:2,10 18:24 28:14 receive 28:10 reconciled 26:25 record 32:14,18,19 recorded 1:1 recording 35:12 recreation 1:11 5:6 19:12 recruitment 16:21 regional 5:14 regular 19:24 relationships 33:1 remember 2:20 6:10 9:13,18,21 report 9:7,8 reported 8:21,24 9:1 13:7 19:10 23:19 25:22 26:3,7,14,16 26:23 27:5,22 31:8 reporting 31:18 reports 10:20 12:15 12:16,19 19:3 22:11 31:1 represents 27:9 reserve 13:11 15:17 reserves 13:14 15:19 resign 29:22 resigning 29:21 resources 4:11,13 5:20 respects 19:8 responsibilities 33:15</p>	<p>result 6:22,25 30:25 33:19 retired 2:24 revenue 14:14 15:13 17:5 18:1,6,18,25 revenues 14:2,25 17:21,23 right 2:1 4:22,22 5:7 7:24 10:23 14:8,12 14:24 20:15 21:19 22:22,22 26:11 27:19,21 30:16 32:15 riverside 5:16 rob 32:23 33:3 role 22:20 roll 11:8,9,20 rolled 11:23 romero 1:5 2:10,11 2:13,18,22 3:1,6,10 3:15,18,22,25 4:2,5 4:9,17,22 5:1,5,10 5:13,19 6:2,5,8,12 6:15,18,22 7:2,6,11 7:13,18,24 8:2,6,13 8:19 9:3,6,11,15,19 9:23 10:2,4,11,20 10:23 11:2,6,15,18 11:25 12:3,8,18,21 12:25 13:9,13,16,22 14:17,24 15:2,7,15 15:18,21 16:7,15,21 16:24 17:7,11,16,23 18:4,8,13,19,21 19:1,3,8,21,24 20:2 20:5,8,15,21,23 21:3,6,8,11,19,24 22:3,7,14,22,25 23:4,11,14,21,24 24:3,6,12,16,22 25:1,3,5,13,17 26:9 27:13,16,25 28:13 28:18,21 29:1,4,7 29:11,15,20 30:10 30:14,18,21 31:2,10</p>	<p>31:14,19,23 32:2,5 32:12,15,18 33:3,8 33:13,22 35:3 routine 12:11 roy 29:7,9,24 30:7,9 ruffled 33:16 ruth 4:16 6:7 7:8,16 8:6 10:1 12:12 19:11,20 20:14 21:1 21:13 22:3 24:17,25 30:3 ruth's 8:14 11:3 32:21 rutt 1:19 35:21</p> <hr/> <p>s</p> <p>sa201210710 1:24 sacramento 1:8 35:8 35:14 sad 31:4 safety 16:2 salary 16:11 santa 5:17,20 sat 11:16 save 22:4 savings 16:11 saw 15:3 18:24 says 30:1 scarborough 4:10 schwarzenegger 3:22,24 seasons 17:14 seattle 29:16 second 10:20 16:10 26:2 secretary 3:16,20 4:10,11,14 see 2:14 15:13 25:13 25:21 28:9 seeing 28:7 selected 4:3,4 send 11:8 separate 15:25 24:12</p>	<p>september 1:7 2:3 served 2:20 services 6:11 7:22 7:23 8:12 19:19 23:10 28:16 32:24 setting 19:13 sharing 27:4 shortly 30:19 showing 26:12,13 shows 27:24 side 6:11 7:8 32:25 33:11 sidebars 20:6 significant 28:2 sit 8:11 six 7:6 21:11 27:20 skeptical 33:24 slightly 14:22 18:11 small 10:9,14 12:2,7 somewhat 12:9 sorry 5:15 sort 16:1 17:6 sounds 18:22 source 26:9 spell 2:9 spend 14:6,9 15:14 spent 5:13 spot 21:18 spreadsheets 25:23 sprf 13:19 14:13 17:5,8,12,19 18:1 18:18 25:6,16 26:1 26:5,20 27:23 ss 35:7 staff 8:3 10:5,7,14 10:16,18 staffers 9:4,14 start 26:14 started 2:22 13:19 14:1,3 19:20 29:16 29:17 33:17,23 state 1:17 3:7 5:23 5:25 13:12 16:16 17:1 35:6</p>
---	--	---	---

[statement - young]

<p>statement 23:19 26:19 27:6,10,12 status 8:14 26:23 stearns 29:8 stint 6:1 strategies 16:10 strengths 33:25 structure 11:7 studied 27:15 stuff 8:8 24:19 style 32:22 subject 13:6 submissions 20:11 submitted 35:13 subscribed 35:16 sudden 29:15 suffice 28:6 suggestion 25:15 suggests 28:3 summertime 17:17 superintendants 11:7 supports 10:13 sure 3:18 22:14,15 surprise 25:19 surprised 22:16,17 25:6 suspect 16:16 17:13 17:18 swings 28:2 systems 5:14,17</p>	<p>telling 29:21 ten 14:7 tenure 18:15 terms 7:20 8:10 27:22 31:8 testify 20:19 thank 34:3 thanks 2:12 30:7 thing 8:22 18:4 20:23 things 12:5,10 16:8 19:15 20:17 24:20 33:18 think 2:22 6:18 10:17 12:9 16:7 18:19,21 21:14,25 22:10,25 25:9 32:6 33:17 34:2 thirty 28:4 thomas 1:13 2:2 thought 30:5 time 2:16 7:5 9:16 11:11 16:18 17:13 21:12,15 23:6 32:11 32:23 33:25 times 17:16 title 22:16 today 2:7 told 13:22,23 21:24 22:3 23:17 26:17 31:11,15,24 tony 30:17 topic 12:14 15:22 traditionally 23:1 transactions 19:5 transcribed 1:19 35:11 transcriber's 35:2 transcription 1:1 transportation 7:9 trends 14:19 tried 13:3 troubleshooter 19:6 true 8:22</p>	<p>try 30:3 trying 16:18 33:10 twenty 26:6,10 27:21 28:5 two 16:8 20:18 25:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <p>uh 6:17,21 7:10,12 7:17 8:5 29:14 31:13 ultimately 6:19 um 3:9 4:25 8:18 9:5 9:10 11:5 12:24 13:15,21 15:6,12 17:15,22 19:7 22:6 22:13 24:15,21 27:25 28:17 29:6,19 31:6 33:12 underreport 27:9 28:4 understand 4:23 7:4 10:9 17:20 understanding 14:11 20:10 undisclosed 26:4 unit 24:13 units 25:8 upwards 33:23 user 14:19 17:14 usually 10:16 12:18 20:21 21:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v</p> <p>vacant 16:12 vacation 31:11 valley 5:22 various 8:17 vehicle 24:9,11 versus 12:16 visible 17:14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">w</p> <p>want 5:8 6:24,25 wanted 30:4 34:1</p>	<p>water 5:22,23 way 11:6 15:23 16:15 28:14 we've 15:24 16:1 webb 35:13 weekly 10:16 went 5:19,21,23 8:21 23:12 whatsoever 13:17 wintertime 17:18 witnessed 19:22 word 14:8 25:25 work 9:7,17 30:6 worked 6:7 8:20 9:11 16:16 working 25:24</p> <p style="text-align: center;">y</p> <p>yeah 2:10 3:25 4:1 5:10 6:14 7:6 8:2,13 9:20 11:17 12:8,20 14:17 16:20 18:7,20 20:1,7,15 21:3,8 23:7,7,12,14,23 25:1,20 29:11 30:18 31:2,2,25 32:4,5 year 3:2,4 6:1 14:14 17:16 18:3,3 26:13 26:19 28:3 year's 14:12 years 5:14 11:18 12:5 17:4 27:18,20 28:5 32:21 york 1:22,22 35:17 35:17 young 4:11</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">t</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">t</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">t</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">t</p>
<p>talk 11:3 12:18 18:13 19:14 20:6 29:3 30:20 31:3,7 31:16 talked 10:8 18:14 24:18 28:24 29:4,7 30:21,24 31:3,21 talking 3:13 14:4 25:22 32:19 ted 29:4 30:12,14,20 tell 30:1</p>	<p>topic 12:14 15:22 traditionally 23:1 transactions 19:5 transcribed 1:19 35:11 transcriber's 35:2 transcription 1:1 transportation 7:9 trends 14:19 tried 13:3 troubleshooter 19:6 true 8:22</p>	<p>try 30:3 trying 16:18 33:10 twenty 26:6,10 27:21 28:5 two 16:8 20:18 25:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">u</p> <p>uh 6:17,21 7:10,12 7:17 8:5 29:14 31:13 ultimately 6:19 um 3:9 4:25 8:18 9:5 9:10 11:5 12:24 13:15,21 15:6,12 17:15,22 19:7 22:6 22:13 24:15,21 27:25 28:17 29:6,19 31:6 33:12 underreport 27:9 28:4 understand 4:23 7:4 10:9 17:20 understanding 14:11 20:10 undisclosed 26:4 unit 24:13 units 25:8 upwards 33:23 user 14:19 17:14 usually 10:16 12:18 20:21 21:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">v</p> <p>vacant 16:12 vacation 31:11 valley 5:22 various 8:17 vehicle 24:9,11 versus 12:16 visible 17:14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">w</p> <p>want 5:8 6:24,25 wanted 30:4 34:1</p>	<p>water 5:22,23 way 11:6 15:23 16:15 28:14 we've 15:24 16:1 webb 35:13 weekly 10:16 went 5:19,21,23 8:21 23:12 whatsoever 13:17 wintertime 17:18 witnessed 19:22 word 14:8 25:25 work 9:7,17 30:6 worked 6:7 8:20 9:11 16:16 working 25:24</p> <p style="text-align: center;">y</p> <p>yeah 2:10 3:25 4:1 5:10 6:14 7:6 8:2,13 9:20 11:17 12:8,20 14:17 16:20 18:7,20 20:1,7,15 21:3,8 23:7,7,12,14,23 25:1,20 29:11 30:18 31:2,2,25 32:4,5 year 3:2,4 6:1 14:14 17:16 18:3,3 26:13 26:19 28:3 year's 14:12 years 5:14 11:18 12:5 17:4 27:18,20 28:5 32:21 york 1:22,22 35:17 35:17 young 4:11</p>