



**COUNTY OF SAN BENITO
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 17, 2025

The County of San Benito: Bank reverses fraudulent transaction

The County of San Benito confirmed on Friday, October 17, 2025, that a bank had successfully reversed a fraudulent \$696,602 transaction that was previously processed on October 15, 2025.

The San Benito County Sheriff's Office will continue to investigate the attempted fraudulent payment of \$696,602 that was approved by the county Auditor-Controller's Office.

County Treasurer, Melinda Casillas, alerted the County Administration Office of the suspected fraudulent payment after being alerted by a bank about the suspicious activity. The payment request originated from someone posing as a construction contractor, likely as part of a suspected phishing scam. The county Auditor-Controller's Office is responsible for verifying the accuracy and legitimacy of such claims. The office is managed by Auditor-Controller Joe Paul Gonzalez, an elected official who is not overseen, directed, or managed by the County Administrative Office administration or the County Board of Supervisors.

The County Treasurer's Office and the bank immediately filed a fraud claim with the FBI and requested the reversal of the ACH electronic payment with the bank. County officials confirmed the reversal was successful today. It is essential to note that, although the criminal investigation had just begun, the fraud detection unit within the banking institution not only alerted us to the transaction but also successfully blocked it and returned the funds.

The County Board of Supervisors is holding a special meeting **on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** to discuss an investigation into the breakdown in the auditor's fraud prevention procedures that led to the loss, as well as reforms to prevent further lapses in the future.

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