

2026

# Santa Cruz LAFCO Policies & Procedures Handbook

Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County

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# **CHAPTER I**

# **ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS**



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### EMPLOYMENT POLICY

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

This policy applies to the employees of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (“LAFCO” or “Commission”). It is not intended to be comprehensive or address all aspects of the topics described below. This Policy supersedes all prior LAFCO employment policies and is intended to supplement, not supersede, current applicable state and federal statutes. Applicable state and federal statutes control if they conflict with any of the guidelines in this Policy.

Employees are expected to read this Policy carefully and know, understand and abide by its contents. LAFCO reserves the right to interpret the Policy’s provisions and make changes to the Policy at any time. This Policy does not confer any contractual rights or guarantee any terms or conditions of employment.

#### **2. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

LAFCO provides equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. LAFCO does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, religious creed (including religious dress and religious grooming), sex (including pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or information (including genetic information) family care or medical leave status, military caregiver status, military status, veteran status, marital status, domestic partner status, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by local, state, or federal laws.

#### **3. DISABILITY ACCOMODATION**

LAFCO is committed to complying fully with state and federal disability discrimination laws. As previously stated, no program or activity administered by the employer shall exclude from participation, deny benefits to or subject to discrimination any individual based on an employee’s actual or perceived disability or based on an employee’s association with someone who has an actual or perceived disability.

LAFCO is further committed to providing reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee. If you believe you are a qualified individual with a disability and that you need a reasonable accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of your job, please notify the Executive Officer. The accommodation process is interactive and allows the applicant or employee to identify possible accommodations. However, LAFCO has the right to choose among effective accommodations.

#### **4. AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT**

The employment relationship between LAFCO and its employees is for an unspecified term and may be terminated by the employee, Executive Officer or the Commission at any time, with or without cause or advanced notice. Also, LAFCO reserves the right

to transfer, demote, suspend, or administer discipline with or without cause or advance notice. None of the policies, procedures, or contents of this policy is intended to create any contractual obligations which in any way conflict with LAFCO's policy of At-Will Employment. The at-will relationship can only be modified by a written agreement signed by the employee and the LAFCO Executive Officer.

## **5. POLICY AGAINST HARRASMENT**

LAFCO prohibits and will not tolerate harassment of employees, applicants, or persons providing services pursuant to a contract based on factors such as race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, age, medical condition, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, physical and mental disabilities, veteran or other protected status, including persons perceived to have any of these characteristics or associating with someone who has or is perceived to have any of these characteristics. LAFCO will also take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment based on protected status by third parties, such as customers, clients and suppliers. All such harassment is prohibited by LAFCO and is against the law.

### **5.1 Definition**

Harassment is unwelcomed, and inappropriate conduct directed at an employee, based upon one of the characteristics protected under the federal and state anti-discrimination laws, that substantially prevents an employee from performing their duties, serves to threaten or intimidate an employee, and/or produce a hostile work environment.

Prohibited unlawful harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior: (1) Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments; (2) Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawing or gestures; (3) Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race or any other protected basis; and (4) Threats, demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors.

### **5.2 Reporting and Compliant Procedure**

An employee who believes that they have been subjected to any form of unlawful harassment should promptly make a complaint, preferably written, to the Executive Officer, or if it involves the Executive Officer, to the Chair of the Commission. Complaints should be specific and should include the names of individuals involved and the names of any witnesses. LAFCO will immediately undertake an effective, thorough, and objective investigation and attempt to resolve the situation. If LAFCO determines that unlawful harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be taken commensurate with the severity of the offense, up to and including termination. Appropriate action will also be taken to deter any future unlawful harassment.

### **5.3 Retaliation**

Employees will not be retaliated against for bringing a complaint in good faith under the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy or the Policy Against Harassment, or for honestly assisting in investigating such a complaint, even if the investigation produces insufficient evidence that there has been a violation, or if the charges cannot be proven. However, disciplinary action may be taken if false or frivolous accusations are

made in bad faith. An employee who believes that they have been subjected to any form of unlawful retaliation should promptly make a complaint, preferably written, in the same manner as described above. Complaints of harassment will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken to protect LAFCO employees from any form of unlawful retaliation.

## **6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The intent of the performance review process is to create a supportive, safe, professional evaluation review process and environment that optimizes the employee's ability to receive and actualize constructive feedback and that motivates the employee to pursue personal and professional growth/excellence authentically. The Commission's Personnel Policy provides more information regarding staff's annual performance evaluation.

## **7. PERSONNEL RECORDS**

Employees have the right to inspect certain documents in their personnel file, as provided by law, in the presence of a LAFCO representative at a mutually convenient time. Employees may add written versions of any disputed item to their file.

LAFCO will attempt to restrict disclosure of an employee's personnel file to authorized individuals within the organization. Any request for information from the file must be made to the Executive Officer or specific designee. Only the Executive Officer or specific designee is authorized to release information regarding current or former employees. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited to the extent allowed by law. However, LAFCO will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state or federal agencies conducting official investigations, with validly issued subpoenas and as otherwise required by law or legal proceeding to be released.

## **8. EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES**

The intent of this section is to define employment categories so that employees understand their employment status and benefit eligibility. These classifications do not guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Accordingly, the right to terminate the employment relationship at will at any time is retained by both the employee and LAFCO.

### **8.1 Exempt/Non-Exempt**

Each employee is designated as either Exempt or Non-Exempt from federal and state wage and hours. An employee's Exempt or Non-Exempt classification may be changed only upon written notification by the Executive Officer. Generally, Exempt employees (as defined by the Fair Labor Standards of 1938) are not eligible for minimum wage or overtime pay, while Non-Exempt employees are eligible.

### **8.2 Employment Categories**

In addition to information above, each employee will belong to one of the following employment categories:

- Regular Full Time – Employees who are not in an extra help status and who are regularly scheduled to work LAFCO's full-time schedule. Generally, they are eligible for LAFCO's benefit package, subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefit program.

- Part Time – Employees who are not assigned to an extra help status and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week. While part time employees do receive all legally mandated benefits (such as Social Security and workers' compensation insurance), they may be ineligible for some of LAFCO's other benefit programs.
- Extra help – Employees who are hired as interim replacements, to temporarily supplement the work force, or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of a limited duration. Employment beyond any initially stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status. Extra help employees retain that status unless and until notified of a change in writing signed by the Executive Officer. Extra help employees are ineligible for LAFCO's benefit programs unless otherwise required by law.
- Intern – LAFCO may utilize the services of paid student interns. Interns are used to supplement the LAFCO workforce and provide opportunities for local students to gain local government work experience. Employment is for a specified period of time. Interns are ineligible for LAFCO's benefit programs.

## 9. JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

The intent of this section is to define job descriptions so that employees understand their employment duties and responsibilities. Job descriptions identified in the following section summarize typical tasks but may comprise further responsibilities not listed.

### 9.1 Executive Officer Classifications

- Position Responsibilities: Under general supervision of the Commission to conduct and perform the Commission's administrative and advisory services, to supervise the daily activities of the Commission staff, and to act as a liaison between the Commission and governmental agencies and the general public.
- Typical Duties: Analyze and evaluate information on administrative and policy matters and advise the Commission on recommended action; conduct studies on governmental reorganization; comply with all legal requirements relating to the Commission's hearings; staff advisory committees to the Commission; prepare correspondence; supervise the maintenance of the Commission's files; attend all Commission meetings; attend City Council, County Board of Supervisors, and Special District Board meetings as necessary; act as liaison officer between the Commission and cities, special districts, the County, State institutions and the general public; prepare the annual budget for the Commission; supervise the Commission's staff; review proposed local and state legislation, and appear at legislative hearings to represent the position of the Commission.

### 9.2 LAFCO Analyst

- Position Responsibilities: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the LAFCO Analyst provides a full range of administrative and analytical services to Santa Cruz LAFCO involving a variety of matters that are complex and technical. Other roles include planning, organizing, and managing office activities, and performing other related duties as required. This "at will" position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the LAFCO Executive Officer and the Commission.

- Typical Duties: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the LAFCO Analyst completes various tasks and duties including but not limited to: (1) Assembling LAFCO meeting agenda packets and notices of meetings; recording LAFCO meetings and preparing resulting documents including minutes and resolutions; (2) Developing, maintaining and updating LAFCO files and records systems for tracking applications, project activities, contracts, and other records; (3) Ordering supplies and services and maintain records of expenditures; (4) Preparing and reviewing correspondence, memoranda and other written materials; (5) Tracking correspondence, filings, and materials with deadlines and expiration dates; (6) Handling a wide variety of correspondence which requires knowledge of policies and procedures and research skills; (7) Answering and screening telephone calls and visitors; (8) Maintaining the LAFCO Website; and (9) Serving as liaison between the Executive Officer, officials and staff, and the public and interacting with Commissioners.

### **9.3 Commission Clerk**

- Position Responsibilities: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Commission Clerk provides a full range of administrative and secretarial services to Santa Cruz LAFCO involving a variety of matters that are complex and technical. Other roles include planning, organizing, and managing office activities, and performing other related duties as required. This “at will” position is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the LAFCO Executive Officer and the Commission.
- Typical Duties: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Commission Clerk completes various tasks and duties including but not limited to: (1) Assembling LAFCO meeting agenda packets and notices of meetings; recording LAFCO meetings and preparing resulting documents including minutes and resolutions; (2) Developing, maintaining and updating LAFCO files and records systems for tracking applications, project activities, contracts, and other records; (3) Ordering supplies and services and maintain records of expenditures; (4) Preparing and reviewing correspondence, memoranda and other written materials; (5) Tracking correspondence, filings, and materials with deadlines and expiration dates; (6) Handling a wide variety of correspondence which requires knowledge of policies and procedures and research skills; (7) Answering and screening telephone calls and visitors; (8) Maintaining the LAFCO Website; and (9) Serving as liaison between the Executive Officer, officials and staff, and the public and interacting with Commissioners.

### **9.3 Administrative Analyst**

- Position Responsibilities: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Administrative Analyst conducts analyses and special studies, and make recommendations on local agency boundary change proposals to the Commission; collect data relating to proposals; and process proposals in accordance with state law, the Commission’s procedures, and the Commission’s policies.
- Typical Duties: Under the direction of the Executive Officer, the Administrative Analyst performs a variety of routine to complex professional and analytical assignments. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Positions at this entry level usually perform

most of the duties required of the positions at higher levels but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgement. Work is usually supervised more closely while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern.

## **10. HIRING AND STAFFING**

To attract and retain qualified staff for LAFCO, it is the policy of LAFCO to use a criterion-based recruitment process and behavioral-based interview process to ensure the most qualified candidates are hired.

### **10.1 Recruiting**

Recruiting applicants will be aggressive enough to assure an adequate supply of qualified candidates to consider. The recruitment process may include, but is not limited to, the use of professional recruitment firms, referrals from current or past employees, walk-in applicants, and/or web-based postings.

### **10.2 Interviews**

The employment interview is a major element in the selection process. It allows the applicant an opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities to perform the job and provides information to the candidate about the position. Interviews may be conducted by telephone or in face-to-face sessions. All interview questions must be job-related and have direct bearing on the tasks of the position. Interviews and questions are standardized so that all applicants are evaluated equally. Questions that express (directly or indirectly) any preference, limitation, or general reference to race, national origin, sex, age, physical handicap, or any other protected category are prohibited.

### **10.3 Probationary Period**

All LAFCO new hires will have a twelve-month probationary period beginning on the first day of employment. The LAFCO staff will provide job training during this time period and the employee will be evaluated every three months during the probationary period. LAFCO may terminate an employee during this twelve-month probationary period or at any point in time therein. Nothing in this provision shall alter the at-will status of any employee.

## **11. SALARIES**

The salaries of all employees shall be set by resolution adopted by the Commission. The salary resolutions for all employees except the Executive Officer shall include provisions for merit increases, if deemed appropriate by the Commission. The Executive Officer shall conduct annual performance reviews and determine if the merit increases are granted. The process for the Executive Officer's performance and compensation review is found in LAFCO's Personnel Policy.

### **11.1 Adoption of the Compensation Schedule**

The Board shall consider and adopt a Compensation Schedule showing the minimum and maximum rates of pay within and between salary ranges for each position in the District. This schedule will be reviewed annually, on or before June 30, by the Commission as part of the budget preparation. Thereafter, the Board may adopt, amend, or change the Compensation Schedule by resolution. Any resolution, which alters, amends, or changes the Compensation Schedule shall be incorporated in Appendix A (Employee Compensation Schedule) of these rules (see page 9).

## Appendix A: Compensation Schedule

2.8% COLA	Santa Cruz LAFCO Compensation Schedule (Effective 3/4/26)								
		Step A	Step B	Step C	Step D	Step E	Step F	Step G	Step H
Position	Range	Base Salary	1-2 years	2-3 year	3-4 year	4-5 year	5-6 years	6+ years	>>
<b>Executive Officer</b>	N/A	Range = \$154,000 - \$205,000 (determined by commission) Current Salary = \$190,000 (\$91.35/hour)							
<b>Assistant EO</b>									
Salary Range		90,000	92,520	95,111	97,774	100,511	103,326	106,219	Commission Discretion
Hourly Rate		<b>\$43.27</b>	<b>\$44.48</b>	<b>\$45.73</b>	<b>\$47.01</b>	<b>\$48.32</b>	<b>\$49.68</b>	<b>\$51.07</b>	
<b>LAFCO Analyst</b>									
Salary Range		80,000	82,240	84,543	86,910	89,343	91,845	94,417	Commission Discretion
Hourly Rate		<b>\$38.46</b>	<b>\$39.54</b>	<b>\$40.65</b>	<b>\$41.78</b>	<b>\$42.95</b>	<b>\$44.16</b>	<b>\$45.39</b>	
<b>Commission Clerk</b>									
Salary Range		60,000	61,680	63,407	65,182	67,008	68,884	70,813	Commission Discretion
Hourly Rate		<b>\$28.85</b>	<b>\$29.65</b>	<b>\$30.48</b>	<b>\$31.34</b>	<b>\$32.22</b>	<b>\$33.12</b>	<b>\$34.04</b>	
<b>Administrative Analyst</b>									
Salary Range		55,000	56,540	58,123	59,751	61,424	63,143	64,911	Commission Discretion
Hourly Rate		<b>\$26.44</b>	<b>\$27.18</b>	<b>\$27.94</b>	<b>\$28.73</b>	<b>\$29.53</b>	<b>\$30.36</b>	<b>\$31.21</b>	

*Footnote: Any step increases or changes to staff salaries are done at the full discretion of the commission.*

## **11.2 Establishing Initial Salary Step and Range for Regular Employees**

Upon being hired, new full-time employees will generally be placed at step-A of the Compensation Schedule for the position being filled. In appropriate circumstances, the Executive Officer, at their discretion, may request that the Personnel Committee approve placement of an employee at step-B or above if the employee has extraordinary qualifications.

## **11.3 Cost of Living Adjustment**

Cost of living adjustments will normally be based on the annual Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). On an annual basis, the Personnel Committee will evaluate whether wages should be adjusted for COLA. The recommendations of the Personnel Committee will be presented to the Commission, who will in the Board's sole discretion, determine whether or not funds are available to grant any COLA. The Commission has the sole discretion in the granting or denying of cost of living increases and the relative percentage of the proposed increase(s). No employee is guaranteed a COLA in any particular year.

## **11.4 Step Increase**

A step increase within the same salary range may be granted to an employee based on three years of continuous employment in steps-A through G of the range, and if the employee has received a satisfactory or better evaluations from their supervisor during the period(s) covered by the increase, refer to page 9 (Compensation Schedule). Employees are not guaranteed any step increases. Such increases are committed at the discretion of the Executive Officer.

## **11.5 Leave of Absence Without Pay**

For special reasons, an employee may be a granted leave of absence without pay for a total of thirty (30) days or more within a given calendar year. When this type of leave is granted (regardless of the underlying reason), the employee's scheduled step increase will be delayed by any time in excess of thirty (30) days. A leave of absence for a period totaling less than thirty (30) days in the given calendar year shall have no effect upon the employee's eligibility for a scheduled step increase. See further information about available leaves of absence in the Benefits section of these rules.

## **12. WORKING HOURS**

LAFCO offices shall be open on all days and the hours that Santa Cruz County offices are open to the public for business. Full-time employees shall work 40 hours per work week and part-time employees shall work at least 20 hours per week.

### **12.1 Overtime Hours**

"Overtime" means authorized time worked in excess of 40 hours in a one-week work period. Employees must obtain approval from the Executive Officer prior to working any overtime. Paid time off from work for any purpose shall not count as time worked for purposes of overtime. Overtime shall be paid at the rate of one and a half times the employee's regular rate of pay or as otherwise required by applicable federal or state law. The Executive Officer must approve regular and overtime work schedules. The Executive Officer is an exempt employee and is not eligible for overtime compensation.

## **12.2 Remote Work (Procedure)**

LAFCO provides employees the privilege of voluntarily working remotely when appropriate. LAFCO considers remote work to be a viable alternative work arrangement in cases where the employee and the employee's position are well-suited to working remotely on either a full-time or hybrid basis. Remote work allows employees to work offsite for all or part of their regular workweek. Remote work is a voluntary work alternative that may be appropriate for some employees and some jobs. It is not a guarantee or an entitlement and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with LAFCO. An employee is not required to work remotely. Work space and equipment is provided for all employees in LAFCO's offices. All remote work employees are expected to:

- Maintain consistent assigned work hours during LAFCO's hours of operation. Any changes to an employee's schedule or availability must be approved by the Executive Officer. Employees should follow the applicable process for requesting and obtaining time off.
- Establish a routine of periodic work plans and reports to their manager to establish goals and document results.
- Be readily available for impromptu video, email and phone conversations. Communicate effectively and be responsive to requests (whether by phone, e-mail, or video).
- Maintain a dedicated and safe home office environment free of distractions and background noise.
- Devote 100% of their attention to working remotely as if you were in the office.
- Store all work product(s) on the LAFCO network and do not store on any internal storage of a home computer or laptop.
- Report to LAFCO's offices and/or other work locations in-person for meetings or other activities as required by the Executive Officer or Commission.
- Managers may require additional methods of communication and reporting to ensure employees are accessible and reliable.
- Employees must follow all security protocols outlined by Santa Cruz County ISD guidelines when accessing LAFCO records remotely through any personal devices, including but not limited to home computers and laptops.

## **12.2 Remote Work (Communication)**

Working from a remote location may add challenges to effective communication, teamwork, and collaboration. The remote employee is responsible for ensuring effective communication and participation while working remotely and for ensuring that coworkers and the Executive Officer feel informed and confident about the work results being produced. If an employee seeks a remote work arrangement, the employee must make the request and obtain approval from the Executive Officer. Remote work can be requested on any of the following bases:

- Full-time (where an employee's primary work location is remote for their full work schedule);
- A regularly scheduled basis (where an employee works a hybrid schedule, with regularly recurring days worked remote); or
- As needed (where an employee works remotely on occasion).

Even if full-time or regularly scheduled remote work is approved, employees can be requested to report to LAFCO offices or other work locations as needed. Remote work arrangements can be changed (either reduced or eliminated) at the discretion of the Executive Officer. Remote work arrangements for the Executive Officer will be addressed and approved, and can be subject to change (either reduced or eliminated) at the discretion of the LAFCO Board Chair.

### **12.3 Remote Work (Home Office Requirements)**

Remote work arrangements require the employee to establish a fully functioning home office environment. LAFCO will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to provide the remote working employee with a computer or monitors for the home office. All other equipment and services are the responsibility of the employee to be paid at their expense including:

- Phone and voicemail with professional outgoing message;
- High speed Internet connection;
- If wireless network is used, a secure, password-protected connection; and
- Repairs or adjustments necessary to maintain a safe working environment

Remote work is for the personal convenience of the employee and is not required by LAFCO. LAFCO maintains work facilities and equipment in its offices. Therefore, if the employee uses their personal computer LAFCO will not:

- Provide support for personal systems;
- Provide maintenance, repairs, or adjustments of any kind;
- Provide upgrades for hardware;
- Provide upgrades for operating systems; and
- Reimburse for the purchase of any software programs

At the conclusion of employment, employees who use their own computer or other personal equipment will be required to certify that there is no LAFCO information on their computer or equipment, and to certify that all LAFCO data, information, and property has been returned.

### **13. EXPENSES AND TRAVEL**

Employees shall be reimbursed for all actual and necessary expenses incurred in the transaction of LAFCO business in accordance with LAFCO's Financial Policy.

### **14. PAID LEAVES**

The following paid leaves shall be provided to LAFCO employees:

- Executive Officer: The Executive Officer shall receive the same paid leave benefits as those provided to appointed Santa Cruz County department heads including vacation, sick leave, administrative leave, bereavement leave, and holidays.
- Other LAFCO Employees: Employees, except the Executive Officer, shall receive the same paid leave benefits as those provided to Santa Cruz County employees in the General Representation Unit including annual leave, bereavement leave, and holidays.

### **15. RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE**

LAFCO employees will receive health insurance, dental insurance and other insurance depending on their particular classifications. These insurance benefits will generally be the same as provided to County of Santa Cruz employees. The Commission will review and establish the benefits annually at its discretion.

#### **15.1 Retirement**

LAFCO contracts with the California Public Employees' Retirement System ("CalPERS") to provide pension benefits to full-time and half-time employees. Employee retirement contributions to CalPERS shall be set by resolution adopted by the Commission.

#### **15.2 Insurance**

The following insurance benefits shall be provided to LAFCO employees:

- Executive Officer: Insurance benefits which are provided to appointed department heads of Santa Cruz County shall be provided to the Executive Officer. These benefits are health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance.
- Other LAFCO Employees: Insurance benefits which are provided to Santa Cruz County employees in the General Representation Unit shall be provided to LAFCO full-time employees other than the Executive Officer. These benefits are health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, life insurance, and long-term disability insurance.
- Annuitant Employees: LAFCO annuitants who retired through CalPERS may enroll in a CalPERS' health plan as provided under the Public Employee's Medical and Hospital Care Act and CalPERS regulations. Eligibility and annuitant contribution amounts are set by the Commission's health insurance contract.

#### **15.3 Health Insurance**

Employees' health insurance contributions shall be the same as the contributions made by employees who hold comparable jobs with Santa Cruz County.

#### **15.4 Deferred Compensation**

LAFCO shall provide a deferred compensation program for employees. LAFCO shall not make employer contributions to the deferred compensation program.

#### **16. SAFETY**

Every employee is responsible for safety. To achieve our goal of providing a completely safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious. Employees should report any unsafe or hazardous condition directly to their supervisor immediately. In case of an accident involving a personal injury, regardless of how serious, employees should notify the Executive Officer or LAFCO Chair immediately. Failure to report accidents can result in a violation of legal requirements and can lead to difficulties in processing insurance and benefit claims. If an employee is injured on the job, they will be entitled to benefits under the state workers' compensation law in most cases. LAFCO carries workers' compensation insurance and will assist employees to obtain all benefits to which they are legally entitled.

#### **17. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

LAFCO is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence. LAFCO will not tolerate any violent or dangerous behavior of any kind, whether through physical abuse, threats of any kind, intimidation, coercion, stalking or otherwise, defacing LAFCO'S property or causing physical damage to the facilities, bringing weapons or firearms of any kind onto LAFCO'S premises, parking lots, or while conducting business, or any other behavior that suggests a propensity towards violence.

LAFCO strictly prohibits employees, consultants, customers, visitors, or anyone else on LAFCO premises or engaging in a LAFCO-related activity from behaving in a violent or threatening manner. Employees may report all incidents of direct or indirect violence or dangerous behavior to the Executive Officer or LAFCO Chair as soon as possible. Reporting incidents and concerns early can help prevent a situation from escalating and becoming even more dangerous. Employees should never attempt to handle a potentially dangerous situation by themselves. Any LAFCO employee that violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, as well as potential legal action.

#### **18. OFFICE INSPECTION**

Although desks, cabinets and shelves are made available for the convenience of employees while at work, employees should remember that all desks, cabinets and shelves remain the sole property of LAFCO. Moreover, LAFCO reserves the right to open and inspect desks, cabinets, and shelves, as well as any contents, effects, or articles in desks, cabinets, and shelves. Such an inspection can occur at any time, with or without advance notice or consent. An inspection may be conducted before, during, or after working hours by the Executive Officer or designee.

Employees have no expectation of privacy in any of these items. Prohibited materials, including weapons, explosives, alcohol and non-prescribed drugs or medications, may not be placed in a desk, cabinet or shelf. Employees who, if requested, fail to cooperate in any inspection will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. LAFCO is not responsible for any articles that are placed or left in a desk, cabinet, or shelf that are lost, damaged, stolen or destroyed.

## **19. THEFT OR LOSS OF OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

The use of any LAFCO-related equipment (computers, cell phones, laptops, or other office-related equipment) outside of the LAFCO offices must be approved by the Executive Officer. LAFCO employees are fully responsible for the care and safekeeping of all office equipment offsite. Should an item be stolen or lost offsite while under the care of a LAFCO employee, the LAFCO employee is responsible to reimburse LAFCO for the replacement cost of all lost or stolen items. Any loss or theft of the LAFCO equipment must be reported immediately to the Executive Officer, and the employee is responsible to reimburse LAFCO for the replacement cost of the device.

## **20. OFFICE PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

LAFCO is committed to encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response. LAFCO strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. All employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. All employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. If there is a disagreement concerning established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, employees may express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No one will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with LAFCO in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.

## **21. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Any employee whose employment is terminated by LAFCO for any reason shall be entitled to two weeks' notice or two weeks' pay in lieu of notice.

## **22. POLITICAL NEUTRALITY AND CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS**

LAFCO is an impartial, quasi-legislative governmental entity whose effectiveness depends on maintaining public trust and political neutrality. To preserve the integrity, independence, and credibility of LAFCO, employees shall not endorse, support, or oppose any candidate for an elected local government board, council, or commission seat during any election period, whether in an official capacity or in any manner that could reasonably be perceived as representing LAFCO.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit employees from engaging in lawful personal political activities in their private capacity, provided such activities do not involve candidate endorsements, do not reference LAFCO employment, and do not otherwise conflict with LAFCO's obligation to remain neutral or with applicable law.

*Adopted on June 4, 1986 (Resolution No. 141-DD)*  
*Amended on December 9, 2015 (Resolution No. 2015-12)*  
*Previous Revision on August 3, 2016 (Resolution No. 2016-12)*  
*Revision on June 3, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-16)*  
*Revision on September 6, 2023 (Resolution No. 2023-20)*  
*Last Revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*  
*Last Revision on March 4, 2026*



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**PERSONNEL POLICY**

**1. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION – LAFCO STAFF**

Evaluations of staff personnel other than the Executive Officer will be made by the Executive Officer on an annual basis. To assist in this process, staff will submit a report documenting their accomplishments from the prior year and their goals for the upcoming year to the Executive Officer for review and discussion. The Executive Officer's review of this report will be conducted by December of each year.

**2. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION – EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Personnel evaluations of the Executive Officer will be made by the Commission on an annual basis. To assist in this process, the Executive Officer will submit a report documenting their accomplishments from the prior year and their goals for the upcoming year to the Personnel Committee for review and discussion. The Personnel Committee's review of this report will be conducted by January of each year.

**3. COMMISSION REVIEW**

All performance evaluations, and any other pertinent information, will be forwarded to the Commission for their review and consideration at the February meeting of each year. In accordance with Government Code Sections 54957 and 54957.6, staff's performance evaluations will be discussed in a closed session.

**4. SALARY ADJUSTMENTS**

Following the Commission's review and consideration of staff performance evaluations, the Personnel Committee will provide an annual report on staff salaries and benefits at the March meeting of each year. At this time, the Commission may consider possible salary adjustments to bring staff salaries into alignment with other comparable positions or as compensation for their job performance. This review may include a report by a personnel consultant, when indicated.

**5. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The members of the Personnel Committee will have at least a two-year term but may continue if reaffirmed by the Commission. At least two Commissioners should be on the Personnel Committee. The current LAFCO Chair is encouraged to be part this committee.

*Adopted on June 7, 2000 (Resolution No. 2000-4)  
Revised on January 9, 2008 (Resolution No. 2008-3)  
Last Revision on February 5, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-02)*



# LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

## FINANCIAL POLICY

### 1. OVERVIEW

It is the policy of Santa Cruz LAFCO to follow ethical, responsible, and reasonable procedures related to purchasing, claims, auditing, money management, and other financial matters. The following accounting discussion is intended to provide an overview of the accounting policies and procedures applicable to LAFCO. This policy documents the financial operations of the organization. Its primary purpose is to formalize accounting policies and selected procedures for the accounting staff and to document internal controls.

### 2. USE OF COUNTY FINANCIAL OFFICES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It is the policy of Santa Cruz LAFCO to utilize the offices, policies, and procedures of the County of Santa Cruz in the conduct of LAFCO's financial matters.

#### 2.1 Santa Cruz County Policies and Procedures Manual

LAFCO shall follow "Title 1—Financing and Accounting Policies and Procedures" of the County of Santa Cruz Policies and Procedures Manual, except as specified in LAFCO's policies. LAFCO is an independent agency; therefore, neither the Board of Supervisors nor the County Administrative Officer has any authority over LAFCO's financial matters. The County Policies and Procedures shall be translated to LAFCO's Policies and Procedures by the following substitutions:

County of Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz LAFCO
Board of Supervisors	LAFCO Commission
County Administrative Officer	LAFCO Executive Officer
Department Head	LAFCO Executive Officer
Purchasing Agent	LAFCO Executive Officer

#### 2.2 Santa Cruz County Auditor-Controller

LAFCO shall use the Santa Cruz County Auditor-Controller for the following functions:

- Claims and warrants;
- Petty cash;
- Payroll and deductions;
- Collection of county, city, and independent district contributions to the LAFCO budget as required by Government Code Section 56381;
- Maintenance of the LAFCO trust fund; and
- Audits.

### **2.3 Santa Cruz County Purchasing Policy Manual**

For procuring goods and services, LAFCO may follow the most recent edition of the County of Santa Cruz, Purchasing Policy Manual.

LAFCO staff may choose to either use the purchasing services of the Santa Cruz County General Services Department or may make direct purchases. In the case of direct purchases, LAFCO staff will follow to the extent possible the County's Purchasing Policy Manual, with the Executive Officer functioning as the Purchasing Agent.

## **3. AUTHORIZATIONS**

It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Officer to authorize expenditures of funds within the framework and limitations of the budget adopted by the Commission.

### **3.1 Payroll**

When payroll is due to be filed with the Auditor-Controller and the Executive Officer is absent from the office, the Secretary-Clerk shall attempt to contact the Executive Officer. The Secretary-Clerk may sign the payroll if either:

- The Executive Officer authorizes the payroll amounts verbally or by e-mail, and the Secretary-Clerk keeps a written record of the authorization; or
- The Executive Officer cannot be contacted, and the Secretary-Clerk presents the payroll to the Executive Officer as soon as possible after the Executive Officer becomes available in the office or electronically.

### **3.2 Claims**

When an urgent claim is due and the Executive Officer is absent from the office, the Secretary-Clerk may utilize LAFCO's designated County Administrative Office (CAO) representative to address the claim. If the Executive Officer and the CAO representative are unavailable, the Secretary-Clerk may sign the urgent claim if either:

- The Executive Officer authorizes the urgent claim amount verbally or by e-mail, and the Secretary-Clerk keeps a written record of the authorization, or
- The Executive Officer cannot be contacted, and the Secretary-Clerk presents the urgent claim to the Executive Officer as soon as possible after the Executive Officer becomes available in the office or electronically.

As used in this section, "urgent claim" means a valid claim for which LAFCO would incur a late payment penalty of \$25 or more if the claim were not submitted to the Auditor-Controller on that workday.

### **3.3 Executive Officer Follow-up Action(s)**

Upon returning to the office or becoming available electronically, the Executive Officer shall review any payroll transaction or urgent claim that was authorized by the Secretary-Clerk, separately sign the payroll or claim, and take any necessary actions to correct any errors or oversights.

#### **4. EXPENSES AND TRAVEL**

Commissioners (regular and alternate members), employees, and staff shall be entitled to reimbursement for all actual and necessary expenses incurred in the transaction of Commission business, including participation on the CALAFCO board and CALAFCO committees, in accordance with the following provisions:

##### **4.1 Stipends**

Regular and Alternate Commissioners shall receive \$50.00 per meeting in order to help defray the costs of attending the meetings.

##### **4.2 Travel Expenses**

Regular and Alternate Commissioners, employees, and staff shall be reimbursed in conformance with current County policy for out-of-county travel, meals, and related expenses incurred while on Commission business.

##### **4.3 Mileage Reimbursement**

Regular and Alternate Commissioners, employees, and staff shall be reimbursed for authorized use of their private automobiles in conformance with current County policy.

##### **4.4 Lodging Expenses**

Travel reimbursements for lodging at rates higher than County policy shall be permitted when Commissioners (Regular and Alternate), employees, and staff stay at the host facility for CALAFCO events, including but not limited to, meetings, workshops, and conferences.

##### **4.5 Staff Definition**

As used in this section, "staff" means the LAFCO Counsel or the LAFCO Counsel's back-up attorney when either is traveling on LAFCO business.

##### **4.6 Reimbursement Authorization**

No travel expenses shall be reimbursable unless authorized by the Executive Officer.

##### **4.7 Extended Meeting Expenses**

For day meetings of the Commission that are expected to last more than four hours, or for any night meetings, the Commission authorizes expenses not to exceed \$5 per attending Commissioners for light refreshments (coffee, bottled water, soft drinks, cookies, etc.)

#### **5. BUDGET**

Government Code Section 56381 indicates that LAFCO shall adopt a proposed budget no later than May 1 and a final budget no later than June 15. LAFCO shall prepare an annual budget in conformance with Government Code Section 56381.

##### **5.1 Performance Evaluations**

Completion of staff's performance evaluation, as outlined in the Personnel Policy, should be completed by February of each year.

## **5.2 Salary & Benefit Adjustments**

Following the Commission's review and consideration of staff's performance evaluation, any adjustments to their salaries and benefits should occur by March of each year.

## **5.3 Proposed Budgets**

The Commission should consider adopting a draft budget by April of each year. Copies of the draft budget, with the proposed allocation breakdown, should be shared with the funding agencies for review and comments.

## **5.4 Final Budgets**

The Commission should consider adopting a final budget by May of each year. Copies of the final budget, with the final allocation breakdown, should be shared with the funding agencies for their records.

## **6. RESERVES**

As of July 1, 2024, Santa Cruz LAFCO has two reserve funds restricted to the agency's account with the Santa Cruz County. These funds are as follows: (1) Litigation and (2) Contingency. These accounts are considered "restricted" accounts and are only used for the specific purposes described below:

### **6.1 Litigation Reserves**

Restricted funds for costs related to agency legal challenges. The minimum balance in the Litigation Reserve Account shall be \$100,000.

### **6.2 Contingency Reserves**

Restricted funds to cover any unforeseen future agency loss and/or urgent matter which includes but is not limited to property or equipment damage, loss, or theft. These funds may also be used to balance annual LAFCO budgets. The minimum balance in the Contingency Reserve Account shall be \$100,000.

*Adopted on June 2, 2004 (Resolution No. 2004-10)  
Revision on February 5, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-03)  
Last Revision on September 6, 2023 (Resolution No. 2023-20)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this policy is to offer guidelines to staff regarding the retention of Santa Cruz LAFCO files; provide for the identification, maintenance, and safeguarding of Santa Cruz LAFCO records and the destruction of obsolete documents in the normal course of business; ensure prompt and accurate retrieval of records; and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

#### **2. COMPLIANCE**

It is the policy of this Commission to retain Santa Cruz LAFCO documents and other records in accordance with the retention schedule established in the attached table (refer to **Figure 1**; page 3 of policy). The schedule is in compliance with the minimum retention periods mandated by the California Government Code, the California Code of Civil Procedure, the Code of Federal Regulations, the Secretary of State Local Government Records Management Guidelines, and other legal authorities cited.

#### **3. PROCEDURE**

Government Code Section 56382 allows LAFCO to authorize the destruction of any duplicate record which is older than two years as long as a copy is kept in some reliable format. This policy documents the records management of the organization. The following section outlines how LAFCO staff should determine if a document is obsolete and subject to potential destruction.

##### **3.1 Request for Destruction Form**

A LAFCO staff member must complete and sign a "Request for Destruction of Obsolete Records" form, listing the date and description of each document to be destroyed. A sample form is attached to this policy as **Figure 2**; (page 4 of policy). The form must include the Executive Officer's signature.

##### **3.2 Approval of Form**

After receiving the signed form from the Executive Officer, the Commission Clerk will oversee the destruction of the obsolete documents.

##### **3.3 Records Log**

The Commission Clerk will permanently retain a master log of all destroyed obsolete documents which includes the titles or brief descriptions of the purged files that were destroyed, the method of destruction and the date of destruction.

#### **4. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

The Commission Clerk shall be responsible for the administration of this policy and shall follow the general guidelines outlined in this document. The following general guidelines apply to all Santa Cruz LAFCO records.

#### **4.1 Duplicate Records**

The Commission may authorize the destruction of any duplicate records at any time (Government Code Sections 26201; 60200).

#### **4.2 Two-Year Threshold**

Unless otherwise required by State or Federal law, the Commission may authorize the destruction of any original document which is more than two (2) years old without retaining a copy of the document as long as the retention and destruction of the document complies with the retention schedule as set forth in this policy (Government Code Sections 26202; 60201).

#### **4.3 Significant Project Documents**

In addition to the retention periods required under this policy, the Commission shall retain original administrative, legal, fiscal, and/or historical records with continued value (i.e., records for long-term transactions and/or special projects) until all matters pertaining to such records are completely resolved or the time for appeals has expired (Government Code Sections 14755; 34090).

#### **4.4 Indestructible Files**

Pursuant to Government Code Section 60201, the Commission shall not destroy any of the following records:

- a) Records relating to the formation change of organization or reorganization of the Commission;
- b) Ordinances and resolutions, unless they have been repealed or have become invalid or otherwise unenforceable for five years;
- c) Minutes of any meeting of the Commission;
- d) Records relating to any pending claim, litigation, any settlement or other disposition of litigation within the past two (2) years;
- e) Records that are the subject of any pending request for records under the California Public Records Act, whether or not the record is exempt from disclosure, until the request has been granted or two (2) years after the request has been denied by the Commission;
- f) Records relating to any non-discharged debt of the Commission;
- g) Records relating to the title to real property in which the Commission has an interest;
- h) Records relating to any nondischarged contract to which the Commission is a party;
- i) Records that have not fulfilled the administrative, fiscal, or legal purpose for which they were created or received;
- j) Records less than seven (7) years old that specify the amount of compensation or expense reimbursement paid to Commission employees, officers, retired annuitant, or independent contractors.

**Figure 1 – Records Retention Schedule**

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
1	Accident/Illness Reports (OSHA Reports)	<p>Not a public record;</p> <p>For Employee Medical Records &amp; Employee Exposure Records regarding exposure to toxic substances or harmful physical agents:</p> <p>*Includes Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)</p> <p>*Does NOT include records of health insurance claims maintained separate from employer’s records; first aid records of one-time treatments for minor injuries; records of employees who worked less than one (1) year if records are given to employee upon termination.</p>	GCS 6254(c); CCR 32304(d)(1)(A)(B)	Duration of employment plus 30 years
2	Accidents/Damage to LAFCO Property	Risk Management Administration	GCS 340901 CCP 337.15	10 years
3	Accounting Records – General Ledger	General Ledger	GCS 34090; CCP 337; Sec. of State Local Govt Records Mgmt. Guidelines	<p>Until audited +4 years</p> <p>Published articles show 4-7 years retention</p> <p>Sec. of State Guidelines recommends permanent retention</p>
4	Accounting Records – Permanent Books of Accounts	Records showing items of gross income, receipts and disbursement (including inventories per IRS regulations)	CFR 31.6001-1(c)&(e)	Permanent

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
5	Accounts Payable	Journals, statements, asset inventories, account postings with supporting documents, vouchers, investments, invoices and back-up documents, purchase orders, petty cash, postage, OCERS reports, check requests, etc.  Expense reimbursements to employees & officers; travel expense reimbursements or travel compensation.	CCP 337; CFR 31.6001-1(e)(2); Secretary of State Local Gov't. Records Mgmt. Guidelines	Until audited + 4 years  7 years after date of payment
6	Accounts Receivable	Receipts for deposited checks, coins, currency; reports, investments, receipt books, receipts, cash register tapes, payments for fees, permits, etc.	CFR 31.6001- 1(e)(2); Sec. of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines recommendation	Until audited +4 years
7	Affidavits of Publication / Posting	Legal notices for public hearings, publication of ordinances, etc.	GCS 34090	2 years
8	Agency Report of Public Official Appointments (FPPC Form 806)	Report of additional compensation received by LAFCO official when appointing themselves to committees, boards or commission of other public agencies, special districts, joint powers agencies or joint powers authorities. Current report must be posted on LAFCO's website.	CCR 18705.5; GCS 34090.5	Recommended retention; keep a copy of report for 2 years after removal from LAFCO's website
9	Agenda / Agenda Packets	Original agendas, agenda packets, staff reports, and related attachments, supplemental items and documentation submitted by staff/public in relation to agenda items.  Paper copies of agenda packets should be maintained for 1 year as complete packets. Originals will later be imaged for permanent records retention; the imaged record may serve as the permanent record.	GCS 34090, 34090.5	Current + 2 years
10	Agreements (see also Contracts)	Original contracts and agreements and back-up materials, including leases, service/maintenance agreements, etc.	CCP 337; 337.2; 343	4 years after termination/ completion

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
11	Annexations / Reorganizations	Notices, Resolutions, Certificates of Completion; documents may be imaged, but the originals can never be destroyed.	GCS 34090 GCS 60201(d)(1)	Permanent
12	Annual Financial Report	May include independent auditor analysis.	GCS 26201, 34090 GCS 34090, 60201 Sec of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines	Until audited + 7 years
13	Articles of Incorporation	Including but not limited to JPAs, mutual water companies, and changes of organization	GCS 34090(a)	Permanent
14	Audit Reports	Financial services; internal and/or external reports;	GCS 34090; CCP 337, 343; Sec. of State Local Gov't. Records Retention Guidelines	Minimum retention – Current + 4 years  Sec. of State Guidelines recommends permanent retention
15	Audit Hearing or Review	Documentation created and or received in connection with an audit hearing or review	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
16	Ballots – Special District elections	Copies of ballots from elections of Special Districts (LAFCO members)	GCS 26202, 34090, 60201	2 years
17	Bank Account Reconciliations	Bank statements, receipts, certificates of deposit, etc.	CFR 31.6001-1(e)(2)	Until audited + 4 years; Secretary of State recommends until audited + 5 years
18	Brochures/Publications	Retain selected documents only for historic value	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
19	Budget, Annual	Annual operating budget approved by LAFCO	GCS 26202, 34090; Sec. of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines	Until audited + 2 years; Sec. of State recommends permanent retention
20	Cal-OSHA	Personnel logs, supplementary records; annual summary (Federal and State-Cal-OSHA)	LAB 6410; CCR 14307	5 years
21	CalPERS - Employee Benefits	Retirement Plan	USC 1027	6 years

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
22	Checks (issued by LAFCO)	LAFCO checks paid – expense reimbursements; payments to independent contractors, etc. Includes check copies; canceled and voided checks; electronic versions of checks.  LAFCO check paid to vendors; other LAFCO payments - includes check copies; canceled or voided checks; electronic versions of checks.	GCS 60201(d)(12); CCP 337; Sec. of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines; CCP 31.6001-1(e)(2)	7 years  Until audited +4 years
23	Citizen Feedback	General correspondence	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
24	Claims Against LAFCO	Paid/denied	GCS 60201(d)(4); GCS 25105.5	Until settled + 5 years
25	Complaints/ Requests	Various files, not related to specific lawsuits involving the agency and not otherwise specifically covered by the retention schedule	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
26	Contracts	Original contracts and agreements and back-up materials, including leases, service/maintenance contracts, etc.	CCP 337, 337.2, 343	4 years after termination/ completion
27	Correspondence	General correspondence, including letters and e-mail; various files, not otherwise specifically covered by the retention schedule	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
28	Deferred Compensation Reports	Finance - pension/retirement funds	CFR 516.5; CFR 1627.3	3 years
29	Demographic/ Statistical Data	Including but not limited to special studies and boundary changes	GCS 26202, 34090	Current +2 years
30	Deposits, Receipts	Receipts for deposited checks, coins, currency	Sec. of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines; CCP 337	Until audited + 4 years
31	DMV Driver's Records, Reports (DMV Pull Notice System)	Part of personnel records – not a public record	GC 34090; GC 6254(c) VC 1808.1(c); Sec. of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines	Until superseded (should receive new report every 12 months)  Sec. of State recommends retention until termination + 7 years

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
32	Employee Files	Personnel - information - may include release authorizations, certifications, reassignments, outside employment, commendations, disciplinary actions, terminations, oaths of office, evaluations, pre- employee medicals, fingerprints, identification cards	GCS 12946 CFR 1627.3	While current + 3 years
33	Employee Information Applicant Identification Records	Personnel – data recording race, sex, national origin of applicants	CCR 7287(b)(c)(2)	2 years
34	Employee Information, General	Name, address, date of birth, occupation	GCS 12946 CFR 1627.3 LAB 1174	3 years
35	Employee Information, Payment	Rate of pay and weekly compensation earned	GCS 60201	7 years
36	Employee Programs	Includes EAP and Recognition	GCS 26202, 34090; GCS 12946	Current + 2 years
37	Employee, Recruitment	Alternate lists/logs, examination materials, examination answer sheets, job bulletins	GCS 12946; GCS 26202, 34090; CFR 1602 et.seq.; CFR 1627.3	Current + 2 years
38	Employee, Reports	Employee statistics, benefit activity, liability loss	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
39	Employee Rights - General		GCS 12946; CFR 1602.31	Length of employment + 2 years
40	Employment Applications - Not Hired	Applications submitted for existing or anticipated job openings, including any records pertaining to failure or refusal to hire applicant	GCS 26202, 34090; GCS 12946; CFR 1627.3	2 years
41	Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9 Forms)	Federal Immigration and Nationality Act; Immigration Reform/Control Act 1986	USC 1324a(b)(3) Pub. Law 99-603	3 years after date of hire, or 1 year after date of termination, whichever is later
42	Employment - Surveys and Studies	Includes classification, wage rates	GCS 12946 GCS 26202, 34090 CFR 516.6	2 years
43	Employment - Training Records, Non-Safety	Volunteer program training - class training materials, internships	GCS 34090 GCS 12946	Length of employment + 2 years

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
44	Employment - Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rates	Annual mileage reimbursement rates	GCS 26202, 34090	Until superseded + 2 years
45	Environmental Quality California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)	Exemptions, Environmental Impact Reports, mitigation monitoring, Negative Declarations, Notices of Completion and Determination, comments, Statements of Overriding Considerations	GCS 34090; 60201 CEQA Guidelines	Permanent
46	Environmental Quality Environmental Review	Correspondence, consultants, issues, conservation	GCS 26202, 34090	Completion + 2 years
47	ERISA Records	Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 – plan reports, certified information filed, records of benefits due	USC 1027, 2059 <i>La Barbera v. A. Morrison Trucking, Inc.</i> 2011 US Dist. LEXIS 16343 (E.D.N.Y. Feb. 17, 2011)	6 years
48	Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (Federal)	Records of leave taken, LAFCO policies relating to leave, notices, communications relating to taking leave	CFR 825.500; GCS 12946	While employed +3 years (Federal) or 2 years (State)
49	Fixed Assets Inventory	Reflects purchase date, cost, account number	GCS 26202, 34090	Until audited + 2 years
50	Fixed Assets Surplus Property	Auction, disposal, listing of property	GCS 26202, 34090; CCP 337	Until audited + 4 years
51	Forms	Including but not limited to administrative/project docs		Until Superseded
52	Fund Transfers	Internal; bank transfers & wires	GCS 26202, 34090	Until audited + 2 years
53	General Ledgers	All annual financial summaries	GCS 34090; CCP 337; Sec. of State Local Gov't. Records Retention Guidelines	Until audited +4 years  Sec. of State Guidelines recommends permanent retention
54	Gift to Agency Report (FPPC Form 801)	FPPC form showing payment or donation made to Santa Cruz LAFCO or to a Santa Cruz LAFCO official and which can be accepted as being made to LAFCO	FPPC Reg.18944(c)(3)(F)(G); FPPC Fact Sheet: "Gifts to an Agency – Part 2"	Must be posted on LAFCO website for 4 years (per FPPC Fact Sheet)

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
55	Gifts/Bequests	Receipts or other documentation	GCS 34090	Until completed + 2 years
56	Grants - Successful Federal, State, or other grants	Grants documents and all supporting documents: applications, reports, contracts, project files, proposals, statements, sub- recipient dockets, environmental review, grant documents, inventory, consolidated plan, etc.	GCS 34090; CFR 570.502; CFR 85.42	Until completed + 4 years
57	Grants – Unsuccessful	Applications not entitled	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
58	Insurance	Personnel related	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
59	Insurance, Joint Powers Agreement	Accreditation, MOU, agreements and agendas	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
60	Insurance Certificates	Liability, performance bonds, employee bonds, property; insurance certificates filed separately from contracts, includes insurance filed by licensees	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
61	Insurance, Liability/Property	May include liability, property, Certificates of Participation, deferred, use of facilities	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
62	Insurance, Risk Management Reports	Federal and State OSHA forms; loss analysis report; safety reports; actuarial studies	CFR 1904.44; GCS 26202, 34090	5 years (Federal) 2 years (State)
63	Investment Reports, Transactions	Summary of transactions, inventory and earnings report	GCS 34090, 60201; CCP 337; Sec. of State Local Gov't. Records Retention Guidelines	Until audited +4 years  Sec. of State Guidelines recommends permanent retention
64	Invoices	Copies sent for fees owed, billing, related documents	GCS 26202, 34090	Until audited + 2 years
65	Legal Notices/ Affidavits of Publication	Notices of public hearings, proof of publication of notices	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
66	Legal Opinions	Confidential - not for public disclosure (attorney-client privilege)	GCS 26202, 34090	Until superseded + 2 years
67	Litigation	Case files	GCS 26202, 34090	Until settled or addressed + 2 years

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
68	Maintenance Manuals	Equipment service/maintenance	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
69	Maintenance/Repair Records	Equipment	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
70	Marketing, Promotional	Brochures, announcements, etc.	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
71	Minutes	Meeting minutes; paper records are to be maintained permanently by the agency.	GCS 34090, 60201(d)(3)	Permanent
72	Newsletters	May wish to retain permanently for historic reference	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
73	Notices – Public Meetings	Including but not limited to regular and special meetings	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
74	Oaths of Office	Elected and public officials – commissioners	GCS 26202, 34090; USC 1113; Secretary of State Guidelines	Current plus 6 years
75	Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	OSHA Log 200, Supplementary Record, Annual Summary (Federal & State- Cal-OSHA); OSHA 300 Log, privacy case list, annual summary, OSHA 301 incident report forms	LC 6410; CCR 14307; CFR 1904.2 -1904.6, 1904.33	5 years
76	Payroll - Federal/State Reports	Annual W-2's, W-4's, Form 1099s, etc.; quarterly and year- end reports	GCS 60201	7 years
77	Payroll Deduction/Authorizations	Finance	CFR 516.6(c); GCS 60201	While Current + 7 years
78	Payroll, registers	Finance – payroll, registers, payroll reports	CFR 516.5(a); LAB 1174(d); GCS 60201	7 years from date of last entry
79	Payroll records terminated employees	Finance files	CFR 516.5; GCS 60201	7 years from date of last entry
80	Payroll, timecards/sheets	Employee	CFR 516.6; LAB 1174; Sec. of State Local Gov't Records Mgmt. Guidelines	3 years Sec. of State recommendation – Until audited + 6 years
81	Payroll - Wage Rates / Job Classifications	Employee records	GCS 60201	le current + 7 years
82	Personnel Records	Other records (not payroll) containing name, address, date of birth, occupation, etc., including records relating to promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off, termination	CFR 1627.3	3 years

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
83	Personnel Rules and Regulations	Including employee handbook, employee manuals, and other policies/procedures	CFR 516.6, 1627.3(a)	Current + 3 years
84	Petitions	Submitted to legislative bodies	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
85	Policies & Procedures	All policies and procedures adopted by the Commission; directives rendered by the agency not assigned a resolution number; Commission Bylaws	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
86	Political Support/Opposition, Requests & Responses	Related to legislation	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
87	Press Releases	Related to LAFCO actions/activities	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
88	Procedure Manuals	Administrative	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
89	Public Records Request	Requests from the public to inspect or copy public documents	GCS 26202, 34090, 60201(d)(5)	2 years
90	Purchasing RFQs, RFPs	Requests for Qualifications; Requests for Proposals – regarding goods and services	GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
91	Purchasing, Requisitions, Purchase Orders	Original documents	GC 34090; CCP 337	Until audited + 4 years
92	Recordings - audio (e.g., for preparation of meeting minutes)	Audio recordings of Commission meetings	GCS 54953.5	Minimum 30 days
93	Recordings, video meetings of legislative bodies	Video recordings of public meetings made by or at the direction of the Commission	GCS 54953.5	Minimum 30 days
94	Recordings, video, other events	Other than video recordings of public meetings; considered duplicate records if another record of the same event is kept (i.e., written minutes or audio recording)	GCS 53161	Minimum 90 days after event is recorded; if no other record of the event exists, the recording must be kept 2 years
95	Records Management Disposition/ Destruction Certification	Documentation of final disposition/destruction of records	GCS 34090, 60201	Permanent

#	Type of Record	Description or Example of Record	Legal Authority	Minimum Legal Retention Period
96	Records Retention Schedules		GCS 26202, 34090	Current + 2 years
97	Recruitments and Selection	Records relating to hiring, promotion, selection for training	CFR 1627.3	3 years
98	Requests for Qualifications (RFQs); Requests for Proposals (RFPs)	Requests for Qualifications, Requests for Proposals, and related responses	GCS 26202; CCP 337	Current + 4 years
99	Resolutions	Vital records – may be imaged, but originals can never be destroyed	GCS 34090, 60201	Permanent
100	Returned Checks	Finance – Adjustments – NSF, etc. (not LAFCO checks)	GCS 26202, 34090; CCP 337	Until audited + 4 years
101	Salary/Compensation Studies, Surveys	Studies of agencies regarding wages, salaries and other compensation benefits	GCS 26202,34090	While current + 2 years
102	State Controller	Annual reports	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
103	Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) (FPPC Form 700) (originals – designated employees)	Original SEIs of officers and employees designated in LAFCO's Conflict of Interest Code	GCS 81009(e), (g)	7 years (can image after 2 years)
104	Stop Payments	Finance - bank statements	GCS 26202, 34090	2 years
105	Unemployment Insurance Records	Records relating to unemployment insurance – claims, payments, correspondence, etc.	USC 3301-3311; Calif. Unemployment Insurance Code; CCP 343	4 years
106	Vouchers - Payments	Account postings with supporting documents	GCS 26202, 34090; CCP 337	Until audited + 4 years
107	Wage Garnishment	Wage or salary garnishment	CCP 337	Active until garnishment is satisfied; then retain until audited + 4 years
108	Warrant Register/Check Register	Record of checks issued; approved by the Commission (copy is normally retained as part of agenda packet information)	GCS 26202, 34090	Until audited + 2 years
109	Workers Compensation Files	Work-injury claims (including denied claims); claim files, reports, etc.	CCR 10102; CCR 15400.2	Until settled + 5 years

**Figure 2 – Request for Destruction Form**



**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

**“Request for Destruction of Obsolete Records”**

To: Joe A. Serrano, LAFCO Executive Officer

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Request for Destruction of Obsolete Records

I am requesting approval to destroy the obsolete records listed below.

DATE OF RECORD	TYPE OF RECORD	LEGAL AUTHORITY	RETENTION PERIOD

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The obsolete records described above were destroyed under my supervision using the following method:

- Shredding       Recycling       Other (specify method)

I certify that such destruction meets the requirements of the Records Retention and Destruction Policy of LAFCO and all applicable requirements of State and federal law.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commission Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Records Destruction

## **CHAPTER II**

# **COMMISSION MEETINGS & SELECTION PROCESS**



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**MEETING RULES POLICY**

**1. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS**

The Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County shall hold regular meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at the hour of 9:00 o'clock A. M. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers in the County Governmental Center, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California. Meetings may be cancelled at the Chair's discretion.

**2. AGENDA**

The agenda packet shall be available for the Commissioners by Thursday evening, six days preceding the Wednesday meeting. The agenda packet will also be made available on the LAFCO website for the general public.

The Chairperson or the Chairperson's designee shall determine the appropriate content of the agenda, and arrange the order of the agenda, or may delegate the same to the Executive Officer. A majority of the Commission may direct the placement of any item on a future agenda by action taken in a noticed public meeting of the Commission.

The agenda may be organized in the following manner:

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Description</b>
1) Roll Call	Identify Commissioners in attendance.
2) Adoption of Minutes	Consideration of previous meeting minutes.
3) Oral Communications	Opportunity for the public to address the Commission on items not on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the Commission's jurisdiction.
4) Public Hearing(s)	Items that require expanded public notification per provisions in state law, Commission direction, or voluntarily placed by the Executive Officer.
5) Other Business	Items that involve administrative, budgetary, legislative, or personnel matters and may be subject to broader discussion.
6) Written Correspondence	Any written correspondence distributed to the Commission less than 72 hours prior to the meeting will be made available for inspection at the hearing and posted on LAFCO's website.
7) Press Articles	LAFCO staff monitors newspapers, publications, and other media outlets for any news affecting local cities, districts, and communities in Santa Cruz County.
8) Commissioners' Business	Opportunity for Commissioners to comment briefly on issues not listed on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Commission.
9) Adjournment	Conclusion of LAFCO's open and closed session items.

In some cases, special items may be added to the agenda, including but not limited to Oath of Office, Closed Sessions, or other non-periodic items. The agenda outline above may include such special items, when applicable.

All reports, communications, resolutions, or other matters to be submitted to the Commission shall be submitted to the Executive Officer no later than noon on Monday, nine days preceding a regular Commission meeting. Correspondence presented to the Commission after that date but before the regular meeting will be made available on the LAFCO website and at the meeting for public review.

Items not on the agenda should not be considered at the scheduled meeting, but should be set for the next available meeting, unless the Commission grants its consent for urgent matters consistent with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Section 54950.5 *et seq.*).

### **3. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

The Commission shall, at its first regular meeting of each year, or as duly continued by action of the Commission, choose one of its members to serve as Chairperson and one of its members to serve as Vice-Chairperson, to serve the balance of the calendar year or until the election of their successors.

Should the office of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson become vacant during the calendar year, the Commission shall, at the meeting at which the vacancy occurs, choose a successor to fill the vacancy for the balance of that calendar year, or until the election of a successor.

### **4. CHAIRPERSON TO PRESIDE**

The Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the Commission. If the Chairperson is absent or unable to act, the Vice-Chairperson shall serve until the Chairperson returns or is able to act. The Vice-Chairperson has the same powers and duties of the Chairperson while acting as Chairperson.

### **5. QUORUM**

A majority of the regular members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Alternate members, when seated in place of regular members, shall be considered a regular member for quorum determination. When there is no quorum, the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, or if no Commissioners are present, the Executive Officer shall adjourn the meeting.

### **6. MAJORITY VOTE**

An affirmative vote of at least four members of the Commission, including alternate members when seated in place of regular members, shall be required to approve any motion before the Commission.

### **7. READING OF MINUTES**

Unless a Commissioner requests a reading of the minutes, the Commission may approve minutes without formal reading if the Executive Officer has previously furnished each member with a draft of the minutes.

### **8. RULES OF DEBATE**

Sturgis Rules of Order shall be followed by the Commission to the fullest extent possible; provided, procedural failure shall not invalidate an otherwise legal act of the Commission. In addition, the Chairperson may second motions and enter into debate regarding all Commission items. Every member desiring to speak shall address the Chairperson, and, upon recognition by the Chairperson, shall speak to the question under debate.

## **9. MANNER OF ADDRESSING THE COMMISSION--TIME LIMIT**

All persons addressing the Commission shall step up to the podium, give their name, geographical area (or City) of residence, and interest in the area under consideration in an audible tone for the record, and unless further time is granted by the Commission, shall limit their time to three minutes. The Chairperson, unless otherwise changed by a motion and vote from the Commission, may set a different time limit.

All remarks shall be addressed to the Commission as a body and not to any member thereof. No person, other than the Chairperson and the person having the floor, shall be permitted to enter into any discussion, either directly or through a member of the Commission, without permission of the Chairperson. No question shall be asked of a Commissioner or staff member except through the Chairperson.

## **10. METHOD OF VOTING**

The Commission shall vote by voice, unless one Commissioner requests a roll call vote. Roll call voting shall be random with the Chairperson voting last. Unless a member of the Commission states that they are disqualified or abstaining from voting, the silence shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.

## **11. ABSTAINING FROM VOTING**

No Commissioner shall abstain from voting without first notifying the Chairperson of the Commissioner's intent to abstain from the vote.

## **12. DISQUALIFICATION FROM VOTING**

Whenever any Commissioner is disqualified from voting, that Commissioner shall announce their disqualification to the extent required by law, step from the dais, and may then participate to the extent permitted by the California Political Reform Act.

## **13. ALTERNATE COMMISSIONERS**

Whenever present at a Commission meeting, Alternate Commissioners shall take part in all of the proceedings of the Commission but shall not vote on any matter before the Commission unless seated in place of an absent or disqualified regular member of the Commission.

## **14. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The Commission will hear presentations from the public not to exceed three minutes on subjects within the Commission's jurisdiction and not on the agenda that day. No action will be taken by the Commission on any matter presented at that time. The Chairperson, subject to a motion and direction from the Commission, may set a different time limit.

## **15. SUMMARY ADJOURNMENT**

The Chairperson is empowered to summarily, and without a motion, second, or voting, declare a meeting of the Commission adjourned if the Chairperson is unable to enforce the proper decorum of a meeting.

## **16. RESOLUTION**

No resolution shall be adopted by the Commission unless it is presented before the Commission in writing and read aloud. When each Commissioner has received a copy of the resolution, the reading of the resolution is automatically waived unless a

Commissioner specifically requests that it is read. Prior to Commission consideration, draft resolutions will be reviewed by Legal Counsel. Resolutions will be signed by the Chair, Legal Counsel, and the Executive Officer after the Commission has approved them at a public meeting.

#### **17. SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Commission may appoint special committees at any time for any lawful purpose of the Commission. Unless otherwise directed by the Commission, all special committees shall be appointed by the Chairperson, subject to approval of the Commission.

#### **18. PROTESTS AND DISSENTS BY COMMISSIONERS**

Any Commissioner shall have the right to have the reasons for their dissent from, or protest against, any action of the Commission, entered in the minutes.

#### **19. POSTING NOTICES**

Posting of official notices, notices of public hearings, and any other official papers of the Commission where posting is required by law, shall be posted on the Official Bulletin Board of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County at the County Governmental Center at 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, California. These official postings shall also be posted on the Commission's website at [www.santacruzlafco.org](http://www.santacruzlafco.org).

Should the Commission hold a public hearing at any other location than its regular place of meeting, then, in addition to posting the notice on the Official Bulletin Board as listed above, posting shall be made upon or near the door to the stated place of meeting.

#### **20. DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AFTER AGENDA PACKET IS DISTRIBUTED**

Materials related to an item on the agenda that are submitted to the Commission after the agenda packet is distributed, are available to the public at the LAFCO office and during the meeting at the meeting location. Each agenda shall include a statement that the public may review these materials at the Commission office or during the meeting at the meeting location.

#### **21. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Should any Regular Commissioner be absent for three consecutive regular meetings of the Commission without valid excuse, the Chairperson shall, through the Executive Officer, notify the appointing authority of such unexcused absences.

#### **22. COMMISSION STIPENDS AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

Commissioners receive a stipend payment of \$50 per posted meeting of the Commission and for attendance at any other Commission approved meetings (i.e. standing or special committee meeting). Commissioners may also receive reimbursement for expenses such as mileage or transportation costs, lodging, and food for approved travel associated with LAFCO business.

*Adopted on May 5, 1999 (Resolution No. 1999-4)  
Revised on October 2, 2019 (Resolution No. 2019-20)  
Revision on March 4, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-04)  
Latest Revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **PUBLIC MEMBER SELECTION POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The Public Member Selection Policy establishes guidelines towards the appointment of LAFCO's regular and alternate public members. As stipulated in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, if the office of a regular public member becomes vacant, the alternate member may serve and vote in place of the former regular public member until the appointment and qualification of a regular public member to fill the vacancy. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56334, the term of office of each member shall be four years and until the appointment and qualification of his or her successor.

#### **2. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

When the regular public member and/or alternate public member position becomes vacant during a term, or two months in advance of either of these terms ending, the Chairperson and Executive Officer shall place on the agenda, a memo advising the Commission of the need to advertise for candidates to apply for the position(s).

At the meeting, the Commission shall direct staff to advertise the vacancy and receive applications. Unless the Commission gives alternate directions, the following steps will be completed:

- a. Vacancy Notification: Staff will advertise the vacancy as soon as possible on the LAFCO website and in at least two newspapers of general circulation which jointly have broad coverage throughout Santa Cruz County. The notice shall include a summary of the qualifications for the position as specified in Government Code Section 56331 (e.g. can't be an officer or employee of the county, city, or district). Pursuant to Government Code Section 56325(d), a copy of the notice will also be sent to all city clerks, to all independent special districts secretaries, and to the clerk of the Board of Supervisors.
- b. Deadline Establishment: The deadline for applications shall be at least 21 days following the meeting at which the Commission authorizes the solicitation.
- c. Candidate Application: Individuals interested in the position shall apply by completing a form provided by LAFCO staff and submitting the application before the deadline.

#### **3. CANDIDATE REVIEW**

The Executive Officer shall compile the applications and present them to the Commission as part of the meeting agenda following the application deadline. Candidates may withdraw an application before or after the application deadline. If a candidate withdraws an application after the deadline, the candidate shall not be considered for the appointment unless the Commission votes to reopen the process and the person reapplies.

#### **4. SELECTION PROCESS**

Final appointment for the regular public member and/or alternate public member shall be conducted during an open session at a regularly scheduled LAFCO Meeting. Upon receiving and reviewing the applications, the Commission by majority vote shall choose one of the following three courses of actions:

- a. Make an appointment from the list of candidates;
- b. Invite all candidates to make oral presentations at a subsequent LAFCO Meeting; or
- c. Reopen the application process.

In the event no candidate from the applicants submitted receives a majority vote and an affirmative vote of at least one county, city, and special district member, the Commission shall conduct a run-off vote of two candidates receiving the most votes. In the event that neither candidate receive a majority vote and an affirmative vote of at least one county, city, and special district member, the Chair shall direct the Executive Officer to re-advertise that a vacancy(ies) exist(s) in the manner set forth in these procedures.

*Adopted on April 7, 2004 (Resolution No. 2004-6)  
Last Revision on May 6, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-10)*



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**INDEPENDENT SPECIAL DISTRICTS SELECTION POLICY**

**1. OVERVIEW**

The purpose of the Independent Special District Selection Committee shall be to appoint the regular and alternate special district members of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and to fill unexpired terms when vacancies occur. It is important to note that nothing in these Rules of Procedure shall supersede Government Code Section 56332, which governs the establishment of the Independent Special District Selection Committee.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the Independent Special District Selection Committee shall be composed of the presiding officer or designated board member of the legislative body of each independent special district either located wholly within Santa Cruz County or containing territory within the county that represents 50% or more of the assessed value of taxable property of the district.

**3. MEETINGS**

**3.1 Notification and Solicitation of Nominations**

The Executive Officer of the Commission shall give written notice to all eligible independent special districts of any meeting of the Independent Special District Selection Committee, specifying the date, time, and place.

Any person qualified to serve as an Independent Special District representative to LAFCO shall be qualified to submit a nomination which shall be accompanied by a brief resume on the form provided by LAFCO. Each district shall be encouraged to submit nominations.

**3.2 Registration**

Each member of the Selection Committee shall be entitled to one vote for each independent special district of which he or she is the presiding officer.

In the event that the presiding officer is unable to attend a meeting of the Committee, the legislative body may appoint one of its members to attend in the presiding officer's place. Such a designated member shall submit written authorization at the time of registration.

Each voting member shall register and complete a declaration of qualification. The voting member will then be given the required number of ballots and other voting materials.

### **3.3 Quorum**

Members representing a majority of the eligible districts shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of Committee business. No meeting shall be called to order earlier than the time specified in the notice and until a quorum has been declared to be present.

Before calling the meeting to order, the Executive Officer shall announce that a quorum is present and request that any voting member who has not yet registered do so at that time. Only those eligible members registered and present shall be allowed to vote.

### **3.4 Sequential Balloting**

If there is more than one position to fill, sequential balloting will be held in the following order using a ballot with names of all eligible nominees: (1) Full term, regular member; (2) Partial term, regular member; and (3) Alternate member.

If a candidate is elected to a position, his or her name will be crossed out on the subsequent ballots.

### **3.5 Majority to Win**

In order for a candidate to be elected, that candidate must receive a majority of the votes being cast.

If no candidate receives a majority, a subsequent round of voting shall be conducted with the eligible candidates limited to the two candidates who received the most votes in the previous round and any candidates who received the same number of votes as the second candidate.

## **4. COMPOSITION OF SPECIAL DISTRICT REPRESENTATION ON LAFCO**

It is desirable that the special district members on LAFCO have a broad cross-section of duties and experience in district matters. Therefore, the following four classes of districts are established:

### **Class 1: Fire Protection Districts**

- Ben Lomond Fire Protection District
- Boulder Creek Fire Protection District
- Central Fire District<sup>1</sup>
- Felton Fire Protection District
- Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District<sup>2</sup>
- Scotts Valley Fire Protection District<sup>3</sup>
- Zayante Fire Protection District

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<sup>1</sup> The original resolution listed the Aptos/La Selva Fire Protection District, which was subsequently consolidated with the Central Fire Protection District (named changed to Central Fire District) in 2021.

<sup>2</sup> The original resolution listed the Freedom Fire Protection District and the Salsipuedes Fire Protection District, which were subsequently consolidated into the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.

<sup>3</sup> The original resolution listed the Branciforte Fire Protection District, which was subsequently dissolved and annexed into the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District in 2023.

## **Class 2: Water Districts**

- Central Water District
- San Lorenzo Valley Water District<sup>4</sup>
- Scotts Valley Water District
- Soquel Creek Water District

## **Class 3: Recreation and Park Districts**

- Alba Recreation and Park District
- Boulder Creek Recreation and Park District
- La Selva Beach Recreation and Park District

## **Class 4: Miscellaneous Districts<sup>5</sup>**

- Pajaro Valley Health Care District
- Pajaro Valley Public Cemetery District
- Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
- Salsipuedes Sanitary District
- Santa Cruz County Resource Conservation District
- Santa Cruz Port District

### **4.1 Overlapping Classes**

At no time shall the two regular special district members on LAFCO come from the same class of districts.

### **4.2 Class Diversity**

Where feasible, nominations for vacancies on LAFCO may not come from the class that already has a regular member sitting on LAFCO.

### **4.3 Conflicting Classes**

Any election that would result in the two regular special district members being from the same class of district shall be immediately deemed invalid, and a subsequent ballot will be prepared excluding the conflicting class of candidates and voted upon.

## **5. MAILED-BALLOT ELECTIONS**

### **5.1 Authority**

A mailed-ballot election may be conducted if the Executive Officer has determined that a meeting of the Special District Selection Committee is not feasible.

### **5.2 Notification and Solicitation of Nominations**

The Executive Officer of the Commission shall give written notice to all eligible independent special districts of the intention to conduct a mailed-ballot election. Each district shall acknowledge receipt of the Executive Officer's notice.

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<sup>4</sup> The original resolution listed the Lompico County Water District which was subsequently dissolved and annexed into the San Lorenzo Valley Water District.

<sup>5</sup> The original resolution listed the Opal Cliffs Recreation District and the Reclamation District No. 2049, which were subsequently dissolved in 2022 and 2024 respectively. The list also excluded the Pajaro Valley Health Care District which was ultimately created through special legislation in 2022.

Each district shall be encouraged to submit nominations, accompanied by a brief resume on the form provided by LAFCO. All nominations must be received by a specified date that shall be at least six weeks from the date of notification. Emailed copies of nominations may be submitted, if necessary, to meet the established deadline; however, replacement originals must be submitted as soon thereafter as possible.

### **5.3 Distribution and Return of Ballots**

All eligible districts shall be sent, by certified mail, return receipt requested, the following materials: (1) copies of all nominations received by the deadline, (2) ballot(s) as required to vote for Commission members, and (3) voting instructions.

The following outlines the necessary information and steps to submit a complete ballot:

1. The ballots shall include the names of all nominees.
2. Each ballot shall be accompanied by a certification sheet to be completed by the presiding officer or designated alternate who cast that district's vote.
3. A specified period of time, not less than six weeks, shall be allowed for the districts to cast their votes and return their ballots.
4. Ballots shall be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested.
5. Emailed copies of ballots may be submitted, if necessary, to meet the established deadline; however, replacement originals must be submitted as soon thereafter as possible.
6. All ballots received by the deadline shall be counted and the results announced within seven days.
7. Certified ballots representing a simple majority of the eligible districts must be returned for a valid election.

### **5.4 Appointment by Majority Vote**

A candidate for a regular or alternate member of the Commission must receive at least a majority of the votes cast in order to be selected. Results of the election will be reviewed and adopted by the Commission during an open session of a regularly scheduled LAFCO Meeting.

In the event that no candidate receives the required number of votes, a run-off election shall be conducted, either by a second mailed ballot or a meeting of the Independent Special District Selection Committee, at the discretion of the Executive Officer.

*Adopted on September 7, 1994 (Resolution No. 801-B)  
Revision on May 6, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-11)  
Last Revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### CITY SELECTION POLICY

#### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the City Selection Committee shall be to appoint the regular and alternate city members of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and to fill unexpired terms when vacancies occur (Government Code Section 56325[b]).

#### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the City Selection Committee shall be composed of the presiding mayor or designated council member of the legislative body of each city located wholly within Santa Cruz County.

#### **3. CLERK OF THE CITY SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The County Administrative Officer, acting as the Clerk of the Board, shall function as the recording officer of the City Selection Committee. All meetings of a City Selection Committee shall be conducted in the presence of the clerk or designated personnel. All votes and action taken by a City Selection Committee shall be recorded in writing by the clerk of the committee. The written record of any vote or action taken by the selection committee shall include the name of each member voting and how they voted. Written records and minutes of a selection committee's clerk are public records (Government Code Section 50276).

#### **4. SELECTION/APPOINTMENT OF CITY COMMISSIONERS**

The City Selection Committee shall appoint two regular commissioners and one alternate commissioner to serve on LAFCO, each of whom shall be a mayor or city council member from one of the County's incorporated communities (Government Code Section 56325). Such appointments shall be made in accordance with the procedure established by the City Selection Committee and described in the rules and regulations of that body.

#### **5. TERMS OF OFFICE & VACANCIES**

The Cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville alternate staggered, four-year terms on LAFCO. All terms end the first Monday in May. Prior to the expiration of a term limit, LAFCO staff will notify the County Administrative Officer to schedule a City Selection Committee meeting to address upcoming vacancies and appoint a new city member.

If a city council member is unable to finish their term on LAFCO, then the City Selection Committee may allow that city to nominate another council member to complete that city’s term. In the case of all appointments, a city’s nomination must be accepted by the City Selection Committee at a noticed meeting.

## 6. CITY ROTATION PROCEDURE

The City Selection Committee established a rotation protocol regarding the appointments to LAFCO on June 6, 2023. This procedure ensures that each of the four cities have equal representation on the Commission. The city rotation goes with the city and not with the person. The unanimous action reflects the following rotation schedule:

- The Cities of Santa Cruz and Watsonville will share and rotate between one regular seat and the alternate seats every two years; and
- The Cities of Capitola and Scotts Valley will share and rotate every two years with the other regular seat.

A comprehensive review of the next series of rotation, based on the procedure outlined above, is shown in the table below. The rotation schedule within the table indicates when a city will hold a regular or alternate seat between 2024 to 2040.

YEAR	CAPITOLA	SCOTTS VALLEY	SANTA CRUZ	WATSONVILLE
<b>2024*</b>	<b>Ex Officio</b>	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Alternate</b>	<b>Regular</b>
2025	Regular	Ex Officio	Alternate	Regular
2026	Regular	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate
2027	Ex Officio	Regular	Regular	Alternate
2028	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate	Regular
2029	Regular	Ex Officio	Alternate	Regular
2030	Regular	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate
2031	Ex Officio	Regular	Regular	Alternate
2032	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate	Regular
2033	Regular	Ex Officio	Alternate	Regular
2034	Regular	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate
2035	Ex Officio	Regular	Regular	Alternate
2036	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate	Regular
2037	Regular	Ex Officio	Alternate	Regular
2038	Regular	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate
2039	Ex Officio	Regular	Regular	Alternate
2040	Ex Officio	Regular	Alternate	Regular

*Note: All terms end on the fourth Monday in January. See LAFCO Policy for more information.*

**\*\*Start of New Rotation Schedule -January 22, 2024\*\***

*Adopted on September 6, 2023 (Resolution No. 2023-20)  
Last revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **APPORTIONMENT DEFERRAL, REDUCTION AND WAIVER POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

Pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, the LAFCO of Santa Cruz County (“LAFCO”) is funded by the local agencies within its jurisdiction which are eligible to be represented on the LAFCO. After the LAFCO adopts its annual budget following noticed public hearings, the County auditor apportions the net operating expenses of the LAFCO (“Apportionment”) according to a formula set forth in Government Code section 56381. From time to time, LAFCO receives requests from members to waive all or part of their Apportionment due to financial hardship and other circumstances. This Policy sets forth the process under which a member may request a deferral, reduction, or waiver of their annual Apportionment.

#### **2. DEFERRAL, REDUCTION AND WAIVER GUIDELINES**

It shall be the policy of the LAFCO of Santa Cruz County to allow member agencies to seek a deferral, reduction or waiver of their annual Apportionment under the following process and conditions:

**2.1 Eligibility:** Every member of the LAFCO upon which an Apportionment is levied is eligible to apply for a deferral, reduction or waiver of their Apportionment.

**2.2 Submittal of Requests:** Requests for deferral, reduction or waiver of a member’s Apportionment shall be made in writing, addressed to the Executive Officer, and submitted not later than July 31st before the due date of the Apportionment for which the deferral, reduction or waiver, as applicable is requested.

**2.3 Grounds for Granting a Request:** Requests shall be granted on a case-by-case basis where it can be shown that levying the full Apportionment would cause significant, undue hardship to the member. The Executive Officer shall screen all requests to determine whether undue hardship is demonstrated before forwarding any request/s hardship to the Commission for a final determination.

**2.4 Deferral Period:** Any deferral, if granted, shall be for a period no later than the following financial year, and may be for a shorter period, at the discretion of the Commission.

**2.5 No Multi-Year Deferrals, Reductions, or Waivers:** Granting of any deferral, reduction or waiver of a member’s Apportionment does not entitle that member to a deferral, reduction or waiver in any future year.

**2.6 Total Apportionment Impact:** Granting of any deferral, reduction or waiver to any member shall not alter the Apportionment amount charged to any other member(s).

# CHAPTER III

## APPLICATIONS & PROPOSALS



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### PROPOSAL EVALUATION POLICY

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

Pursuant to Government Code Section 56375, Santa Cruz LAFCO has established standards for the evaluation of proposals. The Commission uses these standards when reviewing and acting upon proposals for annexations and other boundary changes. This policy concludes with a copy of the application form.

#### **2. CONSISTENCY WITH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

All changes of organization shall be consistent with adopted spheres of influence of affected agencies.

##### **2.1 Sphere Consistency**

Consistency shall be determined by a LAFCO finding of consistency with the sphere of influence maps and policies adopted by LAFCO for the affected agencies.

#### **3. INITIAL PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

Any proposal involving annexations, incorporations, and formations shall not be approved unless it demonstrates a need for the additional services to be provided to the area; while all proposals involving detachments, a disincorporation, and dissolutions shall not be approved unless the proponent demonstrates that the subject services are not needed or can be provided as well by another agency or private organization.

##### **3.1 Pre-zoning & General Plan Updates**

For proposals concerning cities, need shall be established by (a) an adopted pre-zoning, consistent with the city general plan, that shows current or future development at a density that will require urban services such as sanitary sewer and water, and (b) a city growth rate and pattern that the subject area will be developed within 5 years.

The Commission shall require pre-zoning for all city annexations so that the potential effects of the proposals can be evaluated by the Commission and known to the affected citizens.

##### **3.2 Existing Land Use Designations**

For proposals concerning the extension of other services by annexation, incorporation, or district formation, need shall be established by the applicable general plan land use designations and the service levels specified for the subject area in the applicable general plan.

Generally, LAFCO will presume to favor a city's general plan inside the sphere of influence adopted for the city by LAFCO, and the county's general plan elsewhere. It is the proponent's responsibility to prove any exception by referring to the policies of the Local Government Reorganization Act.

### **3.3 Divestiture of Services**

For proposals involving the discontinuation of services, lack of need shall be established by (a) no serious effects on the current users of the service due to discontinuation, and (b) no projected serious effects on the uses that can be expected to occur in the next 5 years based upon the applicable general plan and projected growth rates and patterns.

### **3.4 Population Analysis**

In reviewing proposals, LAFCO shall consider: (1) the "population" in the proposal area to be the population recorded in the last biennial or special census unless the proponent or affected agency can present updated or more detailed information which LAFCO determines to be more accurate, (2) the "population density" to be the population divided by the acreage, and (3) the "per capita assessed valuation" to be the full cash value of all the property in a proposal area (as set by the last secured property tax roll) divided by the population.

### **3.5 Overlapping Plans**

In cases of overlapping plans, LAFCO shall make a determination of which general plan best carries out the policies of the Local Government Reorganization Act.

### **3.6 In-Fill Development**

In order to avoid further urban sprawl, LAFCO shall encourage in-fill development in urban areas and annexations of areas inside the city sphere of influence.

### **3.7 Provision of Services**

In order for LAFCO to approve a change of organization, the proponent shall demonstrate that the subject services can be provided in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost.

### **3.8 Proposals exceeding 50 acres**

For proposals involving the extension of general municipal services to proposal areas greater than 50 acres, the proponent shall either: (a) plan staged growth beginning closest to an existing urban area, or (b) demonstrate why such a plan does not promote urban sprawl and an inefficient pattern of services.

## **4. AFFECTED AGENCIES AND BOUNDARIES**

Proposals, where feasible, should minimize the number of local agencies and promote the use of multi-purpose agencies.

#### **4.1 Ranking Different Boundary Changes**

New or consolidated service shall be provided by one of the following agencies in the descending order of preference:

- a) Annexation to an existing city;
- b) Annexation to an existing district of which the Board of Supervisors is the governing body;
- c) Annexation to an existing multi-purpose district;
- d) Annexation to another existing district;
- e) Formation of a new county service area;
- f) Incorporation of a new city;
- g) Formation of a new multi-purpose district; or
- h) Formation of a new single-purpose district.

#### **4.2 Consolidation Proposals**

The Commission will promote and approve district consolidations, where feasible.

#### **4.3 Logical Boundaries**

LAFCO shall promote more logical agency boundaries.

#### **4.4 Political Boundaries**

To the greatest possible extent, boundaries shall follow existing political boundaries, natural features (such as ridges and watercourses), and constructed features (such as railroad tracks).

#### **4.5 Roads and Streets (Right-of-Way)**

Boundary lines shall be located so that entire rights-of-way are placed within the same jurisdiction as the properties facing the road.

#### **4.6 Community Boundaries**

Boundaries should avoid dividing an existing identifiable community, commercial district, or any other area having social or economic homogeneity. Where such divisions are proposed, the proponents shall justify exceptions to this standard.

#### **4.7 Parcel Boundaries**

The creation of boundaries that divide assessment parcels shall be avoided whenever possible. If the proposed boundary divides assessment parcels, the proponents must justify to the Commission the necessity for such division. If the Commission approves the proposal, the Commission may condition the approval upon obtaining a boundary adjustment or lot split from a city or county.

#### **4.8 Prevention of “Islands”**

Boundaries should be drawn so as not to create an island or strip either within the proposed territory or immediately adjacent to it. Where such an island or strip is proposed, the proponent must justify reasons for nonconformance with this standard.

#### **4.9 Prevention of Irregular Boundaries**

Where feasible, city and related district boundary changes should occur concurrently to avoid an irregular pattern of boundaries.

#### **4.10 Social & Economic Interests**

The Commission shall consider the effects of a proposed action on adjacent areas, mutual social and economic interests, and on local governmental structure.

#### **4.11 Metes & Bounds**

A map of any proposed boundary change shall show the present and proposed boundaries of all affected agencies in the vicinity of the proposal site. The Commission shall ensure that any approved boundary changes are definite and certain. The Commission may approve a proposal conditioned on the proponent preparing a new boundary map and description.

#### **4.12 Timely LAFCO Actions**

LAFCO will review each proposal and take the actions needed to encourage timely annexations to discourage agencies from extending services by agreement without annexing to the agency.

#### **4.13 Financially Desirable Areas**

The sole inclusion of financially desirable areas in a jurisdiction shall be avoided. The Commission shall amend or reject any proposal that, in its estimation, appears to select principally revenue-producing properties for inclusion in a jurisdiction.

#### **4.14 City Jobs & Housing**

For city annexation proposals, if the city has more jobs than places for workers to live (jobs to employed resident ratio greater than 1.00) then a proposal which will directly result in urban development including new permanent employment may only be approved if sufficient land is designated for residential uses in the city's general plan to create a jobs/housing balance.

The Commission will consider and may grant waivers to this standard in cases where all of the following situations exist:

- a) The territory being annexed is an island of incorporated territory and consistent with the definition of “island” in Government Code Section 56375;
- b) The proposal is consistent with the spheres of influence of all affected agencies; and
- c) The proposal has been initiated by resolution of the city which includes the subject property in its adopted sphere of influence.

## **5. AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

Urban growth shall be guided away from prime agricultural lands, unless such action would not promote planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.

### **5.1 Smart Growth**

A change of organization is considered to promote the planned, orderly, and efficient development of an area when:

- a) It is consistent with the spheres of influence boundaries and policies adopted by LAFCO for the affected agencies; and
- b) It conforms to all other policies and standards contained herein.

### **5.2 Infill Development**

LAFCO shall encourage the urbanization of vacant lands and non-prime agricultural lands within an agency's jurisdiction and within an agency's sphere of influence before the urbanization of lands outside the jurisdiction and outside the sphere of influence, and shall encourage detachments of prime agricultural lands and other open space lands from cities, water districts, and sewer districts if consistent with the affected agency's adopted sphere of influence.

### **5.3 Ranking Urban Development on Open Spaces and/or Farmlands**

The priorities for urbanization are:

- a) open-space lands within existing boundaries;
- b) open-space lands within an adopted sphere of influence;
- c) prime agricultural lands within existing boundaries; and
- d) prime agricultural lands within an adopted sphere of influence.

### **5.4 Urbanization of Prime Agricultural Lands**

Proposals involving urbanization of prime agricultural lands within adopted spheres of influence shall not be approved, unless it can be demonstrated that: (a) there is insufficient land in the market area for the type of land use proposed, and (b) there is no vacant land in the subject jurisdiction available for that type of use.

## **6. WATER AND SEWER RESOURCES**

LAFCO recognizes that the water resources of Santa Cruz County are limited, and the Commission's objective is to ensure that its decisions relating to water do not lead to adverse impacts on the natural resources of Santa Cruz County. In reviewing boundary change applications, LAFCO shall be guided by the potential impacts of the proposal on water resources and will consider the efforts of the water agencies and land use agencies to maintain stream and river flows, promote high water quality of surface waters and groundwater, and reduce groundwater overdraft.

## **6.1 Supply of Water**

In any proposal requiring water service, the Commission requires that the agency that will provide the water will need to demonstrate the availability of an adequate, reliable and sustainable supply of water.

- a) In cases where a basin is overdrafted or existing services are not sustainable, a boundary change proposal may be approved if there will be a net decrease in impacts on water resources;
- b) In cases where a phased development is proposed, the agency should demonstrate that adequate service capacity will be provided as needed for each phase;
- c) In cases where a proposed new service area will be served by an onsite water source, the proponent should demonstrate its adequacy (Government Code Section 56668(k)); and
- d) In cases where the proposal's new water demand on the agency does not exceed the typical amount of water used by a single-family dwelling in the agency's service area, the Commission will not require that an "adequate, reliable, and sustainable" supply be demonstrated if the agency has a water conservation program and the program will be implemented as part of any new water service.

## **6.2 Service Limitations**

It is the general policy of the Commission to disapprove annexations to water and sewer agencies (including cities that provide either service) while there is a connection moratorium or other similar service limitation involving the subject water or sewer service. The Commission will consider exceptions to this general policy on a case-by-case basis. The Commission may approve an annexation that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a) To replace a private water source that has failed, such as a well that has gone dry. New service connections shall not be sized to accommodate more intensive development;
- b) To replace a septic system that has failed. New service connections shall not be sized to accommodate more intensive development;
- c) To implement a transfer of service between two existing agencies in a manner that is consistent with the adopted Spheres of Influence of those agencies; and/or
- d) To change a boundary, in a manner consistent with an adopted Sphere of Influence, so that an agency boundary does not divide a property that could only be conveyed under a single deed.

Between January 1, 1986, and the time the service limitation is totally lifted, the Commission shall limit the annexations so that the number of cumulative connections made under the above exemption criteria do not exceed 1% of the total agency's flow (as expressed in equivalent single family dwelling units) in service on January 1, 1986.

An additional criterion, not subject to the 1% cumulative impact limitation, is as follows:

- e) To provide facilities or funding that will allow the agency to lift its service limitation.

### **6.3 Urban Land uses**

For proposals concerning water and sewer district annexations, the need shall be established by lack of services to existing urban land uses, or a building permit application or the allocation for a single-family dwelling or, for a larger project, by: (a) a tentative or final land use entitlement (tentative subdivision map use permit, etc.) conditioned on obtaining water or sewer service, and (b) a growth rate and pattern that the subject area will be developed within 5 years.

### **6.4 Commission Approval**

The Commission will only approve boundary change applications when the Commission determines that it is unlikely that water resources will be degraded. The Commission will review each application to assure that, by implementing project-specific mitigations, participating in agency water conservation programs, or both if applicable, the project will not adversely affect sustainable yields in groundwater basins, flows in rivers and streams, water quality in surface water bodies and groundwater basins, and endangered species.

### **6.5 Multiple Service Providers**

When more than one agency could serve an area, the agencies' services capabilities, costs for providing services, and the desires of the affected community will be key factors in determining a sphere of influence.

*Adopted on September 21, 1966 (Resolution No. 97)  
Previous Revision on February 2, 2011 (Resolution No. 2011-1)  
Revision on August 5, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-19)  
Revision on September 6, 2023 (Resolution No. 2023-20)  
Last Revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*

# PROJECT APPLICATION FORM OF THE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Santa Cruz LAFCO  
701 Ocean Street, Room 318-D  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2055

## **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

This application form is used to initiate the application process to the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO) for a city or district annexation, reorganization, detachment, or a sphere of influence amendment. LAFCO staff looks forward to assisting you with your project.

In addition to the information that you will provide us on this form, LAFCO staff is required to analyze additional data regarding your proposal from our Geographic Information System (GIS) and in-house data base, including, but not limited to: affected agencies, interested agencies, spheres of influence, school districts, land use/zoning, acres of prime agricultural land, and number of dwelling units. A Plan of Services may also be required demonstrating how municipal services will be provided to the affected territory.

**To assist staff in this effort, a mandatory pre-filing meeting is required of all applicants so we can fully understand your project. It is the applicant's responsibility to set up the pre-filing meeting by contacting the LAFCO offices at (831) 454-2055 and requesting an appointment. This application form must be completed prior to the pre-filing meeting.**

Please fill out this application as completely as possible. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact a LAFCO staff member for guidance. If a question does not apply to your proposal, indicate "N/A". Santa Cruz LAFCO is transitioning into a "paperless" office and encourages digital copies, when applicable. It is important that you list all email addresses where indicated on the application. Correspondence, staff reports, resolutions and other LAFCO forms and mailings, whenever possible, will be distributed electronically.

**APPLICATION FOR:** (check all that apply)

- Annexation to: \_\_\_\_\_
- Detachment from: \_\_\_\_\_
- Reorganization (2 or more changes of organization) of: \_\_\_\_\_
- Service Review / Sphere Update / Sphere Amendment: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Extraterritorial Service Agreement ("ESA"): \_\_\_\_\_

*If requesting an extraterritorial service agreement "only", please answer the following two questions:*

- a. Why is an ESA needed rather than annexation? Does it meet the criteria under Government Code Section 56133?
- b. How would an ESA affect the present and future need for services in the project area?

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION OF PROPOSAL:**

1. What changes of organization are included? What agencies are involved? What parcels are involved? Please identify all affected assessed parcel numbers (APNs).
2. Explain the purpose of the requested change in organization.
3. Explain how the proposal provides more logical boundaries and/or improves the provision of service.
4. Does this proposal have 100% consent of all property owners? (If so, please complete *Attachment A on page 5*).

**WHO INITIATED THIS PROPOSAL?** Generally, LAFCO proposals may be initiated by a resolution of an affected agency, a city council, special district or by the Board of Supervisors. In addition, a proposal may be initiated by a petition of the affected area's registered voters or landowners. **Attach one of the following to this application form:**

- Agency Resolution
- Landowner Petition
- Registered Voter Petition

**LOCATION AND ADDRESS OF PROPERTY:**

**MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**

A map and legal description of the proposal may be prepared by a private engineering firm. An application can be filed with LAFCO without a map and legal, but a proposal cannot be scheduled for LAFCO hearing prior to receipt map and legal description.

Additionally, the map and legal description must meet the State Board of Equalization's requirements. The BOE's "Change of Jurisdictional Boundary" requirements are available for download at <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/sprdcont.htm>. Please note, the BOE requires an additional vicinity map that shows the project area in relation to a larger geographic area.

A map and legal description has been:

- Certified by a private engineering firm and is attached to this application.
- Currently being reviewed / developed.
- Other (please explain)

**DISCLOSURE OF POLITICAL EXPENDITURES:**

LAFCO requires applicants to report all expenditures for political purposes related to an application and proceedings to be reported to the Commission's Executive Officer in compliance with Government Code Sections 56700.1 and 57009. The following is attached to this application form:

- LAFCO Disclosure Form (please complete *LAFCO Disclosure of Political Expenditures*, see Attachment 2 on page 6); copy of Financial reports and disclosures submitted to FPPC (please attach)
- Please check here if you have no related financial reports or disclosures.

*(The information contained in this application may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act Government Code Section 6250 et seq.)*

**ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires LAFCO and other public agencies to consider the potential environmental impacts of all applications it reviews. An environmental document should accompany all applications and reference the proposed LAFCO action (e.g., annexation).

The following is included with this application form:

- Environmental Document (ex. Final EIR) produced by the lead agency.
- Other (explain why Environmental Document not included):

**INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT:**

LAFCO policy requires that all applicants sign an indemnification agreement (see *Attachment 3 on page 7*) which indemnifies LAFCO employees, agents and attorneys in the event of litigation is filed concerning the approval of an application.

The following is included with this application form:

- Signed Indemnification Agreement

**FILING FEES:**

*Applicants are required to pay fees in accordance with LAFCO's adopted fee schedule (see Fee Schedule Policy) to cover the administrative and staff costs required to evaluate proposals for hearing. Checks must be made payable to: "Santa Cruz LAFCO".*

The following is included with this application form:

- Check for Filing Fees
- Other (explain why Filing Fees not included):

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify, under penalty of perjury by the laws of the State of California, that the information contained in this application is true and correct. I acknowledge and agree that Santa Cruz LAFCO is relying on the accuracy of the information provided and my representations in order to process this application proposal.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number / Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT 1**

***Property Owner Consent Form***

(All legal owners must sign a consent form or submit a letter of signed consent.)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to the annexation/reorganization of my property

located at \_\_\_\_\_

or Assessor Parcel Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

to the [agency(ies)] \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**INDEMNIFICATION AND DEFENSE**

The undersigned applicant for the above-referenced application (“Applicant”), as a condition of submission of this application, approval of the application and any subsequent amendment of the approval which is requested by the Applicant, hereby agrees to defend, using counsel reasonably acceptable to the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (“LAFCO”), indemnify, and hold harmless LAFCO, its officers, employees, and agents, from and against any claim, demand, damages, costs or liability of any kind (including attorneys’ fees) against LAFCO arising from or relating to this application or any approval or subsequent amendment to the approval thereof, subject to the conditions set forth below.

A) Notification and Cooperation

LAFCO shall notify the Applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding against which LAFCO seeks to be defended, indemnified, or held harmless. LAFCO shall reasonably cooperate in such defense.

B) Fees and Costs:

Nothing contained herein shall prohibit LAFCO from participating in the defense of any claim, action, or proceeding if either of the following occur:

- 1) LAFCO bears its own attorneys’ fees and costs; or
- 2) LAFCO and the Applicant agree in writing to the Applicant paying part or all of the Commission’s attorneys’ fees and costs.

C) Settlement:

When representing LAFCO, the Applicant shall not enter into any stipulation or settlement modifying or affecting the interpretation or validity of any of the terms or conditions of the approval without the prior written consent of LAFCO.

D) Successors Bound:

The obligations of the Applicant under this Indemnity and Defense agreement are specifically associated with and shall run with the land that is the subject of the application and/ or approval and shall be binding upon the applicant and the successor(s) in interest, transferee(s), and assign(s) of the applicant in the land.

E) Recordation:

At any time after submission of the application, LAFCO may, at its sole option, record in the office of the Santa Cruz County Recorder a memorandum of agreement which incorporates the provisions of this condition, or this approval shall become null and void.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of LAFCO Executive Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant)

Joe A. Serrano  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**ATTACHMENT 3****LAFCO Disclosure of Political Expenditures**

Effective January 1, 2008, political expenditures related to a proposal for a change of organization or reorganization that will be or has been submitted to LAFCO are subject to the reporting and disclosure requirements of the Political Reform Act of 1974 and the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act of 2000.

**Please carefully read the following information to determine if reporting and disclosure provisions apply to you.**

1. Any person or combination of persons who, for political purposes, directly or indirectly contributes \$1,000 or more, or expends \$1,000 or more in support of, or in opposition to a proposal for a change of organization or reorganization that will be submitted to the Commission, shall disclose and report the contribution to the Commission pursuant to the requirements of the Political Reform Act of 1974 (Government Code Section 81000 *et seq.*) as provided for local initiative measures, and Section 56700.1 of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act of 2000.
2. Pursuant to Government Code Section 57009, any person or combination of persons who directly or indirectly contributes \$1,000 or more, or expends \$1,000 or more in support of, or in opposition to, the conducting authority proceedings for a change of organization or reorganization, must comply with the disclosure requirements of the Political Reform Act of 1974, (Government Code section 81000 *et seq.*). Applicable reports must be filed with the Secretary of the State and the appropriate city or county clerk. Copies of the report must also be filed with the LAFCO Executive Officer.

**Evaluation Checklist for Disclosure of Political Expenditures**

The following checklist is provided to assist you in determining if the requirements of Government Code Sections 81000 *et seq.* apply to you. For further assistance, contact the Fair Political Practices Commission at 428 J Street, Suite 450, Sacramento, CA 95814, (866) 275-3772 or at <http://www.fppc.ca.gov>.

1. Have you directly or indirectly made a contribution or expenditure of \$1,000 or more related to the support or opposition of a proposal that has been or will be submitted to LAFCO?

Yes  No

Date of contribution \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Name/ Ref. No of LAFCO Proposal \_\_\_\_\_

Date proposal was submitted to LAFCO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you, in combination with other person(s), directly or indirectly contributed or expended \$1,000 or more related to the support or opposition of a proposal that has been or will be submitted to LAFCO?

Yes  No

Date of contribution \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Name/ Ref. No of LAFCO Proposal \_\_\_\_\_

Date proposal was submitted to LAFCO \_\_\_\_\_

3. If you filed a report in accordance with FPPC requirements, has a copy of the report been filed with Santa Cruz LAFCO?

Yes  No



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**PROCESSING FEES AND DEPOSITS POLICY**

**1. OVERVIEW**

All deposits are initial payments toward the total cost of processing (“project cost”). Project cost is defined as staff time plus materials. Staff billing rates include personnel costs. Other application-related costs include, but are not limited to, charges for the advertisement of hearings, as well as any fees charged for project reviews by affected agencies. A cost breakdown will be completed at the end of each LAFCO application. If any funds remain at the end of the LAFCO process, then a refund will be provided to the applicant.

**2. PETITION CHECKING**

There is no charge for verification of the first 20 signatures on a petition. Beginning with the 21st signature, a fee of \$0.55 per signature shall be charged to the applicant.

**3. PROCESSING**

The following identifies the initial deposits for each boundary change request.

**a) District annexations, detachments, and reorganizations not changing city boundaries:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
Less than 1	\$1,600
1 – 24.9	\$2,500
25 – 149.9	\$7,000
More than 150	\$8,000

**b) Municipal annexations, detachments, and reorganizations involving at least one change in a city boundary:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
Less than 1	\$3,150
1 – 24.9	\$4,900
25 – 149.9	\$7,350
More than 150	\$14,600

**c) Consolidations, mergers, and establishments of a subsidiary district:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$1,800

**d) Dissolutions of an independent special district and county service areas:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$1,250

**e) Formation of a county service area:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$5,000

*Footnote: includes petition filing fee and sphere adoption*

**f) Addition of a service to the list of services that a county service area may perform:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$1,250

**g) Formation of a special district:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$15,000

*Footnote: includes sphere adoption*

**h) City incorporations:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$30,000

*Footnote: includes sphere adoption*

**i) Request for the State Controller's Review of a Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis on an incorporation proposal:**

Actual cost billed by the Controller. If the Controller has not set a cost at the time the deposit is due, the deposit shall be \$38,200.

If the costs exceed the deposit in the opinion of the Executive Officer, the Executive Officer shall bill the party who requested the Controller's review for the estimated costs to complete Controller's review. Failure to pay an additional deposit may result in cessation of the Controller's report and other remedies as determined by the Controller's office and the Commission.

**j) Sphere of Influence revision or amendment:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$5,150

**k) Provision of a new function or service by a district:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$1,500

**l) Requests for extraterritorial service:**

Total Acreage	Fee Deposit
N/A	\$950

**m) Request for a service review outside the Commission's schedule in accordance with the adopted multi-year work program:**

Actual cost. Note: Initiation of a service review outside of LAFCO's work program is subject to LAFCO's discretion whether the service review can be conducted in a manner that doesn't prejudice the work program, and to LAFCO's discretion as to the appropriate geographic areas, agencies, and scope of the service review.

**n) Copies or other reproduction efforts:**

Requests	Fee Deposit
Copies	First 30 pages free; thereafter \$0.18 per page
Digital Audio Files	\$14.42 per 80-minute CD
Other Electronic Media	The fees as charged by the County of Santa Cruz on its Unified Fee Schedule

**4. BILLING RATES**

The Commission will review billing rates and the fee schedule on an annual basis and may adjust rates as necessary to ensure the cost recovery of processing each type of application. Documentation regarding actual costs (salaries, benefits, etc.) is available in the LAFCO office.

As of August 5, 2020, staff's hourly rates are the following:

LAFCO Staff	Hourly Rate
Executive Officer	\$138.27
Commission Clerk	\$102.71
Legal Counsel	Same rate charged to LAFCO

**5. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

LAFCO has established a fee schedule policy in accordance with the allowances provided by the State of California under California Government Code Sections 56383 and 66014. In some cases, a fee waiver or some type of financial assistance may be considered and approved by the Commission, if warranted. The following policies direct the setting and criteria when considering financial assistance.

**7.1 Fee Waivers**

The LAFCO filing fee for the following types of proposals may be waived provided, however, that a deposit is provided for the anticipated direct costs for environmental review and state board of equalization recordation fees. Compliance with these conditions is to be determined by the LAFCO Executive Officer:

- a) City annexations of island areas that comply with Government Code Section 56375.3; and
- b) The proposal corrects a boundary alignment problem (i.e. a divided assessor's parcel or inadvertent exclusion).

## **7.2 Proposals Based on Service & Sphere Review Findings/Recommendations**

An applicant may request a waiver/reduction of the LAFCO filing fee if the proposal stems from an adopted service and sphere review. A request must be submitted in writing, be initiated by the affected agency(ies), accompanied by the submission of an application, and within one (1) year from the most recently adopted service and sphere review for consideration. The Executive Officer shall present the waiver request at the next regular hearing for Commission consideration.

Example of fee waiver request under this policy:

- a) LAFCO recommends that a city/district annex areas within its existing sphere boundaries.

Example of fee reduction request under this policy:

- a) LAFCO recommends that two or more districts consolidate to maximize existing resources, optimize economies of scale, and/or improve the provision of services.

A city or special district may also request financial assistance in hiring an outside consultant to explore possible changes of organization based on recommendations found in LAFCO's adopted service and sphere reviews. Examples include but are not limited to the completion of an annexation plan. If the Commission chooses to provide financial assistance, the total amount towards this type of request shall not exceed \$15,000 during the current fiscal year.

*Adopted on December 4, 2002 (Resolution No. 2002-9)  
Revision on August 3, 2011 (Resolution No. 2011-8)  
Revision on February 4, 2014 (Resolution No. 2014-2)  
Previous Revision on December 6, 2017 (Resolution No. 2017-12)  
Revision on August 5, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-19)  
Last Revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

This policy outlines the specific procedures used by LAFCO to tailor the general provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, sections 15000 et seq.) (“State CEQA Guidelines”) to LAFCO’s specific functions as both a “Responsible” and a “Lead” agency under CEQA. This version of LAFCO’s environmental review guidelines incorporates changes in the State CEQA Guidelines through 2019.

These provisions and procedures incorporate by reference (and are to be utilized in conjunction with) the State CEQA Guidelines, a copy of which is available on LAFCO’s website. These procedures will be revised as necessary to conform to amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines, within 120 days after the effective date of such amendments. However, LAFCO will implement any such statutory changes that the California Legislature makes to CEQA regulations as soon as those statutory changes become effective, even if not expressly stated herein.

#### **2. PUBLIC AGENCIES’ RESPONSIBILITIES**

A public agency must meet its own responsibilities under CEQA and shall not rely on comments from other public agencies or private citizens as a substitute for work that CEQA requires the Lead Agency to accomplish. For example, a Lead Agency is responsible for the adequacy of its environmental documents. The Lead Agency shall not knowingly release a deficient document hoping that public comments will correct defects in the document. When making decisions that trigger some type of CEQA review, LAFCO’s duty is to minimize the environmental damage that may result from those decisions and to balance the competing public objectives as outlined in the State CEQA Guidelines, section 15021.

#### **3. LAFCO’S ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

LAFCO’s role as a regulatory agency involves “the discouragement of urban sprawl, the encouragement of the orderly formation, and development of local agencies.” A few of its duties require minimal environmental review, especially those involving the commissioning of studies, the hearing of protests, and consolidations, reorganizations and mergers of cities or districts. Most of these duties only constitute jurisdictional changes with no potential for land use changes or for significant effects on the physical environment.

LAFCO’s more prominent roles include, but are not limited to, creation of spheres of influence, formation of new districts, incorporation of new cities, and annexations/reorganizations to cities or special districts. These types of LAFCO actions generally require more in-depth analysis, especially if they result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment, like facilitation of growth and/or land use alterations. Factors that must be assessed in these cases involve land area and use,

all aspects of the physical and human environment, geographical features, population growth and density, social and economic changes, availability of infrastructure and government services, conformity with city or county land use plans, and creation of unincorporated “islands,” etc.

#### **4. LAFCO’S ROLE AS AN “INTERESTED” AGENCY**

In situations where LAFCO is not a “Responsible Agency” but has an interest in reviewing a project to ensure that LAFCO related information is correctly identified, LAFCO plays a more limited role in the CEQA process. In those instances, the Executive Officer will review, and, if necessary, comment on all environmental documents submitted by a Lead Agency involving projects/decisions relating to and/or affecting LAFCO projects or policies.

#### **5. LAFCO’S ROLE AS A “RESPONSIBLE” AGENCY**

“Responsible” Agency status occurs when LAFCO is not the “Lead” Agency but nevertheless has discretionary approval authority over a project or some aspect of a project, in tandem with, or separate from that of the Lead Agency in accordance with Section 15096 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Examples of situations where LAFCO may be a Responsible Agency include, but are not limited to:

- A city approving an annexation request to LAFCO, only after pre-zoning the area in question. When a city has pre-zoned an area, the city serves as the Lead Agency for any subsequent annexation of the area and should prepare the environmental documents at the time of pre-zoning or other land use decision; or
- When a special district has conducted an environmental review and prepared an environmental determination for a plan to serve an area proposed for annexation to the district.

LAFCO shall use the environmental document prepared by the Lead Agency for LAFCO’s environmental determinations if the Executive Officer deems it adequate for such use pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15096. Procedures for determining the adequacy of the lead agency’s CEQA document are summarized in the following sub-sections.

##### **4.1 Consultation**

Pre-Application Discussion: Regardless of whether LAFCO is a Responsible Agency, each Lead Agency carrying out any project within LAFCO’s jurisdiction and function shall inform LAFCO in writing of its intent and process for that project at the beginning of the Lead Agency’s CEQA review process, and the Lead Agency shall provide LAFCO with copies of any project applications.

CEQA Determination: The Lead Agency shall consult with LAFCO regarding the preparation of its environmental documents/determinations (Statutory Exemptions, Categorical Exemptions, Initial Studies/Negative Declarations, Environmental Impact Reports (“EIR”), etc.), which must also be used by LAFCO in its role as a Responsible Agency; consultation can be written or verbal and LAFCO’s input shall be incorporated/addressed in the Lead Agency’s analysis, documentation and determinations.

LAFCO Initial Comments: The Executive Officer shall, as soon as practical but within 30 days of notification, comment as to the appropriate environmental determination from LAFCO's perspective as well as issues of concern to be addressed in any environmental document. The requirement for written notification from the Lead Agency can be waived at the Executive Officer's discretion.

Where LAFCO disagrees with the Lead Agency's proposed environmental determination (such as a Negative Declaration), LAFCO will identify the specific environmental effects which it believes could result from the project and recommend the project be mitigated with measures to reduce the potential impacts to less than "significant" (when feasible) or that an EIR be prepared to properly characterize potentially significant impacts.

Notice of Preparation: When it intends to prepare an EIR, the Lead Agency shall send a Notice of Preparation by certified mail to LAFCO to solicit input in accordance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

LAFCO shall respond to any Notice of Preparation submitted to LAFCO in accordance with subsection (A)(5) above in writing within 30 days, specifying the scope and content of the environmental data and analysis related to LAFCO's statutory responsibilities for the proposed project. LAFCO shall also provide the Lead Agency with input regarding environmental issues and the minimum content of the analysis needed to meet a standard of adequacy for use of the environmental document/determination by LAFCO as a CEQA Responsible Agency.

#### **4.2 Preparation of Environmental Documents by a Lead Agency**

The Lead Agency shall include information in the Statutory Exemption, Categorical Exemption, Initial Study/Negative Declaration/EIR to allow its subsequent use by LAFCO for its considerations; referencing on the title page and in the project description any boundary changes, changes of organization or reorganization, or other proposed actions requiring subsequent discretionary action by LAFCO to fully implement the project.

The Lead Agency shall send the draft document to LAFCO as part of the public review process required by the CEQA and applicable guidelines (sections 15072 and 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines). The Executive Officer will, within the established review period, send comments to the Lead Agency in writing (which can be transmitted either via U.S. mail or overnight delivery, or electronically by email or other messaging system), all of which LAFCO expects to be incorporated and assessed in the final document. LAFCO's comments on a draft CEQA document submitted to LAFCO by a lead agency should focus on the appropriateness of the CEQA document chosen, the adequacy of the environmental document's content, in the case of an EIR -- additional alternatives or mitigation measures, etc., that are germane to environmental impacts that could result from LAFCO's subsequent discretionary action or to the adequacy of the document for use by LAFCO as a CEQA Responsible Agency.

A final EIR prepared by a Lead Agency or a Negative Declaration adopted by a Lead Agency shall be conclusively presumed to comply with CEQA for purposes of use by Responsible Agencies which were consulted pursuant to Sections 15072 or 15082, unless one of the following conditions occurs:

- The EIR or Negative Declaration is finally adjudged in a legal proceeding not to comply with the requirements of CEQA; or
- A subsequent EIR is made necessary by Section 15162 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

#### **4.3 LAFCO Requirement of Environmental Documents/Determinations**

Applications filed by Lead Agencies with LAFCO shall include copies of one of the following environmental documents as specified in LAFCO's filing requirements and all applicable findings for an EIR per Sections 15091, 15092 and 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

- Exemptions: Certification of Categorical or Statutory Exemption;
- Negative Declaration: Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration and a Final Negative Declaration (including copy of Initial Study) or a Final Negative Declaration with mitigation measures (including copy of Initial Study), all technical appendices, and Mitigation Monitoring/Reporting Plan;
- Environmental Impact Report: Notice of Subsequent Use of an Existing EIR (which was previously available or has been made available to LAFCO), Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR, Notice of Availability/Notice of Completion of Draft EIR (including copy of Draft EIR), Final EIR, Statements of Findings/Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation Monitoring/Reporting Plan;
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife: copy of environmental filing fee receipt including, if applicable, a CEQA Filing Fee No Effect Determination Form; and/or
- Other Appropriate CEQA Documents: copy of any other environmental document/determination not listed in this policy.

#### **4.4 LAFCO's Use of Lead Agency's Environmental Documents**

In making its determinations on boundary change proposals, changes of organization or reorganization, or other proposed actions requiring discretionary action by LAFCO, LAFCO will generally use the environmental document prepared by the Lead Agency if the procedures regarding consultation and preparation of environmental documents by a Lead Agency outlined above have been followed.

Prior to project approval, the Commission will certify that it has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Lead Agency's document. LAFCO may request the Lead Agency furnish additional information or findings as required to support a legally adequate Responsible Agency environmental determination in accordance with Section 15096 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

When a Lead Agency's EIR identifies significant environmental effects, LAFCO will incorporate the Lead Agency's findings or formulate its own, for each significant effect, or otherwise make findings in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091 for each significant environmental effect that is identified in a Lead Agency's EIR.

LAFCO may take any of the following actions to conform to CEQA requirements when rendering a decision on an application:

- LAFCO will not approve a proposed project with significant impacts if it can adopt feasible alternatives or mitigation measures within its powers that would substantially lessen the magnitude of such effects, unless it adopts a Statement of Overriding Considerations (State CEQA Guidelines, section 15093);
- If LAFCO mitigates impacts listed in the EIR to a less than significant level via the adoption of boundary alternatives or conditions of approval (negotiated with the local agency), such findings shall be reinforced by adequate rationale and inserted in the record; or
- If the environmental impacts of the LAFCO decision cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, LAFCO will adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations per State CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15093 and 15096.

Upon project approval, LAFCO shall file a Notice of Determination in a like manner as a Responsible Agency in accordance with Section 15096(i) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The Notice of Determination shall be filed with the Santa Cruz County Clerk of the Board.

## **6. LAFCO'S ROLE AS A "LEAD" AGENCY**

LAFCO will be the Lead Agency responsible for performing CEQA mandated environmental review when its discretion for approval or denying a project involves general governmental powers. This is in contrast with a Responsible Agency role which only has single, limited powers over the project, normally subsequent and secondary to LAFCO's function, such as pre-zoning for the property of interest. Examples of projects requiring LAFCO to act as a Lead Agency include but are not limited to the following:

- Establishment of spheres of influence for cities and special districts;
- Adoption of studies or municipal service reviews; and
- Special District activation or divestiture of a function or class of service.

### **6.1 Delegation of Responsibilities by the Commission to the Executive Officer**

The following quotations from Section 15025 of the State CEQA Guidelines indicate those functions that can and cannot be delegated to the Executive Officer by the Commission:

A public agency (the Commission) may assign specific functions to its staff (Executive Officer) to assist in administering CEQA. Functions which may be delegated include but are not limited to:

- Determining whether a project is exempt;
- Conducting an Initial Study and deciding whether to prepare a draft EIR or Negative Declaration (refer to Section IV, F. 2. of these guidelines for a discussion of the appeal process when an EIR is required.);

- Preparing a Negative Declaration or EIR;
- Determining that a Negative Declaration has been completed within a period of 180 days (see Section 21100.2 of CEQA);
- Preparing responses to comments on environmental documents; and
- Filing of notices.

The decision-making body of a public agency (the Commission) shall not delegate the following functions:

- Reviewing and considering a final EIR or approving a Negative Declaration prior to approving a project before the Commission; and
- The making of findings as required by Sections 15091 and 15093.

## 7. LAFCO'S LEAD AGENCY PROCEDURES

The following process and procedures, specific to LAFCO's function, summarize or supplement the State CEQA Guidelines and are to be used to process all accepted applications.

### 7.1 Statutory Exemptions (CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15260-15285)

Statutorily exempt projects defined by the Legislature that could apply to a LAFCO project include the following:

- Disapproved Projects: CEQA does not apply to projects that LAFCO rejects or disapproves. This statutory exemption is intended to allow an initial screening of projects on the merits for quick disapprovals prior to the initiation of the CEQA process where LAFCO can determine that the project cannot be approved. This statutory exemption shall not relieve an applicant from paying the costs for an EIR or negative declaration prepared for the project prior to the lead agency's disapproval of the project after normal evaluation and processing.
- Feasibility and Planning Studies: A project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency, board, or commission has not approved, adopted, or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. This section does not apply to the adoption of a plan that will have a legally binding effect on later activities.
- Ministerial Projects: Actions or Ministerial Projects involve the application of fixed standards without the option of exercising personal or subjective judgment (discretion) by the Executive Officer or the Commission. Examples include but are not limited to the following: (1) Consolidation/reorganization of special districts where the district boards adopt similar resolutions of applications for said consolidation/reorganization into a single agency (pursuant to Government Code Section 56853), and (2) Certain island annexations (pursuant to Government Code Section 56375) where approval is mandated if the annexation meets certain specific findings.

## **7.2 Categorical Exemptions (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300)**

The following classes of projects, specifically pertaining to LAFCO's activities, have been identified in the State CEQA Guidelines as not having the potential to cause significant environmental effects, and may be categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA if certain specified criteria are satisfied (Note: A categorical exemption shall not be used for these activities where there is substantial evidence to support that one of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions in State CEQA Guidelines, section 15300.2 is present.):

- Construction or Conversion of New, Small Structures (Class 3): Included within this category are extraterritorial or out-of-agency service contracts/agreements involving the extension of water, sewer, and/or other utility services by a city or district outside its boundaries but lying within its respective sphere of influence.
- Annexations of Existing Facilities and Lots for Exempt Facilities (Class 19): Included within this category are: (1) Annexations to special districts where the district's services would be provided even without annexation and construction has been initiated prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Filing, (2) Annexations of areas containing existing public or private structures developed to the density allowed by current zoning or pre-zoning, whichever is more restrictive, (provided, however, that the extension of utility services within the annexed area would have a capacity to serve only those existing facilities), (3) Detachments from cities where the land being detached is committed, by virtue of an adopted land-use plan, to remain in agricultural use or open space; or where the land is presently developed and no change in land-use can be reasonably anticipated, and (4) Detachments from special districts which will not result in any change in zoning or land use.
- Changes in Organization of Local Agencies (Class 20): Included within this category are changes in the organization or reorganization of local agencies where the changes do not modify the geographic area in which previously existing powers are exercised. Examples include but are not limited to: (1) Establishment of a subsidiary district, (2) Consolidation of two or more districts having identical boundaries, (3) Merger with a city of a district lying entirely within the boundaries of the city, or (4) Reorganization of agencies consisting of annexations or detachments providing similar services.

## **7.3 Recordation of Notice of Exemptions**

When a LAFCO project qualifies for an exemption, LAFCO staff may develop and record with the Santa Cruz County Clerk of the Board a "Notice of Exemption" form, to include: (1) A brief project description, (2) The project location with supporting map, (3) The specific exemption including the finding and citation of the CEQA Guidelines section or statute under which it is found to be exempt, and (4) The rationale for its selection, including a brief statement of reasons to support the findings.

## **7.4 Initial Studies**

A project for which LAFCO is the Lead Agency and which is not exempt will require the preparation of an Initial Study to determine if the project has the potential for causing a significant environmental effect. The Initial Study assessment shall consider all phases of the project; the purposes, policies, rules, regulations and standards set

forth in CEQA and its State CEQA Guidelines; these procedures and the adopted plans and policies of cities, the County, and LAFCO. An Initial Study need not be prepared if the Executive Officer determines at the beginning stages of review that a full-scope EIR will be required, but will be used to document the significance of specific impacts requiring a focused EIR, i.e. the Initial Study shall document the rationale for narrowing the scope of issues to be addressed in an EIR.

- Process: The Initial Study will be prepared on a State CEQA Guidelines Standard Initial Study Environmental Checklist Form using the project application, environmental description forms, appropriate literature, etc. A site visit may be necessary. Individual findings for environmental issues will be documented with sufficient technical data to substantiate conclusions regarding the potential for significant adverse impact. Insufficiency of available information will be noted on the form if it affects the ability to reach a conclusion.

The preparer shall consult with all Responsible Agencies and other public agencies/persons/organizations affected by or knowledgeable of the project and its issues. Under appropriate circumstances such review could also involve use of the County's or a city's Environmental Review Committee and its public forum to more fully assess the physical, social and infrastructural implications of complex projects. The Initial Study will be the supporting document for findings of "significance" and "non-significance" (whether to prepare a Negative Declaration or EIR). It is a tool for modifying projects and/or identifying mitigation measures to allow a finding of "non-significance." It can also be used to focus the EIR on effects determined to be potentially significant or to determine whether a previously prepared EIR could be used/modified for the project, etc.

The Initial Study shall contain: (1) A project description and location; (2) Environmental setting; (3) Identification of all environmental impacts using the most recent version of the State CEQA Guidelines environmental checklist form (Appendix G) and substantial evidence to support environmental impact findings, including ways to mitigate (avoid, minimize, compensate or otherwise reduce) a significant impact to a less than significant level; and (4) Examination of project consistency with zoning and land-use plans, etc. Section 15063 of the State CEQA Guidelines contains a detailed description of the content of and uses for the Initial Study and it is hereby incorporated by reference. Funding for the preparation of an Initial Study shall be borne by the applicant for the LAFCO action pursuant to Commission policy.

- Executive Officer's Determinations/Findings: After a review of the Initial Study and all supporting information, the Executive Officer shall determine the appropriate environmental determination based on one of the following findings:
  - 1) The project will not have a significant environmental effect. Prepare a Negative Declaration and a Notice of Determination and publish a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration. After an appropriate public review period consistent with the applicable State CEQA Guideline's requirements, the documentation will be finalized and forwarded to the Commission with a recommendation for adoption;

- 2) The project, as proposed, would have a significant environmental effect, but with alterations, stipulations, or mitigation measures, all adverse impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level. Prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration and a Notice of Determination and publish a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration. After appropriate public review period consistent with State CEQA Guideline's requirements, the documentation will be forwarded to the Commission with a recommendation for adoption;
- 3) The project will have a significant environmental effect, but all such impacts have been adequately assessed in a final EIR previously reviewed by LAFCO and mitigated to the extent feasible. Submit the EIR to the Commission with appropriate findings for certification;
- 4) The project will have a significant environmental effect. An EIR will be prepared and submitted to the Commission with appropriate findings; or
- 5) The project will have a significant environmental effect and an EIR has been prepared. However, new information or changed conditions affecting the project or the site warrant additional analysis. Prepare a supplemental EIR or addendum to the original EIR focusing on these changes. Submit to the Commission with appropriate findings for certification.

### **7.5 Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration**

A Negative Declaration (finding of non-significant effect) or a Mitigated Negative Declaration (finding of non-significant effect with project changes/mitigation measures/conditions of approval) will be prepared on the State CEQA Guidelines Initial Study Environmental Checklist Form by staff per the findings of the Initial Study based on substantiating evidence.

The Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration's contents will include a brief project description, location (i.e., vicinity map), name of applicant, the finding of non-significance, attached Initial Study with any applicable technical reports, data or other information constituting the substantial evidence supporting the environmental analysis, and a list of mitigation measures (if any, in the context of a Mitigated Negative Declaration). A determination of the Initial Study's adequacy and the preparation of the accompanying Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration initially rests with the Executive Officer. The formal adoption of the Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration rests ultimately with the Commission.

- Notice Requirements: The document will be available at the LAFCO office for public review and comment for a minimum of 21 days prior to LAFCO action on the project. Recommended Negative Declarations and Mitigated Negative Declaration (in the form of a Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration) will be noticed at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the project area; noticed in the "local" newspaper of the affected area (if any); mailed to all Responsible Agencies and public agencies with jurisdiction within the project area; mailed to those individuals and organizations who have requested such notices.

Where one or more state agencies will be a Responsible or Trustee Agency or will exercise jurisdiction over natural resources affected by the project, LAFCO shall send copies of the Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to these state agencies. Review by state agency(ies) will require a 30-day period unless reduced by prior approval of the State Clearinghouse. Pursuant to adopted Commission policy, costs associated with the Notice and distribution requirements shall be funded by the applicant for the LAFCO action.

- LAFCO Consideration: The Commission will consider the proposed Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration and any public and agency comments prior to approving a project, and will approve the Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration if it finds there is no substantial evidence in the whole of the administrative record that the project will have a significant environmental effect. Where mitigation is included as a condition of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, the mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) shall assign responsibility for implementing the mitigation measure(s) when the Mitigated Negative Declaration is approved by the Commission.
- Notice of Determination: After the Commission's approval of a project for which a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration has been adopted, the Executive Officer shall file a Notice of Determination. The Notice of Determination's content shall include: (1) Project description, identification and location; (2) Date project approved by LAFCO; (3) Determination of "non-significant" effect, or determination that mitigation measures were imposed and made conditions of approval for the project to reduce impacts to less than significant levels; (4) Statement that a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared and approved; and (5) Address of LAFCO office where a copy of Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration is filed.

The Notice shall be filed with the Santa Cruz County Clerk of the Board. If the project requires a discretionary approval from any state agency, the Notice shall also be filed with the State Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse. Fees for filing a Notice of Determination for a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration shall be funded by the applicant for the LAFCO action.

## **7.6 Environmental Impact Report**

If the Executive Officer or the Commission finds, based on substantial evidence in the record or contained in the Initial Study and public comments, that a project may have a significant environmental effect, the Executive Officer will initiate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report ("EIR").

- Purpose: An EIR is an informational document; a major tool in the decision-making process, informing Commissioners and all parties involved of the environmental consequences of project decisions before they are made. An EIR's primary functions are to identify and mitigate significant adverse impacts and to provide alternative project and boundary options that may reduce potentially significant impacts of the proposed project.

- An EIR is not an instrument to rationalize approval or denial of a project; nor do indications of adverse impacts require automatic denial. LAFCO has the authority to balance environmental, economic, social or other objectives as part of its mandate to develop orderly governmental boundaries (Sections 15091, 15092 and 15093, State CEQA Guidelines). An EIR should be prepared early in the application process to facilitate the integration of environmental considerations in project or boundary design. The applicant is responsible for submitting all necessary project data for the EIR per the Executive Officer's request or funding the preparation of required project data for the EIR.
- Appeals: The Executive Officer's determination to require an EIR is appealable to the Commission within 10 working days of the issuance of the decision to prepare an EIR. Such an appeal must be filed, on LAFCO forms, with the Executive Officer and must include specific substantiation for the appeal, directly related to environmental issues. The appeal shall be heard on the next regularly scheduled Commission agenda that permits adequate public notification. The Commission's decision shall be final. The only legal remedy available to appeal the Commission's final action is to file a petition for writ of mandate in the superior court under California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1085.
- Notice of Preparation: At the earliest feasible date following the Executive Officer's/Commission's formal decision to prepare an EIR (based on the administrative record or an Initial Study), a Notice of Preparation ("NOP") will be mailed to all responsible and affected agencies (including the State Clearinghouse and affected state agencies, if any) and any parties requesting notification. State review of an EIR will result in the issuance of an identification number (State Clearinghouse Number) which shall be used on all subsequent documentation and correspondence.

The NOP shall include sufficient information on the project and its anticipated impacts to facilitate meaningful responses on the environmental issues that may cause significant adverse impacts. Such content should include: (1) Project description; (2) Mapped location; (3) Probable environmental effects; and (4) A copy of the Initial Study or substantial evidence in the record justifying the preparation of an EIR, etc. The NOP shall be sent to all responsible/trustee agencies or interested parties via certified mail or other method to document its receipt.

Within 30 days after LAFCO's release of the NOP, each Responsible Agency/interested party shall submit to LAFCO specific information directly related to that agency's/party's statutory responsibility for the project; the environmental issues, alternatives, and mitigation measures to be explored; and the agency's/party's role in the project's review, etc. If LAFCO does not receive a response or request to extend the public comment period on the NOP by the end of the 30-day NOP review period, LAFCO may presume that no response will be made from an agency or party that received the NOP.

- Scope of EIR: LAFCO may also convene meetings involving all parties (especially at the request of a Responsible Agency) to further assist in the determination of the EIR's scope and content, no later than 30 days after such request. Early and complete scoping, consultation and negotiation are critical to the preparation of an

adequate EIR. LAFCO may request use of the County's or a local agency's Environmental Review Committee in a public meeting forum to aid in the identification and resolution of any technical issues. LAFCO will compile all comments and identify in writing the focus for the EIR. An EIR can be prepared by staff or consultants under contract to LAFCO, coordinated by the Executive Officer or designee. LAFCO may accept data for an EIR from any source subject to independent validation by LAFCO staff. Also, LAFCO may charge an applicant appropriate fee to cover all costs for preparing and processing an EIR.

- EIR Content: Article 9 of the State CEQA Guidelines describes the complete content of all required sections of an EIR, as modified from time to time. However, LAFCO has discretion to narrow the scope of an EIR's content during the scoping process (State CEQA Guidelines, section 15063).
- Consultant EIRs: The Executive Officer shall use a Request for Proposals bidding process to select a consultant to write the EIR. The Executive Officer shall maintain and update as necessary a list of consultants, a minimum of three from which proposals shall be solicited for each consultant prepared EIR. The Executive Officer and the applicant will screen the proposals in an attempt to gain a consensus on choosing the consultant. However, the Executive Officer is ultimately responsible for final selection of the consultant. The Commission will review the scope of work, consultant qualifications, contract cost, and all other aspects before authorizing a contract.

The applicant will be charged a fee to cover all contract and staff costs, to be deposited into a LAFCO trust fund. (Note: The contract will be between LAFCO and the consultant which will work solely at the Executive Officer's, not the applicant's, direction.) The Executive Officer will disburse the funds to the consultant at stages specified in the contract based on completion and performance. In addition to the contract costs, the fees charged will be based on actual staff time involved in, but not limited to: (1) Consultant selection including bid solicitation and review, submission of information to consultants, etc.; (2) Review of Draft EIR, corrections, additions, legal review by the Commission's legal counsel, etc.; (3) Compiling comments and reviewing responses to comments for preparation of Final EIR; and (4) Meetings with applicant, consultant and public regarding EIR preparation.

- Public Participation (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15201): Public participation is an essential part of the CEQA process. LAFCO includes provisions in its CEQA procedures for wide public involvement, formal and informal, consistent with its existing activities and procedures, in order to receive and evaluate public reactions to environmental issues related to the agency's activities. Such procedures include, whenever possible, making environmental information available in electronic format and on LAFCO's website.

Interacting with the public is an important CEQA process that allows the public to voice its concerns about environmental issues and the potential effect of a project on the physical environment. Therefore, in order to ensure public involvement in LAFCO's CEQA process, the Commission—in addition to the requirements for public notification on the NOP and/or the Notice of Completion—will provide the public with the opportunity to participate in any meetings related to the EIR,

whether through a scoping meeting (optional) to provide verbal or written comments on the content of the EIR and/or through the public hearing (required) on the certification of the Final EIR.

- Completion Notice (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15085): Because most LAFCO EIRs will require circulation through the State Clearinghouse, the default procedure is that as soon as the draft EIR is completed, a Notice of Completion (“NOC”) must be filed with the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, denoting the project’s description and location, address where EIR copies are available, and the period which comments can be submitted.
- Agency/Public Review: At the time the NOC is sent, the Executive Officer shall provide public notice of the draft EIR’s availability to all organizations, agencies and individuals who previously requested such notice; as well as publication in The Santa Cruz Sentinel (newspaper of general circulation) and/or local newspapers. The Executive Officer shall also distribute copies of the draft EIRs and requests for comments to all public agencies with jurisdiction within the project area; to any person or organizations previously requesting such copies; to public libraries in the affected areas; as well as maintaining copies in the LAFCO and any Responsible Agency’s offices (upon request). The Executive Officer may consult any person who has special expertise in any environmental issue involved.

Review periods are not to be less than 30 days nor longer than 60 days from the date of the NOC except in unusual situations per the Executive Officer’s discretion. The review period for draft EIRs submitted to state agencies via the State Clearinghouse will be a minimum of 45 days. The last date for comment submittal shall be specified in the request for comments. A lack of response by that date constitutes a non-objection or “no-comment” by that particular party.

The sufficiency of the EIR per State CEQA Guidelines is the only issue to be addressed during this review. Questions/issues regarding the feasibility or desirability of the project itself shall only be considered by the Commission at the appropriate hearing, not integrated into the environmental review process. In instances where complex technical issues or disagreements among experts arise in the context of an EIR, the Executive Officer can convene a meeting of the County’s or a local agency’s Environmental Review Committee to provide a forum for a more thorough review of the EIR’s adequacy.

- Adequacy: The Executive Officer will make preliminary (not appealable) determinations of the EIR’s adequacy, utilizing all aspects of the public record; in turn making specific recommendations on adequacy to the Commission, for its findings, at the time the project is heard.
- Response to Comments on an EIR (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15088): The Executive Officer shall prepare a written response to all comments received during the comment period (and MAY respond to those received after the period): describing the disposition of issues, opinions or facts raised, project revisions or mitigation measures resulting from these comments, reasons for not accepting recommendations, all substantiated by factual information. The response to comments may be in the form of revisions to the EIR text, a separate section in the final EIR or as notes typed in the margins of the comment letters, depending on the event of the resulting revisions.

- Preparation of Final EIR (CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15089 and 15132): The Executive Officer/consultant will prepare a final EIR before the Commission makes a decision on the project. Project denial does not require certification of the Final EIR. Final EIR contents include: (1) The draft EIR and any revisions made to it in response to comments; (2) Comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR verbatim; (3) A list of persons, organizations and agencies commenting on the draft EIR; (4) LAFCO's responses to significant points raised during review and consultation; (5) Plus any other pertinent information. Final EIRs shall be available for a minimum of 10 days prior to the Commission hearing on a project and shall be provided to any commenting party 10 days prior to a Commission hearing on a project. The final EIR shall be submitted to the Commission with the project application and a mitigation measure monitoring plan/program (if necessary) for certification prior to the decision.
- Certification of Final EIR (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15090): Prior to approving a project for which an EIR has been prepared, the Commission shall certify that: (1) The final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; (2) The final EIR was presented to the Commission which reviewed and considered it prior to approving the project; and, (3) The final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis. If the Commission, through testimony or its own review of the data, finds that the environmental review is incomplete or the EIR does not adequately assess the full range of project impacts, it can refer it back to staff for revisions; deferring approval of the project until it can certify the amended final EIR. Under such circumstances, the Commission shall instruct staff to recirculate/not recirculate the amended EIR in accordance with the extent of requested revisions and as required by CEQA Guidelines, section 15088.5.
- Findings (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091): The Commission cannot approve or carry out a project for which an EIR identifies one or more significant environmental effects, unless it makes one or more written findings for each significant effect, each reinforced by substantial evidence in the record. Such findings include: (1) Changes have been incorporated into the project which avoid or substantially reduce the significant environmental effect(s) identified in the final EIR, (2) Such changes are not within LAFCO's jurisdiction, but are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another agency which has adopted such changes, or which can and should adopt such changes, or (3) Specific economic, social or other considerations make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.
- Approval (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15092): LAFCO shall not approve or carry out a project for which an EIR was prepared unless either: (1) The project, as approved, will not have a significant environmental effect, or (2) LAFCO has eliminated or substantially reduced all significant effects where feasible per State CEQA Guidelines, section 15091, and determined that any remaining significant effects found to be unavoidable per State CEQA Guidelines, section 15091, are acceptable due to overriding concerns described in CEQA Guidelines, section 15093.

- Statement of Overriding Considerations (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093): When LAFCO approves a project that will have a significant effect on the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level, LAFCO shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record. The Commission shall balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits, including region-wide or statewide environmental benefits, of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the adverse environmental effects may be considered “acceptable”. The statement of overriding considerations shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record. The Commission’s statement of overriding considerations should be included in the record of the project approval and so stated in the Notice of Determination.
- Notice of Determination (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15094): The Executive Officer shall file a Notice of Determination following each project approval for which an EIR was certified. The notice shall include: (1) The final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; (2) The final EIR was presented to the Commission which reviewed and considered it prior to approving the project; (3) The final EIR reflects the lead agency’s independent judgment and analysis; (4) Determination of any significant environmental effects; (5) Statement that an EIR was prepared and certified pursuant to CEQA; (6) Whether mitigation measures were made conditions of the project; (7) Whether findings were made per State CEQA Guidelines, section 15091; (8) Whether a statement of overriding considerations was adopted; (9) The address of the location of a copy of the final EIR and the project record; and (10) If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project which is supported, in whole or in part, through contracts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies or the identity of the person receiving a lease, permit, licenser, certificate, and other entitlement for use from one or more public agencies. The notice shall be filed with the Clerk of the County Board. If the project requires discretionary approval from a state agency, the notice shall also be filed with OPR State Clearinghouse.
- Disposition of Final EIR (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15095): The Executive Officer shall: (1) File a copy of the Final EIR with the Santa Cruz County Planning Department and the city, if applicable, where significant environmental effects may occur; (2) Include the Final EIR in all subsequent project administration; (3) Maintain a copy of the Final EIR as a permanent public record for the project; and (4) Require the applicant to provide a copy of the certified, final EIR to each Responsible Agency. Pursuant to adopted Commission policy, funding for the preparation of an EIR, fees for filing a Notice of Determination, and other related fees (i.e. notice and distribution requirements), are the responsibility of the applicant for the LAFCO action.

*Adopted on September 6, 2000 (Resolution No.2000-5)  
Revision on August 5, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-19)  
Last Revision on March 6, 2024 (Resolution No. 2024-07)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines that require all applicants to indemnify the Commission, its agents, officers, attorneys, and employees from any action brought to challenge the discretionary approvals of proposals by the Commission.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

Applicants to the Commission for discretionary approvals of proposals for changes of organization are typically the real parties in interest and therefore have financial interest in the Commission's decisions on their applications. Applicants who are not the real parties in interest also have interest in the outcome of their applications. Therefore, LAFCO believes that it is fair and equitable for all applicants to indemnify LAFCO from suits brought to challenge the discretionary approvals of their applications by the Commission. LAFCO also believes that indemnifying LAFCO furthers good government practices and public policy by providing applicants with an incentive to assist the Commission in complying with all laws, including those intended to ensure public rights.

#### **3. PROCESS**

In order to fulfill this practice, and to protect the integrity of the Commission's ability to make good government decisions, it is the policy of this Commission that:

- a) As part of any application submitted to the Commission, the applicant(s) shall be required to submit a signed agreement to indemnify the Commission, its agents, officers, attorneys, and employees from any action brought to challenge the Commission's discretionary approvals related to the application in the form provided in Exhibit "A";
- b) In the event that an action is brought to challenge the discretionary approval of a proposal by the Commission, the Commission shall promptly notify the applicant(s) and real party(ies) in interest of the existence of the legal challenge; and
- c) The Executive Officer shall not issue a Certificate of Filing for an application if an indemnification agreement in the form provided on the following page has not been executed and submitted to the Executive Officer by the applicant(s).

*Adopted on September 6, 1995 (Resolution No. 141-QQQ)  
Previous Revision on April 1, 2015 (Resolution No. 2015-6)  
Last Revision on September 2, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-23)*

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**INDEMNIFICATION AND DEFENSE**

The undersigned applicant for the above-referenced application ("Applicant"), as a condition of submission of this application, approval of the application and any subsequent amendment of the approval which is requested by the Applicant, hereby agrees to defend, using counsel reasonably acceptable to the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County ("LAFCO"), indemnify, and hold harmless LAFCO, its officers, employees, and agents, from and against any claim, demand, damages, costs or liability of any kind (including attorneys' fees) against LAFCO arising from or relating to this application or any approval or subsequent amendment to the approval thereof, subject to the conditions set forth below.

A) Notification and Cooperation

LAFCO shall notify the Applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding against which LAFCO seeks to be defended, indemnified, or held harmless. LAFCO shall reasonably cooperate in such defense.

B) Fees and Costs:

Nothing contained herein shall prohibit LAFCO from participating in the defense of any claim, action, or proceeding if either of the following occur:

- 3) LAFCO bears its own attorneys' fees and costs; or
- 4) LAFCO and the Applicant agree in writing to the Applicant paying part or all of the Commission's attorneys' fees and costs.

C) Settlement:

When representing LAFCO, the Applicant shall not enter into any stipulation or settlement modifying or affecting the interpretation or validity of any of the terms or conditions of the approval without the prior written consent of LAFCO.

D) Successors Bound:

The obligations of the Applicant under this Indemnity and Defense agreement are specifically associated with and shall run with the land that is the subject of the application and/ or approval and shall be binding upon the applicant and the successor(s) in interest, transferee(s), and assign(s) of the applicant in the land.

E) Recordation:

At any time after submission of the application, LAFCO may, at its sole option, record in the office of the Santa Cruz County Recorder a memorandum of agreement which incorporates the provisions of this condition, or this approval shall become null and void.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of LAFCO Executive Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joe A. Serrano  
(Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**CERTIFICATE OF FILING POLICY**

**1. OVERVIEW**

Pursuant to Government Code Section 56020.6, a Certificate of Filing is a document issued by the Executive Officer that confirms an application for a change of organization has met submission requirements and is ready for Commission consideration.

**2. INACTIVE APPLICATIONS**

Applicants for a change of organization or reorganization must meet submission requirements established in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act as well as Commission policies and procedures. Once these requirements are met, a Certificate of Filing will be issued by the Executive Officer deeming the application complete. Any application not deemed complete will be considered incomplete and the applicant notified of missing requirements. If the application remains incomplete for a period of twelve (12) months without substantial progress being made towards its completion, the Executive Officer will notify the applicant and affected agencies that the application is deemed inactive will be closed without prejudice, and may be subject to a refund if any portion of the application fee has not already been used to cover staff time and other processing costs. If the applicant chooses to refile at a later date, a new application and filing fees will be required.

**3. COMPLETE APPLICATIONS**

Once a Certificate of Filing has been issued, the application officially becomes a proposal (Government Code Section 56069) and is scheduled for consideration by the Commission. When a proposal has been scheduled for hearing, no additional modification or amendment may be made to the proposal unless requested by Commission staff or the Commission's board by majority vote. However, an applicant may withdraw its application prior to the closing of the scheduled hearing. Withdrawal of an application must be submitted in writing to the Executive Officer. If an application is withdrawn and resubmitted, the applicant must file a completely new application and associated fee.

*Adopted on December 2, 1981 (Resolution No. 97-M)  
Last Revision on September 2, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-24)*



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**PROTEST PROCEEDINGS POLICY**

**1. OVERVIEW**

Prior to January 1, 2000, LAFCO would designate an affected agency as the “conducting authority” to approve a change of organization or reorganization and direct that agency to conduct protest proceedings pursuant to Government Code Section 57000 et seq. With the passage of AB 2838 (Hertzberg – Chapter 761, Statutes of 2000), the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code § 56000 et seq.) established LAFCO as the “conducting authority” for protest proceedings.

The purpose of this policy is to carry out LAFCO’s functions and responsibilities as a conducting authority pursuant to Government Code Section 57000 et seq. Protest proceedings for changes of organization and reorganization shall be conducted by the Commission in accordance with the following guidelines.

**2. PROTEST PROCEEDING GUIDELINES**

The Commission will adopt a resolution that makes findings and determinations when approving a change of organization or reorganization. The resolution will contain terms and conditions, which include a condition that addresses the protest proceedings.

**2.1 Protest Proceeding Timeframe:** The Commission shall specify a timeframe between twenty-one (21) and sixty (60) days for the collection and filing of written protests pursuant to Government Code Section 56886(o), and that timeframe shall be included in the terms and conditions of an approval for a change of organization or reorganization for which protest proceedings are not waived pursuant to Government Code Section 56663.

**2.2 Public Noticing:** Within thirty (35) days of the adoption of the Commission’s resolution making determinations and approving a change or organization or reorganization, the Executive Officer shall notice a protest hearing and, in the notice, set the hearing date as prescribed by the Commission in its terms and conditions.

**2.3 Types of Public Noticing:** Notice of the hearing shall be provided pursuant to Government Code Section 56150 et seq., and as follows:

- a) Notice must be published, posted, and mailed to affected agencies, proponents, and any person requesting special notice;
- b) Mailed notice must be provided to all landowners affected by the proposal;
- c) The time, date, and location of the hearing shall be specified in the notice as determined by the Executive Officer; and

- d) The protest hearing must be held in the affected territory if the hearing is a proposal initiated by the Commission pursuant to Government Code Section 56375(a) for a district consolidation, dissolution, or merger, or the establishment of a subsidiary district.

**2.4 Protest Hearing:** At the protest hearing, the Executive Officer, or designee, shall (1) summarize the Commission's resolution, and (2) hear and receive any oral or written protests, objections, or evidence. Written protests may be filed by any affected landowner or registered voter. The Executive Officer, or designee, may continue the protest, but for no more than sixty (60) days from the date specified in the notice.

**2.5 Protest Hearing Results:** At the conclusion of the protest hearing:

- a) If no written protests have been filed, the Executive Officer, or designee, shall adopt a form of resolution ordering the change of organization or reorganization without an election; or
- b) If written protests have been filed, the Executive Officer, or designee, shall within thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the hearing, make determinations on the value of written protests filed and not withdrawn; and
- c) To determine the value of written protests filed and not withdrawn, the Executive Officer, or designee, shall cause the names of the signers on the protests to be compared with the voters' register in the County Elections Department pursuant to Government Code Section 56707 and/or the names of the owners of land on the most recent assessment roll pursuant to Government Code Sections 56708 and 56710.

**2.6 LAFCO Actions after Protest Proceedings:** Upon determination of the value of written protests filed and not withdrawn, the Executive Officer, or designee, shall take one of the following actions, depending on the nature of the change of organization or reorganization:

- a) If less than 25% of the affected registered voters or landowners oppose the proposal, then a form of resolution making determinations and ordering the change of organization or reorganization will be adopted without an election;
- b) If 25% to 50% of the affected registered voters or landowners oppose the proposal, then a form of resolution making determinations and ordering the change of organization or reorganization will be adopted subject to confirmation by the voters; or
- c) If more than 50% of the affected registered voters or landowners oppose the proposal, then a Certificate of Termination will be issued, which ends the LAFCO proceedings.

**2.7 Election Process:** If an election is required, the Executive Officer or designee, pursuant to Government Code Section 57000(d), shall inform the legislative body of the affected agency of LAFCO's determination and request the legislative body to direct the elections official to conduct the election.

### **3. LAFCO AS A CONDUCTING AUTHORITY**

Pursuant to Government Code Section 57000(c), the Commission has the option of delegating any or all of the functions and responsibilities of the conducting authority to the Executive Officer. Any references made to the “Commission” or “LAFCO” in the following discussion also pertains to the Executive Officer for any functions they will perform on behalf of the Commission. It should also be noted that, pursuant to Government Code Section 57008, the Commission or Executive Officer is required to hold the protest hearing in the affected territory if the proposal was initiated by the Commission pursuant to Government Code Section 56375(a) (district consolidation, dissolution, merger, establishment of a subsidiary district, or a reorganization that includes any of the previous).

Following summarization of the Commission’s resolution at the protest hearing, the Commission hears and receives any oral or written protests, objections, or evidence. Anyone who has filed a written protest can withdraw that protest prior to the conclusion of the hearing. Within thirty (30) days after the hearing, LAFCO makes a finding on the value of written protests filed and not withdrawn. The percentage thresholds for LAFCO to terminate or order the change of organization or reorganization with or without an election is consistent with existing law. LAFCO, however, does not have statutory authority to conduct an election if one is required. Therefore, if LAFCO’s determination on a proposal is subject to confirmation by the voters and an election must be conducted, LAFCO, pursuant to Government Code Section 57000(d), is required to inform the board of supervisors or city council of the affected city of the Commission’s determination and request the board or council to direct the elections official to conduct the election.

### **4. PROTEST THRESHOLD FOR OTHER BOUNDARY CHANGES**

The percentage protest thresholds for a dissolution, consolidation, merger, or the establishment of a subsidiary district differ from the previous changes of organization discussed in the previous sections. While Government Code Section 57077 addresses the requirements for these changes of organization, Government Code Section 56854 supersedes those provisions.

The provisions of Government Code Section 56854 (previously Government Code Section 56839.1) was the product of legislation passed in 1997. Pursuant to Government Code Section 56854(a), LAFCO is required to order a dissolution, consolidation, merger, or the establishment of a subsidiary district without an election unless certain protest requirements are met. Those requirements are enumerated in the outline below. However, pursuant to Government Code Section 56854(b), the Commission is prohibited from ordering a merger or the establishment of a subsidiary district without the consent of the affected city.

The Commission is required to order a dissolution, consolidation, merger, or the establishment of a subsidiary district subject to a confirmation of the voters, only if the following written protest thresholds are reached.

**4.1 Not Initiated by the Commission:** Where the proposal was not initiated by the Commission, and where an affected city or district has not objected by resolution to the proposal:

- a) In the case of inhabited territory, a petition signed by:
  - i. At least 25% of the registered voters residing, or owning land, within the affected territory; or
  - ii. At least 25% of the number of landowners who own at least 25% of the assessed value of land within the affected territory.
- b) In the case of a landowner-voter district, and the territory is uninhabited, a petition signed by:
  - i. At least 25% of the number of landowners owning at least 25% of the assessed value of the land within the affected territory.

Note: In the case of a proposal for the dissolution of one or more districts and the annexation of all or substantially all of their territory to another district, the voter requirements outlined above do not apply if each affected district has consented to the proposal by a resolution adopted by a majority of its board of directors (Government Code Section 57114b).

**4.2 Initiated by the Commission:** Where the proposal was initiated by the Commission, and regardless of whether an affected city or district has objected to the proposal by resolution:

- a) In the case of inhabited territory where there are 300 or more landowners or registered voters within the affected territory, a petition signed by:
  - i. At least 10% of the number of landowners who own at least 10% of the assessed value of land within the affected territory; or
  - ii. At least 10% of the registered voters residing, or owning land, within the affected territory.
- b) In the case of inhabited territory where there are less than 300 landowners or registered voters within the affected territory, a petition signed by:
  - i. At least 25% of the number of landowners who own at least 25% of the assessed value of land within the affected territory; or
  - ii. At least 25% of the registered voters residing, or owning land, within the affected territory.
- c) In the case of a landowner-voter district where the territory is uninhabited and there are 300 or more landowner voters entitled to vote, a petition signed by:
  - i. At least 10% of the number of landowners who own at least 10% of the assessed value of land within the affected territory.
- d) In the case of a landowner-voter district where the territory is uninhabited and there are less than 300 or more landowner voters entitled to vote, a petition signed by:
  - i. At least 25% of the landowner voters entitled to vote.

*Adopted on March 7, 2001 (Resolution No. 2001-6)  
Last Revision on September 2, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-25)*

# **CHAPTER IV**

## **TYPE OF APPLICATIONS**



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **EXTRATERRITORIAL SERVICES POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this policy is to explain to the public, cities, and districts the procedures by which the Commission will review requests to authorize a city or district in Santa Cruz County to provide one or more services outside its jurisdictional limits pursuant to Government Code Section 56133.

#### **2. COMMISSION APPROVAL REQUIRED FOR NEW OR EXTENDED SERVICES**

Except for the specific situations exempted by Government Code Section 56133, a city or district shall not provide new or extended services to any party outside its jurisdictional boundaries unless it has obtained written approval from the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County ("LAFCO").

#### **3. LIST OF PRE-EXISTING SERVICES**

In 1994, the Executive Officer originally asked each city and district to provide a list or map of parcels receiving extraterritorial service under Government Code Section 56133. The Executive Officer subsequently presented a report on these extraterritorial services with the Commission. As a regular practice, a list of all approved extraterritorial service agreements is presented to the Commission on an annual basis.

#### **4. AREAWIDE APPROVALS**

Upon the initiative of either a public agency or the Commission, the Commission shall consider an areawide approval as a regularly agendaized item and may grant approval for subsequent services to be provided by a city or district within a mapped area as specified by the Commission. The approval may include conditions. The Commission shall specify a time period not greater than ten years for which the areawide approval shall be valid. The Commission may, upon its own initiative or at the request of a public agency, renew with or without amendments, an areawide approval for a period not to exceed ten years.

Before granting an areawide approval, the Commission shall determine that the city or district is able to provide the service in a manner that does not negatively affect the services provided within the agency's boundaries and sphere of influence, and in a manner that does not negatively affect the resources in the area. Also, before granting an areawide approval, the Commission shall determine that the approval is consistent with the requirements of law and LAFCO policies.

#### **5. INDIVIDUAL REQUESTS**

Individual requests for extraterritorial service shall be filed with the Executive Officer on a prescribed application form. The applicant shall pay the costs of processing the application as specified in the Commission's Schedule of Fees and Deposits. The application deposit regarding the request for extraterritorial service is \$950. Deposit amount may be subsequently changed in future revisions of the Schedule of Fees and Deposits.

The Executive Officer shall not file the application unless the affected public agency has submitted a written endorsement indicating its willingness to provide the service if the Commission approves the request. The Commission shall consider the request after it has been placed on the agenda of a Commission meeting.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

All matters that are reviewable pursuant to these regulations are subject to the applicable provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

## **7. COMMISSION ACTION**

The Executive Officer shall prepare a report and place the request for extraterritorial service on the Commission's agenda. The Commission shall provide an opportunity for any interested individual or party to address it. The Commission may call a subsequent public hearing in order to receive additional public testimony before acting upon a request. The Commission acts on the request by majority vote. Subsequently, the Executive Officer shall notify the applicant in writing of the Commission's action. If the Commission denies a request, a similar application cannot be re-filed for one year unless the Commission grants an exception to this rule.

## **8. DELIVERY OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 and this Commission's adopted policies encourage smart growth and rely on appropriate governance options to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of municipal services. Therefore, the Commission intends to reinforce that the standard manner in which services will be extended is by annexation (and sphere of influence amendment, if necessary). The Commission shall limit its extraterritorial service authorizations to public health emergencies and circumstances where:

- a) Facilities are already in place, and
- b) Annexation would not be practical, and
- c) Extraterritorial service is determined by the Commission to be consistent with the policies adopted in and pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act.

When the Commission authorizes the emergency provision of municipal services via extraterritorial service outside an agency's boundaries, and annexation is practical, the Commission will require annexation to be completed within two years.

## **9. WATER PROVISIONS**

LAFCO recognizes that the water resources of Santa Cruz County are limited, and the Commission's objective is to ensure that its decisions relating to water do not lead to adverse impacts on the natural resources of Santa Cruz County. In reviewing extraterritorial service applications, LAFCO shall be guided by the potential impacts of the proposal on water resources and will consider the efforts of the water agencies and land use agencies to maintain stream and river flows, promote high water quality of surface waters and groundwater, and reduce groundwater overdraft. A water policy has also been adopted by this Commission and should be reviewed before submitting any application for potential service delivery, including annexations or requests for extraterritorial services.

*Adopted on June 9, 1994 (Resolution No.97-W)  
Last Revision on June 3, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-15)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **SPHERES OF INFLUENCE POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The Knox-Nisbet Act of 1963 (former Government Code Section 54773 et seq.) established the Local Agency Formation Commission to promote the orderly development of local government agencies in the County and discourage urban sprawl. The law was subsequently combined with other laws regarding boundary changes and recodified as the Cortese-Knox- Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code Sections 56000-57550).

Among its objectives, LAFCO is authorized to perform studies which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local governments to provide for the present and future needs of each county and its communities. (Government Code Section 56301). State law further provides that, in order to carry out its responsibilities for planning and shaping the logical and orderly development of local government agencies, the Local Agency Formation Commission shall develop and determine the sphere of influence of each local governmental agency within the county. (Government Code Section 56425). 'Sphere of Influence' means a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency. (Government Code Section 56076).

#### **2. TYPES OF SPHERES**

There are several types of sphere boundaries that the Commission may adopt:

- a) Coterminous Sphere: A sphere of influence may be coterminous, or identical, with the agency's current jurisdictional boundary.
- b) Larger-than-jurisdiction Sphere: A sphere of influence may be larger than the agency's current jurisdictional boundary. This designation identifies areas that should be annexed into the agency in the foreseeable future.
- c) Smaller-than-jurisdiction Sphere: A sphere of influence may be smaller than the agency's current jurisdictional boundary. This designation identifies areas that should be detached from the agency in the foreseeable future.
- d) Zero Sphere: A sphere of influence may be removed entirely if the Commission determines that the service responsibilities and functions of the agency should be reassigned to another local government, and that the agency assigned a "zero sphere of influence" should be dissolved.

### **3. SPHERE DETERMINATIONS**

In accordance with Government Code Section 56425, the Commission is required to consider and prepare a written statement of its determination with respect to each of the following:

- a) The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open-space lands;
- b) The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area;
- c) The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide, including the funding of capital, debt, service, and operations;
- d) The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency; and
- e) For an update of a sphere of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere.

None of the individual factors listed above will be deemed to be a determining factor but will be reviewed collectively when considering the establishment or revision of a sphere of influence for a city or special district.

### **4. SPHERE UPDATES**

Spheres of influence are to be adopted by the Commission following a public hearing and are to be reviewed and updated every five years. After adoption, the sphere of influence "shall be used by the Commission as a factor in making regular decisions on proposals over which it has jurisdiction. The Commission may recommend governmental reorganizations to particular agencies in the county, using the sphere of influence as a basis for such recommendations...(Government Code Section 56425)." The purpose of a sphere of influence study is to provide the Commission information needed to determine an agency's potential growth and to make recommendations towards future service provisions within areas the county.

### **5. POLICY GUIDELINES**

The Commission will use spheres of influence to discourage inefficient development patterns and to encourage the orderly expansion of local government agencies. Spheres of influence will be used to:

- a) Provide long-range guidelines for the efficient provision of services and timely changes of governmental organization;
- b) Discourage duplication of services by two or more local government agencies;
- c) Guide the Commission in considering individual proposals for changes of organization; and
- d) Identify the need for specific reorganization studies.

**5.1 Municipal Service Reviews:** Pursuant to Government Code Section 56425, spheres of influence shall be reviewed and/or updated every five years. Additionally, state law mandates that spheres be prepared or updated in conjunction with or after completion of a related Municipal Service Review (Government Code Section 56430).

**5.2 Overlapping Spheres:** To promote efficient and coordinated planning among the county's various agencies, city spheres shall not overlap, and districts that provide the same type of service should not have overlapping sphere boundaries.

**5.3 Logical Service Provider:** When more than one agency could serve an area, the agencies' services capabilities, costs for providing services, and the desires of the affected community will be key factors in determining a sphere of influence.

**5.4 Service Efficiencies:** The Commission will encourage the elimination or consolidation of small, single-purpose special districts when a more efficient alternative exists for providing the necessary services. Whenever a combination of urban services is required, general purpose governments or multi-services districts will be preferred to single-purpose districts.

**5.5 Sphere Designations and Annexation:** Before territory can be annexed to a city or special district, it must be within the agency's sphere (Government Code Section 56375.5). However, a sphere is only one of several factors the Commission considers when evaluating changes of organization.

**5.6 Long-Range Planning:** LAFCO recognizes the planning accomplishments of local agencies in the County. In developing spheres of influence, the Commission will consider those adopted plans, and policies of local governments which encourage staged, cost-effective development patterns and the efficient provision of services. Sphere boundaries will identify probable boundaries for an agency's expansion and will be periodically reviewed to reflect changing conditions and circumstances.

Once established, an agency's sphere of influence will be a primary guide to the Commission in its decisions on individual proposals affecting that agency. Before the Commission may approve a change of organization inconsistent with the adopted sphere of influence, the Commission shall amend the sphere of influence.

**5.7 Consistency with General Plans and Pre-Zoning:** The Commission will review the existing and future land uses of territory prior to including it within a city's sphere in order to determine the logical extension of municipal services and the probable future boundary of a city or district. The Commission strongly encourages each city to include all territory within its sphere of influence within the city's General Plan and each special district to address in its infrastructure, facilities and operational planning documents.

**5.8 Land Use Inconsistencies:** City and County general plans will be a significant factor in determining spheres of influence. Where a city's and the County's general plan for the same area are inconsistent, the Commission should encourage the affected agencies to resolve any inconsistencies. In the event the inconsistency cannot be resolved, by law the final decision for the Sphere of Influence must remain with LAFCO.

**5.9 Encourage Annexation of Unincorporated Islands:** The Commission acknowledges that unincorporated islands are generally costly for County government to serve and often have impacts on the surrounding city or district. Cities and special districts (where applicable) will be encouraged to annex unincorporated islands within their sphere of influence.

**5.10 Urban Development:** Proposals for urban development within a city's sphere of influence should first be considered for annexation to that city, unless such annexation would create a "leapfrog" pattern of expansion with respect to existing city boundaries.

**5.11 Water Supply:** LAFCO recognizes that the water resources of Santa Cruz County are limited, and the Commission's objective is to ensure that its decisions relating to water do not lead to adverse impacts on the natural resources of Santa Cruz County. In reviewing sphere of influence adoptions and amendments, LAFCO shall be guided by the potential impacts of the proposal on water resources and will consider the efforts of the water agencies and land use agencies to maintain stream and river flows, promote high water quality of surface waters and groundwater, and reduce groundwater overdraft.

To assist in the review of Spheres of Influence and other LAFCO reports, the Commission will utilize the following data sources to maintain an ongoing data base of the supply, demand, and related water data of the local water agencies subject to LAFCO's boundary regulation:

- a) The Public Water System Annual Reports filed by each public water agency with the California Department of Public Health;
- b) The Urban Water Management Plans prepared by water suppliers with 3000 or more customers as required by the California Water Code Sections 10610 et.seq.; and
- c) The annual Water Resources Report prepared for consideration by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

It is preferable that the residents who use water also participate in the governance of the system that provides the water. Therefore, in making decisions on spheres of influence and boundary changes, the Commission will favor water supply entities for which the users of the system participate in the governance of the system.

**5.12 Coastal Zone:** In an effort to promote cooperation among the land use agencies with jurisdiction over lands in the Coastal Zone, any application to LAFCO for a sphere of influence amendment regarding land in the Coastal Zone shall contain the following information:

- a) A statement that staff of the Coastal Commission and from other land use agencies with jurisdiction over the land which is the subject of the application have reviewed and jointly discussed the sphere of influence amendment application with respect to consistency with applicable general plans, the Coastal Act, and local coastal programs. The statement should also memorialize the results of the review;

- b) Preliminary review and comments from the Coastal Commission staff as to potential issues of Coastal Act consistency; and
- c) Review and comments from any other land use agency with jurisdiction, through a Local Coastal Program or otherwise, over the land which is the subject of the application, including an analysis of consistency of the proposed amendment with its general plan.

LAFCO will consider consistency with the Coastal Act and the relevant general plans in making its Sphere of Influence determination.

*Adopted on June 1, 1977 (Resolution No. 97-F)*  
*Previous Revision on February 2, 2010 (Resolution No. 2011-1)*  
*Last Revision on November 4, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-32)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### CITY INCORPORATION POLICY

#### 1. OVERVIEW

In each county, a Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has been set up by the State of California to regulate city incorporations and other boundary changes to cities and districts. LAFCO's mission is to promote the orderly formation and development of local governments through its enforcement of state-mandated procedures, State policies, and local LAFCO policies.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide guidance to citizens who are considering and proposing the incorporations of a new city within the County of Santa Cruz ("County"). These guidelines do not supersede State law or local policies. Local policies include "Spheres of Influence Policies and Guidelines" and "Standards for Evaluating Proposals." In order to make a final decision on a particular proposal, LAFCO may need additional information not specified in these guidelines. While LAFCO will assist in obtaining any additional information that is needed, the proponents may also have to prepare additional information.

#### 2. PURPOSE OF FEASIBILITY STUDY

The preparation of an incorporation feasibility study is the responsibility of the proponents of a city incorporation. It is an important step in the process. It allows the proponents to understand and, in turn, explain to the citizenry how the new city would operate. Major topics include boundaries, functions, revenues, and expenditures. The feasibility study allows LAFCO to review the effects of the proposal on the entire structure of governmental services. Two of LAFCO's major duties are to make sure that the new city would have sufficient funds with which to operate and would not negatively impact the provision of services by other governmental agencies.

#### 3. STATUTORY BASIS

Incorporation proceedings are set up by the Cortese-Knox Local Government Reorganization Act of 1985 (Government Code Sections §56000-57550) (the "Act"). Under the Act, LAFCO has the responsibility to review applications and to approve; approve subject to amendments, conditions or modifications; or deny applications. If LAFCO denies the proposal, the Act specifies a one-year waiting period before the proponents may initiate another incorporation proposal. If a proposal is approved, LAFCO will forward it to the County Board of Supervisors, which is responsible for calling an election within the authorized incorporation boundaries. If a majority of registered voters in the proposed city petition the Board of Supervisors to terminate the incorporation process, it is terminated and cannot be resubmitted for two years. If a majority of registered voters in the incorporation area vote for the incorporation, then the new city is incorporated. If the proposal is defeated at the election, then there is a two-year waiting period.

#### 4. CONTENTS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY

For LAFCO to make its decision, sufficient information needs to be put on record and analyzed by the registered voters, the affected governmental agencies, and LAFCO staff. The basic elements of a feasibility study are:

- 1) Reason for proposal.
- 2) Proposed boundary map at a scale that allows the identification of individual assessor's parcels.
- 3) The population and number of registered voters in the incorporation area. Projection of population growth for the next ten years.
- 4) The assessed value of the property in incorporation area.
- 5) A description of the local agencies which presently serve the community, with a discussion of the range and level of services currently provided.
- 6) A list and discussion of the functions that the new city would assume.
- 7) A discussion and supporting data on the financial and service efficiency impacts that the proposal would have on all governmental agencies that would give up service responsibility as a result of this proposal. This discussion should include the effects of the incorporation on adjacent communities, special districts, and the County.
- 8) A list and descriptions of the County and special district functions that the new city is not proposed to assume, a list of the special districts that are proposed to continue services to the new city, and a discussion of the foreseeable level of services in the community after incorporation. If the new city has any potential impacts on these districts (including economic or level of service impacts), the feasibility study should discuss and quantify them, where possible.

A clear and compelling rationale must be provided if the continued overlap of any special district (e.g., water, fire, parks, sanitation, or storm drainage) is proposed. There should be special emphasis on the impact of incorporation on the County or any special districts which are currently providing services to the area immediately surrounding the proposed city.

- 9) A map showing a proposed sphere of influence of the new city, including the existing sphere of influence of any city that overlaps or comes within two miles of the proposed city sphere.
- 10) A ten-year forecast of revenues and expenditures for the new city broken out by revenue and expenditure categories. The forecast should include the applicable categories in the same order. Where fees will be set by municipality, include projection of fee levels and anticipated volume. Table A depicts the required financial information as part of the ten-year projections.

#### **Table A: Ten-Year Forecast (Revenue & Expenditure)**

Revenue	Expenditure
1. Property Tax	1. Legislative
2. Sales and Use Taxes	2. Management and Support
3. Transportation Taxes	3. Capital Improvements (Municipal Buildings, etc.)
4. Transient Lodging Taxes	4. Police
5. Franchise	5. Fire
6. Business License Taxes	6. Animal Regulation
7. Real Property Transfer Taxes	7. Weed Abatement
8. Utility Users Tax	8. Street Lighting
9. Construction Permits	9. Disaster Preparedness
10. Vehicle Code Fines and Forfeitures	10. Streets, Highways, and Storm Drains
11. Investment Earnings	11. Street Trees and Landscaping
12. State Motor Vehicle In-Lieu Tax	12. Public Transit
13. State Cigarette Tax	13. Planning
14. State Homeowners Relief Tax	14. Construction and Engineering Regulations Enforcement
15. State Gasoline Tax and SB 325 Funds	15. Housing and Community Development
16. Federal Aid for Urban Streets	16. Community Promotion
17. Zoning and Subdivision Fees	17. Physical and Mental Health
18. Plan Checking Fees	18. Solid Waste
19. Animal Shelter Fees	19. Sewers
20. Engineering Fees	20. Parks and Recreation
21. Weed and Lot Cleaning	21. Libraries
22. Sewer Service Charges and Connection Fees	22. Water
23. Solid Waste Revenues	23. Child Care
24. Library Fines and Fees	24. Senior Services
25. Park and Recreation Fees	25. Other Expenses
26. Water Service Charges and Connection Fees	
27. Other Revenues	

The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive. Additional items may be added. When appropriate, any additions should be included in the same category as outlined in the State Controller's Annual Report of the Financial Transactions Concerning Cities of California. The expenditure chart should summarize the level of service and basis for each expenditure. Projected staffing levels should be included. The background information should be included in the report and based on prevailing staffing patterns and wage rates in comparable communities.

11) A map of any agricultural or other open space lands in the incorporation

boundaries, or the proposed sphere of influence. A discussion of the effect of the proposal on maintaining or converting these lands to other uses.

- 12) A justification of the proposed boundaries explaining why certain sub-areas were included and why adjoining sub-areas were excluded.
- 13) Based upon existing master plans and capital improvement programs of the County and affected districts, the feasibility study shall include a list of planned capital improvements related to city responsibilities, their costs, an indication of which projects would likely be funded, and the source of the funds.

**5. EARLY DISTRIBUTION OF FORECAST OF LOCAL REVENUES**

Upon learning that a community group has been formed to sponsor an incorporation effort and after receiving an appropriate street map of the proposed city from the proponents, LAFCO staff will request a "Forecast of Local Revenues" from the proper State and/or County agencies to determine what funds would be available to the proposed new city.

**6. FURTHER ASSISTANCE**

LAFCO staff is available to incorporation proponents, opponents, affected public agencies, and the general citizenry to provide further assistance. This assistance includes explanations of the incorporation process, copies of the incorporation laws and LAFCO policies, and notices of LAFCO's hearing on the incorporation proposal.

*Adopted on April 5, 1989 (Resolution No. 97-S)  
Last Revision on October 7, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-29)*

# CHAPTER V

## OTHER POLICIES



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

**1. OVERVIEW**

LAFCO's Conflict of Interest Policy outlines conflicts of interest rules and the role of LAFCO's legal counsel. The goal of this policy is to provide consistency and fairness to the Commission's decision-making process. Commissioners have a personal responsibility to comply with conflict of interest regulations as promulgated by the California Fair Political Practices Commission ("FPPC"), but they may consult with LAFCO's legal counsel to assist in making decisions in the event of a potential conflict of interest.

**2. THE CALIFORNIA POLITICAL REFORM ACT**

The California Political Reform Act (Government Code section 81000, *et seq.*) (the "Act") requires state and local government agencies to establish a conflict of interest code. The FPPC, as the state agency responsible for administering and enforcing the Act, enacted regulations to implement the law. FPPC Regulation section 18730 (Tit. 2, Div. 6, Cal. Code of Regs.) states that an agency can incorporate by reference its model conflict of interest code, which the FPPC amends from time to time. LAFCO adopted and incorporated this model code along with the designation of positions and formulation of disclosure categories in section 18730.

The Act prohibits a Commissioner from using their official position to influence a governmental decision in which they have a financial interest. To help identify potential conflicts of interest, the Act and the FPPC Regulations require Commissioners to report their financial interests (i.e., reportable investments, real property interests, business positions, income and its sources, and other financial interests that may give rise to a conflict of interest) on a form called Statement of Economic Interests ("Form 700"). The conflict of interest code and the Form 700s provide transparency in local government and are fundamental tools in ensuring that officials are acting in the public's best interest and not their own.

**3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST RULES**

Under the Act, a Commissioner has a disqualifying conflict of interest in a LAFCO decision if it is foreseeable that the decision will have a financial impact on their personal finances or other financial interests. A Commissioner with a disqualifying conflict of interest must not make, participate in making, or use their position to influence a LAFCO decision. Commissioners must publicly identify the presence of a conflict of interest and recuse themselves from participating in the affected decision. Recusals allow Commissioners to avoid actual biased decision-making or any appearance of improprieties in favor of the public's interest over their own.

There are five types of interests that might result in disqualification:

- *Business Entity.* A business entity in which a Commissioner has an investment of \$2,000 or more and is a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee, or manager.
- *Real Property.* Real property in which a Commissioner has an interest of \$2,000 or more, including leaseholds.
- *Income.* An individual or an entity from whom a Commissioner has received income or promised income aggregating to \$500 or more in the previous 12 months, including the Commissioner's community property interest in the income of their spouse or registered domestic partner.
- *Gifts.* An individual or an entity from whom a Commissioner has received gifts aggregating to \$500 or more in the previous 12 months.
- *Personal Finances.* A Commissioner's personal finances, including their expenses, income, assets, or liabilities, as well as those of their immediate family.

The financial impact or effect on any of the above interests disqualifies a Commissioner from a LAFCO decision if: (1) the financial impact or effect is foreseeable, and (2) the financial impact or effect is significant enough to be considered material. The FPPC has rules called "materiality standards" to inform which financial effects are important enough to trigger a conflict of interest.

There are two limited exceptions to the conflict of interest rules:

- *The Public Generally Exception.* A Commissioner is not disqualified from a decision if the effect on the Commissioner's interests is indistinguishable from the effect on the public.
- *Legally Required to Participate.* In certain rare circumstances, a Commissioner may be randomly selected to take part in a decision if a quorum cannot be reached because too many Commissioners are disqualified under the Act.

#### **4. ROLE OF LEGAL COUNSEL**

**A.** Commissioners are individually responsible for understanding and following the duties and responsibilities of their office, including making determinations on whether they have disqualifying conflicts of interest in LAFCO decisions. Commissioners are encouraged to consult with legal counsel regarding potential conflicts, exceptions, and recusal. However, counsel's advice cannot provide a Commissioner with any immunity from criminal or civil prosecutions. Only good faith reliance upon written advice from the FPPC on a specific situation can protect a Commissioner. Legal counsel will provide assistance in obtaining an advice letter from the FPPC. Legal counsel is authorized to engage experts, such as appraisers or business consultants, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 if counsel deems such experts are necessary to provide this assistance.

- B.** Legal counsel represents LAFCO as an agency governed by the Commission as a corporate body. Therefore, individual consultations with legal counsel are not separately protected by the attorney-client privilege.
- C.** Upon consultation, legal counsel will respond directly to the individual Commissioner seeking advice and shall not share the advice with the entire Commission, unless the advice provided involves a Commissioner with a disqualifying interest who intends to participate in a LAFCO decision notwithstanding that advice.
- D.** Legal Counsel is not available to provide advice relating to past conduct, to investigate conflicts of interest, or to enforce conflict of interest laws.
- E.** Legal Counsel is not available to provide advice to a Commissioner about the implications of another Commissioner's financial interest. However, at the request of the Commission, legal counsel may provide the Commission advice about the validity of its decisions under Government Code section 1090, which restricts Commissioners and designated employees from making a contract in which they are financially interested.
- F.** When a member of the public or government agency submits an inquiry about whether a Commissioner has a disqualifying interest under the Act or a financial interest in a contract under Government Code section 1090, that inquiry will be forwarded to the entire Commission, with a copy to legal counsel. It shall be the responsibility of the individual Commissioner, who is the subject of the inquiry, to determine whether they will seek advice from legal counsel, the FPPC, or their own counsel in addressing these inquiries.

*Adopted on September 5, 1979 (Resolution No. 141-H)*  
*Previous Revision on June 2, 2004 (Resolution No. 2004-9)*  
*Last Revision on May 6, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-08)*



LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

**DISCLOSURE OF POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY**

**1. OVERVIEW**

The Commission finds that the public interest would be served by adoption of procedures for the public disclosure of contributions and expenditures relating to Commission proposals, and further finds that adopting the process is consistent with State law, including the Political Reform Act of 1974, as amended.

**2. DEFINITIONS**

Unless otherwise provided, definitions of the terms used herein shall be those contained in the Political Reform Act of 1974, as amended.

“Contribution” as used herein shall have the same definition as provided in Government Code Section 82015, as amended.

“Expenditure” as used herein shall have the same definition as provided in Government Code Section 82025, as amended.

“Independent expenditure” as used herein shall have the same definition as provided in Government Code Section 82031, as amended, except that the term “measure” as used in Section 82031 shall be replaced with the term “LAFCO Proposal.”

“Political purposes” as used herein shall mean for the purpose(s) of: (i) influencing public opinion and/or actions of voters; (ii) lobbying public officials including LAFCO Commissioners; and/or, (iii) influencing legislative or administrative action as defined in Government Code § 82032.

It shall not include for the purpose(s) of complying with legal requirements and LAFCO rules for the processing of a proposal, including, but not limited to and by way of example only, preparation of a comprehensive fiscal analysis for an incorporation (Government Code Section 56800) or documents necessary to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq., such as a mitigated negative declaration or environmental impact report.

**3. APPLICABILITY**

These policies and procedures are applicable to LAFCO Proposals, as defined in Government Code § 82035.5 and sphere of influence adoption, amendment or review, when applications for same are submitted for filing with Executive Officer. LAFCO proposals include but are not limited to annexation to a city or district, incorporation, or formation or dissolution of a special district.

#### **4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF DISCLOSURE**

Any person or combination of persons who directly or indirectly makes an expenditure or independent expenditure for political purposes of \$1,000 or more in support of, or in opposition to, a change of organization, reorganization, or sphere of influence adoption or amendment proposal submitted to the commission shall comply with the reporting and disclosure requirements of Article 2.5 (commencing with Section 84250) of Chapter 4 of the Political Reform Act (Government Code §§ 81000 et seq.). Such reporting and disclosure requirements, except as otherwise excluded herein, extend to those required by the Fair Political Practices Commission Regulations regarding such disclosures and shall include disclosure of contributions, expenditures and independent expenditures.

A committee primarily formed to support or oppose a LAFCO proposal shall file all statements required under Chapter 4 of the Political Reform Act except that, in lieu of the statements required by Sections 84200 and 84202.3, the committee shall file monthly campaign statements from the time circulation of a petition begins until a measure is placed on the ballot or, if a measure is not placed on the ballot, until the committee is terminated pursuant to Section 84214.

The committee shall file an original and one copy of each statement on the 15th day of each calendar month, covering the prior calendar month, with the clerk of the county in which the measure may be voted on. If the petition results in a measure that is placed on the ballot, the committee thereafter shall file campaign statements required by Chapter 4. In addition to any other statements required by Chapter 4, a committee that makes independent expenditures in connection with a LAFCO proposal shall file statements pursuant to Section 84203.5.

#### **5. CERTAIN REPORTS AND DISCLOSURES**

This policy also requires that the persons subject to it comply with the regulations regarding the names of campaign committees, disclosures of the sources of mass mailings, and disclosures of the source of automated telephone calls under Government Code Sections 84501 et seq. and the regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission implementing those sections.

#### **6. FILING OFFICE**

All reports and disclosures required hereunder shall be filed with the Santa Cruz County elections official, who the Santa Cruz LAFCO hereby designates as a deputy of LAFCO for purposes of receiving and filing such reports. LAFCO Commissioners (Regular and Alternate) and staff (Executive Officer, Legal Counsel, Commission Clerk, and Analysts) submit their annual Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700) by using the County's e-filing system. This online platform is managed and operated by the County Clerk/Elections Department.

For this purpose, forms developed by the Fair Political Practices Commission for disclosures relating to ballot measures shall be used as specified by the Santa Cruz County Elections Office. Acceptable methods of filing or delivery shall conform to those applicable to elections relating to ballot measures. Copies of filed statements will be available to any person upon payment of 10¢ per page.

## **7. FILING SCHEDULE**

Prior to a LAFCO decision by resolution on an application, any required disclosures shall be filed with the Santa Cruz County Elections Department no later than twelve days before the noticed date of the public hearing or continued deliberation or discussion on the proposal at LAFCO. The period covered by this report shall be from any prior filing period to seventeen days preceding the LAFCO hearing date.

Additionally, contributions and expenditures for the period commencing sixteen days before the LAFCO meeting and ending one day before the LAFCO meeting shall also be filed with the Santa Cruz County Elections Department within 24 hours of receipt or expenditure but in no event later than 24 hours before the LAFCO meeting begins. Should the LAFCO hearing or deliberation or discussion be continued to additional dates, or be accepted for reconsideration, the foregoing periods apply for expenditures or contributions received after the initial date and prior to the subsequent dates. Additionally, contributions and expenditures from any prior filing period to seven days after a decision has been made, shall be filed with the Elections Department no later than fourteen days after a decision has been made.

After a final LAFCO decision by resolution and until the completion of protest and election proceedings, disclosures shall conform to all requirements for campaign committees pursuant to the Political Reform Act. For purposes of determining the deadlines by which such reports and disclosures must be filed, the term "election" as used in the Political Reform Act for determining such deadlines shall mean the date of the originally scheduled commission hearing on a proposal for organization, reorganization, or sphere of influence adoption or amendment. If no hearing date has been scheduled at the time a person becomes subject to disclosure under this policy, he or she shall request that the executive officer establish a date to serve as the "election" date for this purpose. The executive officer shall establish a date, such as, but not limited to, the date which is 6 months after the first filing with the commission regarding the proposal, and inform the requestor of that date in writing.

## **8. NOTICE**

The following notice shall be printed on the Commission's application forms, the resulting notices of public hearing, the agenda of each meeting, and the Commission's website:

"Pursuant to Government Code Sections §56100.1, §56300(b), §56700.1, §59009, and §81000 et seq., and Santa Cruz LAFCO's Policies and Procedures for the Disclosures of Contributions and Expenditures in Support of and Opposition to proposals, any person or combination of persons who directly or indirectly contributes a total of \$1,000 or more or expends a total of \$1,000 or more in support of or opposition to a LAFCO Proposal must comply with the disclosure requirements of the Political Reform Act (Section 84250). These requirements contain provisions for making disclosures of contributions and expenditures at specified intervals. Additional information may be obtained at the Santa Cruz County Elections Department, 701 Ocean Street, Room 210, Santa Cruz CA 95060 (phone 831-454-2060)."

**9. AMENDMENT**

These policies and procedures may be further amended from time to time by Santa Cruz LAFCO following a noticed public hearing pursuant to State law.

**10. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS ARE NON-EXCLUSIVE**

The disclosure and reporting requirements herein are in addition to any other requirements that may be otherwise applicable under provisions of the Political Reform Act or by local ordinance.

**11. ENFORCEMENT**

Enforcement and penalties for violation of these policies and procedures shall be pursuant to the Political Reform Act of 1974 and its corresponding regulations, to the extent permitted by law.

*Adopted on March 3, 2010 (Resolution No. 2010-1)  
Last Revision on May 6, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-09)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### **SPECIAL DISTRICTS GOVERNANCE POLICY**

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

The Special Districts Governance Policy was first introduced in December 1981. The intent was to set rules and regulations that will govern the functions and services of independent special districts. The purpose was to clarify the legal requirements under Government Code Section 56450 et seq. These particular sections were eventually repealed and replaced with the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 ("Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act" or "CKH Act"). The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act establishes procedures for local government changes or organization, including city incorporations, annexations to a city or special district, and city and special district consolidations.

#### **2. GOVERNANCE**

There are three primary sources of authority for forming and reorganizing special districts. The first is the special district's enabling act. Most types of districts have a series of statutes specific to that type of special district. These statutes often contain the procedures for creating that type of special district. The second is the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, which governs the establishment and reorganizations of local governments. Finally, there is the District Organization Law, which provides standardized special district organization and governance procedures for certain types of special districts<sup>6</sup>.

For purposes of this policy, the following sections will focus on the special districts under LAFCO's purview in accordance with Government Code Section 56036:

- a) "District" or "special district" are synonymous and mean an agency of the state, formed pursuant to general law or special act, for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries and in areas outside district boundaries when authorized by the commission pursuant to Government Code Section 56133.
- b) "District" or "special district" includes a county service area, but excludes all of the following: (1) The state, (2) A county, (3) A city, (4) A school district or a community college district, (5) An assessment district or special assessment district, (6) An improvement district, (7) A community facilities district formed pursuant to the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (California Government Code section 53311 et seq.), (8) A permanent road division (formed pursuant to California Government Code 1160), (9) An air pollution control district or an air quality maintenance district, and (10) A zone of any special district.

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<sup>6</sup> California Special Districts Association – Laws Governing Special Districts (December 23, 2015)

**3. PRINCIPAL ACTS**

Principal Acts are statutes established for an entire category of special districts. The Commission creates and governs independent special districts under the authority of these acts. Each special district type has its own principal act. Exhibit A is a list of independent special district types, the location of the associated principal act, and other relevant information about the district types.

**4. SPECIAL ACTS**

Special Acts are statutes that address the specific needs of a community and establish a specific special district to address those needs. These districts (rather than district types) are uniquely created by the Legislature. Below is a list of special acts affecting Santa Cruz County:

Type	Code Section
<b>Flood Control</b>	
Santa Cruz County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Act (1955; Chapter 1489)	Water Code (77-1)
<b>Transit</b>	
Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Act of 1967	Public Utilities Code (§98000 et seq.)
<b>Water Agency or Authority</b>	
County Water Authority Act (1943; Chapter 545)	Water Code (45-1)
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency Act (1984)	Water Code (124-1)

## Special District Principal Acts

Special District Type & Principal Act	Powers & Functions	Formation	Election Process	Number of Board Members
<b>Airport Districts</b>  Public Utilities Code (§22001 et seq.)	Assist in the development of airports, spaceports, and air navigation facilities	Any territories of one or more counties and one or more cities, all or any part of any city and any part of the unincorporated territory of any county; the boundaries of a district may be altered and outlying contiguous territory in the same or an adjoining county annexed to the district.	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors
<b>California Water Districts</b>  Water Code (§34000 et seq.)	Maintain the necessary works for the production, storage, and distribution of water for irrigation, domestic, industrial, and municipal purposes, and any drainage or reclamation works	Any area of land which is capable of using water beneficially for irrigation, domestic, industrial or municipal purposes and which can be serviced from common sources of supply and by the same system of works; area need not be contiguous	Elected by landowner voters to 4-year terms	At least 5 Directors (may be increased to 7, 9, or 11)
<b>California Water Storage Districts</b>  Water Code (§39000 et seq.)	Maintain the necessary works for the storage and distribution of water and drainage or reclamation works	Any land irrigated or capable of irrigation from a common source; under specific conditions the district need not be contiguous	Elected by landowner voters to 4-year terms	At least 5 Directors
<b>Citrus Pest Districts</b>  Food & Agri. Code (§8401 et seq.)	Control and eradicate citrus pests	Any county devoted exclusively to the growing of citrus fruits	Appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fixed 4-year terms	5 Directors
<b>Community Services Districts</b>  Government Code (§61000 et seq.)	Provide up to 32 different services such as, water, garbage collection, wastewater management, security, fire protection, public recreation, street lighting, mosquito abatement services, etc.	Any county or counties of an unincorporated territory or incorporated territory of a contiguous or noncontiguous area	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors
<b>Cotton Pest Abatement Districts</b>  Food & Agri. Code (§6051 et seq.)	Control and prevent introduction of pests, and oversee cotton plants in areas that are at risk of pests	Any land in more than one of the counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura with the consent of the Board of Supervisors of the counties affected	Appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fixed 4-year terms	5 Directors

Special District Type & Principal Act	Powers & Functions	Formation	Election Process	Number of Board Members
<b>County Sanitation Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§4700 et seq.)	Maintain and operate sewage systems and sewage disposal or treatment plants	Any unincorporated or incorporated territory or both; the incorporated territory included in the district may include the whole or part of one or more cities with the permission of that city	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms or may choose to have a mixed board	3 Directors
<b>County Water Districts</b>  Water Code (§30000 et seq.)	Develop regulations for the distribution and consumption of water; sell water; collect and dispose sewage, garbage, waste, trash and storm water; store water for future needs; may generate hydroelectric power; and provide fire protection under specified conditions	Any county or two or more contiguous counties or of a portion of such county or counties, whether the portion includes unincorporated territory or not	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	At least 5 Directors (may be increased to 7, 9, or 11)
<b>Fire Protection Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§13800 et seq.)	Provide fire protection and other emergency services	Any territory, whether incorporated or unincorporated, whether contiguous or noncontiguous, may be included	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms or appointed by the Board of Supervisors (and City Council where applicable) to fixed 4-year terms	May be 3, 5, 7, 9, or 11 Directors (not to exceed 11)
<b>Harbor Districts</b>  Harbors & Navigation Code (§6000 et seq.)	Manage any bay, harbor, inlet, river, channel, etc. in which tides are affected by the Pacific Ocean	Any portion or whole part of a county, city, or cities, the exterior boundary of which includes a harbor	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Commissioners
<b>Health Care / Hospital Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§32000 et seq.)	Establish, maintain, and operate, or provide assistance in the operation of, one or more health facilities or health services, including, but not limited to: outpatient programs, services, and facilities; retirement programs, services, and facilities; chemical dependency programs, services, and facilities	Any incorporated or unincorporated territory, or both, or territory in any one or more counties; the territory comprising this district need not be contiguous but the territory of a municipal corporation shall not be divided	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors

Special District Type & Principal Act	Powers & Functions	Formation	Election Process	Number of Board Members
<b>Irrigation Districts</b>  Water Code (§20500 et seq.)	Sell and lease water; operate sewage collection and disposal system; deliver water for fire protection; dispose and salvage sewage water; protect against damage from flood or overflow; provide drainage made necessary by the irrigation provided; maintain recreational facilities in connection with any dams, reservoirs, etc.; and operate and sell electrical power	Any land capable of irrigation; includes land used for residential or business purposes susceptible of receiving water for domestic or agriculture purposes; need not be contiguous	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	3 or 5 Directors
<b>Levee Districts</b>  Water Code (§70000 et seq.)	Protect the district's land from overflow by constructing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure	Any county or counties or any portion thereof of an unincorporated territory or incorporated territory in need of protection of the lands of the district from overflow and for the purpose of conserving or adding water to the sloughs and drains	Elected by landowner voters to 4-year terms	3 Directors
<b>Library Districts</b>  Education Code (§19400 et seq.)	Equip and maintain a public library in order to exhibit knowledge in a variety of areas	Any incorporated or unincorporated territory, or both, in any one or more counties, so long as the territory of the district consists of contiguous parcels and the territory of no city is divided	Appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fixed 4-year terms	3 or 5 Trustees
<b>Memorial Districts</b>  Military & Veterans Code (§1170 et seq.)	Operate and maintain memorial halls, meeting places, etc. for veterans	Any incorporated territory of the county together with any contiguous unincorporated territory thereof; or may be formed entirely of contiguous incorporated territory; or entirely of contiguous unincorporated territory	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors
<b>Mosquito Abatement &amp; Vector Control Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§2000 et seq.)	Conduct effective programs for the surveillance, prevention, abatement and control of mosquitos and other vectors	Any territory, whether incorporated or unincorporated, whether contiguous or noncontiguous and districts may not overlap	Appointed by the Board of Supervisors or the City Council to fixed 2–4-year terms	5 Trustees

Special District Type & Principal Act	Powers & Functions	Formation	Election Process	Number of Board Members
<b>Municipal Utility Districts</b>  Public Utilities Code (§11501 et seq.)	Manage and supply light, water, power, heat, transportation, telephone service, or other means of communication, or means for the collection, treatment, or disposition of garbage, sewage or refuse matter	Any public agency together with unincorporated territory, or two or more public agencies, with or without unincorporated territory; public agencies and unincorporated territory included within a district may be in the same or separate counties and need not be contiguous; no public agency shall be divided in the formation of a district	Elected by resident voters to 2-4 year terms	5 Directors
<b>Municipal Water Districts</b>  Water Code (§71000 et seq.)	Develop and sell water; promote water use efficiency; operate public recreational facilities; provide fire protection; collect and dispose trash, garbage, sewage, storm water and waste; and generate, sell and deliver hydroelectric power	Any county or counties, or of any portions thereof, whether such portions include unincorporated territory only or incorporated territory of any city or cities; cities and unincorporated territory does not need to be contiguous	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors
<b>Police Protection Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§20000 et seq.)	Provide police service to a community	May be formed in unincorporated towns	Elected by resident voters to 2-4 year terms	3 Commissioners
<b>Port Districts</b>  Harbors & Navigation Code (§6200 et seq.)	Maintain and secure the ports	Shall include one municipal corporation and any contiguous unincorporated territory in any one county, but a municipal corporation shall not be divided	Appointed by the Board of Supervisors and City Council to fixed 4-year terms, and approved by resident voters	5 Commissioners
<b>Public Cemetery Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§9000 et seq.)	Maintain public cemeteries in communities as necessary	Any territory, whether incorporated or unincorporated, whether contiguous or noncontiguous; districts may not overlap	Appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fixed 4-year terms	3 or 5 Trustees

Special District Type & Principal Act	Powers & Functions	Formation	Election Process	Number of Board Members
<b>Public Utility Districts</b>  Public Utilities Code (§15501 et seq.)	Maintain the infrastructure to provide electricity, natural gas, water, power, heat, transportation, telephone service, or other means of communication, or the disposition of garbage, sewage, or refuse matter	May be incorporated and managed in unincorporated territory	Elected by resident voters to 2-4 Year terms	At least 3 Directors
<b>Reclamation Districts</b>  Water Code (§50000 et seq.)	Reclaim and maintain land that is at risk of flooding for a variety of purposes	Any land within any city in which land is subject to overflow or incursions from the tide or inland waters of the state	Elected by landowner voters to 4-year terms	3, 5 or 7 Trustees
<b>Recreation &amp; Park Districts</b>  Public Resource Code (§5780 et seq.)	Organize and promote programs of community recreation, parks and open space, parking, transportation and other related services that improve the community's quality of life	Any territory, whether incorporated or unincorporated, whether contiguous or noncontiguous	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms or appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fixed 4-year terms	5 Directors
<b>Resource Conservation Districts</b>  Public Resource Code (§9151 et seq.)	Manage a diversity of resource conservation projects, including soil and water conservation projects, wildlife habitat enhancement and restoration, control of exotic plant species, watershed restoration, conservation planning, education, and many others	Any land shall be those generally of value for agricultural purposes, but other lands may be included in a district if necessary to conserve resources	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 ,7, or 9 Directors
<b>Sanitary Districts</b>  Health & Safety Code (§6400 et seq.)	Maintain and operate garbage dumpsites, garbage collection and disposal systems, sewers, storm water drains and storm water collection, recycling and distribution systems	Any county, or in two or more counties within the same natural watershed area	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors

Special District Type & Principal Act	Powers & Functions	Formation	Election Process	Number of Board Members
<b>Transit Districts</b>  Public Utilities Code (§24501 et seq.)	Construct and operate rail lines, bus lines, stations, platforms, terminals and any other facilities necessary or convenient for transit service	Any city together with unincorporated territory, or two or more cities, with or without unincorporated territory may organize and incorporate as a transit district; cities and unincorporated territory included within a district may be in the same or separate counties and need not be contiguous; no city shall be divided in the formation of a district	Elected by resident voters to 2-4 year terms	7 Directors
<b>Water Conservation Districts</b>  Water Code (§74000 et seq.)	Maintain, survey, and research water supplies	Unincorporated territory or partly within unincorporated and partly within incorporated territory, and may be within one or more counties that need water conservation services; territory does not need to be contiguous	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	3, 5 or 7 Directors
<b>Water Replenishment Districts</b>  Water Code (§60000 et seq.)	Replenish the water and protect and preserve the groundwater supplies	Any land entirely within unincorporated territory, or partly within unincorporated territory and partly within incorporated territory, and within one or more counties in this state	Elected by resident voters to 4-year terms	5 Directors

*Adopted on December 7, 1994 (Resolution No. 801-D)*  
*Last Revision on October 7, 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-28)*



## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

### WATER POLICY

#### **1. OVERVIEW**

Government Code Section 56300 requires each Local Agency Formation Commission to establish written policies and to exercise its powers in a manner pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Act of 2000 and consistent with the written policies of each Commission. In 1964, the Commission adopted the first water policy to align the limited water supply with existing service providers and smart growth as population continues to increase in Santa Cruz County. The purpose of this policy is to clarify LAFCO's role when considering boundary changes involving cities and special districts.

#### **2. SPHERES OF INFLUENCE**

LAFCO recognizes that the water resources of Santa Cruz County are limited, and the Commission's objective is to ensure that its decisions relating to water do not lead to adverse impacts on the natural resources of Santa Cruz County. In reviewing sphere adoptions and amendments, LAFCO will be guided by the potential impacts of the proposal on water resources and will consider the efforts of the water agencies and land use agencies to maintain stream and river flows, promote high water quality of surface waters and groundwater, and reduce groundwater overdraft.

To assist in the review of sphere boundaries and other LAFCO reports, the Commission will utilize the following data sources to maintain an ongoing data base of the supply, demand, and related water data of the local water agencies subject to LAFCO's boundary regulation:

- a) The Public Water System Annual Reports filed by each public water agency with the State Water Resources Control Board;
- b) The Urban Water Management Plans prepared by water suppliers with 3000 or more customers as required by the California Water Code Sections 10610 et.seq; and
- c) The annual Water Resources Report prepared for consideration by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors.

#### **3. BOUNDARY CHANGES**

In any proposal requiring water service, the Commission requires that the affected agency identified as the potential water provider must demonstrate the availability of an adequate, reliable and sustainable supply of water. The following factors may be considered:

- a) In cases where a basin is overdrafted or existing services are not sustainable, a boundary change proposal may be approved if there will be a net decrease in impacts on water resources;
- b) In cases where a phased development is proposed, the agency should demonstrate that adequate service capacity will be provided as needed for each phase;
- c) In cases where a proposed new service area will be served by an onsite water source, the proponent should demonstrate its adequacy (Government Code Section 56668[k]); and
- d) In cases where the proposal's new water demand on the agency does not exceed the typical amount of water used by a single-family dwelling in the agency's service area, the Commission will not require that an "adequate, reliable, and sustainable" supply be demonstrated if the agency has a water conservation program and the program will be implemented as part of any new water service.

#### **4. SERVICE REQUEST**

Proposals requesting water service from a city of special district will need to provide proof of lack of services to existing urban land uses, a building permit application, allocation for a single-family dwelling, or for a larger project by: (1) a tentative or final land use entitlement (tentative subdivision map use permit, etc.) conditioned on obtaining water service and (2) a growth rate and pattern that the subject area will be developed within 5 years.

The Commission will only approve boundary change applications when the Commission determines that it is unlikely that water resources will be degraded. The Commission will review each application to ensure that, by implementing project-specific mitigations, participating in agency water conservation programs, or both if applicable, the project will not adversely affect sustainable yields in groundwater basins, flows in rivers and streams, water quality in surface water bodies and groundwater basins, and endangered species.

#### **5. EXTRATERRITORIAL SERVICE AGREEMENTS**

When the Commission authorizes the emergency provision of water services via extraterritorial service outside an agency's boundaries, and annexation is practical, the Commission will require annexation to be completed within two years.

#### **6. CONNECTION MORATORIUM**

It is the general policy of the Commission to disapprove annexations to water and sewer agencies (including cities that provide either service) while there is a connection moratorium or other similar service limitation involving the subject water or sewer service. The Commission will consider exceptions to this general policy on a case-by-case basis. The Commission may approve an annexation that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a) To replace a private water source that has failed, such as a well that has gone dry, new service connections shall not be sized to accommodate more intensive development;
- b) To replace a septic system that has failed, new service connections shall not be sized to accommodate more intensive development;
- c) To implement a transfer of service between two existing agencies such transfer shall be in a manner that is consistent with the adopted Spheres of Influence of those agencies; and
- d) To change a boundary, in a manner consistent with an adopted Sphere of Influence, an agency boundary shall not divide a property that could only be conveyed under a single deed.

Between January 1, 1986 and the time the service limitation is totally lifted, the Commission shall limit the annexations so that the number of cumulative connections made under the above exemption criteria do not exceed 1% of the total agency's flow (as expressed in equivalent single family dwelling units) in service on January 1, 1986. In this case, an additional criteria not subject to the 1% cumulative impact limitation would be to provide facilities or funding that will allow the agency to lift its service limitation.

## **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Water resources and supplies are critical issues for many spheres of influence and application decisions made by LAFCO. Public information and participation are important components in the decisions made by the Commission, the land use agencies, and the water agencies. To promote public education, at least every two years, the Local Agency Formation Commission will sponsor, or co-sponsor with the Regional Water Management Foundation, the County of Santa Cruz, and local water agencies, a public forum that provides the public with an overview of the state of the water supplies in Santa Cruz County.

It is preferable that the residents who use water also participate in the governance of the system that provides the water. Therefore, in making decisions on spheres of influence and boundary changes, the Commission will favor water supply entities for which the users of the system participate in the governance of the system.

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