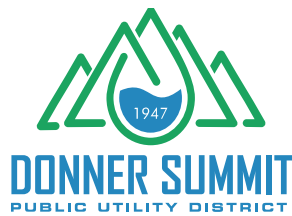


Agenda Item: 5E



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors

PREPARED BY: Steven Palmer, PE, General Manager

SUBJECT: Approve Engagement Letter with Hillberg & Company for an Audit of Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Approve engagement letter with Hillberg & Company for an Audit of Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025 and authorize General Manager to sign.

BACKGROUND

An annual audit of Donner Summit Public Utility District (District) is required by state law. Hillberg & Company is a certified public accountant and well qualified to perform this work. Hillberg & Company recently completed the audit for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024. From 2006 through 2023 the annual audit of financial statements were prepared by Gibson & Company. Following 2023, Gibson & Company closed and transferred the District's audit work to Hillberg & Company. The same accountant that has been preparing annual audits for the District for several years, Joe Julio, is now working for Hillberg & Company.

DISCUSSION

Hillberg & Company has provided the attached Engagement Letter for the District to approve and sign (Attachment 1). The letter details the scope of services that will be provided. The scope complies with all audit requirements and details how their work will comply with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards for financial audits contained in the Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The scope generally includes the following tasks:

- Audit of financial statements to obtain reasonable assurance that they are free from material misstatements
- Evaluate appropriateness of accounting policies and financial statements
- Inquiries of management regarding methods of preparing the information and basic financial statements

ANALYSIS

In order to complete the audit, the Board needs to approve the engagement letter and authorize the General Manager to sign.

FISCAL IMPACT

The fee for these services is not to exceed \$35,000, which is a 7% increase from the fee of \$32,500 from last fiscal year.

CEQA ASSESSMENT

This is not a CEQA Project

ATTACHMENTS

1. Engagement Letter

March 6, 2025

Board of Directors and General Manager
Donner Summit Public Utility District
P.O. Box 610
Soda Springs, CA 95728

We are pleased to confirm our understanding of the services we are to provide Donner Summit Public Utility District for the year ended June 30, 2025.

Audit Scope and Objectives

We will audit the financial statements of the business-type activities, and the disclosures, which collectively comprise the basic financial statements of Donner Summit Public Utility District as of and for the year ended June 30, 2025. Accounting standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP) provide for certain required supplementary information (RSI), such as management's discussion and analysis (MD&A), to supplement Donner Summit Public Utility District's basic financial statements. Such information, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. As part of our engagement, we will apply certain limited procedures to Donner Summit Public Utility District's RSI in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). These limited procedures will consist of inquiries of management regarding the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We will not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance. The following RSI is required by GAAP and will be subjected to certain limited procedures, but will not be audited:

1. Management's Discussion and Analysis.

We will also prepare your California Special Districts Financial Transaction Report for the year ended June 30, 2025.

The objectives of our audit are to obtain reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion about whether your financial statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with GAAP; and report on the fairness of the supplementary information referred to in the second paragraph when considered in relation to the financial statements as a whole. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS and Government Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements, including omissions, can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgement of a reasonable user made based on the financial statements.

We have advised you of the limitations of our audit regarding the detection of fraud and the possible effect on the financial statements (including misappropriation of cash or other assets). We have offered to perform, as a separate engagement, extended procedures specifically designed to detect fraud and you have declined to engage us to do so at this time.

The objectives also include reporting on internal control over financial reporting and compliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and award agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

We will conduct our audit in accordance with GAAS and the standards for financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and will include tests of your accounting records of Donner Summit Public Utility District and other procedures we consider necessary to enable us to express such opinions. As part of an audit in accordance with GAAS and Government Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We will evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management. We will also evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and determine whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation. We will plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, whether from (1) errors, (2) fraudulent financial reporting, (3) misappropriation of assets, or (4) violations of laws or governmental regulations that are attributable to the government or to acts by management or employees acting on behalf of the government. Because the determination of waste and abuse is subjective, Government Auditing Standards do not expect auditors to perform specific procedures to detect waste or abuse in financial audits nor do they expect auditors to provide reasonable assurance of detecting waste or abuse.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, combined with the inherent limitations of internal control, and because we will not perform a detailed examination of all transactions, there is an unavoidable risk that some material misstatements may not be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with GAAS and Government Auditing Standards. In addition, an audit is not designed to detect immaterial misstatements or violations of laws or governmental regulations that do not have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, we will inform the appropriate level of management of any material errors, fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets that comes to our attention. We will also inform the appropriate level of management of any violations of laws or governmental regulations that come to our attention, unless clearly inconsequential. Our responsibility as auditors is limited to the period covered by our audit and does not extend to any later periods for which we are not engaged as auditors.

In connection with this engagement, we may communicate with you or others via email transmission. As emails can be intercepted and read, disclosed, or otherwise used or communicated by an unintended third party, or may not be delivered to each of the parties to whom they are directed and only to such parties, we cannot guarantee or warrant that emails from us will be properly delivered and read only by the addressee. Therefore, we specifically disclaim and waive any liability or responsibility whatsoever for interception or unintentional disclosure of emails transmitted by us in connection with the performance of this engagement. In that regard, you agree that we shall have no liability for any loss or damage to any person or entity resulting from the use of email transmissions, including any consequential, incidental, direct, indirect, or special damages, such as loss of revenues or anticipated profits, or disclosure or communication of confidential or proprietary information.

We will also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the government's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

Our procedures will include tests of documentary evidence supporting the transactions recorded in the accounts, and direct confirmation of receivables and certain assets and liabilities by correspondence with selected customers, creditors, and financial institutions. We will also request written representations from your attorneys as part of the engagement and they may bill you for responding to this inquiry.

Page 4

We have identified the following significant risks of material misstatement based on our prior year audit.

- Management override of controls
- Limited separation of duties
- Risks related to check fraud
- Risks related to revenue being misstated
- Risks related to the cash transactions (high balances, source of most transactions)
- Risks related to accounts receivable being authentic
- Risks related to classifying expenses
- Risks related to long term assets not being recorded

Planning for the current year audit has not concluded and modifications to the significant risks noted above may be made.

We may, from time to time and depending on the circumstances, use third-party service providers in serving your account. We may share confidential information about you with these service providers but remain committed to maintaining the confidentiality and security of your information. Accordingly, we maintain internal policies, procedures, and safeguards to protect the confidentiality of your personal information. In addition, we will secure confidentiality agreements with all service providers to maintain the confidentiality of your information and we will take reasonable precautions to determine that they have appropriate procedures in place to prevent the unauthorized release of your confidential information to others. In the event that we are unable to secure an appropriate confidentiality agreement, you will be asked to provide your consent prior to the sharing of your confidential information with third-party service provider. Furthermore, we will remain responsible for the work provided by any such third-party service providers.

Our audit of financial statements does not relieve you of your responsibilities.

Audit Procedures – Internal Control

We will obtain an understanding of the government and its environment, including the system of internal control relevant to the audit, sufficient to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to error or fraud, and to design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks and obtain evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. Tests of controls may be performed to test the effectiveness of certain controls that we consider relevant to preventing and detecting errors and fraud that are material to the financial statements and to preventing and detecting misstatements resulting from illegal acts and other noncompliance matters that have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. Our tests, if performed, will be less in scope than would be necessary to render an opinion on internal control and, accordingly, no opinion will be expressed in our report on internal control issued pursuant to the Government Auditing Standards. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation, or the override of internal control. An audit is not designed to provide assurance on internal control or to identify significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. Accordingly, we will express no such opinion. However, during the audit, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance internal control related matters that are required to be communicated under AICPA professional standards and Government Auditing Standards.

Audit Procedures-Compliance

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement, we will perform tests of Donner Summit Public Utility District's compliance with provisions of applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants. However, the objective of our audit will not be to provide an opinion on overall compliance and we will not express such an opinion in our report on compliance issued pursuant to Government Auditing Standards.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Our audit will be conducted on the basis that you acknowledge and understand your responsibility for designing, implementing, establishing, and maintaining effective internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and for evaluating and monitoring ongoing activities to help ensure that appropriate goals and objectives are met; following laws and regulations; and ensuring that management and financial information is reliable and properly reported. Management is also responsible for implementing systems designed to achieve compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements. You are also responsible for the selection and application of accounting principles, for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and all accompanying information in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for compliance with applicable laws and regulations and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements.

Management is responsible for making drafts of financial statements, all financial records, and related information available to us and for the accuracy and completeness of that information (including information from outside of the general and subsidiary ledgers); and for the evaluation of whether there are any conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the government's ability to continue as a going concern for the 12 months after the financial statements date or shortly thereafter (for example, within an additional three months if currently known). You are also responsible for providing us with (1) access to all information of which you are aware that is relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements, such as records, documentation, identification of all related parties and all related-party relationships and transactions, and other matters; (2) additional information that we may request for the purpose of the audit; and (3) unrestricted access to persons within the government from whom we determine it necessary to obtain audit evidence. At the conclusion of our audit, we will require certain written representations from you about your responsibilities for the financial statements; compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements; and other responsibilities required by GAAS and Government Auditing Standards.

Your responsibilities include adjusting the financial statements to correct material misstatements and for confirming to us in the written representation letter that the effects of any uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

You are responsible for the design and implementation of programs and controls to prevent and detect fraud, and for informing us about all known or suspected fraud affecting the government involving (1) management, (2) employees who have significant roles in internal control, and (3) others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. Your responsibilities include informing us of your knowledge of any allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the government received in communications from employees, former employees, grantors, regulators, or others. In addition, you are responsible for identifying and ensuring that the government complies with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, agreements, and grants and for taking timely and appropriate steps to remedy fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws, regulations, contracts or grant agreements that we report.

You are responsible for the preparation of the supplementary information, which we have been engaged to report on, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP). You agree to include our report on the supplementary information in any document that contains, and indicates that we have reported on, the supplementary information. You also agree to include the audited financial statements with any presentation of the supplementary information that includes our report thereon. Your responsibilities include acknowledging to us in the written representation letter that (1) you are responsible for presentation of the supplementary information in accordance with GAAP; (2) you believe the supplementary information, including its form and content, is fairly presented in accordance with GAAP; (3) the methods of measurement or presentation have not changed from those used in the prior period (or, if they have changed, the reasons for such changes); and (4) you have disclosed to us any significant assumptions or interpretations underlying the measurement or presentation of the supplementary information.

With regard to publishing the financial statements on your website, you understand that websites are a means of distributing information and, therefore, we are not required to read the information contained in those sites or to consider the consistency of other information on the website with the original document.

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining a process for tracking the status of audit findings and recommendations. Management is also responsible for identifying and providing report copies of previous financial audits, attestation engagements, performance audits or other studies related to the objectives discussed in the Audit Scope and Objectives section of this letter. This responsibility includes relaying to us corrective actions taken to address significant findings and recommendations resulting from those audits, attestation engagements, performance audits, or other studies. You are also responsible for providing management's views on our current findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as your planned corrective actions, for the report, and for the timing and format for providing that information.

Other Services

We will also assist in preparing the financial statements and related notes of Donner Summit Public Utility District in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, preparing the California Special Districts Financial Transaction Report, maintaining your depreciation schedule, and preparing journal entries other than proposed audit entries based on information provided by you. These nonaudit services do not constitute an audit under Government Auditing Standards and such services will not be conducted in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. We will perform the services in accordance with applicable professional standards. The other services are limited to the financial statement services and additional items above previously defined. We, in our sole professional judgment, reserve the right to refuse to perform any procedure or take any action that could be construed as assuming management responsibilities.

You agree to assume all management responsibilities relating to the financial statements and related notes and any other nonaudit services we provide. You will be required to acknowledge in the management representation letter our assistance with preparation of the financial statements and related notes and that you have reviewed and approved the financial statements and related notes prior to their issuance and have accepted responsibility for them. Further, you agree to oversee the nonaudit services by designating an individual, preferably from senior management, with suitable skill, knowledge, or experience; evaluate the adequacy and results of those services; and accept responsibility for them.

Engagement Administration, Fees, and Other

We understand that your employees will prepare all cash, accounts receivable, or other confirmations we request and will locate any documents selected by us for testing. We will schedule the engagement based in part on deadlines, working conditions, and the availability of your key personnel. We will plan the engagement based on the assumption that your personnel will cooperate and provide assistance by performing tasks such as preparing requested schedules, retrieving supporting documents, and preparing confirmations. If, for whatever reason, your personnel are unavailable to provide the necessary assistance in a timely manner, it may substantially increase the work we have to do to complete the engagement within the established deadlines, resulting in an increase in fees over our original fee estimate.

We will provide copies of our reports to the District; however, management is responsible for distribution of the reports and the financial statements. Unless restricted by law or regulation, or containing privileged and confidential information, copies of our reports are to be made available for public inspection.

The audit documentation for this engagement is the property of Hillberg & Company CPAs and constitutes confidential information. However, subject to applicable laws and regulations, audit documentation and appropriate individuals will be made available upon request and in a timely manner to the State of California or its designee, a federal agency providing direct or indirect funding, or the U.S. Government Accountability Office for purposes of a quality review of the audit, to resolve audit findings, or to carry out oversight responsibilities. We will notify you of any such request. If requested, access to such audit documentation will be provided under the supervision of Hillberg & Company CPAs personnel. Furthermore, upon request, we may provide copies of selected audit documentation to the aforementioned parties. These parties may intend or decide to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

The audit documentation for this engagement will be retained for a minimum of five years after the report release date or for any additional period requested by the State of California. If we are aware that a federal awarding agency or auditee is contesting an audit finding, we will contact the party(ies) contesting the audit finding for guidance prior to destroying the audit documentation.

Joseph A. Julio is the engagement partner and is responsible for supervising the engagement and signing the reports or authorizing another individual to sign them. We expect to begin our audit approximately September 8, 2025 and to issue our reports no later than November 30, 2025.

Hillberg & Company CPAs' Sharefile System is used solely to transmit data and is not intended to store Donner Summit Public Utility District's information. Donner Summit Public Utility District is responsible for downloading any deliverables and other records from the Hillberg & Company CPAs' Sharefile System that it wishes to retain for its own records at the completion of the engagement.

Page 9

Upon completion of the engagement, data and other content will either be removed from the Hillberg & Company CPAs' Sharefile System or become unavailable to Donner Summit Public Utility District within a reasonable time frame.

Our audit engagement ends on delivery of our audit report. Any follow-up services that might be required will be a separate, new engagement. The terms and conditions of that new engagement will be governed by a new, specific engagement letter for that service.

Our fee for services will be at our standard hourly rates plus out-of-pocket costs (such as report reproduction, word processing, postage, travel, copies, telephone, confirmation service provider fees, etc.) except that we agree our gross fee, including expenses, will not exceed \$35,000. Our standard hourly rates vary according to the degree of responsibility involved and the experience level of the personnel assigned to your audit. Our invoices for these fees will be rendered each month as work progresses and are payable on presentation. If we elect to terminate our services for nonpayment, our engagement will be deemed to have been completed upon written notification of termination, even if we have not completed our report. You will be obligated to compensate us for all time expended and to reimburse us for all out-of-pocket costs through the date of termination. The above fee is based on anticipated cooperation from your personnel and the assumption that unexpected circumstances will not be encountered during the audit. If significant additional time is necessary, we will discuss it with you and arrive at a new fee estimate before we incur the additional costs.

In addition, this fee estimate is based on Generally Accepted Government Accounting Standards (GAGAS) in effect as of June 30, 2023. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has issued and continues to issue several amendments and additions to these standards. In the event we need to spend additional time to perform extensive adjustments to your accounting records or substantial reformatting of the financial statements or the related disclosures as a result of these unknown changes, our additional time will be billed above our fees quoted above. We will discuss this with you when and if we encounter such a situation.

By signing this engagement letter, you acknowledge and agree to our records retention policy. This policy states that all records for continuing clients of the firm will be destroyed after 7 years from this engagement date. Once the firm's relationship with a client comes to a close, our policy states that all records regarding that client will be destroyed after 4 years from the engagement date (except for files regarding financial statement audit engagements, which will be destroyed after 7 years). Hillberg & Company CPAs reserves the right to make exceptions to this policy at its sole discretion. Once our files are destroyed, the only record of your engagement will be copies we provided to you at the time of the engagement.

You may request that we perform additional services not addressed in this engagement letter. If this occurs, we will communicate with you regarding the scope of the additional services and the estimated fees. We also may issue a separate engagement letter covering the additional services. In the absence of any other written communication from us documenting such additional services, our services will continue to be governed by the terms of this engagement letter.

By executing this engagement letter you consent to Hillberg & Company CPAs using your engagement information as a source of information to send you, by any medium, our newsletters or other communications. This consent is valid for five years.

Reporting

We will issue a written report upon completion of our audit of Donner Summit Public Utility District's financial statements. Our report will be addressed to management and those charged with governance of Donner Summit Public Utility District. Circumstances may arise in which our report may differ from its expected form and content based on the results of our audit. Depending on the nature of these circumstances, it may be necessary for us to modify our opinions, add a separate section, or add an emphasis-of-matter or other-matter paragraph to our auditor's report, or if necessary, withdraw from this engagement. If our opinions are other than unmodified, we will discuss the reasons with you in advance. If circumstances occur related to the condition of your records, the availability of sufficient, appropriate audit evidence, or the existence of a significant risk of material misstatement of the financial statements caused by error, fraudulent financial reporting, or misappropriation of assets, which in our professional judgment prevent us from completing the audit or forming an opinion on the financial statements, we retain the right to take any course of action permitted by professional standards, including declining to express an opinion or issue a report, or withdrawing from the engagement.

We will also provide a report (that does not include an opinion) on internal control related to the financial statements and compliance with the provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a material effect on the financial statements as required by Government Auditing Standards. The report on internal control and on compliance and other matters will state (1) that the purpose of the report is solely to describe the scope of testing of internal control and compliance, and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control on compliance, and (2) that the report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the entity's internal control and compliance. The report will also state that the report is not suitable for any other purpose. If during our audit we become aware that Donner Summit Public Utility District is subject to an audit requirement that is not encompassed in the terms of this engagement, we will communicate to management and those charged with governance that an audit in accordance with U.S. generally accepted auditing standards and the standards for financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards may not satisfy the relevant legal, regulatory, or contractual requirements.

You have requested that we provide you with a copy of our most recent external peer review report and any subsequent reports received during the contract period. Accordingly, our 2023 peer review report accompanies this letter.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to Donner Summit Public Utility District and believe this letter accurately summarizes the significant terms of our engagement. If you have questions, please let us know. If you agree with the terms of our engagement as described in this letter, please sign below and return it to us.

Very truly yours,

Hillberg & Company, CPAs



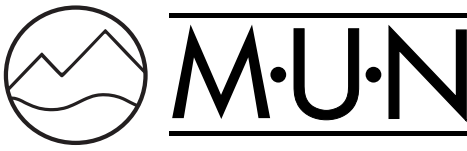
Joseph A. Julio
Partner – Audit & Attestation

RESPONSE:

This letter correctly sets forth the understanding of Donner Summit Public Utility District.

Management Signature: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

Governance Signature: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____



Report on the Firm's System of Quality Control

August 29, 2024

To the Partners of Hillberg & Co.
and the Peer Review Committee of the CalCPA Peer Review Program

We have reviewed the system of quality control for the accounting and auditing practice of Hillberg & Co. (the firm) in effect for the year ended December 31, 2023. Our peer review was conducted in accordance with the Standards for Performing and Reporting on Peer Reviews established by the Peer Review Board of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Standards).

A summary of the nature, objectives, scope, limitations of, and the procedures performed in a system review as described in the Standards may be found at aicpa.org/prsummary. The summary also includes an explanation of how engagements identified as not performed or reported in conformity with applicable professional standards, if any, are evaluated by a peer reviewer to determine a peer review rating.

Firm's Responsibility

The firm is responsible for designing and complying with a system of quality control to provide the firm with reasonable assurance of performing and reporting in conformity with the requirements of applicable professional standards in all material respects. The firm is also responsible for evaluating actions to promptly remediate engagements deemed as not performed or reported on in conformity with the requirements of applicable professional standards, when appropriate, and for remediating weaknesses in its system of quality control, if any.

Peer Reviewer's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the design of and compliance with the firm's system of quality control based on our review.

Required Selections and Considerations

Engagements selected for review included an engagement performed under *Government Auditing Standards*, including a compliance audit under the Single Audit Act, and audits of employee benefit plans.

As a part of our peer review, we considered reviews by regulatory entities as communicated by the firm, if applicable, in determining the nature and extent of our procedures.

Opinion

In our opinion, the system of quality control for the accounting and auditing practice of Hillberg & Co. in effect for the year ended December 31, 2023, has been suitably designed and complied with to provide the firm with reasonable assurance of performing and reporting in conformity with applicable professional standards in all material respects. Firms can receive a rating of *pass*, *pass with deficiency(ies)* or *fail*. Hillberg & Co. has received a peer review rating of *pass*.

MUN CPAs, LLP

MUN CPAs, LLP