LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
701 Ocean Street, #318-D
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Phone Number: (831) 454-2055
Website: www.santacruzlafco.org
Email: info@santacruzlafco.org

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
(hybrid meeting may be attended remotely or in-person)

Attend Meeting by Internet: **https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84673049008**
(Password 408013)

Attend Meeting by Conference Call: **Dial 1-669-900-6833 or 1-253-215-8782**
(Webinar ID: 846 7304 9008)

Attend Meeting In-Person: **Board of Supervisors Chambers**
(701 Ocean Street, Room 525, Santa Cruz CA 95060)

HYBRID MEETING PROCESS

LAFCO has established a hybrid meeting process in accordance with AB 2449:

a) Commission Quorum: State law indicates that a quorum must consist of Commissioners in person pursuant to AB 2449.

b) Public Comments: For those wishing to make public comments remotely, identified individuals will be given up to three (3) minutes to speak. Staff will inform the individual when one minute is left and when their time is up. For those attending the meeting remotely, please click on the "Raise Hand" button under the "Reactions Tab" to raise your hand. For those joining via conference call, pressing *9 will raise your hand. The three (3) minute limit also applies to virtual public comments.

c) Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Santa Cruz LAFCO does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs, or activities. If you are a person with a disability and wish to attend the meeting, but require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the staff at (831) 454-2055 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to make the appropriate arrangements. Persons with disabilities may also request a copy of the agenda in an alternative format.

1. **ROLL CALL**

2. **EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE**
The Executive Officer may make brief announcements in the form of a written report or verbal update, and may not require Commission action.

   a. **Hybrid Meeting Process**
   The Commission will receive an update on the hybrid meeting process.

   Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

3. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**
The Commission will consider approving the minutes from the June 3, 2026 Regular LAFCO Meeting.

   Recommended Action: Approve the minutes as presented with any desired changes.

4. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**
This is an opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items not on the agenda, provided that the subject matter is within the jurisdiction of the Commission and that no action may be taken on an off-agenda item(s) unless authorized by law.

5. **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**
This is an opportunity for the Commission to receive special presentations from local, regional, or state agencies / representatives regarding LAFCO-related matters. These presentations may or may not require Commission action.

   a. **Big Basin Water Company – Status Update**
   The Commission will receive a verbal update regarding the status of the Big Basin Water Company from the court-appointed receiver (Serviam by Wright LLP).

   Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

6. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**
Public hearing items require expanded public notification per provisions in State law, directives of the Commission, or are those voluntarily placed by the Executive Officer to facilitate broader discussion.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**
Other business items involve administrative, budgetary, legislative, or personnel matters and may or may not be subject to public hearings.

   a. **Fire-Related Projects (Recurring Item)**
   The Commission will receive an update on the ongoing reorganization efforts involving CSA 48 and other fire agencies.

   Recommended Action: Direct staff to continue coordinating and assisting the affected fire agencies.

b. CALAFCO Update

The Commission will receive an update on the status of the California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO), discuss this year's annual conference, and designate a voting delegate for the upcoming CALAFCO Board of Directors election process.

Recommended Actions:

1) Designate a Voting Delegate and Alternate for the upcoming election;

2) Approve the nomination of Joe Serrano as a candidate for the Coastal Region seat on the CALAFCO Board of Directors; and

3) Approve the proposed nominations for CALAFCO's President's Award and the Government, Community, or Public Partner Award.

c. Legislative Update

The Commission will receive a status update on the current legislative session and activities involving legislation of LAFCO interest.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

d. Comprehensive Quarterly Report – Fourth Quarter (FY 2025-26)

The Commission will receive an update on active proposals, upcoming service reviews, latest budgetary performance, and other staff activities.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

8. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

LAFCO staff receive written correspondence and other materials on occasion that may or may not be related to a specific agenda item. Any correspondence presented to the Commission will also be made available to the general public. 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.

9. PRESS ARTICLES

LAFCO staff monitors newspapers, publications, and other media outlets for any news affecting local cities, districts, and communities in Santa Cruz County. Articles are presented to the Commission on a periodic basis.

a. Press Articles during the Months of May through July 2026

The Commission will receive an update on recent LAFCO-related news occurring around the county and throughout California.

Recommended Action: No action required; Informational item only.

10. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

This is an 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. No discussion or action may occur or be taken, except to place the item on a future agenda if approved by a Commission majority. The public may address the Commission on these informational matters.

11. ADJOURNMENT

LAFCO's next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES:

Campaign Contributions

State law (Government Code Section 84308) requires that a LAFCO Commissioner disqualify themselves from voting on an application involving an "entitlement for use" (such as an annexation or sphere amendment) if, within the last twelve months, the Commissioner has received $500 or more in campaign contributions from an applicant, any financially interested person who actively supports or opposes an application, or an agency (such as an attorney, engineer, or planning consultant) representing an applicant or interested participant. The law also requires any applicant or other participant in a LAFCO proceeding to disclose the amount and name of the recipient Commissioner on the official record of the proceeding. The Commission prefers that the disclosure be made on a standard form that is filed with LAFCO staff at least 24 hours before the LAFCO hearing begins. If this is not possible, a written or oral disclosure can be made at the beginning of the hearing. The law also prohibits an applicant or other participant from making a contribution of $500 or more to a LAFCO Commissioner while a proceeding is pending or for 3 months afterward. Disclosure forms and further information can be obtained from the LAFCO office at Room #318-D, 701 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 (phone 831-454-2055).

Contributions and Expenditures Supporting and Opposing Proposals

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). More information on the scope of the required disclosures is available at the web site of the Fair Political Practices Commission: www.fppc.ca.gov. Questions regarding FPPC material, including FPPC forms, should be directed to the FPPC's advice line at 1-866-ASK-FPPC (1-866-275-3772).

Accommodating People with Disabilities

The Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County does not discriminate on the basis of disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs or activities. The Commission meetings are held in an accessible facility. If you wish to attend this meeting and will require special assistance in order to participate, please contact the LAFCO office at 831-454-2055 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to make arrangements. For TDD service, the California State Relay Service 1-800-735-2929 will provide a link between the caller and the LAFCO staff.

Late Agenda Materials

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.5 public records that relate to open session agenda items that are distributed to a majority of the Commission less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available to the public at Santa Cruz LAFCO offices at 701 Ocean Street, #318-D, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 during regular business hours. These records, when possible, will also be made available on the LAFCO website at www.santacruzlafco.org. To review written materials submitted after the agenda packet is published, contact staff at the LAFCO office or in the meeting room before or after the meeting.

Agenda Item No. 3

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

DRAFT MINUTES

LAFCO REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, June 3, 2026
Start Time - 9:00 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Joe Clarke called the meeting of the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (LAFCO) to order at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. He asked staff to conduct a roll call.

The following Commissioners were present:

- Commissioner Jim Anderson
- Commissioner Joe Clarke *(Vice Chair)*
- Commissioner Justin Cummings
- Commissioner Fred Keeley
- Commissioner Manu Koenig
- Alternate Commissioner Lani Faulkner
- Alternate Commissioner John Hunt
- Alternate Commissioner Eduardo Montesino *(remotely)*

Alternate Commissioner John Hunt will be a voting member on behalf of Commissioner Roger Anderson (Public). Alternate Commissioner Lani Faulkner will be a voting member on behalf of Chair Rachél Lather. Vice Chair Joe Clarke will serve as Chairperson on behalf of Chair Rachél Lather.

The following LAFCO staff members were present:

- LAFCO Analyst, Francisco Estrada
- Legal Counsel, Joshua Nelson
- Executive Officer, Joe Serrano

2. EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

2a. Virtual Meeting Process

Executive Officer Joe Serrano welcomed everyone to the Scotts Valley City Chambers and indicated that the meeting was being conducted through a hybrid model with Commissioners and staff attending in-person while members of the public have the option to attend virtually or in-person.

Additionally, **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** provided a summary of the SB 827 training hosted by LAFCO and the California Special Districts Association.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke moved on to the next agenda item.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested public comments on the draft minutes. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted no public comment on the item. Vice Chair Clarke closed public comment.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke called for a motion. **Commissioner John Hunt** motioned for approval of the May 6th Meeting Minutes and **Commissioner Jim Anderson** seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke called for a voice vote on the approval of the draft minutes.

MOTION:	**John Hunt**
SECOND:	**Jim Anderson**
FOR:	**Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, Justin Cummings, Fred Keeley, Lani Faulkner, John Hunt, and Manu Koenig.**
AGAINST:	**None**
ABSTAIN:	**None**

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested public comments on any non-agenda items. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted two requests to provide public comment.

Timothy Dalton, a member of the public, provided comments on the Felton Fire Protection District and thanked LAFCO staff for their various reports and analysis.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, provided comments on the proposed battery energy storage system on Minto Road and on future water system consolidations.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke closed public comment and moved on to the next agenda item.

5. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested a presentation from the Pajaro Valley Health Care District (PVHCD) Chief Executive Officer Stephen Gray regarding the healthcare district's recent and ongoing efforts.

Stephan Gray, PVHCD CEO, provided the Commission with updates on his recent decision to leave his post and subsequent CEO transition, the recent $10 million grant awarded to the hospital to address ongoing financial constraints and struggles, and explained how changes to reimbursement rates at the federal and state level will affect local residents of the healthcare district. Finally, Mr. Gray provided updates on the progress made in their strategic plan and reported that the quality of care and safety at Watsonville Community Hospital has measurably improved.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was a request to address the Commission.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, provided comments on the quality of service at Watsonville Community Hospital, Measure N and its assessments, and on expanding the boundaries of the healthcare district.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke closed public comments and opened the floor to Commission discussion. **Commissioner Eduardo Montesino** inquired about potential partnerships for the hospital. **CEO Stephen Gray** stated that he remained optimistic that a partner can be identified to help with the day-to-day operations and made clarifications regarding the Measure N assessments.

Commissioner Lani Faulkner asked about a potential healthcare partner. **CEO Stephen Gray** explained the impact of a closure to Watsonville Community Hospital on residents and to nearby healthcare systems and how a partnership can bring more resources into the community.

John Hunt asked about modifying the boundaries for the District. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained the process to modify a sphere of influence or a jurisdictional boundary.

Commissioner Justin Cummings inquired about the impact of the changes at the federal level. **CEO Stephen Gray** provided an update on the changes made to Medicare and Medi-Cal services and how it will impact residents in Santa Cruz County. Commissioner Cummings asked about the cyber-attack. CEO Gray explained what happened and how the District has responded.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke moved on to the next agenda item.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

6a. "Boulder Creek Fire Protection District Station Parcel Annexation"

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested staff to provide a presentation to consider the annexation of two parcels into County Service Area 7 for sewer service.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained to the Commission that as a condition to an extraterritorial service agreement approved in June 2024, the two parcels would need to be annexed into CSA 7 within four years (June 2028). The proposal is consistent with state law and the adopted policies of the Commission, and CSA 7 is willing and capable of providing the requested services. Finally, this is part of an ongoing effort to assist the residents of Big Basin.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was one request to address the Commission.

Chief Mark Biggum, Boulder Creek Fire Protection District, made a note on assisting Big Basin residents and on the proposed parcels to be annexed.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke closed public comments and requested a motion. **Commissioner Jim Anderson** made the motion to approve staff recommendations, and **Commissioner Fred Keeley** seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke called for a voice vote on staff recommendation: **Adopt the draft resolution (No. 2026-09) approving the two-parcel annexation into County Service Area 7.**

MOTION:	**Jim Anderson**
SECOND:	**Fred Keeley**
FOR:	**Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, Justin Cummings, Fred Keeley, Lani Faulkner, John Hunt, and Manu Koenig.**
AGAINST:	**None**
ABSTAIN:	**None**

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

6b. "La Cuesta Road / Hyde Stephenson Extraterritorial Service Agreement"

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested staff to provide a presentation to consider an extraterritorial service agreement request between two landowners and the City of Scotts Valley under Government Code Section 56133.

LAFCO Analyst Francisco Estrada explained to the Commission that an application was submitted by two landowners requesting sewer service from the City of Scotts Valley. The Scotts Valley City Council considered the request and approved it in March 2024 and the request is also consistent with state laws and the Commission's adopted policies.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there was no request to address the Commission.

Commissioner Jim Anderson asked about use of the failing septic system. **LAFCO Analyst Francisco Estrada** indicated that the landowners have expressed interest in discontinuing their septic systems and connecting to reliable public infrastructure.

Commissioner Lani Faulkner inquired about future annexations for existing ESAs. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** explained that there is a condition in the draft resolution encouraging future annexation and that staff was coordinating with the City.

Commissioner Justin Cummings made the motion to adopt staff recommendation and **Commissioner Lani Faulkner** seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke called for a voice vote on staff recommendation: **Adopt the draft resolution (No. 2026-10) approving the extraterritorial service agreement involving the City of Scotts Valley for sewer service.**

MOTION:	**Justin Cummings**
SECOND:	**Lani Faulkner**
FOR:	**Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, Justin Cummings, Fred Keeley, Lani Faulkner, John Hunt, and Manu Koenig.**
AGAINST:	**None**
ABSTAIN:	**None**

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

<u>6c. "Countywide Fire Protection Service and Sphere Review</u>
Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested staff to provide a presentation to consider the adoption of a service and sphere of influence review for the 12 fire agencies in Santa Cruz County.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano explained to the Commission that the report would analyze all 12 fire protection agencies by incorporating historical analysis conducted decades ago to develop recommendations on the provision of fire protection services into the future. Executive Officer Serrano introduced the concept of the regional spheres to allow similar agencies to explore shared services opportunities or potential future governance reorganization. Additionally, staff shared copies of the draft with partner agencies countywide for feedback and provided a rationale for the related recommendations. Finally, Executive Officer Serrano recommended approving the 2026 countywide fire report by adopting the draft resolution.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested public comments on the item. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that there were six requests to address the Commission.

Isa Nielson, a member of the public, provided comments on the Felton Fire Protection District and on the countywide fire report. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** provided clarification on the boundaries for the fire district and on the individual sphere of influences for the respective fire agencies.

Don Jarvis, a member of the public, requested the Commission approve an outside consultant to explore fire service and the impacts of the proposed reorganization for the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District (PVFPD), and to assess financial impacts.

Becky Steinbruner, a member of the public, requested clarification on the Santa Cruz County Fire Department in the report and stated that residents were not aware of the financial impact of the proposed PVFPD reorganization. Ms. Steinbruner also requested the report not be approved.

Chief Corey Schafer, Watsonville Fire Department, provided comments on the countywide fire report and expressed interest in a study analyzing fire protection services in south county.

Canda Whalley, a member of the public, provided comments on LAFCO, on the countywide fire report and on transparency for the FFPD website, and the FFPD benefit assessment.

Charlie Eadie, CSA 4 Representative, provided comments on the recommendations for CSA 4 in the report and on the benefit assessment approved by CSA 4 residents.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke closed public comments and opened the floor for Commission discussion. **Commissioner Lani Faulkner** made comments on the report and asked about “water poor areas”. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted water concerns around the county. Commissioner Faulkner asked about Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District. Executive Officer Serrano explained that Monterey County is the Principal LAFCO for the District. Commissioner Faulkner asked if LAFCO could bring greater awareness of the challenges to provide modern fire protection services. Executive Officer Serrano stated that if an analysis is warranted on CSA 48, a request would need to come from the affected agencies.

Commissioner John Hunt asked for clarification on approving the countywide fire report. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** noted that the Commission may approve the report, and administrative changes to the report can be incorporated afterwards, but special studies would need to be requested, considered and approved by the Commission.

Commissioner Eduardo Montesino provided comments on the future of fire protection services in south county.

Commissioner Jim Anderson provided comments on the proposed financial analysis for a proposed CSA 48 reorganization and the status of volunteer fire service model in the county. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** stated that a special study is appropriate but must be coordinated with PVFPD.

Commissioner Justin Cummings made the motion to adopt staff recommendations and to coordinate with affected agencies on potential special studies. **Commissioner Lani Faulkner** seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke called for a voice vote on staff recommendation: **Adopt the draft resolution (No. 2026-11) approving the 2026 Countywide Fire Protection Service and Sphere Review with its identified conditions.**

MOTION: Justin Cummings
SECOND: Lani Faulkner
FOR: Jim Anderson, Joe Clarke, Justin Cummings, Fred Keeley, Lani Faulkner, John Hunt, and Manu Koenig.
AGAINST: None
ABSTAIN: None

MOTION PASSES: 7-0

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7a. CALAFCO Update

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested staff to provide a status update on the current upcoming activities involving the statewide organization.

Executive Officer Joe Serrano provided the Commission with an update on the Annual Staff Workshop and the shared services agreement with Placer LAFCO.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke opened and closed public comments. Vice Chair Clarke moved on to the next item since no Commission action was required.

8. WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Vice Chair Joe Clarke inquired whether there was any written correspondence submitted to LAFCO. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that written correspondence had been received from Becky Steinburner, a member of the public, regarding the county's radio systems. The other correspondence was from CALAFCO regarding ongoing statewide efforts.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

9. PRESS ARTICLES

Vice Chair Joe Clarke requested staff to provide a presentation on the press articles. **Executive Officer Joe Serrano** indicated that this item highlights LAFCO-related articles recently circulated in local newspapers.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

10. COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS

Vice Chair Joe Clarke inquired whether any Commissioner would like to share any information. There were no requests from the Commission.

Vice Chair Joe Clarke moved to the next item since no Commission action was required.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Joe Clarke adjourned the Regular Commission Meeting at 11:03 a.m. for the next regular LAFCO meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 5, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

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RACHÉL LATHER, CHAIRPERSON

Attest:

____
FRANCISCO ESTRADA, LAFCO ANALYST

Agenda Item No. 7a

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: August 5, 2026
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Joe Serrano, Executive Officer
Subject: Fire-related Projects – Status Update

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

The Commission has been receiving a comprehensive update on the various ongoing fire-related projects throughout the 2026 calendar year with notable accomplishments including but not limited to the formation of the LAFCO Fire Ad-Hoc Committee, the development of a five-year fiscal analysis for a proposed reorganization, and the completion of the countywide fire report. This staff report provides the latest news regarding the various fire-related projects.

It is recommended that the Commission direct staff to continue coordinating and assisting the affected fire agencies.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The following section provides a comprehensive summary of each fire-related project currently underway at Santa Cruz LAFCO. Together, these project updates demonstrate how staff are advancing multiple interconnected initiatives aimed at improving the governance, coordination, and long-term sustainability of fire service across the county. For quick reference, **Table A** on page 3 offers a consolidated overview of all active fire-related projects and their current status.

County Service Area 48 Reorganization Analysis

In August 2024, the Commission received a fire study from AP Triton that evaluated the potential financial impacts to CSA 48 if local fire agencies annexed areas within their respective spheres of influence. The report's findings led to the formation of a stakeholder working group (with representatives from the County, CAL FIRE, and LAFCO) to develop a specialized transition study assessing the conversion of CSA 48 from a dependent fire agency to an independent fire protection district. While this transition study was initially planned as an in-house effort to assess governance models, service levels, operational frameworks, financial capacity, and long-term sustainability, its development was delayed following the submission of an application in May 2025 for a reorganization involving CSA 48 and the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District.

Status Update: The Commission adopted the 2026 Countywide Fire Protection Service & Sphere Review on June 3, 2026 and one of the recommended actions was to consider hiring an outside consultant to produce a feasibility study for the proposed CSA 48 transition into an independent fire district. LAFCO staff is scheduled to present a draft Request for Proposals to the Commission in October 2026 for consideration and approval.

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Reorganization

On April 24, 2025, the PVFPD Board of Directors adopted a resolution to dissolve the District and concurrently annex its service area into County Service Area 48. The District submitted its formal reorganization application in May 2025. Since that time, LAFCO has worked closely with the County and PVFPD to help guide the reorganization process while also supporting the District's consideration of an alternative funding model that could allow it to remain an independent agency. It is important to note that PVFPD discontinued the alternative funding model process in March 2026. Throughout 2026, LAFCO (together with the County, PVFPD, and CAL FIRE) prepared and updated a five-year fiscal projection illustrating the potential impacts to CSA 48 should the reorganization proceed, facilitated two community workshops (one virtual and one in person), launched a dedicated webpage to enhance public transparency, and recently updated the Plan for Service document, included as **Attachment 1**.

<u>Feasibility Study Request</u>

At the Commission's June 3 LAFCO meeting, a PVFPD resident requested that LAFCO conduct a supplemental feasibility analysis comparing projected costs under the CSA 48 reorganization with the discontinued PVFPD benefit assessment. LAFCO subsequently received three emails supporting the request (two from constituents and one from a non-resident) as noted in **Attachment 2**. The Commission directed staff to consult with PVFPD and the County to determine whether a supplemental fiscal study was warranted. Following meetings in mid-June, both agencies confirmed they do **not** support conducting an additional analysis. They emphasized that the SCI Consulting report already evaluated comparable fiscal scenarios, LAFCO's February 4, 2026 staff report compared the discontinued PVFPD benefit assessment with the proposed CSA 48 assessments, and a recent joint effort among LAFCO, the County, PVFPD, and CAL FIRE produced an updated five-year fiscal projection. Together, these documents provide sufficient fiscal information, making a new study unnecessary. All referenced materials are available on LAFCO's website: https://santacruzlafco.org/pvfpd_reorg/.

<u>Status Update:</u> The County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to consider the draft property tax exchange agreement and a will-serve letter at its August 11th board meeting. **Attachment 3** provides the latest timeline for this reorganization effort.

Fire Memorandum of Understanding (Potential Fire Study)

Since November 2024, LAFCO staff has actively participated in a stakeholder group with representatives from the City of Santa Cruz, Central Fire District, and Scotts Valley Fire Protection District. Early discussions produced consensus on engaging an independent consultant to assess the benefits and limitations of potential shared services arrangements (including but not limited to reorganizations or consolidations) through the development of a comprehensive feasibility study. While the fire agencies decided not to move forward with hiring an outside consultant to conduct a feasibility study, LAFCO has had an opportunity to take a proactive role in continuing to guide this process, fostering continued collaboration among all parties, and ensuring that governance options are thoroughly evaluated as part of the upcoming 2026 Countywide Fire Report.

<u>Status Update:</u> The Commission authorized staff to work with the affected agencies to consider retaining an outside consultant to evaluate service efficiencies and governance options. This action creates a structured opportunity for the agencies and their boards to jointly consider long-term service models and ensure that any future review of governance alternatives is grounded in shared priorities and collaborative input. Staff is tentatively scheduled to meet with the agencies in August 2026.

Felton Fire Protection District Governance Options Analysis

In July 2025, LAFCO published a comprehensive governance review outlining twelve potential organizational options for Felton FPD and its community to evaluate. After considering those alternatives, the District's Board determined in November 2025 that pursuing a new benefit assessment represented the most viable path for securing additional revenue while maintaining its status as an independent fire district. To advance that direction, Felton FPD conducted a mailed-ballot benefit assessment proceeding throughout June and July 2026, with the final tabulation completed during a special Board meeting on July 24, 2026.

Status Update: The proposed benefit assessment passed through strong community participation, with 1,181 ballots submitted representing $924,082.26 in assessed value and 67.88% of the weighted votes in support. LAFCO extends its appreciation to the Felton FPD Board and staff for their proactive leadership throughout the assessment process, and also thanks the Felton Community for Emergency Response (FCER) resident group for its sustained engagement and outreach, which contributed meaningfully to the measure's successful passage.

Table A: Overview of Fire Projects

Project	Affected Agencies	Description	Timeline / Deadline
CSA 48 Reorganization	County (CSA 48) and CalFIRE	**Status: Ongoing** The affected agencies and LAFCO are exploring the concept of transitioning CSA 48 into an independent special district.	Group effort started in August 2024; Draft RFP will be considered by the commission in Oct. 2026
Pajaro Valley FPD Reorganization	County (CSA 48), CalFIRE, and Pajaro Valley FPD	**Status: Ongoing** LAFCO is processing an application submitted by PVFPD that would dissolve the district and concurrently annex the area into CSA 48. A dedicated webpage regarding the project is now available on LAFCO's website: https://santacruzlafco.org/pvfpd_reorg/	Application received on May 2, 2025; Two community workshops held in May 2026 Commission may consider the reorganization by late-2026
Fire Memorandum of Understanding	City of Santa Cruz, Central Fire District, and Scotts Valley FPD	**Status: Pending** The affected agencies and LAFCO initially considered hiring a consultant to produce a study; however, those discussions were stalled at the board level. LAFCO is currently coordinating with the affected agencies once again to determine if conducting a special study (led by LAFCO) would be supported by the respective boards.	Group effort started in July 2023; LAFCO staff will coordinate with the affected agencies to determine if a special study is supported.
Felton FPD Governance Options	Felton Fire Protection District	**Status: Complete** Felton FPD conducted a successful mailed-in election with approximately 68% support from the community. FFPD is tentatively scheduled to announce the selection of a new full-time fire chief in late-July or early-August 2026.	LAFCO received and filed the governance options report in September 2025; LAFCO analyzed Felton FPD's recent improvements and actions as part of the 2026 Countywide Fire Report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Attachments:
1. PVFPD Plan for Service Document (Updated Version)
2. Email Correspondence (PVFPD Reorganization)
3. PVFPD Reorganization Timeline (Updated Version)

DISTRICT PLAN FOR SERVICES

Prepared for

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY,

Proposed

PAJARO VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT REORGANIZATION (LAFCO PROJECT NO. RO 25-08)

A proposed reorganization involving PAJARO VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (DISTRICT) and COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ (COUNTY) has been initiated by the DISTRICT'S Board of Directors. Following the conclusion of the LAFCO process, the DISTRICT will be dissolved and the DISTRICT'S area will be concurrently annexed into the COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ.

AUGUST 5, 2026

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PLAN FOR SERVICE

Government Code Section 56653 requires that a Plan for Service in narrative form must be submitted with the application for a reorganization. This plan must respond to each of the following questions and be signed and certified by an official of the affected agency(ies):

1) A description of the level and range of each service currently provided to the affected territory;

2) A description of the level and range of each service proposed to be provided to the affected territory;

3) An indication of when the service can be feasibly extended to the affected territory;

4) An identification of any improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, water or sewer facilities, other infrastructure, or other conditions the affected agency would impose upon the affected territory; and

5) The estimated cost of extending the service and a description of how service or required improvements will be financed. A discussion of sufficiency of revenues for anticipated service extensions is also required.

BACKGROUND

Countywide Fire Protection Service & Sphere Review
LAFCO periodically performs municipal service reviews and sphere of influence updates for each agency subject to LAFCO's boundary regulations. On August 7th of 2024, LAFCO reviewed a countywide Fire service special study. During the August 7th of 2024 LAFCO meeting, the Commission discussed outside and other factors to consider. This included the DISTRICT dissolving and becoming a part of County Service Area #48 (CSA #48).

LAFCO Findings & Recommendations
LAFCO staff identified the reorganization of CSA #48 as an independent fire district. This would establish a new public entity capable of assuming fire service responsibilities from any struggling district. For example, the DISTRICT recently adopted a budget that reduced its level of service due to insufficient funding. Furthermore, the DISTRICT is on a path that will lead to insolvency in less than 18 months from now. The DISTRICT Board of Directors considered various governance options and determined that dissolution and concurrent annexation into CSA #48 may be their best/only solution. Based on the issues currently facing CSA #48, it is unknown if the County would be willing and capable of assuming fire protection services for a large area in south county.

Previous & Current Collaboration
In 1994 the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection Agency voted unanimously to begin formally merging the Freedom and Salsipuedes Fire Districts. LAFCO recommended the merged district to contract with the California Department of Forestry (CDF), aiming to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Alternatives included dissolving the district and transferring control to the county, which already contracted with CDF (refer to **Exhibit A**).

Conclusion
A reorganization is considered when there is a more efficient way to provide services to a specific area. In this case, the DISTRICT, the COUNTY and LAFCO have determined that a reorganization would improve the level of service and overall governance within the DISTRICT community. A full analysis must be completed and presented to the residents to clearly indicate the benefits of a reorganization. In order to provide such transparency, the two agencies and LAFCO will coordinate throughout the entire reorganization process. This collaborative effort will help produce cohesive findings about the reorganization involving the DISTRICT and the COUNTY.

CURRENT LEVEL AND RANGE OF SERVICE

Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District
The DISTRICT was formed in 1994 and operates under the Fire Protection District Law of 1987. The DISTRICT encompasses nearly 52 square miles of territory located in the southern portion of Santa Cruz County. The lands within the DISTRICT vary between agriculture, urban and rural residential. The DISTRICT includes both Local Responsibility Area and State Responsibility Area. The DISTRICT currently has a Class 3/5 rating with the Insurance Service Office (ISO).

Services & Operations
The DISTRICT currently operates with 8.5 full-time permanent employees. The current staffing model provides for a minimum of two firefighters and a Battalion Chief on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Type of Services
The DISTRICT is an all-hazards fire district. Some examples of the services provided by the DISTIRCT include Basic Life Support, Basic Rescue, Community Education, Construction Plan Check, Fire Code Enforcement, Fire Investigation, Fire Suppression, Haz Mat Response, and Public Awareness.

Apparatus
The DISTRICT operates two (2) Type 1 Fire Engines, one (1) Water Tender, one (1) Utility vehicle and one (1) Battalion Chief Command vehicle.

Existing Fire Station
The DISTRICT currently operates one fire station, built in 2005. It is located at 562 Casserly Rd., Watsonville, California.

Call Data

The DISTRICT responds to approximately 1,200 calls annually. The DISTRICTS average response time is approximately 7 minutes.

Board of Directors

The DISTRICT is an independent special district governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected by the voters within the DISTRICT. The current board members are:

- Dave Martone – Elected in 2008
- Robert Erbe – Elected in 2018
- John Sampson – Elected in 2022
- Ashley Moules – Elected in 2024
- Jake Dellamonica – Elected in 2025

County of Santa Cruz (CSA #48)

CSA #48 was formed in 1948 and operates under the County of Santa Cruz. CSA #48 encompasses nearly 250 square miles throughout the unincorporated area of Santa Cruz County. The lands within CSA #48 vary between agriculture, urban and rural residential. CSA #48 includes Local Responsibility Area, State Responsibility Area and Federal Responsibility Area. CSA #48 currently has a Class 4/8B rating with the Insurance Service Office (ISO).

Services & Operations

CSA #48 currently operates with 13 full-time permanent employees and 58 volunteer Firefighters. During base fire season, CSA #48 contracts with CAL FIRE under the Amador Plan to staff 5 fire engines staffed with three (3) firefighters on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Type of Services

CSA #48 is an all-hazards fire department. Some examples of the services provided by the DISTIRCT include Basic Life Support, Basic Rescue, Community Education, Construction Plan Check, Fire Code Enforcement, Fire Investigation, Fire Suppression, Haz Mat Response, Public Awareness, and Vegetation Management.

Apparatus

CSA #48 operates apparatus as listed below:

- Admin/Battalion = 6 in total
- Type 1 Fire Engine = 5 in total
- Type 3 Fire Engine = 5 in total
- Rescue Vehicle = 4 in total
- Utility Vehicle = 3 in total
- Water Tender = 5 in total

Existing Fire Stations
CSA #48 currently operates 6 fire stations. Station 29 was built in 1986 and is located at 18269 Las Cumbres Rd., Los Gatos, CA. Station 32 was built in 1972 and is located at 975 Martin Rd., Santa Cruz, CA. Station 34 was built in 2004, and is located at 7276 Empire Grade Rd., Santa Cruz, CA. Station 36 was built in 1999 and is located at 17445 Old Summit Rd., Los Gatos, CA. Station 37 was built in the 1980's and is located at 76 Marine View Ave., Davenport, CA. Station 49 was built in the 1970's and is located at 120 Eureka Canyon Rd., Watsonville, CA.

Call Data
The COUNTY responds to approximately 2,300 calls annually. The COUNTY's average response times vary significantly based on incident location.

Board of Directors
The COUNTY is governed by the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors. The following identifies the current Supervisors:

- Manu Koenig – First District, elected in 2020
- Kimberly De Serpa – Second District, elected in 2024
- Justin Cummings – Third District, elected in 2022
- Felipe Hernandez – Fourth District, elected in 2024
- Monica Martinez – Fifth District, elected in 2024

PROPOSED LEVEL AND RANGE OF SERVICE

Management & Governance
In 2025, the DISTRICT Board considered various options through a strategic plan (**Exhibit B**) and ultimately decided to move forward with a reorganization effort. The DISTRICT Board unanimously adopted an initiating resolution in May 2025 (**Exhibit C**). This reorganization will include all the territory within the boundaries of the DISTRICT and all the territory within the boundaries of CSA #48. The DISTRICT will be governed by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. **Exhibit D** provides an overview of the proposed project timeline. It is important to note that the identified dates are subject to change.

The DISTRICT Oversight and Representation
Following reorganization, the DISTRICT dissolved area will continue to be managed by the COUNTY Fire Chief, their staff and officers. This includes, but is not limited to, Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, Information Technology, Fire Prevention, Plan Checking, Fleet Management, Facility Management, Public Education and Community Outreach, and any other service currently provided or authorized in the future.

Operations
Following reorganization, the COUNTY will be responsible for providing service to the DISTRICT. The COUNTY will deploy emergency response assets from the existing DISTRICT fire station, located at 562 Casserly Rd., Watsonville, CA. In addition, the COUNTY will modify the DISTRICT'S current Automatic Aid agreements to ensure the response of the closest appropriate resource to any emergency incident occurring in the DISTRICT.

In order to mitigate the impacts of serving 52 square miles of additional territory, the COUNTY plans to add an additional firefighter to each of the three shifts. The increased staffing will allow more flexibility for the rapid deployment of adequate resources to mitigate all incidents within the COUNTY. The COUNTY will utilize the current apparatus of the DISTRICT to provide service to the Pajaro Valley Community.

Transfer of Assets / Liabilities
All assets and liabilities of the DISTRICT shall become assets and liabilities of the COUNTY at the time the reorganization is deemed complete.

Transfer of Personnel
The current DISTRICT employees under CAL FIRE Contract will become COUNTY employees under CAL FIRE Contract, which is a legacy agreement.

Cost of Services

Current Revenue Stream
Recurring revenue for the DISTRICT for FY 24/25 consists of an estimated $2,483,567 in Property Tax and other revenue. This amount is insufficient to fund the appropriate number of firefighters on duty daily (minimum of 3), operational expenses, and future expenditures (i.e. apparatus replacement, facility maintenance).

General Fund revenue for the COUNTY is approximately $6,179,024 for FY 24/25, and is derived primarily from benefit assessments.

The reorganized COUNTY would have an estimated recurring revenue as follows:

- COUNTY Fund- $8,662,591
- Estimated additional revenue - $2,384,000 (Fire Flow and 2020 Benefit Assessment overlay)
- Total $11,045,591

Staff has determined that the total recurring revenue is sufficient to fund the operational plan detailed above.

Additional Factors to Address

Pajaro Valley FPD
Currently, the DISTRICT is understaffed and underfunded, which results in noncompliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

State Standards (OSHA)
The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was established in 1970 to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for workers by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance. OSHA is part of the United States Department of Labor. In the late-1990s, OSHA established the Respiratory Protection Standard. This provision requires that at least two employees enter the Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) atmosphere and remain in visual or voice contact with each other at all times. It also requires that at least two employees be located outside the IDLH atmosphere, thus the term, "two in/two out". This assures that the "two in" can monitor each other and assist with equipment failure or entrapment or other hazards, and the "two out" can monitor those in the building, initiate rescue, or call for back-up. One of the "two out" can be assigned another role such as incident commander.

National Standards (NFPA)
One of the most well-known and respected standards organizations is the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Since 1896, NFPA has developed standards directly affecting the fire service at the department level. As an advocate of fire prevention and an authoritative source on public safety, NFPA develops, publishes, and disseminates more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. Their vision is to advocate for the elimination of death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. Their mission is to help save lives and reduce loss with information, knowledge and passion.

The NFPA has developed standards specifically for volunteer departments known as the NFPA 1720 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments. NFPA believes that volunteer departments must maximize resources and be able to evaluate and improve firefighter safety and service to meet the modern challenges of local firefighting operations. The 1720 Standards offer a framework for defining levels of service, deployment capabilities, and staffing requirements for volunteer and combination fire departments. At present, NFPA recommends a minimum of four firefighters.

CalPERS Actuarial Report
The California Public Employees' Retirement System ("CalPERS") developed the Annual Valuation report for the Safety Plan of the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection Agency. The analysis was completed in July 2024 (refer to **Exhibit E**). As of June 30, 2024 the DISTRICT has an Unfunded Liability Balance of $547,998.

FINANCIAL SYNOPSIS OF PAJARO VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

	Adopted Budget FY 24/25	Funds Received/Used	Remaining Balance	Unanticipated Rev / Exp	Year-End Balance
Operating Budget					
FY 23/24 Fund Balance	$332,818	$332,818	$0	$0	$0
Total Revenue	$2,483,567	$2,593,328.21	$0	$109,761.21	$109,761.21
Total Available Funds	**$2,816,385**				
Salaries & Benefits	$120,900	-$120,166.68	$733.32	0	$733.32
CAL FIRE Contract	$2,043,936	-$1,633,041.59	$380,894.41	$140,354.70	$521,249.11
Services / Supplies	$451,911	-$329,041.62	$123,872.38	$0	$123,872.38
Contingencies	$100,000	$0	$100,000	$0	$100,000
Trans. to Capital Outlay	$99,638	-$99,638	$0	$0	$0
Total	**$2,816,385**				**$855,616.02**
Capital Outlay					
FY 23/24 Fund Balance	$514,598	$514,598	$0	$0	$0
Trans. From Operating Budget	$99,635	$99,635	$0	$0	$0
Interest	$8,000	$51,898.68	$51,898.68	$43,898.68	$51,898.68
Total Available Funds	**$622,233**				
Building & Improvements	$100,000	$0	$100,000	$0	$100,000
Mobile Equipment	$522,233	$0	$522,233	$0	$522,233
Total	**$622,233**				**$666,131.68**

Operating Budget

The main revenue sources for the Operating Budget include property tax, fire protection tax, and carryover from the prior fiscal year, along with some small incidental revenue sources. It is used to pay for services, supplies and salaries that are budgeted.

Capital Outlay

The main sources of money that fund the Capital Outlay budget include carryover of unallocated funds from the Operating Budget and interest from funds in the Capital Outlay Budget. The Capital Outlay budget is funds allocated for fire station repairs or improvements, acquisition of new fire apparatus, emergency response equipment, personal protective equipment, and any unfunded emergencies.

Additional Fiscal Analysis

PVFPD, in coordination with LAFCO, the COUNTY, and CAL FIRE, developed a five-year projection analysis in February 2026 to illustrate the fiscal impact to CSA 48 should the reorganization come to fruition (refer to **Exhibit F**). The fiscal analysis was revised in May 2026 to better reflect the estimated expenses.

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A – "Fire agency votes for permanent merger" newspaper article

Exhibit B – Pajaro Valley FPD Strategic Plan

Exhibit C – Pajaro Valley FPD Initiating Resolution

Exhibit D – Tentative Reorganization Timeline

Exhibit E – CalPERS Cost Analysis

Exhibit F – Five Year Fiscal Analysis (as of May 26, 2026)

From:	WordPress
To:	Joe Serrano
Subject:	Santa Cruz LAFCO "Correspondence re: Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Reorganization and Independent Consultant"
Date:	Sunday, June 14, 2026 2:02:36 PM

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

From: Becky Steinbruner <ki6tkb@yahoo.com>
Subject: Correspondence re: Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Reorganization and Independent Consultant

Message Body:
Dear Commissioners,
Thank you for your recommendation made at your June 3, 2026 meeting that LAFCO pursue an independent consultant to analyze the Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District reorganization as a condition of approval of the Draft 2026 Countywide Fire District Sphere and Service Review. As you remember, this recommendation was requested by Mr. Don Jarvis, in his expert opinion testimony during public comment on the Report. Mr. Jarvis has served as an expert in past fire district reorganization efforts led by LAFCO, and was responsible for seeing the Aptos/ La Selva Fire District and Central Fire District consolidation across the finish line, as an Interim Chief of Aptos/ La Selva Fire District.

Subsequently, I attended the June 10, 2026 Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Board meeting wherein District staff merely reported that LAFCO had approved the Countywide Service and Sphere Review. I then testified regarding the Commission's recommendation to seek an independent consultant to analyze the current trajectory of LAFCO's and the District's reorganization actions.

I was very shocked to hear Chair Martone only then declare that he and Vice-Chair Dellamonica had rejected LAFCO's recommendation to hire an independent consultant to review the merger of the District with Santa Cruz County Fire Department. There was no discussion.

This decision was made in a vacuum, without any public discussion or approval of the PVFPD Board.

It is evident that, for whatever reason, some on the Board members are intent upon dissolving the District, despite clear and strong resistance voiced by several residents at the May 23 and May 26 Town Hall meetings to discuss the merger with Santa Cruz County Fire Dept.. https://www.pajarovalleyfire.com/

Mr. Jarvis's careful analysis has shown that the draft Santa Cruz County Fire Dept. assessments for PVFPD assessment post-annexation would cost significantly more for the same 3-0 level of staffing that a simple parcel tax increase would cost, should the District remain an independent fire district. As Mr. Jarvis pointed out to the public at the May 23, 2026 Public Meeting, a Prop. 218 assessment vehicle is not the proper tool for increasing PVFPD revenues to fund 3-0 staffing, and the District should pause the dissolution and consider a simple parcel tax increase.

This is what your Commission's June 3 recommendation to staff would have done, but it met with curious resistance from LAFCO staff, who reported that no action on the recommendation could be taken without prior approval of the PVFPD. I find this incongruent with the duties of LAFCO staff, and the fact that your Commission has already approved funding / waiving fees related to this reorganization effort, contingent upon the reorganization's completion.

The District's 2026-2027 Budget identifies $1,436,907 rolling revenue

surplus that could be applied to the increased staffing now. (page 88 of June 10 agenda packet:
https://www.pajarovalleyfire.com/wp-content/uploads/PV-Board-Meeting-Packet-6-10-26_Amended.pdf)
A simple parcel tax increase would require 2/3 voter approval, but would be the most transparent, equitable and most cost-effective level of service to the residents within PVFPD. In my opinion, a 2/3 voter approval is possible to achieve.

Therefore, please continue public discussion of this issue at the August LAFCO meeting, and insist that LAFCO staff move forward with an independent consultant analysis (NOT done "in-house") to determine whether or not the current course of action being decided in a vacuum is the best for the residents of PVFPD.

Please respond.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Becky Steinbruner

--
This e-mail was sent from a contact form on Santa Cruz LAFCO (https://santacruzlafco.org)

From:	Randy Craven
To:	LAFCO Info
Cc:	Randy Craven
Subject:	Pajaro Valley Fire District Reorganization
Date:	Tuesday, July 14, 2026 7:12:14 PM

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

Dear LAFCO,

I believe that one of the critical roles that LAFCO plays is ensuring that the people affected by these types of reorganization projects are not adversely impacted. To fulfill that role, LAFCO staff and Commissioners must remain impartial, objective, and unbiased. Given that LAFCO staff assumed the lead role in the PVFD reorganization from the very beginning, it appears that they are an advocate of one particular approach to the exclusion of all others.

At the May 23, 2026 PVFD Town Hall meeting, Officials acknowledged that for the identified service level, the reorganization of the PVFD into CSA 48 will cost $500,000 more than the PVFD remaining an independent fire district. To my knowledge, this is the first time this has been made public and has not been independently reviewed nor adequately justified.

Based on information in LAFCO's May 20, 2026 Financial Projections report, it is proposed that both of the existing CSA 48 Benefit Assessments be applied to the PVFD parcels at the current maximum rate, generating over $1.8 million in new revenue from charges placed on property owner's tax bills *without a vote*. I am very concerned that this authority is being exercised without due regard for the provisions of Proposition 218. The risk of implementing this methodology incorrectly is that property owners within the reorganization area may be deprived of the protections afforded them under Article XIII D of the California Constitution.

I find it very concerning that the proposed Resolution (No. 2026-11) for the Countywide Fire Protection Service and Sphere Review includes direction to staff to hire an outside consultant to produce a feasibility study exploring the reorganization of CSA 48 into an independent fire district. However, there is no such recommendation for a feasibility study exploring the reorganization of the Pajaro Valley Fire District. The CSA 48 reorganization is likely to have no financial implications to the CSA 48 constituents but on the other hand, the Pajaro Valley Fire District reorganization proposed would add $1.8 million dollars in new assessments to property in the PVFD.

I'm respectfully asking that the Commission engage the services of a qualified outside consulting firm to produce a feasibility study to address and evaluate, at a minimum, the increased costs of providing services to the PVFD reorganization area and whether the costs are commensurate with the services desired by the community; and to ensure that the process of extending the CSA 48 Benefit Assessments to the reorganization area adheres strictly to all applicable provisions of Article XIII D of the California Constitution.

Sincerely,

Randy Craven

From:	Don Jarvis
To:	LAFCO Info
Subject:	Comments on the Pajaro Valley Fire District Reorganization
Date:	Monday, July 27, 2026 12:03:07 PM

Dear LAFCO Commissioners,

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify my position on the Pajaro Valley reorganization project. As a resident and property owner in the PVFPD I will be directly impacted by the proposed changes and I want the Commission to have an accurate understanding of what my concerns are.

My request to the Commission at your June 3 meeting was very succinct. I requested that the Commission undertake an objective, third-party analysis of the PVFPD reorganization project, with particular emphasis on the overall cost of the proposed services and compliance to relevant provisions of Proposition 218. As I stated, the project proposes to levy more than $1.8 million in new assessments on property owners, and the total projected costs of $4.4 million are about $500,000 higher than the costs of the PVFPD remaining an independent fire district operating with a CAL FIRE contract.

LAFCO Policy 3.7 states the following:

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. (emphasis added)

The amount of the proposed assessment has ballooned from about $1 million in 2024 to today's $1.8 million. In the context of a rural fire district, $1.8 million is an enormous amount of money. Combined with existing revenue sources, the total revenue generated from PVFPD territory is projected at about $4.4 million, far in excess of the reasonable cost for CAL FIRE to operate one fire station at the Basic Life Support level.

The proponents (including LAFCO staff) have not demonstrated that the subject services are being provided at a reasonable cost. In fact, there has been no independent analysis of the costs (or any other measurable criteria) of the project. The proposed assessments against the properties in the PVFD were arbitrarily set at the maximum level by staff, without any public input and without the express consent of any elected governing body.

This leads to my concerns about compliance to Proposition 218. Based on first-hand conversations and the evolution of staff's financial projections, it is clear that the basis for the projections began with the maximum amount of potential revenue, then the calculations were reverse-engineered to try to justify the taking. This methodology is a clear violation of Proposition 218. There are many other direct and indirect deviations that potentially deprive ratepayers of their protections under Article XIII-D of the California Constitution. Even a casual reading of Proposition 218 would draw one to conclude that the law does not allow a government agency to assess property owners for services that they don't directly benefit from.

It seems as though the PVFPD is viewed as a cash-cow or profit-center for funding CSA 48.

My final area of concern involves the role that LAFCO plays in projects such as this. LAFCOs have traditionally remained neutral and objective arbiters of proposed changes in local government boundaries that could be counted on to render unbiased and factual analysis, and ultimately, judgement. People affected by proposed changes could trust that LAFCO would ensure that they were not adversely impacted by the change. In contrast to this traditional approach, LAFCO staff have taken an activist role in this process, ceaselessly advocating for a "highest possible revenue" funding model.

To ensure that ratepayers are not saddled with unsubstantiated charges, a project of this magnitude absolutely deserves objective independent study. LAFCO Policy 3.7 insists that such a study be completed before allowing property owners to be subjected to this level of new assessments, especially since it is under the authority of LAFCO that such assessments would be imposed. Questions about the amount of revenue, the level of expenses, and compliance to the law should be approached with an abundance of caution and backed by verifiable data.

The PVFPD reorganization is being passed off as inevitable and trivial. It may well be inevitable, but it is far from trivial. The PVFPD reorganization is by far the most significant project LAFCO has considered since your current Executive Officer assumed the role. Despite the financial implications to property owners, important policy questions (such as shifting the financial burden from commercial interests to residences) are brushed aside, and the PVFPD Board is along for the ride, refusing to engage with their constituents in any meaningful way.

My June 3 comments to the Commission have been reinterpreted by various parties, so please allow me to clarify. I am asking for one thing and one thing only: an impartial, unbiased, thorough, and comprehensive study of the Pajaro Valley Fire District reorganization project by a qualified, independent, third-party consultant that will provide the community and your Commission with a complete and accurate analysis of all relevant information so that together we can make data-driven decisions that work for all of us.

I am not opposed to the reorganization of the PVFPD. I am however opposed to being taken advantage of, so I must insist that if we are going to engage in such a process, we do it correctly, with complete, impartial, and thorough analysis of all relevant data.

Sincerely,
Don Jarvis

"Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Reorganization" (LAFCO Process - Proposed Schedule) (*For Discussion Purposes Only - Dates Subject to Change*)			
Action	**Responsible Agency**	**Target Date**	**Description**
Pre-LAFCO Process			
Discussion about application requirements	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	February - April 2025	Discuss the LAFCO process, proposal area, and application requirements to transfer service responsibilities from Pajaro Valley FPD to CSA 48.
Conduct Community Workshop	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	April 15, 2025	While not mandatory, it may be beneficial to educate the community about the existing issues and the benefits from the reorganization. This was the first of a series of meetings/workshops that will help alleviate any misconceptions/questions from residents.
During LAFCO Process			
Submittal of Application to LAFCO	PVFPD	May 2025	A completed application must also include the following: 1) Initiating Document (adopted resolution); 2) Plan for Service/Feasibility Study; 3) Environmental Questionaire (CEQA requirement); 4) Map & Legal Description (SBE requirement); 5) Signed Indemnification Agreement; 6) LAFCO Filing Fee (Initial Deposit; based on acreage); 7) Letters/Resolutions of support from CSA 48; and 8) Any additional information requested by LAFCO (TBD)
Review and Notification of Application	LAFCO	May 2025	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO will identify any missing items to the applicant within 30 days. Concurrently, LAFCO will solicit comments from affected and interested agencies/parties.
Discuss Next Steps in LAFCO Process	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	December 2026 - January 2026	Discuss the next steps in the LAFCO process, including but not limited to, the upcoming educational workshops, outstanding application items, etc.
Provide Supplemental Documents	LAFCO	February 4, 2026	Provide commission and public a 5-Year Financial Projection Analysis and Proposed Benefit Assessment Parcel Cost Breakdown for informational purposes only
Host Educational Workshop (In-Person Setting)	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	May 23, 2026	PVFPD will host an in-person educational study session to inform the community about the reorganization effort, discuss the proposed benefit assessment process, and answer any questions by the residents (1 of 4 workshops).
Host Educational Workshop (Virtual Setting)	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	May 26, 2026	PVFPD will host a virtual educational study session to inform the community about the reorganization effort, discuss the proposed benefit assessment process, and answer any questions by the residents (2 of 4 workshops).
Adoption of a Property Tax Ex. Agreement & Will-Serve Letter	County and PVFPD	August 11, 2026	The County will need to determine the transfer of ad valorem property tax revenues to fulfill the requirements of Section 99 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.A Will-Serve Letter will indicate that the County, under CSA 48, is willing and capable of providing services.
Discuss Next Steps in LAFCO Process	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	August 2026	Address any pending items. These items must be resolved before LAFCO staff can deem this project complete and ready for Commission consideration.
CALPERS Actuarial Report	CALPERS	Aug-Sept 2026	CalPERS will provide an actuarial report indicating how PVFPD's pension obligations will be addressed following the reorganization.
Host Educational Workshop (In-Person Setting)	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	Lat-August 2026	PVFPD will host an in-person educational study session to inform the community about the reorganization effort, discuss the proposed benefit assessment process, and answer any questions by the residents (3 of 4 workshops).
Host Educational Workshop (Virtual Setting)	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	September 2026	PVFPD will host a virtual educational study session to inform the community about the reorganization effort, discuss the proposed benefit assessment process, and answer any questions by the residents (4 of 4 workshops).
Complete Certificate of Filing	LAFCO	October 2026	Pursuant to State law, LAFCO's Executive Officer will deem the project complete when a Certifcate of Filing is signed. All required documents and actions need to be accomplished before this step is taken.
Advertise LAFCO Hearing in Newspaper(s)	LAFCO	October 2026	Pursuant to State law, LAFCO will advertise the consideration of the proposed reorganization in a newspaper(s) at least 21-days prior to the hearing date (GCS 56157[h] - 1/8 page in newspaper).
Conduct LAFCO Hearing (Consider Proposal)	LAFCO	November 4, 2026	The Commission will consider the proposed change of organization in a public forum. Affected/interested agencies and members of the public will have an opportunity to address the Commission on this matter.
Record Environmental Document	LAFCO	November 5, 2026	The affected parties and LAFCO must determine which environmental document will be needed to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). LAFCO may act as the Lead Agency.
Conduct 30-day Request for Reconsideration Period	LAFCO	Nov. 5 to Dec. 4, 2026	Pursuant to state law, the request for reconsideration period is 30 days. <u>Reconsideration:</u> If the reorganization is approved, any person or affected agency may file a written request with the executive officer requesting amendments to or reconsideration of the adopted resolution. The request shall state the specific modification to the resolution being requested and shall state what new or different facts that could not have been presented previously are claimed to warrant the reconsideration.
Advertise LAFCO Protest Hearing in Newspaper(s)	LAFCO	November 30, 2026	Pursuant to State law, LAFCO will advertise the protest proceedings for the reorganization in a newspaper(s) at least 21-days prior to the hearing date (GCS 56157[h] - 1/8 page in newspaper)
Conduct Protest Proceedings	LAFCO	Dec. 7, 2026 to Jan. 22, 2027 (47 days)	Pursuant to state law, the date of the protest hearing shall not be less than 21 days or more than 60 days after the date the notice is given. This is an opportunity for affected residents/landowners to submit protest petitions against the Commission's action (i.e. approval of the reorganization). If less than 25% oppose, then Commission action holds It 25%-50% oppose, then election is required If more than 50% oppose, then Commission action is terminated
Conduct Protest Hearing (Collect Final Petitions)	LAFCO	Jan. 15, 2027	A protest hearing will be held to receive any final protest petitions from affected residents/landowners.
Conduct LAFCO Hearing (Adopt Protest Results)	LAFCO	February 3, 2027	Pursuant to state law, LAFCO will adopt a resolution acknowledging the results of the protest proceedings.
Completion of all Terms & Conditions	County, CalFIRE, PVFPD, and LAFCO	February - March 2027	The adopted resolution from the LAFCO Meeting will list a number of terms and conditions. The affected parties will be responsible to fulfill such conditions prior to recordation, including but not limited to legislative assistance, bond measures, etc.
Recordation of Proposal	LAFCO	February - March 2027	<u>LAFCO:</u> Recordation of the approved proposal with the County and the State Board of Equalization (SBE). <u>PVFPD / County:</u> The effective date of the reoreganization may be the day of recordation or a specified date. The affected parties may specify the effective date as a potential condition in the LAFCO resolution.
Post-LAFCO Process			
Certificate of Completion Distribution	LAFCO	March 2027	LAFCO will send a copy of the Certificate of Completion, which includes the adopted resolution, to all affected/interested parties.
State Board of Equalization Tax Roll Update	SBE	March 2027	Reorganization will be reflected in new tax roll

Agenda
Item
No. 7b

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: August 5, 2026
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Joe Serrano, Executive Officer
Subject: CALAFCO Update

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

Santa Cruz LAFCO is a member of the California Association of LAFCOs (CALAFCO). The annual conference hosted by CALAFCO will be held in Sacramento from October 21 to October 23, 2026. This report also provides an update on CALAFCO's upcoming elections, proposed award nominations, and other CALAFCO activities.

It is recommended that the Commission take the following actions:

1. Designate a Voting Delegate and Alternate for the upcoming election;
2. Approve the nomination of Joe Serrano as a candidate for the Coastal Region seat on the CALAFCO Board of Directors; and
3. Approve the proposed nomination for CALAFCO's President's Award and the Government, Community, or Public Partner Award.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT:

While CALAFCO continues to address some organizational challenges, including the recent departure of Fresno LAFCO, the organization continues to make meaningful strides toward stability and renewed effectiveness. Notable improvements include the successful rejuvenation of the CALAFCO U webinar series, the formation of a new committee to review the organization's dues structure, the transition from interim to regular executive director for Michelle McIntyre, and the recent return of Sonoma and Los Angeles LAFCOs as members. In other words, CALAFCO is making improvements and adding more value to the membership. These actions demonstrate CALAFCO's commitment to supporting LAFCOs across the state, including the Coastal Region, and strengthening its own operational foundation. This report summarizes all the recent and upcoming CALAFCO activities.

Annual Conference

CALAFCO has announced the dates for the 2026 CALAFCO Annual Conference (**Attachment 1**). The annual business meeting and conference will be held from October 21st to October 23rd in Sacramento (Central Region). The CALAFCO conferences offer significant educational value for both new and seasoned Commissioners and staff. The Commission has budgeted a fixed amount to permit two Commissioners and two staff members to attend the annual conference. Commissioners are encouraged to inform staff if they are interested in attending this year's conference.

Regional Caucus and Business Meeting
CALAFCO board members have been elected by region since 2010. This year the Board of Directors will be entirely reformed under updated bylaws that now require appointments based on experience and interest rather than designated seats (i.e. City Member, County Member, Public Member, and District Member). Under the new bylaws, each region will have four seats. Executive Officers are also newly eligible to seek election within their respective regions. As a reminder, your Executive Officer was appointed as a voting member earlier this year following CALAFCO's policy and bylaw revisions intended to address broader membership concerns and requests. **Attachment 2** provides the nomination form, a regional map of CALAFCO, and additional information regarding the election process. Your Executive Officer has expressed interest in running for a seat and to continue representing the Coastal Region. The Commission is recommended to nominate Joe Serrano as an eligible candidate.

In preparation for the election process at the annual conference, each LAFCO designates a single representative to cast its votes. Santa Cruz LAFCO's designee traditionally consults with the other Commissioners and staff attending the event in an attempt to establish a consensus position before casting any vote. The designee may also represent Santa Cruz LAFCO during the annual Business Meeting held at the conference. The commission is recommended to designate one voting delegate and one alternate delegate for the upcoming election.

CALAFCO Award Nominations
Each year, CALAFCO presents awards recognizing outstanding achievements by dedicated and committed individuals and/or organizations from throughout the State. **Attachment 3** provides background information on the various award categories. LAFCO staff is recommending two nominations for the newly created *President's Award* and *Government, Community, or Public Partner Award*.

- President's Award: This is a discretionary award that allows CALAFCO to recognize an exceptional effort, contribution, achievement, or individual who does not fit neatly within the existing award categories. This award exists to ensure that truly remarkable accomplishments are not overlooked simply because they fall outside predefined boundaries. The award is discretionary and is not expected to be presented annually.

- Government, Community, or Public Partner Award: This award recognizes a public agency, community association, stakeholder group, nonprofit, or other entity that has worked effectively with a LAFCO and contributed to a successful outcome. This award acknowledges that strong LAFCO work often depends on genuine partnerships beyond the Commission itself.

President's Award Nomination (Placer-Santa Cruz LAFCOs)
The recent shared-services agreement between two LAFCOs (Placer and Santa Cruz) represents exactly the kind of exceptional, boundary-defying achievement the President's Award was created to honor. Under this agreement, Santa Cruz LAFCO delivered a full Executive Officer recruitment in just four months for roughly $10,000 - an outcome made possible because its staff already understood LAFCO operations, statutory mandates, and the unique competencies required of an Executive Officer, unlike outside recruiters unfamiliar with the intricacies of the field. The collaboration saved Placer LAFCO significant time and money, ensured a high-quality candidate pool was recruited, and demonstrated how cross-LAFCO partnerships can strengthen the entire statewide network. This effort stands out as a genuine exception: an innovative, cost-effective, and mission-aligned model of inter-LAFCO cooperation that would not fit neatly within existing

award categories yet clearly merits recognition for its statewide impact. Therefore, staff is recommending that the Commission approve the draft nomination form, as shown in **Attachment 4**.

Government, Community, or Public Partner Award Nomination (Pajaro Valley-Renaissance High Stakeholder Group)

The Pajaro Valley – Renaissance High Stakeholder Group is being nominated because its multi-year, multi-agency collaboration directly enabled a long-needed solution to a serious public health challenge at Renaissance High School. Representatives from the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Renaissance High School, the County of Santa Cruz, the California Division of Drinking Water, Soquel Creek Water District, Santa Cruz LAFCO, and two consulting firms worked together to replace the school's contaminated groundwater wells with a safe, reliable connection to Soquel Creek Water District. Their coordinated efforts (supported by LAFCO's approval of an extraterritorial service agreement back in late-2023) allowed the Pajaro Valley Unified School District to secure a $2.857 million state funding agreement with full principal forgiveness. This partnership required sustained trust, technical expertise, and persistence, ultimately delivering a meaningful public benefit: safe dependable drinking water for an underserved school community. The group's achievement demonstrates how effective external partnerships can advance LAFCO's mission and produce transformative outcomes, making them highly deserving of statewide recognition. Therefore, staff is recommending that the Commission approve the draft nomination form, as shown in **Attachment 5**.

Other CALAFCO Activities

CALAFCO continues to advance several major initiatives this year. The regional map restructuring effort is moving forward, with the working group (which includes your Executive Officer) revising the proposed regional map based on feedback collected at the spring staff workshop and regional meeting. The updated map is scheduled for consideration by the CALAFCO Board in early August. CALAFCO also solicited volunteers for the newly formed dues structure committee in early-July, and your Executive Officer is serving as a committee member in their capacity as a CALAFCO Board representative. The purpose of the committee is to evaluate whether a revised dues model can provide a more equitable, efficient, and financially sustainable approach to assessing member contributions. Lastly, CALAFCO launched its new Mentorship Program earlier this year, with your Executive Officer serving as one of the inaugural mentors and your Analyst participating as a mentee under another Executive Officer in the Central Region. This effort reflects our commission's active commitment to developing emerging LAFCO professionals and strengthening statewide leadership capacity.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Attachments:
1. Annual Conference Announcement
2. Board of Directors Nomination Form
3. Achievement Award Nomination Letter
4. President's Award Nomination
5. Government, Community, or Public Partner Award Nomination

JOIN US FOR THE 2026

CALAFCO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21 – 23, 2026
Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel ♦ 11230 J St., Sacramento

THURSDAY KEYNOTE LUNCHEON

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER
ANGELIQUE ASHBY
CA STATE SENATOR • 8TH DISTRICT

Don't miss this opportunity to hear from California State Senate Majority Leader Angelique Ashby. With experience at both the local and state levels, Senator Ashby will discuss the issues shaping California's future, the priorities emerging from the Capitol, and what they mean for local governments and LAFCOs.

CALIFORNIA'S PREMIER CONFERENCE FOR LAFCO AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS The challenges facing California's communities are evolving, and so is the role of local government. Join colleagues from across the state to exchange ideas, share experiences, and prepare for what's next.

FEATURED SESSIONS

Hear from respected practitioners and subject matter experts on the issues that matter most to LAFCOs and the communities they serve.

AI and Local Government – Artificial intelligence is rapidly entering local government. Discover practical applications, emerging risks, and the governance questions every public agency should be prepared to answer.

Fire Services Under Pressure – Fire protection continues to evolve in communities across California. Examine the trends shaping the future of fire service and how LAFCOs can help communities evaluate options before challenges become crises.

Legislative Update – Hear directly from legislative leaders about the issues shaping local government in Sacramento and what they could mean for LAFCOs and the communities they serve.

Beyond Growth: What's Next for LAFCO? – California's communities are changing. Explore how shifting demographics, aging infrastructure, and evolving service needs are reshaping LAFCO's role in the years ahead.

What Your Reports Are Really Saying – Every report tells a story. Learn how to recognize emerging issues, ask better questions, and turn technical reports into better-informed decisions.

Housing, Agriculture & Infrastructure – When communities face competing priorities, there are rarely easy answers. Hear how LAFCOs and local agencies balance housing needs, agricultural preservation, infrastructure, and long-term community goals.

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

MOBILE WORKSHOP: Beneath the Streets of Old Sacramento: How Flood Protection Shaped a Capital City. Go beneath the streets of historic Old Sacramento to discover the city's hidden history, then explore how reclamation districts, levees, and regional flood management continue to shape land use, development, and community resilience throughout the Sacramento region. This unique behind-the-scenes experience offers a fascinating look at how history, infrastructure, and planning continue to influence California's Capital City.

Space is limited to 50 participants. The tour includes approximately one-half mile of walking over uneven surfaces, stairs, darkly lit areas, tight spaces, and low doorways, and may not be suitable for individuals with mobility limitations.

LAFCO 101 GAME SHOW: Whether you're new to LAFCO or looking for a refresher, test your knowledge in this interactive and entertaining introduction to LAFCO fundamentals.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN! To register, please scan the code or visit **https://qrco.de/bgBkrL**

For hotel reservations, scan the QR code or visit: **https://qrco.de/bguu9A** and receive the discounted event group rate of **$259 per night.** (excludes taxes, fees and parking).

BOOK BEFORE **SEPTEMBER 23, 2026**

CALAFCO, 1451 River Park Drive, Suite 185, Sacramento, CA 95815-4520
Phone: (916) 442-6536 | Email: info@calafco.org | www.calafco.org

California Association of
Local Agency Formation Commissions

CALAFCO

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY GROWTH

DATE: July 1, 2026
TO: CALAFCO Member LAFCOs
FROM: Michelle McIntyre, Interim Executive Director
SUBJECT: 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors Election Now Open

CALAFCO is pleased to announce that the **2026 Board of Directors election is now open**.

This year's election marks the implementation of the updated Board structure approved by the membership in February 2026 and begins the transition to staggered Board terms.

The following changes apply to the 2026 election:

WHAT'S NEW FOR THE 2026 ELECTION

- All Board seats will be open for election.
- Board seat type distinctions have been eliminated.
- Executive Officers are eligible to serve as Board members if elected.
- Candidates must declare whether they are running for a one-year term or a two-year term.
- Candidates may only run for one term category.

ELECTION OVERVIEW

Each region will elect four (4) members to the CALAFCO Board of Directors. To stagger terms, two positions in each region will serve an initial one-year term, and two will serve an initial two-year term.

Regional caucus elections will be held during the 2026 CALAFCO Annual Conference in Sacramento on Thursday, October 22, 2026, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Candidates nominated during the nomination period will appear on the ballot in the order their completed nomination forms are received. Additional nominations may be accepted from the floor during the regional caucus in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.

Voting delegates, absentee ballots, and all election procedures will be conducted in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures. A majority vote is required. If no candidate receives the required majority, runoff elections will be conducted in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.

KEY ELECTION DATES:

- **Nomination Period Opens:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026
- **Nomination Deadline:** No later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026
- **Voting Delegate Names Due:** No later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026
- **Candidate Orientation (virtual):** 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 10, 2026.
- **Electronic/Absentee Ballot Deadline:** No later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 2026.
- **Election Committee Report Released:** Thursday, October 8, 2026
- **Regional Caucus Elections:** Thursday, October 22, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.
- **Annual Business Meeting:** Thursday, October 22, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

2026 ELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee Member	LAFCO	Region	Email	Phone No.
Gary Thompson	Riverside	Southern	gthompson@lafco.org	(951) 369-0631
Shannon Costa	Butte	Northern	scosta@buttecounty.net	(530) 552-5820
José Henríquez	Sacramento	Central	henriquezj@saclafco.org	(916) 874-6458
Neelima Palacherla	Santa Clara	Coastal	neelima.palacherla@ceo.sccgov.org	(408) 993-4705

SUBMITTING NOMINATION MATERIALS:

Please submit completed nomination materials by email to **mmcintyre@calafco.org** or by mail to:

1451 River Park Drive, Suite 185
Sacramento, CA 95815

1. Candidate Nomination Form
2. Candidate Information & Statement Form
3. Election Timeline
4. Guide to the CALAFCO Board of Directors Election Process
5. 2026 CALAFCO Voting Delegate Authorization Form
6. Roles and Responsibilities of a CALAFCO Board Member
7. 2027 Board Meeting Schedule
8. Regional Map and Member LAFCOs by Region

THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS ARE ENCLOSED:

Please distribute this announcement and the accompanying election materials to your Commissioners and Executive Officer.

Thank you for your attention to this important election process and for your continued participation in CALAFCO. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Michelle McIntyre

2026 CALAFCO BOARD OF DIRECTORS CANDIDATE

Nomination Form

[To be completed by both the Member LAFCO making the nomination AND the Nominee]

This form is to be used by CALAFCO Member LAFCOs to nominate candidates for the 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors election.
Candidates should reserve Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the required virtual Candidate Orientation.

NOMINATION DEADLINE:
Completed nomination materials must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026.

1 - Election Information

CALAFCO Region:

☐ Northern Region ☐ Central Region ☐ Coastal Region ☐ Southern Region

Term Category Sought:

☐ One-Year Term ☐ Two-Year Term

Candidates may seek election to only one term category.

2 - Candidate Information

Candidate Name: ______________________________

Title/Position: ______________________________

Member LAFCO: ______________________________

Mailing Address: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Email: ______________________________

3 - Candidate Eligibility and Board Expectations

Candidate Eligibility

☐ I certify that I am eligible to serve on the CALAFCO Board of Directors consistent with the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures.

☐ I certify that I am affiliated with a CALAFCO Member LAFCO.

☐ I certify that I am eligible to seek election within the region identified above.

Board Expectations

- ☐ I understand that Board members are expected to actively participate in Board meetings, committee assignments, CALAFCO conferences, and other Board responsibilities.
- ☐ I understand that candidates are expected to participate in the virtual Candidate Orientation scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
- ☐ I understand that Board members have a responsibility to serve the interests of CALAFCO and the statewide LAFCO community.
- ☐ I understand that newly elected Directors begin their terms on December 1, 2026, consistent with the CALAFCO Bylaws.

4 – Candidate Acceptance

☐ I accept this nomination for the CALAFCO Board of Directors.

Candidate Signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

5 – Member LAFCO Certification

Name: ______________________________

Title: ______________________________

Member LAFCO: ______________________________

Signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

As Chair, I certify that this nomination has the support of our LAFCO. If elected, our LAFCO is committed to supporting the nominee in fulfilling the responsibilities of serving on the CALAFCO Board.

6 – Submission Instructions

Both the Candidate Nomination Form (Attachment 1) and the Candidate Information & Statement Form (Attachment 2) must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026. Pursuant to the CALAFCO Policies and Procedures, nomination materials received after the deadline will be returned marked "Received too late for Election Committee action."

SUBMITTING NOMINATION MATERIALS:

Please submit completed nomination materials by email to mmcintyre@calafco.org or by mail to:
1451 River Park Drive, Suite 185, Sacramento, CA 95815

Questions regarding the nomination or election process are welcome and may be directed to the CALAFCO Executive Director or members of the Election Committee.

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions

CALAFCO

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GROWTH

2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors Candidate Information and Statement Form

[To be submitted with Candidate Nomination Form]

This form is to be completed by candidates seeking election to the 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors. Information provided on this form, including the candidate statement and any submitted photograph, may be included in the election materials distributed to Member LAFCOs and voting delegates.

Candidates should reserve Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. for the required virtual Candidate Orientation.

1. Election Information

CALAFCO Region:

☐ Northern Region ☐ Central Region ☐ Coastal Region ☐ Southern Region

Term Category Sought:

☐ One-Year Term ☐ Two-Year Term

Candidates may seek election to only one term category.

2. Candidate Information

Candidate Name: ____________________

Title/Position: ____________________

Member LAFCO: ____________________

Mailing Address: ____________________

Phone: ____________________ Email: ____________________

3. Professional and LAFCO Background

Please provide a summary of your professional experience, current position, involvement with LAFCOs, and participation in CALAFCO activities-maximum 250 words.

4. Candidate Statement

Please describe why you are seeking election to the CALAFCO Board of Directors and how your experience would contribute to the work of the Board and the statewide LAFCO community—maximum 250 words.

5. Board Expectations

- ☐ I understand that Board members are expected to actively participate in Board meetings, committee assignments, CALAFCO conferences, and other Board responsibilities.
- ☐ I understand that Board members have a responsibility to serve the interests of CALAFCO and the statewide LAFCO community.
- ☐ I understand that Directors elected in 2026 begin their terms on December 1, 2026, consistent with the CALAFCO Bylaws.

6. Photo Submission (Optional)

- ☐ I have attached a photo for use in election materials.

Candidates are encouraged to submit a recent headshot for inclusion in the election materials, if available.

7. Candidate Signature

Signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________________

8. Submission Instructions

Both the Candidate Nomination Form (Attachment 1) and the Candidate Information & Statement Form (Attachment 2) must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026. Pursuant to the CALAFCO Policies and Procedures, nomination materials received after the deadline will be returned marked "Received too late for Election Committee action."

Submitting Nomination Materials:

Please submit completed nomination materials by email to **mmcintyre@calafco.org** or by mail to:
1451 River Park Drive, Suite 185, Sacramento, CA 95815

Questions regarding the nomination or election process are welcome and may be directed to the CALAFCO Executive Director or members of the Election Committee.

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions
CALAFCO
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2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors Election Timeline

The following timeline summarizes the key dates and deadlines for the 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors election process. Unless otherwise noted, all deadlines are final.

Date	Election Milestone
Wednesday, July 1, 2026	**Nomination Period Opens** – Candidate nomination materials become available, and the nomination period begins.
Friday, September 4, 2026 *No later than 5:00 p.m.*	**Nomination Deadline** – Candidate Nomination Form (Attachment 1), Candidate Information and Statement Form (Attachment 2), and the Voting Delegate Authorization Form must be received by CALAFCO no later than 5:00 p.m.
Thursday, September 10, 2026 *At 10:00 a.m.*	**Virtual Candidate Orientation** – Candidates are required to participate in the virtual Candidate Orientation.
Tuesday, September 22, 2026 *No later than 5:00 p.m.*	**Electronic/Absentee Ballot Deadline** – CALAFCO must receive electronic absentee ballots by this deadline.
Thursday, October 8, 2026	**Election Committee Report Released** – The Election Committee Report is distributed to Member LAFCOs and voting delegates.
Thursday, October 22, 2026 *At 8:00 a.m.*	**Regional Caucus Elections** – Voting delegates elect Directors representing each CALAFCO region.
Thursday, October 22, 2026 *At 9:00 a.m.*	**Annual Business Meeting** – Election results are announced to the membership, and newly elected Directors are introduced.
Tuesday, December 1, 2026	**New Directors Take Office** – Directors elected during the 2026 election officially begin their terms in accordance with the CALAFCO Bylaws.

Questions:

Questions regarding the election process may be directed to the CALAFCO Executive Director or members of the Election Committee.

Guide to the CALAFCO Board of Directors Election Process

Introduction

This guide summarizes the procedures governing the 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors election, including voting procedures and the determination of election results. In the event of any conflict between this guide and the CALAFCO Bylaws or Policies & Procedures, the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures shall govern.

1. Voting Delegates

Each CALAFCO Member LAFCO is responsible for designating **one Voting Delegate** and may also designate **one Alternate Voting Delegate** to represent the Member LAFCO during the CALAFCO Board of Directors election.

The Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegate must be an Officer of the Member LAFCO designated in writing by the Member LAFCO. Under the CALAFCO Bylaws, an Officer of a Member LAFCO includes a regular Commissioner, alternate Commissioner, Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, Legal Counsel, or Deputy Legal Counsel. The Voting Delegate is authorized to cast the Member LAFCO's ballot during the Regional Caucus Election. If the designated Voting Delegate is unable to serve, the Alternate Voting Delegate may vote in their place.

Each Member LAFCO is entitled to one vote and may cast its ballot only within the CALAFCO region in which it is located.

The completed **Voting Delegate Authorization Form** must be received by CALAFCO no later than the deadline identified in **Attachment 3 – Election Timeline**. Member LAFCOs may revise their Voting Delegate or Alternate Voting Delegate designation at any time before the submission deadline. Once the deadline has passed, no changes may be made to the designated Voting Delegate or Alternate Voting Delegate.

Proxy voting is not permitted.

2. Voting Procedures

A. Regional Caucus Elections

Regional Caucus Elections are conducted during the CALAFCO Annual Conference. Each CALAFCO region meets separately to elect its representatives to the CALAFCO Board of Directors. The Regional Caucus Election is conducted as follows:

- Authorized Voting Delegates and Alternate Voting Delegates receive their voting credentials and ballots at conference registration.
- The Election Committee convenes the Regional Caucus and reviews the election procedures.
- The Election Committee presents the Election Committee Report.
- The Election Committee calls for additional nominations from the floor in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.
- Following the close of nominations, the Election Committee conducts a Candidates Forum. Candidates nominated from the floor respond to the candidate questions and are provided an opportunity to make a brief statement. Candidates who are unable to attend may designate a representative from their region to respond to the candidate questions and make a brief statement on their behalf.
- Only the designated Voting Delegate, or the designated Alternate Voting Delegate acting in place of the Voting Delegate, may cast a ballot.
- Voting is conducted by secret ballot.
- Ballots are collected and counted by the Election Committee.
- Following certification by the Election Committee, election results are announced during the Annual Business Meeting.

B. Electronic/Absentee Voting

Member LAFCOs that are unable to send an authorized Voting Delegate to the Regional Caucus Election may request an electronic ballot in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.
The electronic ballot process is conducted as follows:

- A Member LAFCO must designate its Voting Delegate using the Voting Delegate Authorization Form by the deadline identified in Attachment 3 – Election Timeline.
- A Member LAFCO requesting an electronic ballot must submit its request to CALAFCO in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.
- Completed electronic ballots must be received by CALAFCO no later than the deadline identified in Attachment 3 – Election Timeline.
- Member LAFCOs voting by electronic ballot may vote only for the candidates identified on the ballot and may not participate in any run-off election.
- If a Member LAFCO that requested an electronic ballot is subsequently able to send its designated Voting Delegate to the Regional Caucus Election, the Member LAFCO may discard its electronic ballot and vote in person during the Regional Caucus Election in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.

3. Determining Election Results

Election results are determined in accordance with the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures as follows:

- A candidate must receive a majority of the votes cast to be elected.
- If no candidate receives the required majority, one or more run-off elections may be conducted in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.
- If a tie remains after the final run-off election, the tie is resolved by a draw of lots in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.
- Following certification by the Election Committee, election results are announced during the Annual Business Meeting.
- Directors elected during the Regional Caucus Elections begin their terms on December 1, 2026, in accordance with the CALAFCO Bylaws.

4. Frequently Asked Questions

WHO MAY SERVE AS A VOTING DELEGATE OR AN ALTERNATE VOTING DELEGATE?

The Voting Delegate or Alternate Voting Delegate must be an **Officer of the Member LAFCO** designated in writing by the Member LAFCO. Under the CALAFCO Bylaws, an Officer of a Member LAFCO includes a regular Commissioner, alternate Commissioner, Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, Legal Counsel, or Deputy Legal Counsel.

CAN A MEMBER LAFCO CHANGE ITS VOTING DELEGATE OR ALTERNATE VOTING DELEGATE AFTER SUBMITTING THE VOTING DELEGATE AUTHORIZATION FORM?

Yes. A Member LAFCO may change its Voting Delegate or Alternate Voting Delegate at any time before the submission deadline identified in Attachment 3 – Election Timeline. After the deadline, no changes may be made.

MAY NOMINATIONS BE MADE FROM THE FLOOR DURING THE REGIONAL CAUCUS ELECTION?

Yes. Additional nominations may be made from the floor by a Member LAFCO in good standing in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY MEMBER LAFCO IS UNABLE TO SEND A VOTING DELEGATE TO THE REGIONAL CAUCUS ELECTION?

A Member LAFCO may request an electronic ballot in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures. Electronic ballots include only the candidates listed in the Election Committee Report and may not be used in any run-off election.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS REGARDING THE ELECTION PROCESS?

Questions regarding the election process may be directed to the CALAFCO Executive Director or the Election Committee.

2026 CALAFCO VOTING DELEGATE
Authorization Form

Each CALAFCO Member LAFCO is responsible for designating one Voting Delegate and may also designate an Alternate Voting Delegate to represent the Member LAFCO in the 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors election.

To participate in the **2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors election**, each **Member LAFCO** must submit a **Voting Delegate Authorization Form**, regardless of whether it is submitting a candidate nomination.

The Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegate must be an Officer of the Member LAFCO, as designated in writing by the Member LAFCO. Under the CALAFCO Bylaws, an Officer of a Member LAFCO includes a regular Commissioner, alternate Commissioner, Executive Officer, Deputy Executive Officer, Legal Counsel, or Deputy Legal Counsel.

DEADLINE:

This form must be received by CALAFCO no later than **5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026**. Member LAFCOs may revise their Voting Delegate or Alternate Voting Delegate designation at any time before the submission deadline. After the deadline, no changes may be made.

1 - Member LAFCO Information

Member LAFCO: ______________________________

CALAFCO Region:

☐ Northern Region ☐ Central Region ☐ Coastal Region ☐ Southern Region

2 - Voting Delegate

Name: ______________________________

Title/Position: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Email: ______________________________

3 - Alternate Voting Delegate

Member LAFCO: ______________________________

Title/Position: ______________________________

Phone: ______________________________

Email: ______________________________

Submit to: mmcintyre@calafco.org • Deadline: Friday, September 4, 2026 by 5:00 p.m.

4 - Electronic Ballot Request

☐ **Our Member LAFCO requests an electronic ballot because it is unable to send its designated Voting Delegate to the Regional Caucus Election.**

Member LAFCOs requesting an electronic ballot are subject to the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures governing electronic voting. Additional information is available in **Attachment 4 – Guide to the CALAFCO Board of Directors Election Process.**

5 – Authorization

The Member LAFCO identified above hereby authorizes the individuals listed on this form to serve as its Voting Delegate and, if applicable, its Alternate Voting Delegate for the 2026 CALAFCO Board of Directors election.

Only the designated Voting Delegate or the designated Alternate Voting Delegate, acting in place of the Voting Delegate, may cast the Member LAFCO's ballot during the Regional Caucus Election.

Proxy voting is not permitted. Only the designated Voting Delegate or the designated Alternate Voting Delegate, acting in place of the Voting Delegate, may cast the Member LAFCO's ballot during the Regional Caucus Election.

Authorized by the Member LAFCO

Name: ______________________________

Title: ______________________________

Signature: ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

6 – Submission Instructions

This form must be received by CALAFCO **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, September 4, 2026**.
Submit completed forms electronically to: **mmcintyre@calafco.org**

OR

Mail completed forms to:
CALAFCO
1451 River Park Drive, Suite 185
Sacramento, CA 95815
Questions regarding the election process may be directed to the CALAFCO Executive Director or members of the Election Committee.

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions
CALAFCO
SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GROWTH

2027 CALAFCO Board Meeting Schedule

The following schedule reflects the 2027 CALAFCO Board meeting schedule approved by the Board of Directors and is provided to assist prospective candidates in understanding the anticipated meeting schedule for Board service. Meeting dates are subject to change by action of the Board of Directors.

Date	Meeting	Format
Friday, January 22, 2027	Regular Board Meeting	Hybrid
Thursday, February 25, 2027	Strategic Planning Workshop	In Person
Friday, February 26, 2027	Regular Board Meeting	Hybrid
Friday, May 14, 2027	Regular Board Meeting	Hybrid
Friday, August 27, 2027	Regular Board Meeting	Hybrid
Friday, October 22, 2027	Regular Board Meeting (Annual Conference)	In Person

Additional Information

- The Strategic Planning Workshop is held immediately before the February Regular Board Meeting.
- The October Regular Board Meeting is held in conjunction with the CALAFCO Annual Conference.
- Board members are also expected to participate in committee meetings and other Board activities throughout the year, as applicable to their committee assignments.
- Additional Board meetings or special meetings may be scheduled as necessary in accordance with the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures.

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions
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Roles and Responsibilities of a CALAFCO Board Member

Introduction

Serving on the CALAFCO Board of Directors is an opportunity to help guide the Association's leadership, legislative advocacy, educational programs, and long-term direction on behalf of LAFCOs throughout California.

Board members serve the interests of **CALAFCO and the statewide LAFCO community** and are expected to actively participate in Board meetings, committee assignments, and Association activities.

The following summary highlights the principal responsibilities and expectations of Board service. It is intended as a general overview and does not replace the CALAFCO Bylaws or Policies & Procedures. In the event of any conflict between this document and the CALAFCO Bylaws or Policies & Procedures, the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures shall govern.

General Participation

Board members are expected to support CALAFCO's mission and core values, serve as part of a unified governing body, and make decisions in the best interests of CALAFCO and the statewide LAFCO community.

Board members are expected to:

- Regularly attend and prepare for Board meetings.
- Participate actively in Board discussions and decision-making.
- Participate in establishing CALAFCO's strategic direction and organizational priorities.
- Serve on at least one CALAFCO Board committee.
- Attend the CALAFCO Annual Conference and participate in other Board meetings and Association activities, as appropriate.

Governance

Board members are expected to:

- Attend Board Member orientation provided by CALAFCO.
- Consider statewide interests and impacts when making Board decisions.
- Adhere to the CALAFCO Board Code of Ethics.
- Read, understand, and operate within the CALAFCO Bylaws and Policies & Procedures.

Communication

Board members are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully.
- Support consistent and accurate communication with CALAFCO membership.

Association Programs

Board members are expected to:

- Understand and encourage participation in CALAFCO programs and services, including the Associate Member Program.

Performance Evaluations

- Participate in the annual Board performance evaluation process.
- Participate in the annual evaluation of the Executive Director and Regional Officers, in accordance with the CALAFCO Policies & Procedures.
- Participate in the Board's annual review of CALAFCO's Strategic Plan.

Advocacy, Recruitment and Retention

Board members are expected to:

- Support CALAFCO's legislative advocacy efforts.
- Promote CALAFCO and encourage participation in Association programs and activities.
- Help strengthen awareness and understanding of CALAFCO and LAFCOs throughout California.

Finance

Board members are expected to:

- Review and understand CALAFCO's financial information and assist the Board in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities.

Board Committees

Board members are expected to serve on at least one Board committee. Committee assignments are made annually by the Board.

Standing committees currently include:

- Awards Committee
- Conference Committee
- Elections Committee
- Legislative Committee

Committee responsibilities and meeting schedules vary depending on the committee assignment.

Time Commitment

Board service includes regular participation in:

- Board meetings
- Committee meetings
- The CALAFCO Annual Conference
- Board Member orientation
- Other Board meetings and activities, as appropriate

The anticipated Board meeting schedule is included as **Attachment 7**.

Board Service

Serving on the CALAFCO Board of Directors is an opportunity to contribute to the continued success of CALAFCO and to the advancement of the statewide LAFCO community. Board members are expected to approach their responsibilities collaboratively and ethically, with a commitment to serving the best interests of CALAFCO and its membership.

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions

CALAFCO

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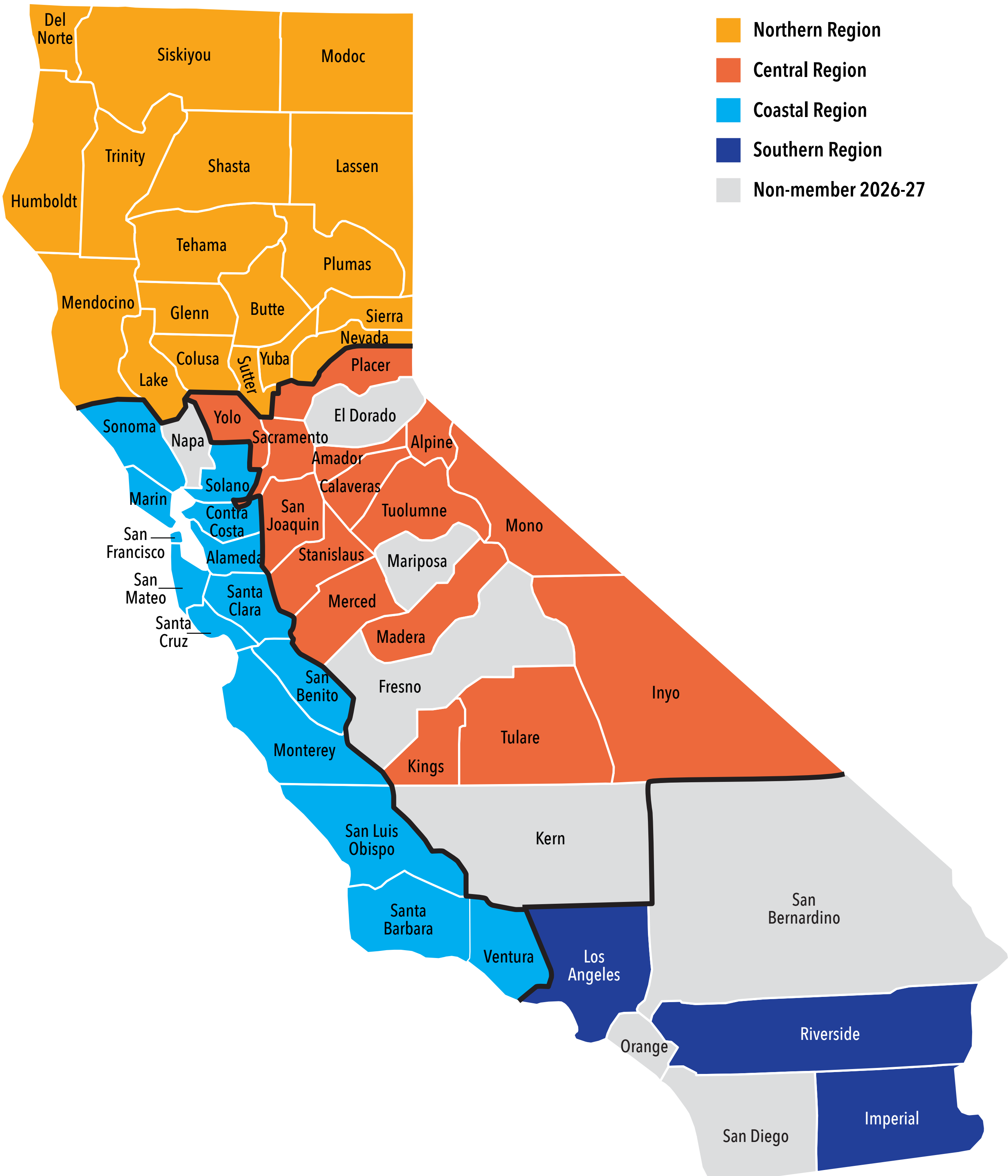
FOUR REGIONS



California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions

CALAFCO

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY GROWTH

DATE: July 1, 2026

TO: CALAFCO Members, LAFCO Commissioners and Staff, Other Interested Organizations

FROM: Michelle McIntyre - *CALAFCO Executive Director*, CALAFCO Achievement Awards Committee, CALAFCO Board of Directors

SUBJECT: 2026 CALAFCO Achievement Award Nominations Period Open

DEADLINE: Friday, August 28, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.

Qualifying Period: August 16, 2025 through August 15, 2026

On behalf of the Association, I am pleased to announce that the nomination period for the 2026 CALAFCO Achievement Awards is now open.

Each year, CALAFCO recognizes individuals and organizations from across the state for their work advancing the mission and responsibilities of LAFCOs. This year's program retains its established structure with targeted updates to better reflect the breadth of work being done across the LAFCO community, including emerging leadership, partnerships, project-based accomplishments, community impact, and discretionary recognition of exceptional efforts that may not fit neatly into existing categories.

We encourage you to nominate individuals and organizations whose work reflects strong performance, meaningful collaboration, and measurable results. Early submittal is encouraged.

Before submitting a nomination, please carefully review the nomination instructions and the criteria for each category. ***Incomplete nominations, or those that do not follow the submission guidelines, will not be considered.***

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS NOMINATION PROCEDURE

1. Most nominations may be made by an individual, a LAFCO, a CALAFCO Associate Member, or any other organization.
2. Each nomination must meet the specific award category criteria for consideration.
3. With the exception of the Lifetime Achievement Award, all nominated projects or acts of service must have occurred or been completed during the qualifying period of August 16, 2025, through August 15, 2026.

4. Nominations must be submitted with a completed nomination form. A separate form is required for each nomination.
5. Nomination Executive Summaries must be limited to no more than 250 words. Nomination Summaries must be limited to no more than 1,000 words or two (2) pages.
6. All supporting information (e.g., reports, articles) must be submitted with the nomination. Total supporting documentation, including any letters of support or endorsement, is limited to no more than three (3) pages.
7. Support or Endorsement Letters: Nominations may optionally include letters of support or endorsement from individuals or organizations familiar with the nominee's work. Letters should provide specific examples of contributions and impact. A maximum of two (2) letters may be submitted, each not to exceed one (1) page. Letters must be included at the time of submittal and count toward the three-page supporting documentation limit. The quality and relevance of the nomination will be given greater weight than the number of letters submitted.
8. All materials must be submitted at one time. No late nominations will be accepted — no exceptions.
9. Electronic submittals are required and must be submitted as a single PDF document.
10. Nominations and all supporting materials must be received no later than Friday, August 28, 2026.

Submit nominations electronically as a single PDF to:

Michelle McIntyre, CALAFCO Executive Director
mmcintyre@calafco.org | (916) 442-6536

AWARDS COMMITTEE FLEXIBILITY

Number of Awards: The Awards Committee may, at its discretion, select more than one recipient in a category when multiple nominations are deemed equally deserving.

Category Assignment: The Awards Committee may reassign a nomination to a different award category if it determines the nomination better aligns with the criteria of that category. The Committee's determination is final.

General: Submission of a nomination does not guarantee that an award will be given in that category. Not all categories are required to be awarded each year.

Every year, CALAFCO recognizes excellence within the LAFCO community by presenting Achievement Awards at the Annual Conference. Nominations are accepted until Friday, August 28, 2026, in the following categories:

EXISTING CATEGORIES

OUTSTANDING CALAFCO VOLUNTEER

AWARD SUMMARY:

Recognizes a CALAFCO volunteer who has provided exemplary service during the year. Exemplary service clearly goes above and beyond what is asked or expected in the charge of their responsibilities. This category may include a CALAFCO Board member, regional officer, program volunteer, or any other requested volunteer.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nominee must have volunteered for the Association during the year in which the nomination is being made.
- Nominee does not have to be a CALAFCO member.
- Volunteer efforts must demonstrate going above and beyond what was asked or expected, with positive and effective results.
- Nominee can be a CALAFCO Board member, regional officer, program volunteer, or any other volunteer.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria requirements for consideration.
- Equal consideration shall be given to each nominee, regardless of position or role. Only contributions and outcomes shall be considered.
- The extent of volunteerism and overall impact on the statewide Association and membership shall be considered.
- Preference may be given to individuals who have not previously received this award and meet all required criteria.

OUTSTANDING CALAFCO ASSOCIATE MEMBER

AWARD SUMMARY:

Presented to an active CALAFCO Associate Member (person or agency) that has advanced or promoted the cause of LAFCOs by consistently producing distinguished work that upholds the mission and goals of LAFCOs, has helped elevate the role and mission of LAFCOs through its work, and demonstrates a collaborative approach to LAFCO stakeholder engagement.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nominee must be a CALAFCO Associate Member in good standing.
- Nominee shall have been an Associate Member for the full year in which the nomination is being made, and for at least one year prior.
- The nominee may be an individual within an Associate Member firm or agency.
- Nominee shall demonstrate that through their work, the role and mission of LAFCO have been upheld and furthered.
- Nominee must have demonstrated cooperative and collaborative approaches to situations affecting LAFCOs state wide.
- Proven commitment to the Association's membership through volunteering time and resources during the year in which the nomination is made.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Equal consideration shall be given to all nominees meeting the nominating criteria.
- The level of volunteering time and resources to the Association shall be a consideration.

OUTSTANDING COMMISSIONER

AWARD SUMMARY:

Presented to an individual Commissioner for extraordinary service to their Commission. Extraordinary service is considered actions above and beyond those required to fulfill statutory responsibilities as a Commissioner, including consistently demonstrating independent judgment on behalf of the entire county, developing innovative and collaborative solutions to local issues, and leading the commission and community by example.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nominee must be a Commissioner of a LAFCO in good standing with the Association.
- Nominee shall be a Commissioner for the full year in which the nomination is being made.
- Proven demonstration of consistently exercising independent judgment for the greater good of the County is required.
- Proven leadership through collaborative, innovative, and creative solutions to local issues is required.
- Proven effective results and outcomes shall be demonstrated in the nomination.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Equal consideration shall be given to all nominees meeting the nominating criteria. Representation type and LAFCO size shall not be a consideration.
- The overall impact of the Commissioner's leadership shall be considered.
- Preference may be given to individuals who have not previously received this award and meet all required criteria.

OUTSTANDING LAFCO PROFESSIONAL

AWARD SUMMARY:

Recognizes an Executive Officer, Staff Analyst, Clerk, Legal Counsel, or any other LAFCO staff person for exemplary service during the past year. Exemplary service is considered actions that clearly go above and beyond what is asked, expected, or required in the charge of their LAFCO responsibilities.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nominee must be a staff person of a LAFCO in good standing with the Association.
- Nominee shall be a staff person for the full year in which the nomination is being made.
- Nominee can be either an employee of the LAFCO or a contractor providing employee-type services.
- Efforts must be demonstrated showing the individual has consistently gone above and beyond their role, with proven results that otherwise would not have occurred.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Equal consideration shall be given to all nominees. Position within a LAFCO and the size or geographic area of the LAFCO shall not be considerations.
- The overall impact of the LAFCO professional on their LAFCO and the greater community shall be considered.
- Preference may be given to individuals who have not previously received this award.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

AWARD SUMMARY:

Recognizes any individual who has made extraordinary contributions to the statewide LAFCO community in terms of longevity of service, exemplary advocacy of LAFCO-related legislation, proven leadership, and demonstrated support in developing and implementing innovative and creative ways to support the goals of LAFCOs throughout California. The nominee should have a substantial and sustained record of involvement with the LAFCO community

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nomination must be received from a member of LAFCO or an Associate Member in good standing.
- The nominee should have a long record of involvement with the LAFCO community.
- During that time, the nominee shall have a proven positive impact and effect on the support and evolution of LAFCOs statewide.
- Includes advocacy through legislation, developing creative and innovative solutions serving beyond their LAFCO, collaborative stakeholder approaches, and support for fellow members of the LAFCO community.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Preference may be given to nominees who have also proven experience volunteering for CALAFCO through regional officer roles, committees, or the CALAFCO Board.

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

AWARD SUMMARY:

Presented to a member of the California State Senate or Assembly in recognition of leadership and valued contributions in support of LAFCO goals that have a statewide effect. The recipient shall have demonstrated clear support and effort to further the cause and ability of LAFCOs to fulfill their statutory mission and selected by the CALAFCO Board by a super majority.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nominee shall be a California State legislator during the full year in which the nomination is made.
- Nominee must have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in the Legislature on behalf of LAFCOs statewide, with efforts resulting in a positive impact for all LAFCOs.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- The Achievement Awards Committee shall forward all nominations to the Board for consideration.
- Selection requires a supermajority approval of the Board present at the time of the vote.

MIKE GOTCH EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

AWARD SUMMARY:

Awarded to an individual, group, or agency for actions that rise above expected or common functions; reduce or eliminate common institutional roadblocks; and result in a truly extraordinary public service outcome. Individuals, a LAFCO, or collaborative efforts among multiple LAFCOs or a LAFCO with other entities are eligible. This award has two distinct categories:

1. Protection of agricultural and open space lands and prevention of sprawl
2. Innovation, collaboration, outreach, and effective support of the evolution and viability of local agencies and promotion of efficient and effective delivery of municipal services

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Clear demonstration that the actions rise above expected or common functions.
- The actions reduced or eliminated common institutional roadblocks.
- The actions clearly prove a truly extraordinary public service outcome that is systemic and sustainable.
- Identified unique circumstances and factors leading to the solution or project.
- The innovative steps taken to solve the problem or take action.
- Clear description of the results and outcomes, including short- and long-term effects.

- How this work can be promoted as a LAFCO best practice.

SELECTION CRITERIA:
- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Equal consideration shall be given to each nominee within each category. LAFCO size or geographic area shall not be a consideration.
- The overall impact of the actions and outcomes on the greater community shall be considered.

NEW CATEGORIES 2026

EMERGING LEADER – COMMISSIONER

AWARD SUMMARY:
Recognizes a LAFCO Commissioner who, early in their service, has demonstrated strong engagement, sound judgment, and a clear commitment to the work of the Commission. This award acknowledges the value of fresh perspectives and early leadership in shaping effective governance.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:
- Must be a Commissioner of a LAFCO in good standing with the Association.
- Must have served generally no more than five (5) years as a LAFCO Commissioner.
- Demonstrates active, engaged participation in Commission work during the qualifying period.
- Shows initiative and sound judgment in Commission proceedings.
- Demonstrates early leadership through meaningful contributions to Commission outcomes.

SELECTION CRITERIA:
- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Level of engagement and initiative demonstrated during the qualifying period.
- Quality and impact of contributions to Commission work.
- Potential for continued leadership and growth within the LAFCO community.

EMERGING LEADER – STAFF

AWARD SUMMARY:
Recognizes a LAFCO staff member who has demonstrated initiative, reliability, and meaningful contributions early in their career. This award celebrates the next generation of LAFCO professionals who are building the foundation for sustained excellence in local agency governance.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:
- Must be LAFCO staff (employee or contractor providing employee-type services) of a LAFCO in good standing.
- Must have served generally no more than five (5) years in a LAFCO staff capacity.
- Demonstrates initiative and reliability in their work during the qualifying period.

- Contributes meaningfully to LAFCO projects or operations beyond what is minimally expected.
- Shows willingness to take on additional responsibilities and learn.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Level of initiative and professionalism demonstrated.
- Impact of contributions relative to experience and role.
- Potential for continued growth and contribution to the LAFCO profession.

PROJECT OR INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR

AWARD SUMMARY:

Recognizes a LAFCO-led or LAFCO-supported project or initiative that demonstrates strong execution, clear purpose, and measurable results. This award highlights the importance of project-based work in delivering on LAFCO's statutory mission.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- May be submitted by a single LAFCO or as a collaborative effort among multiple entities.
- Must have been completed or reached a significant milestone during the qualifying period.
- Clearly defines the issue or need addressed by the project.
- Describes the approach, steps taken, and resources involved.
- Demonstrates measurable and verifiable results.
- Advances LAFCO responsibilities and objectives in a meaningful way.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Effectiveness and quality of execution.
- Significance and sustainability of outcomes.
- Value as a model or best practice for other LAFCOs.
- Overall impact on the community or communities served.

GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY, OR PUBLIC PARTNER AWARD

AWARD SUMMARY:

Recognizes a public agency, community association, stakeholder group, nonprofit, or other entity that has worked effectively with a LAFCO and contributed to a successful outcome. This award acknowledges that strong LAFCO work often depends on genuine partnerships beyond the Commission itself.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- Nominee must not be a LAFCO.

- Must have worked collaboratively with a LAFCO during the qualifying period.
- Demonstrates a constructive, solution-oriented approach to the partnership.
- Made a clear and demonstrable contribution to a LAFCO process or outcome.
- Demonstrates clear and tangible results from the partnership or engagement.
- May include cities, counties, special districts, associations, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, or other stakeholder groups.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Strength, quality, and depth of the partnership or engagement.
- Impact on governance, service delivery, or community outcomes.
- Value as a model for collaborative LAFCO engagement.

EQUITY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

AWARD SUMMARY:

Recognizes efforts that improve access to services, address identified service gaps, or advance equitable outcomes through LAFCO-related work. This award reflects CALAFCO's commitment to ensuring that LAFCO's mission serves all communities, particularly those that have historically faced barriers to adequate services.

NOMINATION CRITERIA:

- May be a LAFCO, individual, collaborative effort, or other entity as appropriate.
- The work must have occurred during the qualifying period.
- Clearly identifies a service need, gap, or equity concern.
- Describes the specific actions taken to address the identified need.
- Demonstrates measurable or clearly defined outcomes.
- Aligns with LAFCO responsibilities and statutory mission.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Must meet all nomination criteria for consideration.
- Level and breadth of community impact.
- Effectiveness and appropriateness of the approach taken.
- Sustainability and durability of results.
- Clarity and verifiability of outcomes.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD (DISCRETIONARY)

AWARD SUMMARY:

The President's Award is a discretionary award that allows CALAFCO to recognize an exceptional effort, contribution, achievement, or individual who does not fit neatly within the existing award categories. This award exists to ensure that truly remarkable accomplishments are not overlooked simply because they fall outside predefined boundaries. The award is discretionary and is not expected to be presented annually. Its use should reflect a genuine exception rather than routine recognition.

CRITERIA:

- May be awarded to an individual, organization, collaborative effort, or other nominee determined appropriate by the Board Chair.
- The contribution, achievement, or effort must be clearly exceptional in nature.
- The nominee should represent circumstances, accomplishments, or contributions that are not adequately recognized through an existing CALAFCO award category.
- Any Board member may submit a nomination to the Board Chair for consideration.

SELECTION:

- The Board Chair, in consultation with the Executive Director, determines whether to advance a nomination to the Executive Committee.
- The Executive Committee shall ratify the recipient by a supermajority vote.
- The recommendation presented to the Executive Committee shall include a clear explanation of why the nominee does not fit within an existing award category and why the recognition merits special consideration.

Note on the President's Award

Because this award is discretionary, a standard nomination form is not required. However, any nomination or recommendation for this award should include a written explanation of the exceptional contribution and a clear statement of why it falls outside existing categories.

QUALIFYING PERIOD

Except for the Lifetime Achievement Award, all nominated projects or acts of service must have occurred or been completed between August 16, 2025, and August 15, 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

A. 2026 Achievement Awards Nomination Form
B. Listing of Prior Achievement Award Recipients

2026 CALAFCO ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Nomination Form

DEADLINE: Friday, August 28, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.
Qualifying Period: August 16, 2025 through August 15, 2026
Submit all materials as a single PDF to: mmcintyre@calafco.org

Step 1: Select Award Category

Select the award category for this nomination (one category per form):

EXISTING CATEGORIES:

- ☐ Outstanding CALAFCO Volunteer
- ☐ Outstanding CALAFCO Associate Member
- ☐ Outstanding Commissioner
- ☐ Outstanding LAFCO Professional
- ☐ Lifetime Achievement Award
- ☐ Legislator of the Year
- ☐ Mike Gotch Excellence in Public Service Award – Agricultural / Open Space Protection
- ☐ Mike Gotch Excellence in Public Service Award – Innovation, Collaboration & Outreach

NEW CATEGORIES 2026:

- ☐ Emerging Leader – Commissioner ▶ NEW
- ☐ Emerging Leader – Staff ▶ NEW
- ☐ Project or Initiative of the Year ▶ NEW
- ☐ Government, Community, or Public Partner Award ▶ NEW
- ☐ Equity and Community Impact Award ▶ NEW
- ☐ President's Award (Discretionary) – Board recommendation/super majority vote required ▶ NEW

With the exception of the Lifetime Achievement Award, all nominated projects or acts of service must have occurred or been completed between August 16, 2025, and August 15, 2026. The Awards Committee may, at its discretion, reassign a nomination to a more appropriate category if warranted.

Step 2: Nominee Information

Name of Nominee:

Title (if applicable):

Organization / LAFCO:

Mailing Address:

City, State, ZIP:

Phone:

Email:

Step 3: Nominator Information

Name of Nominator:

Title / Organization:

Phone:

Email:

Step 4: Executive Summary (Required – 250 words maximum)

Provide a concise overview of the nomination. This summary should capture the most important reasons this nominee deserves recognition.

Step 5: Nomination Summary (Required – 1,000 words or 2 pages maximum)

Provide a full description of the nominee's contributions. Address each of the following elements:

- The issue, need, or context that prompted or shaped the nominee's contributions
- The specific actions taken
- Results or outcomes achieved
- Overall impact on the community, agency, or LAFCO mission
- How this nomination aligns with the specific award criteria

(Attach additional pages as needed, up to the two-page maximum, clearly labeled with the nominee's name and award category)

Step 6: Supporting Documentation (Optional)

Page Limits for Supporting Materials:

- Total supporting documentation (including letters): 3 pages maximum
- Optional letters of support or endorsement: maximum 2 letters, 1 page each
- Letters count toward the 3-page limit and must be submitted at time of initial submittal
- **Nominations exceeding these limits will not be considered**

Description of supporting documentation included with this nomination:

Step 7: CERTIFICATION AND SUBMITTAL

Certification:

By submitting this nomination, I confirm that:

- The information provided in this nomination is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- All required materials are included and meet the specified format and page limit requirements.
- This nomination is submitted as a complete, single PDF package.
- I understand that incomplete or late nominations will not be considered.

Nominator Signature:

Printed Name:

Title / Organization:

Date Submitted:

Submittal Instructions:

- Submit one complete nomination packet per nominee.
- Combine all materials (form, executive summary, nomination summary, supporting documents) into a single PDF.
- Nominations must be received by **Friday, August 28, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.** No late nominations accepted.
- Submit to: Michelle McIntyre, CALAFCO Executive Director | mmcintyre@calafco.org (916) 442-6536

Selection Process:

Following the nomination deadline, all eligible nominations will be reviewed by the CALAFCO Achievement Awards Committee in accordance with the published award criteria and Association policies. The Committee may, at its discretion, reassign a nomination to a more appropriate award category, recognize more than one recipient in a category, or determine that no award will be presented in a category. To preserve the tradition of the CALAFCO Achievement Awards, award recipients are generally not notified in advance and are announced during the Achievement Awards presentation at the CALAFCO Annual Conference.

Thank you for taking the time to recognize the outstanding individuals, projects, and organizations that strengthen California's LAFCO community. Your nominations help CALAFCO celebrate excellence, innovation, leadership, and service throughout the state.

California Association of
Local Agency Formation Commissions

CALAFCO

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY GROWTH

PREVIOUS CALAFCO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

2025

Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Kai Luoma, Ventura LAFCO
Associate Member of the Year	Best Best & Krieger LLP
Outstanding LAFCO Commissioner	Anthony Tyrrell, Calaveras LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Volunteer	José C. Henríquez, Sacramento LAFCO
Mike Gotch Award - *Innovation, Collaboration, Outreach, and Effective Support of Local Agency Evolution*	Placer LAFCO
Lifetime Achievement Award	SR Jones, Nevada LAFCO

2024

Legislator of the Year Award:	Senator Dave Cortese
Lifetime Achievement Award:	Stephen Lucas, Butte LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner:	Bill Connelly, Butte LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	J.D. Hightower, San Joaquin LAFCO
Mike Gotch Award -	
Agriculture	Monterey LAFCO
Innovation	Two-Way Tie: Santa Cruz LAFCO Riverside LAFCO & Imperial LAFCO

2023

Lifetime Achievement Award:	Dawn Mittleman Longoria, Napa LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Richard Bettencourt, San Benito LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Two-Way Tie: José C. Henriquez, Sacramento LAFCO Andrea Ozdy, Ventura LAFCO
Outstanding Associate Member	Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley
Outstanding Volunteer	Anita Paque, Calaveras LAFCO
Mike Gotch Award -	
Agriculture	Napa LAFCO
Innovation	Tom Cooley, Plumas LAFCO

2022

Outstanding Commissioner	Don Saylor, Yolo LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Carolyn Emery, Orange LAFCO
Mike Gotch Award - Innovation, Collaboration, And Outreach	Two-Way Tie: Cristine Crawford,Yolo LAFCO, and Erica Sanchez, El Dorado LAFCO & Amanda Ross, South Fork Consulting, LLC

2020 – 2021 *(2 year period due to the pandemic)*

Outstanding Associate Member	Planwest Partners
Outstanding Commissioner	Olin Woods, Yolo LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Crystal Craig, Riverside LAFCO
Mike Gotch Protection of Ag and Open Space Lands & Prevention of Urban Sprawl	Napa LAFCO
Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Yolo LAFCO
Lifetime Achievement Award	Jerry Glabach, Los Angeles LAFCO

2019

Distinguished Service Award	Charley Wilson, Orange LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Contra Costa LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Jim DeMartini, Stanislaus LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	David Church, San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Project of the Year	Orange LAFCO, *for San Juan Capistrano Utilities MSR*
Government Leadership Award	CA State Water Resources Control Board, Los Angeles County and Los Angeles LAFCo, *for Sativa Water District*
Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Butte LAFCO
Legislator of the Year	Assembly Member Mike Gipson
Lifetime Achievement Award	John Benoit, various LAFCOs, Jurg Heuberger, Imperial LAFCO

2018

Distinguished Service Award	John Withers, Orange LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Santa Clara LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Margie Mohler, Napa LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	George Williamson, Del Norte LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Elizabeth Valdez, Riverside LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Associate Member	Best Best & Krieger
Project of the Year	Lake LAFCo, water services consolidation
Government Leadership Award	City of Porterville, County of Tulare, Dept. of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Self Help Enterprises, Community Water Center for East Porterville water supply project
Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Mike Ott, San Diego LAFCO
Legislator of the Year	Assembly Member Anna Caballero
Lifetime Achievement Award	Pat McCormick, Santa Cruz LAFCO, George Spiliotis, Riverside LAFCO

2017

Most Effective Commission	Los Angeles LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Sblend Sblendorio, Alameda LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	John Marchand, Alameda LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Paul Novak, Los Angeles LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Richelle Beltran, Ventura LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Associate Member	Policy Consulting Associates
Project of the Year	County Services MSR, Butte LAFCO, and Santa Rosa Annexation, Sonoma LAFCO
Government Leadership Award	San Luis Obispo County Public Works Dept.
Lifetime Achievement Award	Kathy Rollings McDonald (San Bernardino)

2016

Distinguished Service Award	Peter Brundage, Sacramento LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	John Leopold, Santa Cruz LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Don Tatzin, Contra Costa LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Steve Lucas, Butte LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Cheryl Carter-Benjamin, Orange LAFCO
Project of the Year	Countywide Water Study, (Marin LAFCO)
Government Leadership Award	Southern Region of CALAFCO
Lifetime Achievement Award	Bob Braitman (retired Executive Officer)

2015

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Yuba County Water Agency
Distinguished Service Award	Mary Jane Griego, Yuba LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Butte LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Marjorie Blom, formerly of Stanislaus LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Matthew Beekman, formerly of Stanislaus LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Sam Martinez, San Bernardino LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Terri Tuck, Yolo LAFCO
Project of the Year	Formation of the Ventura County Waterworks District No. 38 (Ventura LAFCO) and 2015 San Diego County Health Care Services five-year sphere of influence and service review report (San Diego LAFCO)
Government Leadership Award	The Cities of Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore and San Ramon, the Dublin San Ramon Services District and the Zone 7 Water Agency
CALAFCO Associate Member of the Year	Michael Colantuono of Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley
Legislators of the Year Award	**Assembly member Chad Mayes**
Lifetime Achievement Award	Jim Chapman (Lassen LAFCO) and Chris Tooker (formerly of Sacramento LAFCO)

2014

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	David Church, San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	Kate McKenna, Monterey LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Santa Clara LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Stephen Lucas, Butte LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Paul Norsell, Nevada LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Kate McKenna, Monterey LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Paige Hensley, Yuba LAFCO
Project of the Year	LAFCo Procedures Guide: 50th Year Special Edition, San Diego LAFCO
Government Leadership Award	Orange County Water District, City of Anaheim, Irvine Ranch Water District, and Yorba Linda Water District
Legislators of the Year Award	Assembly member Katcho Achadjian
Lifetime Achievement Award	Susan Wilson, Orange LAFCO

2013

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Simón Salinas, Commissioner, Monterey LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	Roseanne Chamberlain, Amador LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Stanislaus LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Harry Ehrlich, San Diego LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Jerry Gladbach, Los Angeles LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Lou Ann Texeira, Contra Costa
LAFCO Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Kate Sibley, Contra Costa LAFCO
Project of the Year	Plan for Agricultural Preservation, Stanislaus LAFCo
Government Leadership Award	Orange County LAFCO Community Islands Taskforce, Orange LAFCO
Legislators of the Year Award	Senators Bill Emmerson and Richard Roth
Lifetime Achievement Award	H. Peter Faye, Yolo LAFCO; Henry Pellissier, Los Angeles LAFCO; Carl Leverenz, Butte LAFCo; Susan Vicklund-Wilson, Santa Clara LAFCO.

2012

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Bill Chiat, CALAFCO Executive Director
Distinguished Service Award	Marty McClelland, Commissioner, Humboldt LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Sonoma LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Stephen A. Souza, Commissioner, Yolo LAFCO and CALAFCO Board of Directors
Outstanding Commissioner	Sherwood Darington, Monterey
LAFCO Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Carole Cooper, Sonoma LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Gwenna MacDonald, Lassen LAFCO
Project of the Year	Countywide Service Review & SOI Update, Santa Clara LAFCO
Government Leadership Award	North Orange County Coalition of Cities, Orange LAFCO
Lifetime Achievement Award	P. Scott Browne, Legal Counsel LAFCOs

2011

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Martin Tuttle, Deputy Director for Planning, Caltrans Mike McKeever, Executive Director, SACOG
Distinguished Service Award	Carl Leverenz, Commissioner and Chair, Butte
LAFCo Most Effective Commission	San Bernardino LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Keene Simonds, Executive Officer, Napa LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Louis R. Calcagno, Monterey LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	June Savala, Deputy Executive Officer, Los Angeles LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Debbie Shubert, Ventura LAFCO
Project of the Year	Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Definitions Revision Bob Braitman, Scott Browne, Clark Alsop, Carole Cooper, and George Spiliotis
Government Leadership Award	Contra Costa Sanitary District
	Elsinore Water District and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District

2010

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Helen Thompson, Commissioner, Yolo LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	Kathleen Rollings-McDonald, Executive Officer, San Bernardino LAFCO Bob Braitman, Executive Officer, Santa Barbara LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Tulare LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Roger Anderson, Ph.D., CALAFCO Chair, Santa Cruz LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	George Lange, Ventura LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Harry Ehrlich, Government Consultant, San Diego LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Candie Fleming, Fresno LAFCO
Project of the Year	Butte LAFCo Sewer Commission - Oroville Region Municipal Service Review
Government Leadership Award	Nipomo Community Services District and the County of San Luis Obispo
Special Achievement	Chris Tooker, Sacramento LAFCO and CALAFCO Board of Directors

2009

Mike Gotch Courage & Innovation in Local Government Leadership Award	Paul Hood, Executive Officer, San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	William Zumwalt, Executive Officer, Kings LAFCO
Most Effective Commission	Napa LAFCO
Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Susan Vicklund Wilson, CALAFCO Vice Chair Jerry Gladbach, CALAFCO Treasurer
Outstanding Commissioner	Larry M. Fortune, Fresno LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Pat McCormick, Santa Cruz LAFCO Executive Officer
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Emmanuel Abello, Santa Clara LAFCO
Project of the Year	Orange LAFCO Boundary Report
Government Leadership Award	Cities of Amador City, Jackson, Ione, Plymouth & Sutter Creek; Amador County; Amador Water Agency; Pine Grove CSD – Countywide MSR Project
Legislator of the Year Award	Assembly Member Jim Silva

2008

Distinguished Service Award	Peter M. Detwiler, Senate Local Government Committee Chief Consultant
Most Effective Commission	Yuba LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Dennis Hansberger, San Bernardino LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Michael Ott, San Diego LAFCO Executive Officer Martha Poyatos, San Mateo Executive Officer
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Wilda Turner, Los Angeles LAFCO
Project of the Year	Kings LAFCO City and Community District MSR and SOI Update
Government Leadership Award	San Bernardino Board of Supervisors
Legislator of the Year Award	Assembly Member Anna M. Caballero

2007

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Kathy Long, Board Chair, Ventura LAFCo
Distinguished Service Award	William D. Smith, San Diego Legal
Counsel Most Effective Commission	Santa Clara LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Gayle Uilkema, Contra Costa LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional	Joyce Crosthwaite, Orange LAFCO Executive Officer
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk	Debby Chamberlin, San Bernardino LAFCO
Project of the Year	San Bernardino LAFCo and City of Fontana Islands Annexation Program
Government Leadership Award	City of Fontana - Islands Annexation Program
Lifetime Achievement	John T. "Jack" Knox

2006

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Everett Millais, CALAFCO Executive Officer and Executive Officer of Ventura LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	Clark Alsop, CALAFCO Legal Counsel
Most Effective Commission Award	Alameda LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner Award	Ted Grandsen, Ventura LAFCO Chris Tooker, Sacramento LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	Larry Calemine, Los Angeles LAFCO Executive Officer
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk Award	Janice Bryson, San Diego LAFCO Marilyn Flemmer, Sacramento LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	Sacramento Municipal Utility District Sphere of Influence Amendment and Annexation; Sacramento LAFCO
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	Cities of Porterville, Tulare, and Visalia and Tulare LAFCO Island Annexation Program
Legislator of the Year Award	Senator Christine Kehoe

2005

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Peter Herzog, CALAFCO Board, Orange LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	Elizabeth Castro Kemper, Yolo LAFCO
Most Effective Commission Award	Ventura LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner Award	Art Aseltine, Yuba LAFCO Henri Pellissier, Los Angeles LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	Bruce Baracco, San Joaquin LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk Award	Danielle Ball, Orange LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	San Diego LAFCO MSR of Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)

2004

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Scott Harvey, CALAFCO Executive Director
Distinguished Service Award	Julie Howard, Shasta LAFCO
Most Effective Commission Award	San Diego LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner Award	Edith Johnsen, Monterey LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	David Kindig, Santa Cruz LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	San Luis Obispo LAFCO Nipomo CSD SOI Update, MSR, and EIR

2003

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Michael P. Ryan, CALAFCO Board Member
Distinguished Service Award	Henri F. Pellissier, Los Angeles LAFCO
Most Effective Commission Award	San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner Award	Bob Salazar, El Dorado LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	Shirley Anderson, San Diego LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk Award	Lori Fleck, Siskiyou LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	Napa LAFCo Comprehensive Water Service Study
Special Achievement Award	James M. Roddy

2002

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Ken Lee, CALAFCO Legislative Committee Chair
Most Effective Commission Award	San Diego LAFCO Outstanding
Commissioner Award	Ed Snively, Imperial LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	Paul Hood, San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk Award	Danielle Ball, Orange LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	San Luis Obispo LAFCO
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	Napa LAFCo, Napa County Farm Bureau, Napa Valley Vintners Association, Napa Valley Housing Authority, Napa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Napa County Counsel Office, and Assembly Member Patricia Wiggins

2001

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	SR Jones, CALAFCO Executive Officer
Distinguished Service Award	David Martin, Tax Area Services Section, State Board of Equalization
Outstanding Commissioner Award	H. Peter Faye, Yolo LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	Ingrid Hansen, San Diego LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	Santa Barbara LAFCO
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	Alameda County Board of Supervisors, Livermore City Council, Pleasanton City Council
Legislator of the Year Award	Senator Jack O'Connell

2000

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Ron Wootton, CALAFCO Board Chair
Distinguished Service Award	Ben Williams, Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century
Most Effective Commission Award	Yolo LAFCO
Outstanding Commissioner	Rich Gordon, San Mateo LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Professional Award	Annamaria Perrella, Contra Costa LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk Award	Susan Stahmann, El Dorado LAFCO
Project of the Year Award	San Diego LAFCO
Legislator of the Year Award	Robert Hertzberg, Assembly Member

1999

Distinguished Service Award	Marilyn Ann Flemmer-Rodgers, Sacramento LAFCO
Most Effective Commission Award	Orange LAFCO
Outstanding Executive Officer Award	Don Graff, Alameda LAFCO
Outstanding LAFCO Clerk Award	Dory Adams, Marin LAFCO
Most Creative Solution to a Multi-Jurisdictional Problem	San Diego LAFCO
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	Assembly Member John Longville
Legislator of the Year Award	Assembly Member Robert Hertzberg

1998

Outstanding CALAFCO Member	Dana Smith, Orange LAFCO
Distinguished Service Award	Marvin Panter, Fresno LAFCO
Most Effective Commission Award	San Diego LAFCO
Outstanding Executive Officer Award	George Spiliotis, Riverside LAFCO
Outstanding Staff Analysis	Joe Convery, San Diego LAFCO Joyce Crosthwaite, Orange LAFCO
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	Santa Clara County Planning Department

1997

Most Effective Commission Award	Orange LAFCO
Outstanding Executive Officer Award	George Finney, Tulare LAFCO
Outstanding Staff Analysis	Annamaria Perrella, Contra Costa LAFCO
Outstanding Government Leadership Award	South County Issues Discussion Group
Most Creative Solution to a Multi-Jurisdictional Problem	Alameda LAFCO and Contra Costa LAFCO
Legislator of the Year Award	Assembly Member Tom Torlakson

CALAFCO PRESIDENT AWARD NOMINATION
(PLACER-SANTA CRUZ LAFCOS)

Executive Summary (250 words or less)

The partnership between Placer LAFCO and Santa Cruz LAFCO under a shared-services recruitment agreement represents an exceptional achievement that aligns squarely with the intent of the CALAFCO President's Award. Faced with the challenge of securing a new Executive Officer quickly and cost-effectively, Placer LAFCO leveraged Santa Cruz LAFCO's proven expertise in LAFCO-specific recruitment and operational knowledge – let's face it, resources that traditional consultants often lack. This collaboration produced a fully executed, high-quality recruitment in just four months at a cost of roughly $10,000, demonstrating remarkable efficiency, fiscal stewardship, and inter-LAFCO innovation (try to get that from an outside consultant in today's economy). More importantly, it showcased how agencies can strengthen one another through shared capacity, professional trust, and mission-aligned problem-solving. Since this model falls outside existing award categories yet clearly advances CALAFCO's values and statewide effectiveness, it stands as a genuine exception worthy of special recognition through CALAFCO's newly created President's Award.

Nomination Summary (1,000 words or less)

The shared-services agreement between Placer LAFCO and Santa Cruz LAFCO stands as one of the most meaningful demonstrations of inter-LAFCO collaboration in recent memory - an achievement that does not fit neatly within existing award categories yet clearly advances CALAFCO's mission at the highest level. Faced with the urgent need to recruit a new Executive Officer, Placer LAFCO turned not to a traditional consultant, but to a peer LAFCO with proven expertise, deep operational knowledge, and a commitment to strengthening statewide capacity. Santa Cruz LAFCO's Executive Officer brought direct experience in LAFCO recruitment, an understanding of statutory responsibilities, and insight into the competencies required of an EO (advantages that in reality external recruiters often lack and results in a mixed pool of candidates).

In simple terms, the outcome was extraordinary. Within four months, Santa Cruz LAFCO delivered a complete, high-quality recruitment process for approximately $10,000, saving Placer LAFCO significant time and money while ensuring a candidate pool tailored to the unique demands of LAFCO governance. This partnership demonstrated fiscal stewardship, operational excellence, and a shared commitment to public service (values at the core of CALAFCO's statewide mission).

More importantly, this collaboration modeled what LAFCOs can achieve when they leverage each other's strengths. It showcased a new pathway for agencies facing staffing challenges, proving that shared services can be both cost-effective and strategically beneficial. It strengthened professional relationships, expanded statewide capacity, and reaffirmed that LAFCOs are at their best when they support one another.

This achievement is not routine. It is not expected. But it can be easily replicated. And in the end, it's a genuine example and circumstance the President's Award was created to honor. By recognizing this partnership, CALAFCO would highlight a model of innovation and mutual support that can inspire other LAFCOs across the state.

The Placer–Santa Cruz shared-services recruitment partnership deserves to be the first-ever recipient of the President's Award because it exemplifies the spirit of statewide collaboration, delivers measurable impact, and demonstrates how LAFCOs can elevate one another through trust, expertise, and shared purpose.

CALAFCO GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY, OR PUBLIC PARTNER AWARD NOMINATION
(PAJARO VALLEY-RENAISSANCE HIGH STAKEHOLDER GROUP)

Executive Summary (250 words or less)

The Pajaro Valley – Renaissance High Stakeholder Group exemplifies the type of cross-agency collaboration that the CALAFCO Government, Community, or Public Partner Award was created to honor. Over multiple years, this diverse coalition (including representatives from the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Renaissance High School, the County of Santa Cruz, the California Division of Drinking Water, Soquel Creek Water District, Santa Cruz LAFCO, and two consulting firms) worked collectively to resolve a long-standing public health challenge affecting Renaissance High School's drinking water supply. As a result, the Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees approved a $2.857 million state funding agreement in July 2026 to connect the school to Soquel Creek Water District's system, replacing groundwater wells contaminated with elevated levels of hexavalent chromium.

This outcome was only possible because the stakeholder group built trust, shared technical expertise, and maintained a unified commitment to securing safe, reliable water for students and staff. LAFCO's approval of the extraterritorial service agreement served as a pivotal step, enabling the group to advance the project and ultimately secure state funding with full principal forgiveness. The stakeholder group's persistence, coordination, and dedication produced a meaningful public benefit: a safe drinking water source for an underserved school community. Their work demonstrates how strong partnerships beyond the Commission can drive transformative outcomes - making this group highly deserving of statewide recognition.

Nomination Summary (1,000 words or less)

The Pajaro Valley – Renaissance High Stakeholder Group embodies the type of extraordinary, mission-aligned partnership that the CALAFCO Government, Community, or Public Partner Award was created to recognize. This multi-year, multi-agency effort demonstrates how complex public challenges (especially those involving essential services like drinking water) can only be solved through sustained collaboration, technical expertise, and unwavering commitment to community well-being. The group's achievement is not only significant; it is emblematic of the very purpose of LAFCOs in California: ensuring reliable, safe, and efficient public services through thoughtful governance and interagency coordination.

For years, Renaissance High School struggled with groundwater wells contaminated by elevated levels of hexavalent chromium, a serious public health concern. The Pajaro Valley Unified School District ultimately approved a $2.857 million state funding agreement to connect the school to the Soquel Creek Water District - an outcome made possible only because this stakeholder group persisted through technical hurdles, regulatory processes, funding challenges, and interagency negotiations. The project's purpose is to consolidate the school's water system with Soquel Creek Water District to address the hexavalent chromium maximum contaminant level violations and provide safe and reliable drinking water to the students and staff of the school.

Behind this milestone was an extraordinary coalition: the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, Renaissance High School leadership, the County of Santa Cruz, the California Division of Drinking Water, State Water Board's Division of Financial Assistance, Soquel Creek Water District, Santa Cruz LAFCO, and two outside consulting firms (Web, Hayes & Associates and Denise Duffy & Associates). Each partner brought essential expertise (i.e. engineering, regulatory compliance, funding strategy, community engagement, and governance oversight). LAFCO's approval of the extraterritorial service agreement was a pivotal turning point, enabling the group to move forward with the consolidation and ultimately secure full principal-forgiveness funding through the State Water Resources Control Board's Expedited Drinking Water Grant Program.

This was not an easy path. The group navigated environmental review, mitigation requirements, state reporting obligations, cost-eligibility rules, and the complexities of designing a project that included extending a water main, installing a pipeline beneath railroad tracks, constructing a booster pump station, and permanently abandoning contaminated wells. The project's scope and regulatory demands required persistence, coordination, and trust … qualities that define exceptional public partnerships.

The result is transformative: Renaissance High School will finally receive a reliable, safe water supply from a dependable public provider. Students and staff (who for years advocated for change) will benefit from a solution that protects their health and supports their learning environment. This achievement reflects the very heart of LAFCO's statewide mission. It demonstrates how LAFCO involvement can catalyze solutions that transcend jurisdictional boundaries, uplift underserved communities, and ensure essential services are delivered responsibly and sustainably. The stakeholder group's work is a model of what can be accomplished when agencies commit to collaboration rather than operating in isolation.

For these reasons, the Pajaro Valley – Renaissance High Stakeholder Group deserves recognition at the state level. Their perseverance, coordination, and dedication produced a meaningful public benefit and exemplify the power of partnership in advancing LAFCO's core purpose.

Agenda Item No. 7c

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: August 5, 2026
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Francisco Estrada, LAFCO Analyst
Subject: Legislative Update

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

LAFCO staff tracks bills during the legislative session and provides periodic updates. The Commission may take a position on any tracked bill. This agenda item is for informational purposes only and does not require action at this time. Therefore, it is recommended that the Commission receive and file the staff report.

BACKROUND

Staff informed the Commission at the February 4, 2026 LAFCO Regular Meeting that they would receive an update on legislation affecting public agencies in Santa Cruz County in May, August, and November, with additional updates to be conducted when necessary. For the purposes of this legislative update, staff will provide information on previous and new bills that LAFCO is currently monitoring on behalf of the Commission.

Tracked Bills

LAFCO staff is currently monitoring four bills that may be of interest to this commission, as shown in the table below. Among the bills being monitored is SB 1312 regarding abandoned cemeteries, which CALAFCO has taken an "Oppose Unless Amended" position due several concerns affecting LAFCO's role. Additionally, **Attachment 1** is a letter of support regarding SB 1439 (Omnibus Bill) submitted on June 25, 2026, a bill with a provision to extend the deadline for Imperial LAFCO to complete its municipal service review of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District from December 31, 2026 to December 31, 2027. The bill will also better define specific LAFCO-related terminology.

Table A: Monitored Bills

Bill No.	Sponsor	Topic & Code	Brief Description	CALAFCO Position
AB 1821 Introduced on: 2/11/2026	Pacheco	Act to amend Section 7922.535 of the Government Code relating to public records	Extends deadline for agencies to provide an initial response to a public records request	None at this time
Bill No.	**Sponsor**	**Topic & Code**	**Brief Description**	**CALAFCO Position**
SB 994 Introduced on: 2/5/26	Cabaldon	Add article to Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 Government Code relating to local government	Prohibits local government officials from entering non-disclosure agreements	Watch
SB 1312 Introduced on: 2/20/26	Richardson	Add Section 7604 Business and Professions Code relating to professions and vocations; continuation of SB 777	SB 777 (2025) focused on abandoned cemeteries. SB 777 required a working group to be formed without LAFCO participation	Oppose Unless Amended
SB 1439 Introduced on: 3/11/26	Durazo	Omnibus Bill	Annual Omnibus Bill that includes a provision to extend the deadline for Imperial LAFCO to complete its MSR of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District from 12/31/26 to 12/31/27	Support

Footnote: "Bill No." column includes hyperlinks to the proposed bills for additional information

Next Update

LAFCO staff will continue to monitor these bills as they continue to be vetted and modified under the ongoing legislative process. Once these bills are considered for passage, LAFCO staff will return with an update and possible commission action in November.

Respectfully Submitted,

Francisco Estrada
LAFCO Analyst

Attachment:

1. SB 1439 (Committee on Local Government): Local Government: Omnibus Bill As Amended June 18, 2026 — Letter of Support

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission
701 Ocean Street # 318D
Santa Cruz CA 95060
Phone: (831) 454-2055
Email: info@santacruzlafco.org
Website: www.santacruzlafco.org

June 25, 2026

The Honorable Juan Carrillo, Chair
Assembly Local Government Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5610
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: SB 1439 (Committee on Local Government): Local Government: Omnibus Bill As Amended June 18, 2026 — SUPPORT

Dear Chair Carrillo and Members of the Assembly Local Government Committee:

As Executive Officer for the Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County (Santa Cruz LAFCO), I am writing in **support** of SB 1439, including the provision extending the deadline for Imperial LAFCO to complete its municipal service review of the Imperial Valley Healthcare District from December 31, 2026, to December 31, 2027.

AB 918 established the Imperial Valley Healthcare District and mandated Imperial LAFCO to complete an initial municipal service review by December 31, 2026. The following year, SB 1070 established a process for the District to present a permanent funding mechanism to Imperial County voters for the November 2026 General Election. These two statutory timelines do not reasonably align. Under current law, LAFCO would be required to complete its review almost immediately after the election, leaving insufficient time to fully evaluate the election results, the financial assumptions associated with the funding measure, or the outcome's effect on the District's ability to provide sustainable countywide health care services.

It is our understanding that Imperial LAFCO is actively working on the required municipal service review. The requested extension is not intended to delay the review or reduce the oversight and accountability established by AB 918. Rather, it will allow Imperial LAFCO to complete a proper and more accurate evaluation of the District based on its actual financial standing, following the November 2026 election.

Without the extension, Imperial LAFCO would be placed in the difficult position of either having to complete the review without one of the most important pieces of financial information or having to incorporate the election outcome and its implications within an accelerated and impractical timeframe. SB 1439 provides a narrow and practical mechanism to correct this oversight by extending the initial review deadline by one year while preserving the ongoing municipal service review requirements established by AB 918. For these reasons, I respectfully request the Committee's AYE vote on SB 1439.

As you may be aware, healthcare districts are financially struggling throughout the state, including the Pajaro Valley Health Care District in Santa Cruz County – which is why this bill is critical for Imperial LAFCO to complete a robust fiscal analysis with accurate and updated data. I appreciate your consideration to support this important bill and its time extension. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached by phone (831-454-2055) or by email (joe@santacruzlafco.org).

Sincerely,

Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Local Government Committee
The Honorable María Elena Durazo, Chair, Senate Local Government Committee
Members and Consultants, Senate Local Government Committee
The Honorable Steve Padilla, California State Senate
The Honorable Jeff Gonzalez, California State Assembly
Michelle McIntyre, Executive Director, CALAFCO

Agenda
Item
No. 7d

LAFCO

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: August 5, 2026
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Francisco Estrada, LAFCO Analyst
Subject: Comprehensive Quarterly Report – Fourth Quarter (FY 2025-26)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

This report provides an overview of projects currently underway, the status of the Commission's Multi-Year Work Program, the financial performance of the annual budget, and staff's outreach efforts from April through June. This agenda item is for informational purposes only and does not require any action. Therefore, it is recommended that the Commission receive and file the Executive Officer's report.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act delegates LAFCOs with regulatory and planning duties to coordinate the logical formation and development of local governmental agencies. **Attachment 1** summarizes how several of these statutory mandates are being met through the consideration of boundary changes, the development of scheduled service reviews, and staff's ongoing collaboration with local agencies.

Respectfully Submitted,

Francisco Estrada
LAFCO Analyst

Attachment:

1. FY 2025-26 Comprehensive Quarterly Report (Fourth Quarter)

Comprehensive Quarterly Report

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26
FOURTH QUARTER
(APRIL TO JUNE)

LAFCO

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

ACTIVE PROPOSALS

As of June 30, 2026, Santa Cruz LAFCO has one active application.

1. **<u>"Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District Reorganization (Project No. RO 25-08)</u>:** This application was initiated by board resolution on April 24, 2025, and proposes to dissolve the PVFPD and concurrently annex into CSA 48.

   Latest Status: The County Board of Supervisors are scheduled to consider approving a Will-Serve Letter and property tax exchange agreement in early-August 2026.

PROCESSED & TERMINATED APPLICATIONS

As of June 30, 2026, Santa Cruz LAFCO has one processed application.

2. **<u>"BCFPD Station Parcel Annexation" (Project No. DA 25-12):</u>** This application was initiated by County to annex two parcels into CSA 7. The purpose of the annexation is to provide sewer service to existing structures, including a fire station. This annexation is part of an ESA approved by the Commission in June 2024.

   Latest Status: Approved. The Commission approved the annexation at the June 3, 2026 Meeting. The 30-day request for consideration ended on July 3, 2026. The annexation was successfully recorded on July 15, 2026.

MULTI-YEAR WORK PROGRAM (SERVICE REVIEWS)

A new five-year work program was adopted in 2024 to ensure that service reviews for each local agency under LAFCO's purview are considered within the legislative deadline. The Commission reviews and adopts the work plan on an annual basis. A total of four separate service reviews will be completed this year, as summarized below.

1. **Countywide Sanitation Districts (12 local agencies in total) –** The proposed service review will analyze 10 sewer agencies located throughout the county.

   <u>Latest Update</u>: Completed. The Commission adopted the service and sphere review on February 4, 2026.

2. **City of Scotts Valley** – The City was incorporated in 1966 and operates as a general law city. The City contains approximately five square miles of land and provides various municipal services, including but not limited to police, animal control, wastewater treatment, and stormwater management.

   <u>Latest Update:</u> Completed. The Commission adopted the service and sphere review on May 6, 2026.

3. **Fire Protection Districts (8 districts and 2 CSAs)** – The 8 fire districts in Santa Cruz County are Aromas Tri-County, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Central, Felton, Pajaro Valley, Scotts Valley, and Zayante Fire Protection Districts. The County operates two County Service Areas (CSA 4 and CSA 48) which also provide fire protection services.

   <u>Latest Update:</u> Completed. The Commission adopted the service and sphere review on June 3, 2026.

4. **Recreation and Park Districts** – The three recreation and park districts in Santa Cruz County are Alba Park, Boulder Creek, and La Selva Beach. Parks and recreation services are also provided by County Service Area 11, managed by the County of Santa Cruz. The Commission will analyze these agencies in the municipal service review.

   Latest Update: The Commission is scheduled to consider adopting the draft service and sphere review on October 7, 2026.

OTHER PROJECTS

Santa Cruz LAFCO currently has five other LAFCO-related projects:

1. **CALAFCO Activities:** Staff has remained actively engaged in several CALAFCO-related initiatives this year. The Annual Conference is scheduled for October 21–23, 2026 in Sacramento where staff is part of the planning committee and once again scheduled to participate in several sessions. The Executive Officer was appointed to CALAFCO's Finance Committee to help the Association's fiscal planning efforts. In addition, staff is involved in the inaugural CALAFCO Mentorship Program as both mentor (Executive Officer) and mentee (Analyst), reflecting the commission's commitment to cultivating emerging LAFCO leaders.

2. **Shared Services Agreement with Placer County:** LAFCO staff successfully assisted Placer LAFCO in its effort to help recruit and identify their next Executive Officer. A total of 15 applications were submitted for the position. Jason Fried, now former Executive Officer for Marin LAFCO, was selected to lead Placer LAFCO as its new Executive Officer.

3. **Cienaga Heights Annexation to the City of Watsonville:** LAFCO staff have been coordinating with representatives from the City of Watsonville and MidPen Housing for the past four years to annex several parcels into Watsonville. This annexation effort is part of a condition from an extraterritorial service agreement approved by the Commission in February 2021.

4. **Pajaro Valley Health Care District Interim CEO:** The healthcare district recently appointed veteran healthcare leader Tim Moran as interim CEO following the recent departure of Stephen Gray. Mr. Moran will serve through January 2027 as the board continues to search for a permanent replacement. As part of the 2025 service review, LAFCO will continue to coordinate with PVHCD and provide periodic updates to the commission. The next update is scheduled for November 4, 2026.

5. **Joint Powers Authority Inventory List:** LAFCO notes the recent formation of the "Regional Fire Districts Joint Powers Authority" which was established by Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond, Felton, Zayante, Scotts Valley, and Central Fire Protection Districts to jointly develop and manage critical radio-system infrastructure. Under state law (SB 1266), LAFCOs are required to maintain an inventory of all JPAs within their respective counties. Santa Cruz County now has 36 JPAs on file. Staff will provide an updated JPA Inventory List to the Commission in October.

BUDGET REPORT

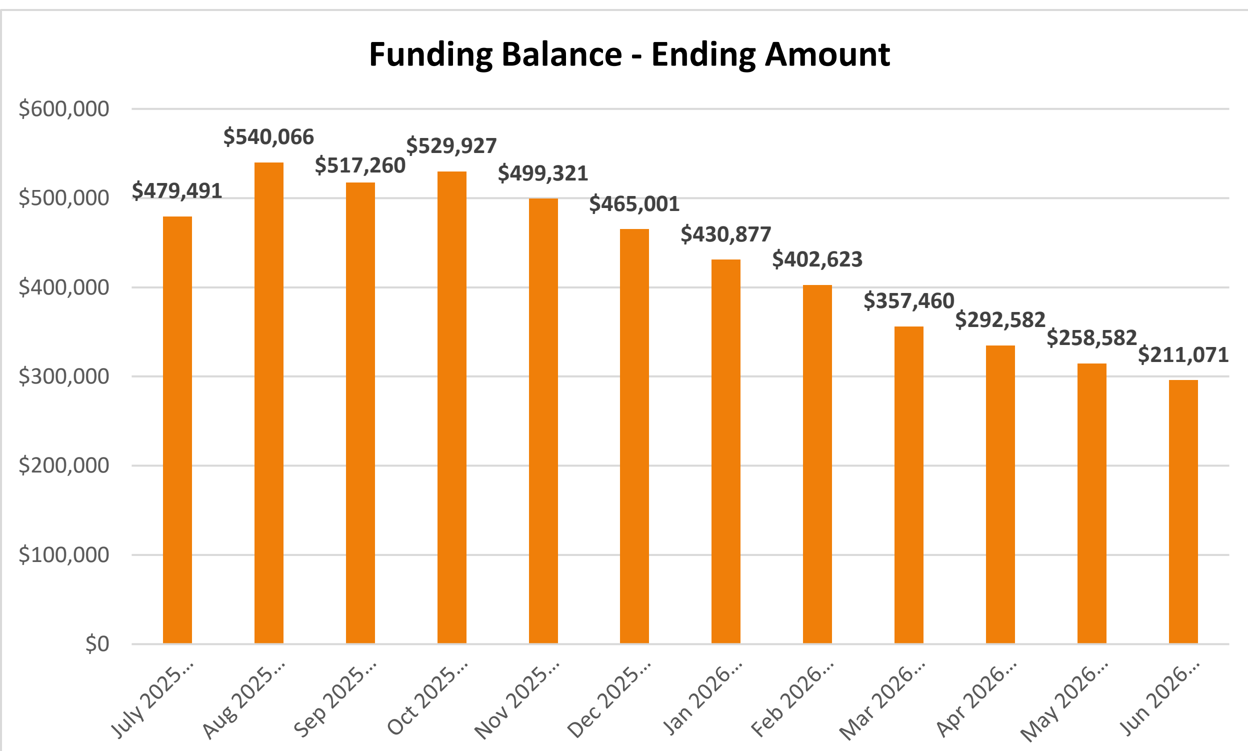
The fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2025-26 ended on June 30, 2026. During this three-month period, the Commission received approximately $3,400 in revenue. During the same period, the Commission incurred approximately $149,000 in total expenses. In total, LAFCO used 69% of the estimated costs for the entire fiscal year, as shown in the table below.

	FY 25-26 First Qtr. (Jul - Sep)	FY 25-26 Second Qtr (Oct - Dec)	FY 25-26 Third Qtr (Jan - Mar)	FY 25-26 Fourth Qtr (Apr - Jun)	Additional Available Funds	FY 25-26 Total	FY 25-26 Adopted Budget
Total Revenue	$503,961	$9,823	$4,324	$3,369	$295,000	$816,477	$791,500
Total Expenditure	$167,061	$116,409	$111,866	$148,516	-	$543,851	$791,500
Difference	**$336,900**	**$(106,586)**	**$(107,542)**	**$(145,147)**	**$295,000**	**$272,626**	**-**

As of June 30, 2026, the total fund balance ended with approximately $211,000. The following table highlights the fund balance during the entire fiscal year. The ending balance for FY 25-26 may be used to address any unanticipated expenses during the next fiscal year. A detailed review of LAFCO's financial performance during the fourth quarter (April to June) is shown on **page 4**.

Fund Balance / Reserves

As of June 30, 2026, the total fund balance ended with approximately $211,070. The following table will highlight the fund balance during the entire fiscal year (actual). LAFCO's fund balance reached its peak during this first quarter after receiving all the scheduled apportionment fees from the funding agencies. The end balance for FY 2025-26 will be used to balance the new budget in FY 2026-27.



FY 2025-26 Budget (Financial Performance by Quarter)

FISCAL YEAR 2025-26	FY 25-26 First Qtr. (Jul - Sep)	FY 25-26 Second Qtr (Oct - Dec)	FY 25-26 Third Qtr (Jan - Mar)	FY 25-26 Fourth Qtr (Apr - Jun)	FY 25-26 Adopted Budget	FY 25-26 Actual	Difference ($)	Budget Line Item Notes
REVENUES DESCRIPTION								
Interest	$ 5,384	$ 5,124	$ 3,908	$ 1,918	$ 1,500	$ 16,334	$ 14,834	Above estimated amount
Contributions from Other Govt Agencies	$ 494,390	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 495,000	$ 494,390	$ (610)	PVHCD allocation deferred to FY 26-27 via Commission action
LAFCO Processing Fees	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 950	$ -	$ 950	$ 950	-
Medical Charges-Employee	$ 374	$ 415	$ 415	$ 501	$ -	$ 1,705	$ 1,705	-
Misc. Revenue	$ 3,814	$ 4,284	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 8,098	$ 8,098	Reimbursement from Monterey LAFCO for admin services
Re-budget from Fund Balance	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 295,000	$ 295,000	$ 247,985	-
TOTAL REVENUES	**$ 503,961**	**$ 9,823**	**$ 4,324**	**$ 3,369**	**$ 791,500**	**$ 816,477**	**$ 272,962**	**Additional Funds in Total Revenue**
EXPENDITURES DESCRIPTION								
Regular Pay	$ 55,546	$ 69,696	$ 58,080	$ 82,569	$ 280,000	$ 265,891	$ 14,109	Remaining Funds
Holiday Pay	$ 1,478	$ 4,224	$ 5,280	$ 4,067	$ 10,300	$ 15,050	$ (4,750)	Over budgeted amount
Social Security	$ 4,378	$ 4,914	$ 4,847	$ 6,857	$ 18,000	$ 20,996	$ (2,996)	Remaining Funds
PERS	$ 75,107	$ 8,327	$ 7,069	$ 9,618	$ 113,000	$ 100,122	$ 12,878	Remaining Funds
Insurances	$ 11,020	$ 11,120	$ 12,050	$ 15,065	$ 45,000	$ 49,255	$ (4,255)	Remaining Funds
Unemployment	$ -	$ -	$ 868	$ -	$ 1,000	$ 868	$ 132	Remaining Funds
Workers Comp	$ -	$ 114	$ -	$ 1,302	$ 1,500	$ 1,416	$ 84	Remaining Funds
Salaries Sub-total	**$ 147,528**	**$ 98,395**	**$ 88,194**	**$ 119,480**	**$ 468,800**	**$ 453,598**	**$ 15,202**	**Remaining Funds in Salaries & Benefits**
Telecom	$ 100	$ 204	$ 405	$ 510	$ 1,600	$ 1,219	$ 381	Remaining Funds
Office Equipment	$ 33	$ 66	$ 33	$ 33	$ 200	$ 165	$ 35	Remaining Funds
Memberships	$ 5,723	$ 1,872	$ -	$ -	$ 7,800	$ 7,595	$ 205	Remaining Funds
Duplicating	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 200	$ -	$ 200	Remaining Funds
PC Software	$ 495	$ -	$ 90	$ -	$ 700	$ 586	$ 114	Remaining Funds
Postage	$ 7	$ 14	$ 4	$ 4	$ 400	$ 29	$ 371	Remaining Funds
Subscriptions	$ 2,307	$ 396	$ 312	$ 312	$ 3,300	$ 3,328	$ (28)	Over budgeted amount
Supplies	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 400	$ -	$ 400	Remaining Funds
Accounting	$ -	$ -	$ 13,750	$ 1,210	$ 11,500	$ 14,960	$ (3,460)	Over budgeted amount
Attorney	$ -	$ 3,897	$ 3,106	$ 3,313	$ 15,000	$ 10,316	$ 4,684	Remaining Funds
Data Process GIS	$ 3,892	$ 4,680	$ -	$ 4,680	$ 14,000	$ 13,252	$ 748	Remaining Funds
Director Fees	$ 200	$ 1,200	$ -	$ 3,000	$ 5,000	$ 4,400	$ 600	Remaining Funds
Prof. Services	$ 3,380	$ 1,250	$ 5,000	$ 12,583	$ 38,000	$ 22,213	$ 15,787	Remaining Funds
Legal Notices	$ 392	$ 176	$ 616	$ 454	$ 4,000	$ 1,638	$ 2,362	Remaining Funds
Rents	$ -	$ 205	$ 205	$ 410	$ 10,000	$ 820	$ 9,180	Remaining Funds
Misc. Expenses	$ 338	$ 781	$ 150	$ 1,955	$ 4,500	$ 3,225	$ 1,275	Remaining Funds
Air Fare	$ 511	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 600	$ 511	$ 89	Remaining Funds
Training	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 500	$ -	$ 500	Remaining Funds
Lodging	$ -	$ 1,743	$ -	$ -	$ 2,000	$ 1,743	$ 257	Remaining Funds
Mileage	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	Remaining Funds
Travel-Other	$ 54	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 54	$ (54)	Unanticipated Expense
Registrations	$ 2,100	$ 1,530	$ -	$ 570	$ 3,000	$ 4,200	$ (1,200)	Additional Commisioner Attended
Supplies Sub-total	**$ 19,533**	**$ 18,013**	**$ 23,671**	**$ 29,036**	**$ 122,700**	**$ 90,253**	**$ 32,447**	**Remaining Funds in Services & Supplies**
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$ 167,061**	**$ 116,409**	**$ 111,866**	**$ 148,516**	**$ 591,500**	**$ 543,851**	**$ 47,649**	**Remaining Funds in Total Expenditures**

RECENT & UPCOMING MEETINGS

LAFCO staff values collaboration with local agencies, the public, and other LAFCOs to explore and initiate methods to improve efficiency in the delivery of municipal services. During the fourth quarter (April – June), staff participated in over 40 meetings. For transparency purposes, a summary of those meetings is shown in the following table.

April Meetings			
Topic	**Date**	**Subject Agency(ies)**	**Purpose**
Working Group-Workshop Session	4/7	CALAFCO	Meeting to consider a new proposed CALAFCO Regional Map structure.
Fire-related projects	4/8	LAFCO Fire Ad Hoc Committee	Staff met with members of the LAFCO ad hoc committee to discuss ongoing fire-related projects.
Mentorship Program	4/15	CALAFCO	Staff met with their respective mentor/mentee participated in the CALAFCO Mentorship program.
Fire-Related Updates	4/15	Fire Department Advisory Group	Staff attended and participated in the regular meeting of the advisory body.
Legislative Committee	4/16	CALAFCO	Staff participated in CALAFCO's regular legislative committee meeting.
Mentorship Program	4/16	CALAFCO	Staff met with their respective mentor/mentee participated in the CALAFCO Mentorship program.
Working Group-Workshop Session	4/16	CALAFCO	Meeting to consider a new proposed CALAFCO Regional Map structure.
Community Event Planning	4/16	Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District	Staff met with reps of the County of Santa Cruz, PVFPD, and CAL FIRE to plan an upcoming community workshop.
Healthcare District-related Updates	4/20	Pajaro Valley Health Care District	Staff met with PVHCD CEO Stephen Gray to discuss district updates.
LAFCO 201 Webinar	4/22	CALAFCO	Staff planned and hosted a "LAFCO 201" webinar on behalf of CALAFCO. Presentation was attended by over 80 individuals.
Working Group-Workshop Session	4/23	CALAFCO	Meeting to consider a new proposed CALAFCO Regional Map structure.
Annual Conference Presentation	4/23	Fire District Associations of California	Staff presented at the FDAC Annual Conference held in Seaside.
Cienaga Heights Annexation Update	4/23	MidPen Housing	Staff met with MidPen Housing reps to discuss the proposed Cienaga Heights annexation to Watsonville.
Mentorship Program	4/30	CALAFCO	Staff met with their respective mentor/mentee participated in the CALAFCO Mentorship program.
Working Group – Workshop Session	4/30	CALAFCO	Meeting to discuss and considered a new proposed CALAFCO Reginal Map structure.

May Meetings			
Topic	**Date**	**Subject Agency(ies)**	**Purpose**
LAFCO Executive Officer Recruitment	5/1	Placer LAFCO	Staff assisted Placer LAFCO in their process of hiring a new Executive Officer through a shared services agreement.
LAFCO Executive Officer Recruitment	5/8	Placer LAFCO	Staff conducted candidate interviews for the Placer LAFCO EO position.
Mentorship Program	5/12	CALAFCO	Staff met with their respective mentor/mentee participated in the CALAFCO Mentorship program.
Working Group – Workshop Session	5/12	CALAFCO	Meeting to consider a new proposed CALAFCO Regional Map structure.
Community Workshop	5/13	Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District	Staff coordinated with PVFPD, the County, and CAL FIRE to prepare for the upcoming community workshops.
LAFCO Executive Officer Recruitment	5/14	Placer LAFCO	Staff conducted candidate interviews for the Placer LAFCO EO position.
Board Meeting	5/15	CALAFCO	Staff, as a board member, participated in the regular meeting of the board of directors.
SB 827 Training	5/16	California Special Districts Association	Along with CSDA, staff hosted a training event on SB 827 for special districts in Santa Cruz County.
Fire-related Updates	5/21	Scotts Valley Fire Protection District	Staff met with Chief Mark Correria to discuss SVFPD fire-related updates.
Community Workshop	5/23 (Saturday)	Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District	Staff hosted and participated in an in-person educational workshop on the proposed reorganization of PVFPD.
Working Group – Workshop Session	5/26	CALAFCO	Meeting to consider a new proposed CALAFCO Regional Map structure.
Community Workshop	5/26	Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District	Staff hosted and participated in a virtual educational workshop on the proposed reorganization of PVFPD.
LAFCO Executive Officer Recruitment	5/29	Placer LAFCO	Staff conducted the second round of interviews with the selected candidates for the Placer LAFCO EO position.
Workday Training	Throughout May	County of Santa Cruz	Staff participated in various in-person and virtual training courses for the County of Santa Cruz's new Workday system.

June Meetings			
Topic	**Date**	**Subject Agency(ies)**	**Purpose**
Fire-related Updates	6/2	City of Watsonville	Staff met with City Manager Tamara Vides to discuss fire-related updates.
Upcoming Municipal Service Review	6/5	La Selva Beach Recreation District	Staff met with representatives of La Selva Beach Recreation District to discuss the upcoming service and sphere review.
Mentorship Program	6/8	CALAFCO	Staff met with their respective mentor/mentee participated in the CALAFCO Mentorship program.
Placer LAFCO Final Interview Process	6/10	Placer LAFCO	Staff attended Placer LAFCO's special meeting to conduct the final interview with the finalists.
LAFCO Special Meeting	6/15	Placer LAFCO	As part of a shared services agreement, staff attended the special meeting to assist in the hiring of a new Placer LAFCO EO.
Upcoming Municipal Service Review	6/16	County of Santa Cruz	Staff met with CSA 11 reps to discuss the upcoming service and sphere review.
Fire-related Updates	6/17	Fire Department Advisory Group	Staff attended and participated in the regular meeting of the advisory body.
Mentorship Program	6/18	CALAFCO	Staff met with their respective mentor/mentee participated in the CALAFCO Mentorship program.
Annual Conference Planning Committee	6/22	CALAFCO	Staff participated in the Planning Committee for the upcoming CALAFCO annual conference.
New Executive Officer	6/22	Monterey LAFCO	Staff attended the regular meeting for Monterey LAFCO to welcome their new Executive Officer.
Annexation Update	6/25	City of Watsonville	Staff met with representatives from MidPen Housing and City Manager Tamara Vides to discuss the Cienaga Heights annexation.
Coastal Region	6/25	CALAFCO	Staff hosted a meeting with the 15 LAFCOs in the Coastal Region to review the proposed regional map.
Upcoming Municipal Service Review	6/26	County of Santa Cruz	Staff met with CSA 11 reps to discuss the upcoming service and sphere review.

LAFCO

Santa Cruz Local Agency Formation Commission

Date: August 5, 2026
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Francisco Estrada, LAFCO Analyst
Subject: Press Articles during the months of May through July 2026

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION
LAFCO staff monitors local newspapers, publications, and other media outlets for any news affecting local agencies or LAFCOs around the State. Articles are presented to the Commission on a periodic basis. This agenda item is for informational purposes only and does not require any action. Therefore, it is recommended that the Commission receive and file the Executive Officer's report.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
The following is a summary of recent press articles. Full articles are attached.

Article #1: "Pajaro Valley school board to discuss potential Renaissance High, Duncan Holbert relocation". The article, dated May 18, informs the community on an upcoming presentation from the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) on the proposal to relocate Renaissance High School to the campus of Duncan Holbert and disperse its special needs programming to sites around the district. Among the reasons cited for the proposed relocation were the high levels of chromium-6 present in the water system, which will require millions in funding for infrastructure upgrades before connecting to Soquel Creek Water District to receive safe and reliable water service. The idea was met with community opposition due to a lack of clear planning, especially regarding implementation of the proposed staffing and logistical changes.

Article #2: "Watsonville Community Hospital will receive $10.6 million state grant to help weather financial challenges". The article, dated May 29, announces that Watsonville Community Hospital, operated by the Pajaro Valley Health Care District (PVHCD), was one of four hospitals in the state to receive a $10 million grant, providing temporary financial relief to the agency. The grant is provided by the California Department of Health Care Access and Information, and funding comes through AB 108 with support from Senator John Laird and is intended to help stabilize hospitals that would otherwise struggle to meet their financial obligations before July 1. The funding will provide a crucial funding bridge to the health care district as the board continues to identify an external partner to help manage the day-to-day operations of the hospital.

Article #3: "Capitola City Council continues deliberations on district-based elections". The article, dated May 29, provides an update on the City of Capitola's first public hearing on transitioning to district-based elections. The action comes after the City received a letter of demand from a Southern California law firm arguing that it violates federal law. At the meeting, the council received presentations from staff and experts and provided a timeline for future public hearings. At the first hearing, the city council did not provide directions on a few matters, such as determining the number of districts to be drawn and whether Capitola should opt for a directly elected mayor.

Article #4: "Supervisor Justin Cummings hosts fire preparedness and resiliency event in Bonny Doon". The article, dated May 30, reports on the Community Fire Preparedness and Resilience Fair hosted by Santa Cruz Supervisor Justin Cummings to provide wildfire preparedness information and share expertise to residents on the county's north coast and Bonny Doon area. Along with Supervisor Cummings, several local nonprofit organizations, businesses, and resident-led groups joined and provided residents with resources to prepare year-round for wildfires and emergencies. Additionally, as a Firewise-recognized community, the event was held to demonstrate to insurance companies that Bonny Doon is doing its part to help mitigate wildfires.

Article #5: "What will Watsonville Community Hospital's next chapter be?" The article, dated May 10, is authored by Senator John Laird, and provides the public with context and background information on why Watsonville Community Hospital, and other hospitals across the state, are currently struggling. He cites the disproportionate impacts from the passage of HR-1 and its cuts to Medicare and Medi-Cal as the primary reason why some hospitals need additional financial assistance. Senator Laird explains the importance of the hospital to the region, highlights the progress it has made under the health care district, what challenges still lie ahead, and that giving up is not an option.

Article #6: "Watsonville Community Hospital CEO Stephen Gray to step down from position in July". The article, dated June 1, announces the departure of Stephen Gray as the CEO of Watsonville Community Hospital and explains the process to identify a replacement to lead the health care district. Under his leadership, voters approved the passage of Measure N, the district purchased the property and campus of the hospital, and that the agency was close to breaking even in 2024. Despite the progress, the hospital suffered a severe cyber-attack, a decline in the number of patients due to new immigration policies, changes to its funding source at the federal and state funding and now requires grant funding to provide some financial relief.

Article #7: "Colantuono, Highsmith, Whatley, PC Bulletin Update on Public Law". The bulletin, dated June 9, provides readers with information on a requirement by the Department of Justice to make web content and mobile apps accessible to individuals with disabilities. Agencies serving 50,000 or more people will be required to comply by April 2027, while smaller entities have until 2028 to make their web content and mobile apps accessible to all residents regardless of abilities. Compliance will involve many steps and take time to adapt, but failure to do so may result in litigation arguing residents have the private right of action under title II of the American Disabilities Act.

Article #8: "Steve Sanchez Calls for Independent Forensic Audits". The article, dated June 10, reports on requests made by La Quinta councilmember and Riverside LAFCO Commissioner Steve Sanchez, which includes expanded Municipal Service Review (MSR) oversight reforms, additional transparency and accountability frameworks, and forensic-level audit policy discussions. Councilmember Sanchez cites concerns and information he received from current and former local agency representatives regarding the procurement practices, financial stewardship, governance issues, conflicts of interest, and taxpayer accountability by public agencies. These actions, according to Sanchez, are meant to strengthen public trust and accountability, not just to merely identify wrongdoing, and to ensure resources are being managed responsibly on behalf of Riverside residents.

<u>Article #9: “Fiscal analysis, updated timeline and a penalty: the latest on La Jolla’s cityhood effort”.</u> The article, dated June 19, is an update on the five-year effort by the Association for the City of La Jolla to detach from the city of San Diego and become its own city. On June 17, London Moeder Advisors were announced as the agency conducing the comprehensive analysis on the financial impact of the proposed secession plan and in an updated timeline, hoping to have the matter on the ballot by 2028 to be decided. Currently, San Diego would be projected to lose over $8 million in funding with La Jolla’s departure, but additional analysis is expected to be completed to get a clearer financial picture. Finally, the resident-led group was fined $2,500 for repeated failures to produce monthly campaign statements, which the committee approved to pay.

<u>Article #10: “San Rafael, Marinwood approve firefighting plan”.</u> The article, dated June 19, is about efforts to integrate the Marinwood Community Services District fire staff into the City of San Rafael Fire Department over the next few years as part of a three-phase plan to consolidate agencies. The two fire agencies have been cooperating and sharing services for years, and efforts to consolidate represent a commitment to implementing a new long-term service delivery model that will better serve all residents. The process also recognizes the operational challenges created by two agencies responding to a shared area and is seen as an opportunity to build a unified approach prioritizing public and firefighter safety, and efficient use of funding and resources.

<u>Article #11: “San Simeon dissolution plan advances as county weighs takeover options”.</u> The article, dated June 25, provides information on efforts to dissolve the San Simeon Community Services District and transfer responsibilities to the County of San Luis Obispo due to the ongoing financial and operational challenges faced. Services to be transferred include water, sewer, road maintenance, street lighting, and weed abatement.

<u>Article #12: “Watsonville Community Hospital appoints veteran healthcare leader as interim CEO”.</u> The article, dated June 25, announced the appointment of veteran healthcare leader Tim Moran as interim CEO of the Watsonville Community Hospital following the recent departure of Stephen Gray. Mr. Moran will serve through January 2027 as the board continues to search for a permanent replacement. He had previously served as interim CEO in 2011 and has served as CEO for Tri-City Medical Center and Chino Valley Medical Center.

<u>Article #13: “Placer LAFCO names new executive officer”.</u> The article, dated June 27, informed the public that Jason Fried, formerly of Marin LAFCO, has been appointed Executive Officer for Placer LAFCO. Fried was selected for his years of LAFCO service, familiarity with jurisdictional and governance changes, policy development and successful intergovernmental collaborations. The recruitment and hiring process was led by Santa Cruz LAFCO staff as part of a shared services agreement with Placer LAFCO.

<u>Article #14: “As Felton Fire faces mounting financial challenges, an assessment proposal divides residents”.</u> The article, dated June 30, provides information on the Felton Fire Protection District and their ongoing Proposition 218 ballot measure process, providing an explanation why raising funds for the struggling fire agency is necessary. The article also explains what will happen if the ballot measure fails or succeeds, as well as what limited options are available for the residents to move forward and receive an appropriate level of fire protection services.

Article #15: "Jury calls for consolidation of districts". The article, dated July 1, informs the public of a report published by the Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommending greater consolidation of special districts providing similar essential services. While noting the geography for parts of the county, the report recommended adopting shared countywide administrative services and standardizing performance measures to address shared aging infrastructure, workforce shortages, climate change, and rising costs. Marin LAFCO Executive Officer Jason Fried highlighted existing efforts to address the longstanding issues in the report but also acknowledged that more time is needed to implement the strategies developed behind the scenes. In general, local officials are supportive of the jury's recommendations but also caution that broader consolidation can be a disservice without more careful analysis.

Article #16: "PVUSD approves $2.86 million water project at Renaissance High". The article, dated July 2, announces to the public that a special meeting was held by the board of PVUSD to approve a $2.58 million state grant to connect Renaissance High School to Soquel Creek Water District and provide clean water service. The funding was provided by the state's Expedited Drinking Water grant program and will allow for the replacement of the campus' groundwater system that contains elevated levels of hexavalent chromium. Students and staff will now be able to access safe and reliable drinking water from a reliable public agency, and the project is expected to be completed by December 2028.

Article #17: "County recognized as Fire Risk Reduction Community, making certain homeowners eligible for wildfire insurance discounts". The article, dated July 6, informs the public on Santa Cruz County's designation to the California Fire Risk Reduction Community List, assisting residents with insurance issues and strengthening future wildfire prevention efforts. Since the CZU fire of 2020, residents have faced increasing premiums or non-renewals determinations from insurance companies, and this effort is a positive step in making the county more prepared and more competitive for wildfire prevention funding. The designation will also allow homeowners to pursue potential insurance discounts.

Article #18: "Joe Clarke Announces Campaign for Second Term on Capitola City Council". The article, dated July 10, announces Councilmember Joe Clarke is seeking a second term serving the Capitola City Council. Councilmember Clarke was first elected in 2022, and has worked to address housing, infrastructure, and community development needs. Among his achievements, Councilmember Clarke has helped rebuild the Capitola Wharf, reopened Rispin Mansion Park, and assisted in the upcoming opening of Treasure Cove.

Article #19: "El Dorado Hills inches closer to cityhood as environmental study comes back". The article, dated July 10, details El Dorado Hills' efforts to gain cityhood after a draft environmental study determined that there would be no significant environmental impacts. The process can move forward but is still scheduled to conduct a comprehensive financial analysis and will require voter approval. This is not the first time cityhood has been attempted, and land use has been cited as the reason residents have pursued this governance option.

Article #20: "Los Altos Council to vote on giving fire stations to fire agency". The article, dated July 14, explains Los Altos City Council's decision to provide Santa Clara County Fire District with additional funding for maintenance before it is annexed into the fire district. The fund transfer is part of Los Altos plan to join county fire district rather than continuing to contract with the district as it has been doing for three decades. Although some residents had feedback on the process, Santa Clara LAFCO held a 21-day protest and a protest hearing on July 9 to review the protest notices received by constituents. Written protests submitted to LAFCO will be reviewed before the next steps are announced.

Article #21: "Felton Fire Protection District passes assessment for new funding". The article, dated July 28, announces that the Felton community approved a new benefit assessment with 67.88% support, providing an estimated $1.7 million annually to stabilize and modernize the district's operations. The article notes that FFPD has faced a 180% increase in call volume, relies heavily on volunteers, and operates out of a 71-year-old station that has never undergone major maintenance. The additional revenue will help fund facility upgrades, replacement of aging apparatus, and the transition to a sustainable staffing model that includes a full-time fire chief, a full-time engine company, and administrative support.

Respectfully Submitted,

Francisco Estrada
LAFCO Analyst

Attachments:
1. "Pajaro Valley school board to discuss potential Renaissance High, Duncan…"
2. "Watsonville Community Hospital will receive $10.6 million state grant to help…"
3. "Capitola City Council continues deliberations on district-based elections"
4. "Supervisor Justin Cummings hosts fire preparedness and resiliency event…"
5. "What will Watsonville Community Hospital's next chapter be?"
6. "Watsonville Community Hospital CEO Stephen Gray to step down from position…"
7. "Colantuono, Highsmith, Whatley, PC Bulletin Update on Public Law"
8. "Steve Sanchez Calls for Independent Forensic Audits"
9. "Fiscal analysis, updated timeline and a penalty: the latest on La Jolla's cityhood…"
10. "San Rafael, Marinwood approve firefighting plan"
11. "San Simeon dissolution plan advances as county weighs takeover options"
12. "Watsonville Community Hospital appoints veteran healthcare leaders as interim…"
13. "Placer LAFCO names new executive officer"
14. "As Felton Fire faces mounting financial challenges, an assessment proposal…"
15. "Jury calls for consolidation of districts"
16. "PVUSD approves $2.86 million water project at Renaissance High"
17. "County recognized as Fire Risk Reduction Community, making certain home…"
18. "Joe Clarke Announces Campaign for Second Term on Capitola City Council"
19. "El Dorado Hills inches closer to cityhood as environmental study comes back"
20. "Los Altos Council to vote on giving fire stations to fire agency"
21. "Felton Fire Protection District passes assessment for new funding"

9A: ATTACHMENT 1

santacruzsentinel.com

Pajaro Valley school board to discuss potential Renaissance High, Duncan Holbert relocation

Nick Sestanovich

7–8 minutes

WATSONVILLE — The Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees will receive a presentation Wednesday on a proposal to relocate Renaissance High School to the Duncan Holbert Preschool campus and move Duncan Holbert's program to campuses throughout the district.

District officials wrote in a news release that the goal was to "create more inclusive environments for both preschool students receiving special education services and students enrolled in alternative education programs." The release emphasized that no final decision has been made and that this initial presentation to the board would be the start of a formal public review process.

According to the planned presentation by Peggy Pughe and Heather Gorman, the district's director of student support services and the district's special education director, respectively, a major driving force for the proposal was infrastructure issues at Renaissance High's current campus on Spring Valley Road in La Selva Beach. Currently, they wrote, the building has high levels of chromium-6 in the water and connecting to the Soquel Creek Water District would cost more than $3 million and take approximately two years.

Renaissance High School. (Nick Sestanovich — Santa Cruz Sentinel file)

Other factors cited were transportation barriers, lower attendance rates than the state average for continuation high schools and lack of proximity to career technical education programs, internships and apprenticeships.

"A Watsonville relocation creates a competitive program and wealth of student opportunities," Gorman and Pughe wrote.

The proposal would move Renaissance High to the Duncan Holbert building on the Rolling Hills Middle School campus on Herman Avenue in Watsonville. Duncan Holbert is geared toward special education preschoolers and offers services such as early intervention, therapy and a preschool program.

Pughe and Gorman wrote that, under California Education Code, educational institutions are required to provide special education students the same opportunity to learn in the same environment to the maximum extent possible. Moving the Duncan Holbert program to different campuses, they wrote, would create a stable continuum from preschool to the end of elementary school.

"This integration allows special education students to experience school alongside general education peers," Pughe and Gorman wrote.

The proposal would transition Duncan Holbert's preschool program, Early Start and state preschool programs to other district sites with instructional programs and support services suited for students, officials wrote. The district conducted feasibility studies to determine which campuses to potentially relocate the programs to — specifically ones which had accessible classrooms and playgrounds — and identified Ann Soldo, H.A. Hyde, Landmark and Ohlone elementary schools as possible sites.

“For preschool students, the proposal aligns with ongoing advocacy from the District’s Community Advisory Committee (CAC), which has encouraged PVUSD to expand inclusive practices that allow students with disabilities to learn alongside same-age peers while continuing to receive specialized support and services,” district officials wrote. “For Renaissance High School students, relocating to a more centralized campus would improve access to transportation, student services, extracurricular opportunities, and Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways across the District.”

However, not all are happy with the proposal. Katlyn Bach, a local occupational therapist, started a petition on Change.org urging the district not to move forward with relocating Duncan Holbert. As of Monday, the petition received more than 1,200 signatures.

Specifically, the petition raised concerns about what the proposal would mean for Duncan Holbert’s population of special education students.

“Duncan currently allows preschool teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, assessment teams, behavior staff, Early Start 0-3 teams, office staff, and families to collaborate consistently and naturally in one location,” the petition stated. “Dispersing programs across multiple campuses would weaken communication, delay support, and reduce the effectiveness of services for students.”

Other concerns were raised on the potential impacts to staffing, maintaining a safe environment for students, the displacement of between 150 and 200 students with disabilities and the lack of a clear plan on which campuses students would attend or what inclusion opportunities would be available.

“Simply being located on a campus with older students does not automatically create authentic inclusion opportunities, especially when preschool students remain largely separated from older students throughout the school day and activities,” the petition stated. “In fact, Duncan Holbert Preschool has already made significant progress toward meaningful inclusion on its current campus."

This is not the first time the district has considered relocating Renaissance High. In 2025, the district proposed relocating Renaissance High students to the Pajaro Valley High School campus to allow Ceiba College Preparatory Academy — a public charter school within the district's boundaries — to move into the Renaissance campus. However, the Renaissance community did not support the idea, and the board voted unanimously to approve a pair of resolutions that kept both schools in their current locations.

The district acknowledged that the proposal would "create questions for families and staff" and assured that it would communicate throughout the process. The district is continuing to work with stakeholder groups for input on the proposed model, would bring it to the Sustainable Schools Advisory for input and deliver a recommendation at the June 17 board meeting. If approved by the board, the district would spend the summer remodeling the current Duncan Holbert campus to be ready for the start of the 2026-27 academic year.

In other business, the district will:

• Consider a job description and $228,000 employment contract for Mark Herbst to serve as deputy superintendent to replace the current assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction and professional development position previously held by Claudia Monjaras. Herbst is currently the associate superintendent of student support services at Modesto City Schools.

• Consider a resolution finalizing notices for classified and certificated employee layoffs.

• Receive a report on a policy regarding student cellphone use on campus.

The board will meet publicly at 6 p.m. Wednesday in the district office boardroom, 294 Green Valley Road, Watsonville. A closed session will precede the regular meeting at 5 p.m.

9A: ATTACHMENT 2

lookout.co

Watsonville Community Hospital will receive $10.6 million state grant to help weather financial challenges

Tania Ortiz

4–5 minutes

Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

Quick Take

Watsonville Community Hospital is receiving a $10.6 million state grant that will provide temporary financial relief. Watsonville is one of four California hospitals receiving additional state funding.

➤ **Para leer el artículo en español, haga** clic aquí**.**

Watsonville Community Hospital will receive $10.6 million from an emergency budget measure to support nonprofit and public hospitals “experiencing immediate and significant financial distress.”

Watsonville is one of four hospitals in California that will receive grants from the California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), according to a media release Friday. The funding comes from Assembly Bill 108, which allocated nearly $25 million to help the struggling hospitals.

The money is intended to help stabilize hospitals that would otherwise be unable to pay their debts before July 1. Hospitals selected to receive funding had fewer than 10 days' cash on hand, have exhausted other financial options, and more than half of their patients must be enrolled in public programs, such as Medi-Cal or Medicaid, or are uninsured, according to the bill.

During the Watsonville hospital board's monthly meeting Wednesday evening, CEO Stephen Gray said the facility has had "somewhere between six to eight days of cash on hand." And roughly 85% of the hospital's patients rely on Medi-Cal.

The three other hospitals that will receive state funding are: Palo Verde Hospital in Riverside County ($3 million), El Centro Regional Medical Center ($11 million) and Southern Inyo Healthcare District in Lone Pine ($400,000).

The $10.6 million grant is "a crucial funding bridge during a challenging financial period" as the hospital continues to navigate challenges caused by funding delays and changes at the federal level, said Gray in a written statement to Lookout.

Julie Peterson, the Watsonville hospital's chief financial officer, said Wednesday the hospital could use a portion of the money for its backlog of payments to suppliers and "other operational needs." Gray added the funding will also be used for debt management and staff salaries.

Hospital leadership, meanwhile, is also resuming its search for an external partner to help manage the facility's day-to-day operations after a potential match fell through.

Hospital board chair Tony Nuñez told Lookout earlier this week that hospital leadership believed they were "very close" to presenting a formal proposal, but ultimately the potential match did not work out. He declined to share which healthcare provider, nor the reason why the potential partnership fell through.

Hospital leadership have already scheduled meetings with other potential partners in the coming weeks, said Nuñez.

Establishing a partnership with a large healthcare provider could also help improve the hospital's balance sheet by allowing it to negotiate better rates with insurance companies and better prices for supplies, things that are harder to do as a small independent hospital, Gray previously told Lookout.

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FOR THE RECORD: This story was updated to include comments from Watsonville Community Hospital CEO Stephen Gray.

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Have something to say? Lookout welcomes letters to the editor, within our policies, from readers. Guidelines here.

Tania Ortiz joins Lookout Santa Cruz as the California Local News Fellow to cover South County. Tania earned her master's degree in journalism in December 2023 from Syracuse University, where she was... More by Tania Ortiz

9A: ATTACHMENT 3

santacruzsentinel.com

Capitola City Council continues deliberations on district-based elections

Caroline Hemphill

4–5 minutes

CAPITOLA — The Capitola City Council held its first public hearing on its transition to district-based City Council elections Thursday night.

In March, the city of Capitola received a demand letter from Malibu-based law firm Shenkman & Hughes alleging that the city's at-large election system for councilmembers violated the California Voting Rights Act. The letter claimed that Capitola's voting system weakens the voting power of Latinos, pointing to the council's lack of Latino representation.

Since the act was passed in 2001, over 200 cities and 300 school districts have made the switch to district-based elections. Jurisdictions that have tried to fight lawsuits have spent millions of dollars in legal fees, and none have been successful so far.

Due to the potential costs of fighting a lawsuit, the City Council chose to begin the process of drawing district maps. Though the change will not affect 2026 City Council elections, the first in a series of required public hearings took place Thursday night at a City Council meeting.

City staff announced during the meeting that the city had received a 30-day extension to the original timeline, pushing the deadline to complete district maps to Aug. 28. The city adjusted its timeline in response. The second public hearing will take place June 11. No official maps will be drawn or reviewed until after that hearing. On June 20, the city will host a webinar for continued community outreach. There will be two more public hearings to review and refine draft maps scheduled for June 25 and July 23. The city plans to adopt the final maps Aug. 25, just before the mandated deadline.

The city is working with a demographer from the National Demographics Corporation to draw the maps. The demographer gave a presentation Thursday night to explain the rules that must be followed when drawing district maps. All districts must have approximately equal populations and have clear geographic boundaries, such as rivers or streets. The district lines should also avoid dividing neighborhoods or communities of interest that should be kept together — for example, groups with shared policy concerns, socioeconomic characterizations or voter registration rates.

Capitola residents are allowed to submit their own maps through tools on the city's website. Paper maps of the city that can be used to draw maps are also available. Additionally, the city has a tool that allows residents to draw the boundaries of Capitola neighborhoods. This information will help determine which neighborhoods or communities of interest should be considered when drawing districts. To be considered at a public hearing, resident maps must be submitted 10 days prior to meetings.

The City Council adopted the updated timeline for switching to districts and added one extra community meeting June 11, which will take place right before the public hearing that has already been scheduled.

The City Council did not provide direction on how many districts should be drawn, or whether Capitola should opt for a directly-elected mayor.

The city can either choose to have four districts and a directly-elected mayor, or keep its five-district system with a rotating mayorship. There are pros and cons to both options. A four-district system may allow the mayor to serve as a formal figurehead for the city, and would allow residents to vote for both a City Council member and a mayor. A five-district system would maintain Capitola's tradition of a rotating mayorship and would ensure that geographical representation on the council remains balanced. If the city opts for a directly-elected mayor, they would also need to choose between two-year and four-year terms.

None of these changes to the mayorship would change the position's power. The city has a City Council and city manager form of government, and the mayor has no more power than any other councilmember.

Councilmembers said they wanted to hear more feedback from the public before making early decisions about the number of districts that should appear in draft maps.

To view submitted maps or draw a map, visit the city's website at cityofcapitola.gov.

9A: ATTACHMENT 4

santacruzsentinel.com

Supervisor Justin Cummings hosts fire preparedness and resiliency event in Bonny Doon

Gabrielle Gillette

6–8 minutes

BONNY DOON — As fire conditions continue morphing throughout California and the six-year anniversary of the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire nears, Bonny Doon residents gathered Saturday to learn about fire preparedness and recovery from a panel of fire safety organizations.

The Community Fire Preparedness and Resilience Fair was hosted by Santa Cruz County Supervisor Justin Cummings and the Bonny Doon Fire Safe Council at Bonny Doon Fire and Rescue's Martin Station. The fair's main event was a panel discussion from nine fire resource and preparedness organizations for community members to get all their wildfire preparedness questions answered.

Wildfire preparedness is an important issue for Cummings' District 3 constituents, which includes Santa Cruz County's North Coast and the Bonny Doon area, so he wanted to make sure people were as informed as possible about how to be prepared.

"We hear a lot about 'How can we be better prepared?'" Cummings said. "We know peoples' insurance have been getting dropped and premiums are going up, so it's really figuring out how we can better make our properties safe against fire."

The event aimed to be a way for residents to find resources all at once, instead of trying to track down different companies and organizations, so they could get answers to all of their questions in one place, Cummings said.

Alongside the panel moderated by Dave Reid, director of the Santa Cruz County Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience, the station was lined with informational booths, free barbecue food, fire truck tours, games and live music.

One booth, the Long Term Recovery Group of Santa Cruz County, had a game where players spun a wheel that asked them questions about their fire and flood preparedness, and their answers moved them closer to or farther away from a cornhole board, where they had to make the most amount of points to win.

The Long Term Recovery Group works with people affected by disasters such as the CZU fires and the 2023 atmospheric rivers, said Tonje Wold-Switzer, the group's director.

When people need to recover from disasters, there are a host of challenges to rebuilding, Wold-Switzer said. The Long Term Recovery Group helps crisis-stricken communities communicate with planning departments, get in touch with resources and has a volunteer-based rebuilding program to help survivors rebuild their homes with donations, private funding or insurance money.

The group is also a part of a collection of regional organizations throughout California garnering information from community members about where PG&E should invest money into communities and had a survey at the event that submitted participants into a raffle for gift cards, radios and go-bags.

"I know a lot of people are really angry at PG&E in communities specifically that are often plagued by power outages and wildfires," Wold-Switzer said. "So for us, it's really important that those individuals get a chance to have their voice heard when PG&E is coming into the community and investing."

During the panel discussion, Jed Wilson, CalFire CZU San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit chief, talked about the ever-changing fire conditions in California, saying that CalFire recently changed their staffing model to be further staffed from March 15 through Dec. 15.

A decade ago, Wilson said, fire season typically lasted from July through September. Now that conditions have changed, CalFire no longer sees fires in terms of “fire season,” but in terms of a “fire year,” and therefore needs to be more heavily staffed throughout the year.

Wilson also told listeners about the new California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection regulation, Zone 0, a regulatory code currently in the works to establish a required ember-resistent zone 5 feet around a structure’s perimeter in certain zones throughout California.

Zone 0 is a part of a larger concept of how people can defend their homes from fires by changing and removing certain types of vegetation from different perimeters around their structures, which would ultimately help protect the entire community or neighborhood, said Michael Young, the public information officer for CalFire CZU unit who gave a presentation at the panel.

“In addition to just the Zone 0, it’s really all about the whole package and the whole package is your whole defensible space strategy,” Young said. “It has to do with water, home hardening, working with a Firewise community, working with your neighborhood community and working with your local fire department to see what is really going to work for you.”

Firewise communities is a program led by the National Fire Protection Association that gives communities a structured way to enhance their wildfire resilience.

Lynn Sestak, a Firewise area coordinator, said California has more than 1,500 Firewise sites. Santa Cruz County has the second highest number of Firewise-recognized communities in the United States, with over 130 recognized communities spanning 27,000 acres.

The event also touched on how to navigate insurance, as constituents continue to see their premiums rise, and some have been dropped from their insurance altogether as wildfires continue to be a rising issue in California.

One of the main purposes of the event was to demonstrate to insurance companies that Bonny Doon is doing its part to help stay safe from wildfires — something that can help lower insurance costs, Cummings said.

Living in or becoming a Firewise community can also help people receive discounts on their fire insurance, said Joel Laucher, a preparedness advocate with United Policyholders. Fire insurance rates are accelerating faster than ever before, he said, and rates can be determined based on the slope of a hill a house sits on, landscape around it and width of the road it is on.

If someone gets a non-renewal notice from their insurance due to the fire safety condition of their house, they have 75 days to try to change things that are within their control, Laucher said.

“It is really about trying to make your home as fire safe as possible,” he said. “Including doing a lot of those things that were just talked about, including clearing the area around your home and making your home more fire safe.”

9A: ATTACHMENT 5

lookout.co

What will Watsonville Community Hospital's next chapter be?

John Laird

7–9 minutes

Quick Take

State Sen. John Laird warns that Watsonville Community Hospital is once again facing a financial crisis, with fewer than 10 days of cash on hand. Recently passed emergency legislation will provide $10.6 million in short-term relief to help the hospital stay afloat through July, he writes, but it is not a permanent solution. Laird argues that federal funding cuts have reversed years of financial progress and left community hospitals like Watsonville especially vulnerable. The hospital continues to seek a long-term partner to survive.

Have something to say? Lookout welcomes letters to the editor, within our policies, from readers. Guidelines here.

Watsonville Community Hospital is once again facing a financial crisis.

Right now, the hospital has reportedly been operating with fewer than 10 days of cash on hand — an extraordinarily difficult position for any hospital, especially one that serves so many families across the Pajaro Valley and south Santa Cruz County. Hospitals generally try to maintain months of reserves to weather unexpected financial problems.

Watsonville does not have that cushion.

The danger is real. Federal funding cuts and delays tied to last summer's passage of HR1 have hit hospitals across the country, especially hospitals like Watsonville, where roughly 85% of patients rely on Medicare, Medi-Cal or other public health programs. Those programs already reimburse hospitals below the actual cost of care. When federal support dries up, community hospitals feel it immediately.

That is why the legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom moved quickly this month to approve Assembly Bill 108, emergency legislation pushed by state Assembly and Senate leadership and designed to help a small number of financially distressed hospitals stay afloat. A few days ago, Watsonville Community Hospital was awarded a $10.6 million grant through the distressed hospital program created by AB 108.

The funding is intended to help the hospital get to July 1, when we expect that another distressed hospital program will be put into place by the state budget.

WATSONVILLE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL: Read more Lookout news and Community Voices opinion coverage here

This scenario – of Watsonville Community Hospital needing emergency help – might sound familiar.

In 2021, I got a call from then-County Executive Officer Carlos Palacios warning that Watsonville Community Hospital was heading toward a financial reckoning. By the end of that year, the private equity firm that owned the hospital announced plans to close it.

What followed was one of the most extraordinary community efforts our region has seen in years.

At the beginning of January 2022, I authored Senate Bill 418 with Assemblymember Robert Rivas to establish a public hospital district. The bill moved through the California Legislature in less than three weeks. The bankruptcy court accepted the district's bid for the hospital days later, and residents, healthcare workers, local businesses, elected officials and community leaders came together to raise the money needed to keep the hospital open.

If Watsonville Community Hospital had closed, there would have been no emergency room between Santa Cruz and Salinas. Thousands of residents would have lost access to emergency care, maternity services and basic health care. More than 600 people would have lost their jobs.

For many families in the Pajaro Valley, that would have been devastating.

The next year, voters approved Measure N so the hospital could purchase its facility, improve services and begin rebuilding for the future. The state recognized the situation with many stressed hospitals and created the distressed hospital loan program, which helped hospitals across the state – including Watsonville and Hollister's Hazel Hawkins Hospital – with their fiscal challenges.

Watsonville was on a path to long-term solvency, and it was expected that this year was the first year in many that the hospital would have been in the black. There was real optimism about where the hospital was headed; it finally seemed like Watsonville Community Hospital was moving toward financial stability after years of losses.

But federal officials had other ideas.

With the passage of HR1 last summer, various federal funding sources for hospitals across the country started to dry up. Funds for disadvantaged hospitals and hospital fee program funding were cut or delayed. Hospitals like Watsonville, with so many patients needing public medical assistance, were particularly hard hit. Those programs do not reimburse the full cost of medical services as it is, and if a hospital relies on a disproportionate share of public payees, it struggles. The federal bill will knock millions of people off healthcare nationwide, and hospitals like Watsonville will take a hit.

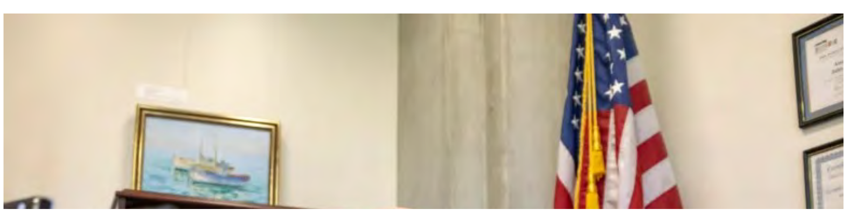
These cuts put Watsonville Community Hospital back where it was financially when it was rescued in 2022, despite making real progress in the intervening years. Right now, the biggest issue is cash flow. Hospitals generally try to keep months of reserves on hand to get through unexpected financial problems.

Again, Watsonville Community Hospital has less than 10 days of cash on hand and needs this state infusion to stay afloat.

The eligibility standards to access this emergency funding are strict. Hospitals have to show very limited cash reserves, serious financial distress and a patient population heavily dependent on Medi-Cal, Medicare and other public health care programs. While this legislation is not a permanent fix, it gives hospitals some short-term breathing room.

None of this will be easy. Community hospitals across California are dealing with rising costs, staffing shortages, and aging facilities while continuing to care for large numbers of low-income patients.

But keeping a community hospital open does not happen because of one election, one bill or one round of funding. It takes years of work, difficult decisions and a lot of people who care to continue to work together.



State Sen. John Laird. Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

After July 1, there will be more difficult choices. Hopefully, the federal hospital fee program funding will come through. Hopefully, a state distressed hospital program will be put in place – even though there is not enough money to fund everything that is needed for such hospitals in California. And there is the possibility of a long-term partnership with another entity to help Watsonville Community Hospital make it.

No one should assume the difficult decisions are behind us.

Giving up is not an option. Watsonville Community Hospital is too important to the Pajaro Valley, too important to South County families, and too important to health care in this region for us to walk away. The community already proved that this hospital is worth saving.

Now we need to keep doing the hard work in the coming months to make sure it stays that way.

State Sen. John Laird represents California Senate District 17, which includes all of Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties, and a majority of San Luis Obispo County. He chairs the Senate budget committee.

9A: ATTACHMENT 6

lookout.co

Watsonville Community Hospital CEO Stephen Gray to step down from position in July

Tania Ortiz

5–6 minutes

CEO Stephen Gray speaks at Watsonville Community Hospital in April 2025. Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

Quick Take

Watsonville Community Hospital CEO Stephen Gray will be stepping down from his role in early July, according to hospital leadership. The search for an interim replacement is currently underway.

Watsonville Community Hospital CEO Stephen Gray will step down from his position in early July, according to hospital leadership.

Gray's last day will be July 10, according to a media release Monday. The governing board of the Pajaro Valley Health Care

District, which manages the Watsonville hospital, has already started the process to identify an interim CEO, which will be followed by a search for a permanent CEO in the fall.

LAST WEEK

Gray took the helm of the hospital in 2023, when the facility became publicly owned after facing bankruptcy in 2022. He previously told Lookout that his priorities were ensuring the hospital becomes financially stable, and that staff and patients were happy.

During his tenure, the hospital has experienced financial highs and lows. In 2024, Measure N, a voter initiative to generate funding for infrastructure needs, passed, which led to the health care district buying the building and the 27-acre property the hospital sits on later that year.

Gray called the milestone the hospital's final threshold to pass to be "truly owned by the community." The hospital saved itself nearly $3 million a year in lease and insurance payments. Money from Measure N has also been used for much needed infrastructure improvements and renovations to the hospital's CT and MRI machines.

The hospital was close to breaking even for 2024, cutting its losses to nearly $100,000. However, that fall, Watsonville Community Hospital fell victim to a cyberattack, impacting its finances because the hospital could not bill patients right away. Staff had to work on a paper system for more than a week. The hospital has only just recovered financially from the incident.

In 2025, the hospital reported a nearly $23 million loss after facing a flurry of challenges, including a decline in the number of patients and changes to state and federal funding. Hospital leadership also began its search last summer for an external partner to help manage the facility's day-to-day operations.

Gray told Lookout the hospital expects to lose between $4.5 and $10 million over the next three years, largely due to the budget reconciliation bill passed last year, which cut nearly $1 trillion in funding for the Medicaid reimbursements that public hospitals rely on.

Just days before Gray announced his departure, Watsonville Community Hospital received a $10.6 million state grant from a fund aimed at stabilizing hospitals in financial distress. He told Lookout via email that the grant is "a crucial funding bridge during a challenging financial period."

"This community's always been challenged, and we always came through collectively together," said hospital board member Marcus Pimentel. "That being said, I'm super grateful to Steve."

Pimentel told Lookout Monday afternoon that Gray came on board with the focus of serving the Watsonville community, which he says distinguished him from other candidates seeking the role. He added that Gray was stepping away from his position to prioritize more time with his family.

"He chose to be part of our progress, and we made a lot of progress," Pimentel said. "Had it not been for federal policy changes and other unintended changes, 2025 would have been a very successful year that we could be proud of."

The hospital board expects to name an interim CEO at its meeting later this month, in order to have someone ready to work on July 11, Pimentel said. He added the board already has a list of candidates.

Have something to say? Lookout welcomes letters to the editor, within our policies, from readers. Guidelines here.

Tania Ortiz joins Lookout Santa Cruz as the California Local News Fellow to cover South County. Tania earned her master's degree in journalism in December 2023 from Syracuse University, where she was... More by Tania Ortiz

COLANTUONO HIGHSMITH WHATLEY, PC

June 9, 2026

BULLETIN

Update on Public Law

More Time for ADA Updates to Public Agencies Websites

By Julia W. Cohene, Esq.

Public agencies have one more year to make web content and mobile apps accessible to individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), thanks to a new Interim Final Rule published by the Department of Justice and already in effect, with comments accepted until June 22, 2026.

Covered entities serving 50,000 or more people now have until April 26, 2027 to make their web content and mobile apps accessible. Smaller agencies have until April 26, 2028.

In 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice published an ambitious new rule requiring public entities, including special districts, to ensure the web content and mobile apps they "provide[] or make[] available, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements" are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

This rule is both broad and technically complex. Covered web "content" goes beyond its common meaning of text, images, videos, or electronic documents like PDFs; it also includes the code that defines web content's structure, presentation, and interactions, communicated to a user through a web browser or other software like media players or assistive technologies. In addition, the rule applies not only to a public agency's own website and published apps, but also to those it makes available through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, such as when a public university contracts with third parties to post educational content on its behalf. Compliance can be achieved by using the detailed technical guidelines in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 ("WCAG 2.1"), Levels A and AA. Limited exceptions to ease the burden are available.

Criticizing the initial compliance dates, advocates for affected governments insisted the rule's prior two- and three-year timelines for accessibility were unachievable, especially for smaller entities with limited revenue and technical staff.

Compliance will require several steps. Public agencies must understand the complex rule; identify noncompliant content and platforms; and then remediate inaccessible content. Agencies that do not comply with the rule face litigation given the private right of action under title II of the ADA, which risks can be elevated in the age of AI.

Public agencies still have a marathon ahead to make web content and apps accessible. It is best to work steadily toward compliance. But the extra year should help make the work more achievable.

For more information on this subject, please contact Julia at JCohene@chwlaw.us or 213.542.5736.

Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley is a law firm with five offices around California that represents public agencies throughout the state. Its municipal law practice includes public revenues, land use, housing, CEQA, LAFCO matters, public safety liability defense, and associated appeals and trial court litigation. We are committed to providing advice that is helpful, understandable, and fairly priced.

https://chwlaw.us

9A: ATTACHMENT 8

ukenreport.com

Steve Sanchez Calls for Independent Forensic Audits

Cindy Uken

6–8 minutes

Steve Sanchez Calls for Independent Forensic Audits Amid Growing Accountability Concerns Within Riverside County Cities and Special Districts

RIVERSIDE COUNTY— La Quinta Councilmember and Riverside County LAFCO Commissioner Steve Sanchez recently announced a series of new oversight, transparency, and forensic audit policy discussions he formally requested during the May 6 Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) meeting.

The proposals include the creation of a dedicated forensic audit reserve fund, expanded Municipal Service Review (MSR) oversight reforms, and the development of long-term transparency and accountability frameworks for cities and special districts throughout Riverside County.

Sanchez currently serves as one of only two city councilmembers in all of Riverside County appointed to serve on the seven-member independent Riverside LAFCO Commission, which oversees local government boundary, governance, and service-related matters throughout the county.

Established under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act, LAFCO is the independent state-mandated agency responsible for overseeing local government boundary changes, annexations, incorporations, reorganizations, mergers, dissolutions, and the formation and restructuring of cities and special districts throughout Riverside County.

LAFCO also conducts Municipal Service Reviews that evaluate whether local agencies are financially stable, operationally efficient, properly governed, and capable of providing reliable public services to their communities.

Sanchez said that while LAFCO is often publicly associated with annexations and boundary changes, the Commission's responsibilities go far beyond drawing lines on a map.

"In essence, LAFCO serves as one of the government watchdog independent agencies overseeing cities and special districts," Sanchez said in a statement. "Under Government Code Section 56430, LAFCO is specifically tasked with evaluating governance accountability, financial ability to provide services, operational efficiencies, and long-term sustainability through the Municipal Service Review process. Serious oversight responsibilities require meaningful oversight tools."

Among the policy discussions Sanchez requested are:

- Creation of an ongoing forensic audit reserve fund capable of supporting multiple independent forensic audits or forensic financial reviews annually.
- Development of a long-term accountability program requiring cities and special districts to undergo an independent forensic audit or forensic financial review at least once every five years as an added layer of transparency and oversight beyond their standard annual financial audits.
- Review and modernization of Riverside LAFCO's Municipal Service Review process, consultant scopes, methodologies, and evaluation criteria to strengthen independent analysis and early-warning oversight capabilities.
- Exploration of long-term transparency and accountability requirements tied to future city incorporations, annexations, mergers, reorganizations, dissolutions, and special district formations approved through LAFCO.

Sanchez said that the proposals come after receiving concerns and information from current and/or former government employees, elected officials, and individuals associated with local agencies throughout Riverside County, particularly within the Coachella Valley, regarding procurement practices, financial stewardship, governance issues, conflicts of interest, change orders, and taxpayer accountability.

"To protect those individuals, their identities and communications will remain confidential," Sanchez said. "However, much of the information being brought forward involves public records, financial data, procurement activity, contracts, budgets, and other government records that deserve careful review and responsible oversight."

Sanchez emphasized that the effort is focused on independently verifiable information and factual documentation.

"I am not looking for hearsay, politics, assumptions, or personal grievances," Sanchez said. "I am interested in facts, records, documentation, timelines, procurement history, financial information, and evidence capable of independent verification."

Sanchez further said that forensic audits are intended to strengthen public trust and accountability, not merely identify wrongdoing.

"If an independent forensic audit identifies weak accounting practices, outdated procurement procedures, inadequate safeguards, or poor internal controls, then those problems can be corrected through stronger policies and reforms," Sanchez said. "That is exactly what oversight is supposed to accomplish."

"However, if evidence of intentional misconduct, corruption, conflicts of interest, bid manipulation, or misuse of taxpayer resources is uncovered, then those matters should be referred to the appropriate state and/or federal authorities."

Sanchez also said that transparency and accountability should not be viewed as threats by agencies operating responsibly.

"Strong public institutions require strong public trust," Sanchez stated. "And strong public trust requires transparency, accountability, independent oversight, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources."

The proposals are intended to strengthen public confidence, improve accountability, identify risks earlier, and ensure taxpayer resources are being managed responsibly throughout Riverside County local government, Sanchez said.

Image Sources

- Forensic audit: Shutterstock

9A: ATTACHMENT 9

sandiegouniontribune.com

Fiscal analysis, updated timeline and a penalty: the latest on La Jolla's cityhood effort

Noah Lyons

8–10 minutes

It's been a busy month for organizers of La Jolla's cityhood effort.

Members of the Association for the City of La Jolla, who have been working for nearly five years to have La Jolla detach from San Diego and become its own city, learned this week who will be leading the required comprehensive fiscal analysis on the proposed city's feasibility and received an updated timeline for when the report may be completed. And they were handed a penalty for filing late monthly campaign statements.

Fiscal analysis

ACLJ announced June 17 that London Moeder Advisors, led by Gary London, was selected by a committee of the regional Local Agency Formation Commission to conduct the comprehensive analysis on the likely financial impact of a La Jolla secession.

The selection committee consisted of representatives of ACLJ; San Diego LAFCO, which provides guidance to communities seeking to become cities; the San Diego mayor's office; the San Diego Municipal Employees Association and the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce.

London "is one of San Diego's most respected and most candid real estate economists," ACLJ said in a statement, and his appointment offers "an independent voice with the standing to be believed."

London said in a statement that "we recognize that no city in California has previously formed when part of an existing city. As such, we are committed to conducting a fair and independent fiscal analysis which carefully addresses fiscally sound approaches to how to achieve this should San Diego voters favor the proposal."

An election on the cityhood application, should LAFCO approve it, would require a majority of voters both in La Jolla and the rest of San Diego to give their blessing. ACLJ has said it hopes to have the matter on the ballot in 2028.

The planned city of La Jolla would have about 38,000 residents over 14 square miles, largely aligning with the 92037 ZIP code. The boundaries would stretch north-south from Del Mar to Pacific Beach and east-west from Interstate 5 to the ocean, excluding UC San Diego.

Members of ACLJ have met since September 2021 and been a frequent presence at community meetings and events.

The map of a potential city of La Jolla largely aligns with the 92037 ZIP code, stretching north-south from Del Mar to Pacific Beach and east-west from Interstate 5 to the ocean, excluding UC San Diego. (Association for the City of La Jolla)

A preliminary fiscal analysis completed last year by Richard Berkson of urban economics company Berkson Associates estimated San Diego would lose $8.5 million in annual revenue as a result of La Jolla's departure.

That raised the possibility that La Jolla would need to make annual mitigation payments, or "alimony," to San Diego, since "state law prohibits LAFCO from approving and incorporating [La Jolla] if it causes adverse financial impacts on another public agency, in this case the city of San Diego, and unless there is an agreement in place between La Jolla and San Diego," the report stated.

The analysis did not estimate the amount of any such payments, saying it would "be negotiated between the two cities during the LAFCO process."

Though Berkson's preliminary analysis painted a fairly optimistic picture — projecting a first-year city budget for La Jolla of $74.8 million and a surplus of $8 million — the final report will dive deeper into the facts and figures.

> Story gallery: "Leaving San Diego?" A series about potential La Jolla cityhood

Updated timeline

In announcing London's involvement in the comprehensive fiscal analysis, LAFCO said it expects the project to kick off next month and continue until June 2027, when the draft CFA would be given to the city of San Diego and made available for public view.

Following community workshops, the final report would be expected around January 2028, though that is subject to change.

The comprehensive fiscal analysis serves the purpose of "independently verifying [the preliminary report's] assumptions rather than adopting them wholesale," according to LAFCO.

La Jolla resident and former San Diego city manager Jack McGrory, who now is ACLJ's chief negotiator and strategic adviser, said in April that the CFA is "a tough study."

"[The analysis] will have to go into the city budget, extract all the information for La Jolla … across all the city departments," McGrory said.

An application was submitted in January 2025 to the San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission by a group of La Jolla residents as part of an effort to turn La Jolla into its own city. (Association for the City of La Jolla)

Late campaign statements

The Association for the City of La Jolla will have to fork over a $2,500 penalty to the state over a failure to produce monthly campaign statements. The group blamed a "technical error" caused by mixed messaging.

According to the California Fair Political Practices Commission, ACLJ "failed to timely file monthly campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84252," from May 1, 2024, to Nov. 15, 2025.

Section 84252 stipulates that committees formed to support or oppose a LAFCO matter must file all required statements "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."

Nineteen campaign statements were not filed on time, according to the FPPC. In nine of those months, there were no expenditures or contributions.

"We're trying something that really hasn't been done before, so there's a great deal of confusion on how to do it," said ACLJ President Diane Kane.

She added that the distinction was unclear between what is considered political and non-political activity.

"We're finding that we're making the playbook up as we go and we're getting caught in between various entities that will give us information telling us to do one thing and then that will be contradicted by another source," Kane said.

When ACLJ became aware of the violation, it self-reported it to FPPC and the issue was corrected Dec. 16, according to a commission report.

The maximum penalty for similar violations is $5,000. But by reporting the error themselves and not having previous violations, cityhood advocates instead will pay $2,500.

The FPPC report states "the committee was cooperative during the investigation and exhibited their intent to resolve the issue expeditiously."

The commission approved the penalty June 18.

The road to today, and the campaign to come

At a community meeting April 28, McGrory said he expected the cityhood effort to face more challenges in coming months and years.

The city of San Diego filed a lawsuit in June 2025 calling on LAFCO to rescind a ruling allowing the effort to move forward. LAFCO had issued a "certificate of sufficiency" indicating ACLJ had gathered the number of signatures required on a petition to keep the movement alive.

ACLJ responded with a court motion arguing that the city's case was a strategic lawsuit against public participation, or SLAPP, calling it a "meritless attempt to obstruct democratic participation and silence a public interest effort through costly litigation."

In October, Superior Court Judge Judy Bae granted ACLJ's motion, dismissing the city's lawsuit and allowing LAFCO to move to the next steps in the process, including the comprehensive review of the proposal's feasibility.

San Diego decided not to appeal the judge's ruling, though the city attorney's office did not comment further.

The city had argued in its lawsuit that LAFCO overstepped in the process of verifying the petition signatures and that the La Jolla cityhood review process would impose "substantial irreparable harm" on San Diego due to the costs associated with staff time required for the next steps.

McGrory said he expects more conflicts with the city. "There is going to be a lot of litigation, and the city is going to be all over us," he said in April.

Another challenge for ACLJ is that it would have to persuade a majority of voters not only in La Jolla but also throughout San Diego to approve the detachment.

The association is raising funds for future expenses and to this point has $174,000 in the bank and an additional $200,000 in community pledges, according to ACLJ Vice President Ed Witt.

The group is setting its 2026 fundraising goal at $1 million.

— La Jolla Light staff writer Ashley Mackin-Solomon contributed to this report. ♦

9A: ATTACHMENT 10

marinij.com

San Rafael, Marinwood approve firefighting plan

Adrian Rodriguez

5–6 minutes

Marinwood and San Rafael have approved resolutions to fold the Marinwood fire staff into the city fire department over the next several years.

The Marinwood Community Services District board approved the resolution on June 9. The San Rafael City Council finalized it on Monday.

"The agreement is the result of years of work, conversation and collaboration between the Marinwood CSD and the city of San Rafael," Mayor Kate Colin said. "I appreciate the willingness of both parties to come together, navigate complex issues and ultimately find a path forward that benefits the broader community."

The Marinwood fire service staffs nine firefighters and operates from a single firehouse on a $3.28 million annual budget. It provides fire protection services to Marinwood, upper Lucas Valley and parts of Terra Linda.

The San Rafael Fire Department has 73 firefighters operating out of six fire stations on a $40.1 million budget.

The city and the Marinwood Community Services District have had a close relationship for years. In 1994, the city closed a fire station on Joseph Court after a study showed the Marinwood engine could fill the void and even improve response times and began compensating the district for staffing.

The most recent agreement was approved in 2018 after the Marinwood fire chief retired. Rather than hire a new chief, the special district, which funds the fire department, has been paying

San Rafael about $116,000 annually for chief officer services.

The resolution amends the agreement to initiate a three-phase plan beginning July 1. The first phase addresses staffing issues.

Marinwood has one vacant firefighter-paramedic position. Daily staffing challenges have been compounded by a string of injury leaves. Since late 2024, Marinwood has been operating intermittently with a two-person engine, rather than the three-person standard.

In the initial phase, Marinwood will stop paying the city for chief officer services. Instead, the city will contribute $350,000 to support Marinwood's budget.

"In the immediate term, this amendment provides a significant financial inflow to the district allowing for the ability to better stabilize fire department staffing; invest in enhanced fire-related capital, supplies and equipment needs; and to better address fire-related long-term debt concerns," said Eric Dreikosen, the district manager.

In the second phase, Marinwood will contract fire and emergency medical services from the city. That means San Rafael will staff the Marinwood station and Marinwood firefighters will be offered employment with the city. Those who accept will see their salaries increase to the same pay rate as the city firefighters in the same position.

A Marinwood firefighter-paramedic has a base salary range of $93,825 to $117,063, compared to a San Rafael firefighter-paramedic in the same position who makes $125,768 to $149,935.

The target date to implement the second phase is July 1, 2027.

The second phase is the bridge that would enable the two agencies to move into a full consolidation in phase three, which would require coordination with the Marin Local Agency Formation Commission. Tasks include establishing a governance structure and responsibilities, and making administrative decisions around how property taxes and fire assessments are allocated to provide the services.

“While helping to address short-term staffing challenges, this agreement also signifies a strong commitment from the city and the Marinwood Community Services District to continue our collaboration toward developing and implementing a long-term service delivery model to better serve our communities,” said Paul Navazio, San Rafael’s city manager.

Dreikosen said the district aims “to fully dissolve” its legal responsibility for fire protection “via a full consolidation of fire services into a larger, better resourced agency.”

“For decades, San Rafael and Marinwood firefighters have worked side-by-side responding to emergencies and serving our communities,” San Rafael fire Chief Abe Roman said. “This proposal recognizes the reality of how we already operate and provides a thoughtful path toward a stronger, more sustainable regional fire service.”

Randy Ainsworth, a San Rafael fire captain and president of the San Rafael Firefighters Association, said the organization appreciates the leadership shown by the city and district.

“Our members have long recognized the operational challenges created by separate systems serving a shared response area,” Ainsworth said. “This process represents an opportunity to build a more unified approach that prioritizes public safety, firefighter safety and efficient use of resources.”

“Ultimately, our goal is simple: ensure the communities we serve receive the highest level of fire and emergency services possible while providing the staffing and support necessary for firefighters to do their jobs safely and effectively,” he said.

9A: ATTACHMENT 11

newtimesslo.com

San Simeon dissolution plan advances as county weighs takeover options

Chloë Hodge

7–9 minutes

A long-running effort to dissolve the San Simeon Community Services District (CSD) and transfer its responsibilities to San Luis Obispo County reached a significant milestone this month, as county Public Works unveiled a draft analysis outlining the costs, challenges, and potential paths forward for the coastal community.

The district first applied to the San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for dissolution in May 2024, citing ongoing financial and operational challenges. The application proposed transferring all district services—including water, sewer, road maintenance, street lighting, and hazardous weed abatement—to the county.

In response, LAFCO paused the application shortly after it was submitted, requesting a more comprehensive analysis of the district and its obligations.

"LAFCO indicated that the analysis should include a consideration of existing and future governance structures and services to be provided as well as a complete analysis of [San Simeon] CSD's current challenges, regulatory issues, future obligations, potential benefits, reduced costs, etc., that must be considered by all agencies impacted to make a fully informed decision when considering the dissolution," a June 10 CSD staff report stated.

That analysis, prepared by consulting firm NBS and funded through an agreement between the district and county, was presented to the CSD board during a June 10 special meeting.

"At the meeting, we gave the CSD board a three-part presentation," San Luis Obispo County Public Works Director John Diodati told *New Times.* "The county is just doing its due diligence, to see what are the total costs necessary to bring the water and wastewater system [up to standard], covering the deferred maintenance costs, and then the known projects."

Among the most significant future expenses are relocating the community's aging wastewater treatment plant and constructing new drinking water storage reservoirs.

> **'The county, if we take over, we need assurances that we can fund the projects that are mandated.'**
> —*San Luis Obispo County Public Works Director John Diodati*

The report found that while San Simeon's water and wastewater systems remain functional, many key components have exceeded their anticipated service lives and will require major reinvestment, repairs, or replacement in coming years.

A major challenge facing the district is a Coastal Commission requirement that the wastewater treatment plant be relocated, creating what the report describes as a "non-discretionary capital project."

According to the analysis, there are three primary options for maintaining services if the district dissolves: The county directly assumes responsibility, a new county service area is formed to take over operations, or the district consolidates with the Cambria Community Services District.

The report identifies the county and a newly formed county services area as the most viable options, noting that consolidation with Cambria could prove difficult because of governance and geographic considerations.

While the county has expressed a willingness to consider taking over services, Diodati said the process depends on establishing a sustainable funding source.

"The county, if we take over, we need assurances that we can fund the projects that are mandated," Diodati said. "The wastewater treatment plant is a special condition from the Coastal Commission that has to be done. Otherwise, the entity that is there starts incurring fines."

Because of those obligations, any future dissolution would likely require approval of utility rates capable of funding major infrastructure projects, he explained.

"The rates will need to increase," Diodati said. "We're not engaging in any formal process under Prop. 218 to raise water and sewer rates right now, but the information that we get out of the NBS report will help us refine what projects we know we need to do."

According to Diodati, any formal rate-setting process remains roughly 18 months away at a minimum and would be tied to whatever dissolution structure ultimately moves forward.

At the same time, San Simeon CSD leaders are proposing their own rate increases to improve the district's financial position while the dissolution process continues.

A district financial commitment proposal calls for significant water and sewer rate increases that have yet to be fully determined. A 32 percent increase on water rates was implemented in February along with a 36 percent increase in wastewater rates. Additional annual increases are being considered.

The county saidthe increases would allow the agency to address deferred maintenance, complete overdue audits, repair critical infrastructure such as the ocean outfall line and pipe bridge, and demonstrate to regulators and potential successor agencies that the community is committed to investing in its utility systems.

The proposal states that the increases would also "pave the way for additional CSA [county service area]-based Prop. 218 increases to begin the water and wastewater design, permitting, grant, and loan work."

Even with project rate increases, county Public Works stressed that current cost estimates are possibly higher than what would be needed and could decrease substantially if outside funding becomes available.

"We have to look at this with a worst-case-scenario approach on rate," Diodati said. "And then if we are the successor agency, our team would work on grant funding, low-interest loans, and explore alternatives for project implementation to bring the most reasonable and feasible cost to the ratepayers as possible."

Diodati pointed to the county's role in delivering the Los Osos wastewater project as an example of how future costs could potentially be reduced through grants and financing assistance.

For now, the dissolution process remains in its early stages. County staff will incorporate feedback received from district board members and residents before finalizing the report and presenting it to the county Board of Supervisors for direction.

"We're at one milestone in a multi-year endeavor," Diodati said. "I was just really optimistic with where we're at. This was an important milestone to get to, and it was well received."

The county Board of Supervisors will ultimately determine whether the county is willing to become San Simeon's successor agency and under what conditions. Until then, Diodati said the county will continue supporting the community through its current CalWARN—California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network—arrangement while exploring long-term solutions for the aging infrastructure.

"I think that after the CSD meeting, it was really apparent that everybody in the room wants us to be successful," Diodati said. "The county wants us to be successful, the CSD wants us to be successful, LAFCO wants it to be successful." ∆

Reach Staff Writer Chloë Hodge at chodge@newtimesslo.com.

This article appears in June 25 – July 2, 2026.

lookout.co

Watsonville Community Hospital appoints veteran healthcare leader as interim CEO

Tania Ortiz

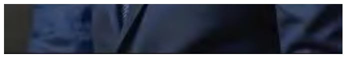
4–5 minutes

Watsonville Community Hospital in November 2025. Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

Quick Take

Watsonville Community Hospital leadership has appointed Tim Moran, a longtime healthcare leader, as interim CEO. He will take over for outgoing CEO Stephen Gray following his last day on July 10.

Watsonville Community Hospital leadership has appointed veteran healthcare executive Tim Moran to lead the facility as interim CEO.



Tim Moran will step in as Watsonville Community Hospital's interim CEO on July 11. Credit: Watsonville Community Hospital

Moran, who has more than three decades of healthcare leadership experience, will be at the helm of the hospital beginning July 11, following outgoing CEO Stephen Gray's last day on July 10.

Gray announced his departure from the hospital earlier this month, saying that he wanted to prioritize more time with his family. He took over as hospital CEO in 2023, when the facility became publicly owned after facing bankruptcy in 2022.

Moran will serve as interim CEO through Jan. 11, 2027, as the hospital board searches for a permanent replacement for Gray, Tony Nuñez, head of the hospital's governing board, said Wednesday night. He added that Moran's tenure could be extended if needed.

The board approved a $416,000 annual salary for the interim CEO position. But since Moran is expected to be in the role for only six months, the base pay is not expected to exceed $208,000, said Nuñez. Moran will also receive temporary employee benefits and a $4,500 monthly housing stipend.

This is not Moran's first time stepping into an interim position for Watsonville Community Hospital. He served a four-month stint as interim CEO for the facility in late 2011, under its previous management.

More recently, Moran was at the helm of Chino Valley Medical Center, a 116-bed acute care hospital in San Bernardino County, where he helped strengthen daily operations and improve relationships with labor unions, according to a media release from Watsonville Community Hospital. He also served as CEO of Tri-City Medical Center, an almost-400-bed public hospital in Oceanside, where he helped ink an affiliation deal with UC San Diego in 2015 that allowed patients access to specialists, according to the media release.

"Tim understands hospitals, public accountability, people, and the importance of earning trust inside and outside the organization," said Nuñez in a media release Thursday. "As we move through this transition, our board is focused on continuity, operational stability, and maintaining the progress Watsonville Community Hospital has made for the Pajaro Valley and South County."

Last month, Watsonville Community Hospital received a $10.6 million state grant from a fund aimed at stabilizing hospitals in financial distress. Gray previously told Lookout that the grant is "a crucial funding bridge during a challenging financial period."

The hospital has faced a flurry of financial challenges since late 2024, when it fell victim to a cyberattack, leading to a delay in billing patients. It also reported a nearly $23 million loss in 2025, after seeing a decline in the number of patients and changes to state and federal funding. Hospital leadership are also searching for an external partner to help manage the facility's day-to-day operations.

Have something to say? Lookout welcomes letters to the editor, within our policies, from readers. Guidelines here.

Tania Ortiz joins Lookout Santa Cruz as the California Local News Fellow to cover South County. Tania earned her master's degree in journalism in December 2023 from Syracuse University, where she was... More by Tania Ortiz

9A: ATTACHMENT 13

goldmountaincanews.com

Placer LAFCO names new executive officer

Staff Report

2–3 minutes

The Placer Local Agency Formation Commission (Placer LAFCO) on June 26 announced the hiring of Jason Fried as its new executive officer, effective Aug. 1.

Following a competitive recruitment process and thorough review of a highly qualified pool of finalists, the commission selected Fried for his exceptional depth of LAFCO-specific leadership experience, collaborative approach and demonstrated success in strengthening agency operations.

Fried brings more than 15 years of experience serving as a LAFCO executive officer, most recently at Marin LAFCO and previously at San Francisco LAFCO. Throughout his career, he has successfully managed complex jurisdictional changes, including fire district consolidations, while building strong relationships with local agencies, elected officials and community stakeholders. His experience in budgeting, organizational management, policy development and intergovernmental coordination aligns well with the needs of Placer LAFCO.

As executive officer, Fried will lead Placer LAFCO through its next phase of organizational growth. His experience recruiting and mentoring staff, managing increasing workloads and building high-performing teams will support the commission as it continues to expand its capacity to meet the growing demand for LAFCO services throughout Placer County.

The commission extends its sincere thanks to Interim Executive Officer Colette Santsche and the LAFCO staff for their dedicated service during the transition. The commission looks forward to welcoming Fried and to the next chapter of leadership at Placer LAFCO.

Placer LAFCO is an independent government agency established under California law to discourage urban sprawl, preserve open-space and prime agricultural lands, encourage the efficient delivery of local government services and support the orderly formation and development of local agencies.

9A: ATTACHMENT 14

santacruzlocal.org

As Felton Fire faces mounting financial challenges, an assessment proposal divides residents

Jesse Kathan

10–12 minutes

What is the assessment, and how do I vote?

The property assessment is proposed under state Proposition 218, which differs from elections for parcel taxes and bonds. Only property owners can vote, and each vote is weighted according to the amount they would pay — essentially, those who would pay more get a bigger say. The assessment requires 50% approval of the weighted ballots.

Ballots were mailed out in late May and must be returned by July 24. They may be submitted:

- By mail, using a pre-paid envelope included with the ballot. Send to 131 Kirby St., Felton, CA 95018.
- In person by July 24 at the Felton Fire district office at 131 Kirby St. in Felton.
- In person at a public hearing for the assessment, 6 p.m. July 24.

Voters who want to change their vote or request a replacement ballot can call 831-335-4422.

Property owners who believe the assessment doesn't comply with the California Constitution have until July 6 to submit a written objection. If the assessment is approved, it may only be challenged in court by those who have submitted a constitutional objection.

Who would pay, and how much?

The assessment must also be priced according to how much each property owner would benefit from the improved service. The assessments have been priced according to property use, property value, fire hazard and distance to the station.

Each ballot includes the amount of the property's proposed assessment. A typical single-family home would be assessed $697.43 annually. The assessment can increase up to 3% a year to match inflation. A citizen panel would annually review Felton Fire's finances and assessment spending.

All properties are legally required to pay the tax. But though homeowners could face a lien for non-payment, churches, nonprofits, or government buildings like schools would not.

What would the assessment pay for?

Felton Fire collects about $1.1 million annually through property taxes. The new tax would increase the district's revenue to $2.8 million.

The district has long relied on volunteer firefighters. Until 2024, it also had a part-time administrator, a full-time chief and up to two full-time firefighters and two full-time captains. But the district can no longer afford the full-time employees, said Interim Chief Issac Blum, and is currently staffed entirely by volunteers.

Volunteers receive a $120 stipend for a 12-hour shift. Blum receives up to a $2,500 stipend each month, though some months he has opted not to take it, he said. Blum said he usually works at the station four days a week, in addition to a full-time paid position at NASA Ames research center near Mountain View.

Blum said he intends to vacate his volunteer position at the end of the summer. The board is interviewing six candidates for the role, one of whom is set to receive a job offer after the assessment vote. If the board offered him the role, "I would have to think very hard about it," he said. "What we want to ensure the next fire chief is the best person for the job."

About $1.6 million of the expanded $2.8 million budget would go to training and salaries, including health care and retirement:

- A full-time chief and for $166,000 to $193,000 base pay.
- Three fire captains.
- Six firefighters. The staffing plan also accounts for two on-call volunteer firefighters.

The Proposition 218 assessment must be linked to the cost of a specific benefit to property owners. In this case, Felton Fire leaders say, the money would allow the re-hiring of three full-time firefighters and a full-time chief, ensuring faster response times and more firefighters responding. It would also pay for training and equipment.

District leaders previously considered a $700 parcel tax before pursuing the assessment.

What happens if the tax doesn't pass?

If property owners reject the proposed assessment, the station will not immediately close, and 911 calls will still be answered. The station's reserves are expected to be mostly depleted by an agreement underway to exit California's CalPERS pension system, a move to make future hires less costly.

The reserves have enough money to also cover a $400,000 shortfall in this year's budget and staff the station for one year with a slightly larger paid staff — a chief, two fire captains and an administrative assistant.

Without an assessment, the station may not have enough money to continue to maintain that staffing after 2028, Blum said.

If the assessment fails, Felton Fire leaders could propose a lower assessment, or renew efforts for a parcel tax. Director Erica Schwanbeck said she is unsure if she would propose another revenue measure or move towards dissolving.

"I would hope that there's a through road there" to continue without dissolution, "but I don't know for how long." she said.

Could another agency absorb Felton Fire?

If Felton Fire leaders are unable to find a sustainable way to provide emergency response, they could ask another fire agency to absorb the district. But no district would be obligated to take on Felton Fire's coverage area.

A 2025 report from the Local Area Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County included a dozen possibilities for Felton Fire's future. The report's four top-ranked options are to be absorbed by another fire agency.

One of those agencies is County Service Area 48, also known as Santa Cruz County Fire. The agency is part of the county government, though leaders have discussed becoming an independent fire district. CSA 48 has two existing assessments, which total about $367 for a typical single-family home. But if CSA 48 takes over Felton Fire, it could decide that the existing assessments won't be enough to provide service to Felton residents, and propose an increase.

CSA 48 is in the process of absorbing Pajaro Valley Fire Protection District, which opted to dissolve after years of unsuccessful tax proposals. Pajaro Valley Fire Chief Dave Martone said the move is a win for residents, who will now have more robust emergency service. Martone did not take a position on the Felton assessment.

Former interim Aptos/La Selva Fire Chief Don Jarvis, a Pajaro Valley Fire District resident and past consultant for LAFCO, presented the South County dissolution as a cautionary tale for Felton Fire residents. Single-family homeowners will pay more to CSA 48 than what Pajaro Valley Fire proposed as an assessment. It's unclear how much CSA 48 would charge Felton property owners if it absorbed the area. A county spokesperson declined to comment on whether CSA 48 would be willing to absorb Felton Fire, or how much it would charge.

The neighboring Zayante Fire Protection District could also offer to absorb Felton Fire. Zayante Fire Chief Jeff Maxwell said that neither he nor Zayante Fire's board of directors have taken a position on the tax or the possibility of taking on Felton Fire's service area, and that said Felton Fire leaders have not reached out to discuss the issue.

Blum said Zayante's staffing model wouldn't work for Felton Fire long-term. Zayante, which takes on fewer calls than Felton Fire, employs two daytime fire fighters and relies on volunteers at night. Like CSA 48, Zayante Fire leaders could decide they need to raise taxes to take on the expanded service, he said.

"Maybe we could tread water for a few years, but the reality is that it still does not provide a long-term solution for the Felton community," Blum said.

Ultimately, Felton Fire residents will not have a firm idea of how much a takeover would cost until the district signals an intent to dissolve.

LAFCO Executive Officer Joe Serrano had encouraged directors last year to start the dissolution process at the same time they pursued a new assessment, to create a "Plan B" in case it fails. That would have triggered a process for LAFCO to consult with neighboring fire agencies and create a report on the possible cost and viability of being absorbed by another agency. The directors opted not to start that process, leaving the other options unclear.

"It's a little misleading to say that there's other options out there," Serrano said. "There are, but there's no analysis, there's no commitment, there's nothing."

Does Felton Fire need 24-hour paid staff?

Supporters of the assessment say that it assures an industry-standard three-person response to emergencies — and it makes a four-person response, with the assistance of a chief or volunteer, more likely.

Labor protection laws stipulate that with fewer than four people, fire fighters can enter a burning building only for search and rescue. With four people, two can enter to fight the fire from within while two stand outside.

Felton Fire has 25 volunteer fire fighters, including 21 with enough training to respond to calls, Blum said, but only three live in Felton. The rest may not be available on short notice.

Blum attributes the difficulty of recruiting local volunteers to the increasing gentrification of the San Lorenzo Valley with more commuters to Silicon Valley. Within a decade, "you're going to see this transition all the way through the valley," he said.

Maxwell, the Zayante Fire chief, said his agency has had success hiring daytime staff while relying on local volunteers for nighttime coverage. "I think it takes strong leadership to create an environment that is welcoming for those members of the community," he said. "It's absolutely not easy."

Serrano said the fact that other agencies have survived on a smaller budget thus far doesn't mean the model is sustainable long term.

"If you lose your legacy fire chief and you have to hire someone new, you know, they may not want to take a pay cut like the current fire chief is taking," he said. "You can easily compare somebody, but at the end of the day, Felton Fire is struggling with its current model, and it's looking for ways to address that."

If voters approve the assessment but later push to reduce paid staffing, fees could be lowered with the vote of three board members.

9A: ATTACHMENT 15

ptreyeslight.com

Jury calls for consolidation of districts

Ara Rosenthal

7–9 minutes

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury is calling for greater consolidation of Marin's 50-odd special districts, which provide fire protection, water, sanitation, and refuse collection, among other essential
services.

In a report released in June, the group argued that duplicative administrative systems, uneven service fees, and fragmented governance create inefficiency and unnecessary costs.

Yet the report acknowledged that West Marin's geography makes consolidation more challenging, while local district officials say the cooperation and collaboration emphasized by the jury already defines much of their operations.

The nine recommendations in the report, titled "Better Service at Lower Cost—Optimizing Essential Services for the Future of Marin," include adopting shared countywide administrative services and standardizing performance measures. Though the report says Marin's special districts generally provide average or above-average service today, it warns that the system is increasingly vulnerable to long-term pressures that must be addressed now, including aging infrastructure, workforce shortages, climate change, and rising costs.

The report lists Marin Water, North Marin Water District, and the Marin County Fire Department among the agencies required to submit formal responses by September.

Under state law, they must declare whether they will implement each recommendation or explain why they will not.

Although tiny special districts like the Inverness and Bolinas

Community Public Utility Districts were not included on the response list, officials there have reviewed the report. In conversations with the *Light*, they said there are many ways that cooperation and collaboration are already part of their day-to-day.

Jason Fried, the executive officer of the Marin Local Agency Formation Commission, an organization that has discussed consolidation and related topics with local districts for years, said the grand jury's call for greater efficiency is not new.

"It's something that's very difficult to do, and it takes time—but it is not a new concept for us or for Marin County," he said.

Some collaborative practices encouraged by the report are already taking place, though often outside public view. "There's a lot of ways that this stuff is occurring," Mr. Fried said. "It's done behind the scenes, and people just don't know."

As one example, Mr. Fried highlighted the support that Marin County Fire gives to West Marin's volunteer fire stations.

"The mutual aid agreements and the collaboration that goes on between all the fire departments within the county is spectacular," he said. "They make sure that there are no holes in the system."

Sometimes, agencies band together for better pricing when purchasing equipment. In recent years, a joint FEMA grant secured by the Stinson Beach, Bolinas, Nicasio, Muir Beach, and Inverness Volunteer Fire Departments was used to upgrade respirators. Shelley Redding, the general manager of the Inverness Public Utility District, which oversees the fire department, said Stinson Beach led the application, the districts shared part of the cost, and federal funding covered most of the expense.

Ms. Redding referred to an "intertie" agreement between IPUD and North Marin Water District, wherein a pipeline allows either system to supply the other during an emergency, as another example of cooperation. The longstanding agreement, renewed last year for another decade, demonstrates how small districts already depend on neighboring agencies in a crisis. IPUD also participates in CalWARN, a statewide network that allows water and wastewater agencies to request equipment and provide mutual assistance during emergencies.

But regular coordination isn't just crisis-driven, said BCPUD's general manager, Georgia Woods. Water district managers across the county meet quarterly to discuss common issues and opportunities for cooperation. Their joint efforts become especially useful when small districts get hit with mounting regulatory requirements, such as new rules that prevent contaminated water from flowing back into the drinking system. BCPUD worked with IPUD and the Muir Beach Community Services District to divvy up the workload of drafting compliant plans, she said.

"It's enjoyable to work with others," Ms. Woods said. "It's helpful, and it makes the work more efficient."

Local officials generally support the jury's goals of greater collaboration and efficiency but argue that broader consolidation could be a disservice.

"You wouldn't necessarily take Muir Beach and merge it up with someone out in Stinson Beach, because they're different communities, so you have different needs for each one of them," Mr. Fried said. "That would be kind of like saying, 'Hey, we're going to take the city of Novato, and we're going to consolidate it with the city of Sausalito.' They're very far apart from each other."

Special districts often function not just as service providers, but as the de facto local government for their communities. Ms. Woods said that besides providing public services, BCPUD acts as a voice for the community.

"We become a really important mouthpiece for unincorporated Marin and our citizens—being able to relay their concerns in a formalized and recognized way to county officials," she said.

Some parts of West Marin actually need more representation, not less, she said. Towns like Point Reyes Station and Marshall, which lack a special district, often wish they had one to represent them, she added.

One of the jury's recommendations was for districts to share administrative services such as human resources, payroll, information technology, legal support, and insurance. But that idea might be hard to pull off in practice, Ms. Woods said.

"The extent to which we could join other agencies and bring further efficiencies—it's worth exploring, but it's not something we've done. It's not trivial to undertake those kinds of efforts," she said.

Ms. Redding agreed that meaningful consolidation of administrative services would be difficult. Districts rely on different insurance pools, retirement systems, and contracts, she said, making it a fairly big task to unwind and renegotiate their arrangements.

On the other hand, coordinating regulatory reporting and sharing I.T. support could be helpful, Ms. Redding said. Regional collaboration is regularly discussed at IPUD board meetings, with a particular focus on workforce development. She said coastal districts like hers struggle to recruit certified operators because of the high cost of living.

Some officials questioned the usefulness of a chart in the jury report comparing costs and utility rates across districts. Differences in geography, infrastructure, and operating responsibilities make direct comparisons of utility rates difficult, Mr. Fried said.

In a written statement, Marin Water similarly said cost-of-service comparisons require additional context. Operational and historical differences, including water system age, system responsibilities, water supply sources, storage assets, and long-term capital obligations, make comparisons complicated.

The North Marin Water District board plans to discuss the report at its July meeting and will offer comments after input from its directors, General Manager Tony Williams said.

Supervisor Dennis Rodoni, whose West Marin representation area includes about a dozen special districts, said he plans to read the report in more detail.

"Given the report's acknowledgment that consolidation presents distinct challenges in West Marin, the perspectives of those districts will be important as this conversation continues," he wrote in a statement.

9A: ATTACHMENT 16

pajaronian.com

PVUSD approves $2.86 million water project at Renaissance High

Todd Guild

4–5 minutes

PIPED IN WATER Efforts are under way to modernize the water supply at Renaissance High School. (Tarmo Hannula/The Pajaronian)

The Pajaro Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees on Saturday approved a $2.857 million state funding agreement that will connect Renaissance High School to the Soquel Creek Water District, replacing the campus's groundwater system that has been plagued by elevated levels of hexavalent chromium.

The board held a special meeting to ratify a financial assistance agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board, allowing the district to move forward with the long-planned project.

The agreement provides $2.857 million in funding through the state's Expedited Drinking Water Grant program. While structured as a loan agreement, the entire amount is designated as principal forgiveness, meaning the district will not have to repay the money if it completes the project and complies with the state's reporting and funding requirements.

In a social media post, Trustee Gabe Medina praised the decision.

"This was an important vote because Renaissance High School students, staff, and families deserve access to safe and reliable drinking water," he wrote on his Substack account. "Many students and staff have been asking the district to address this issue, and this project is one step toward meeting that responsibility."

According to the agreement, the project's purpose is to consolidate Renaissance High School's water system with the Soquel Creek Water District "to address the hexavalent chromium maximum contaminant level violations" and provide "safe and reliable drinking water to the students and staff of the school."

The project calls for extending a water main along San Andreas Road, installing a pipeline beneath the railroad tracks, constructing a booster pump station on campus and tying the new line into the school's domestic water system. The project also includes installing a master meter and backflow prevention device and permanently abandoning the school's two groundwater wells.

Construction is scheduled to be completed by Sept. 30, 2028, with the overall project wrapping up by Dec. 31, 2028. The district must submit its final reimbursement request by Feb. 28, 2029, and retain project records through Dec. 31, 2064.

State documents show the Water Resources Control Board determined the project will not create significant adverse water quality impacts. The agency relied on an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by PVUSD, which approved the project in 2025 and adopted a mitigation monitoring program addressing biological resources, cultural resources and noise.

Under the agreement, the district must comply with numerous grant requirements, including completing the project on schedule, documenting expenditures, submitting quarterly progress reports and obtaining state approval before advertising the project for construction bids or beginning construction. Failure to comply could jeopardize reimbursement or require repayment of funds.

The agreement also prohibits reimbursement for costs incurred before the eligible work start date and limits funding to approved project expenses. If project costs exceed the $2.857 million budget, the district must notify the state and seek additional funding or modify the project's scope, although additional state funding is not guaranteed.

The project budget includes $1.1 million for construction, $364,000 for contingency costs, $739,000 for engineering and administrative costs, a $28,000 Soquel Creek Water District connection fee and $626,000 in conditional costs.

9A: ATTACHMENT 17

lookout.co

County recognized as Fire Risk Reduction Community, making certain homeowners eligible for wildfire insurance discounts

Caly Luna Plowman

~3 minutes

Quick Take:

In response to insurance issues residents have faced since the 2020 CZU Fire, Santa Cruz County recently secured a statewide recognition through the California Fire Risk Reduction Community List that could help ease some of these struggles and potentially fund future wildfire prevention efforts.

Since the CZU Fire burned over 86,000 acres of Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties in 2020, many residents have faced rising insurance premiums, non-renewals and an increased reliance on the California FAIR Plan, which provides basic fire insurance coverage for high-risk properties when traditional insurance companies will not.

In response to these issues, the Santa Cruz County Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience (OR3) and Community Development and Infrastructure Department helped the county secure a Fire Risk Reduction designation through the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. The designation went into effect July 1.

“This recognition reflects years of work to make Santa Cruz County safer, better

prepared and more competitive for wildfire prevention funding,” OR3 Director David Reid said in a June 26 press release.

The California Fire Risk Reduction Community List, which is where the county was named as a designee, recognizes local agencies that have demonstrated a strong commitment to reducing wildfire risk through planning, community engagement, wildfire mitigation and implementation of state-recognized best practices.

The Fire Risk Reduction designation could make Santa Cruz more competitive for millions of dollars in future wildfire prevention grants to support projects like fuel reduction, wildfire planning and community education. It will also help qualifying homeowners, especially those on the FAIR plan, receive wildfire insurance discounts.

Homeowners interested in pursuing potential insurance discounts can contact their insurance agent or provider and ask whether the county's new designation can be applied to their policy.

Caly Luna Plowman is a narrative and audio student at UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism on the investigative reporting track. Originally from Los Angeles, she graduated from UC Santa Cruz in 2025.... More by Caly Luna Plowman

9A: ATTACHMENT 18

tpgonlinedaily.com

Joe Clarke Announces Campaign for Second Term on Capitola City Council

Michael Oppenheimer

~2 minutes

Spread the love

Joe Clarke, current member of the Capitola City Council and former Mayor, recently announced he will seek a second term representing the City of Capitola. Clarke was first elected to the City Council in 2022.

Joe Clarke

Before retiring, Clarke worked for the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, where he served as a K-9 deputy, search-and-rescue unit manager, SWAT team member, and hostage negotiator. He went on to serve as vice mayor in 2025 before being appointed mayor later that year, leading the council through key decisions on housing, infrastructure, and community development.

“I’m running again because the job isn’t done yet,” Clarke said. “We’ve made real progress over the last term, but there’s more work ahead — on responsible development, public safety, and keeping Capitola the kind of place people are proud to call home. I believe the experience I’ve gained on the council, and throughout my career in public service, puts me in a strong position to help guide the decisions that will best serve this community going forward.”

During his time on the council, Clarke has been involved in discussions on the Coastal Rail Trail, the Capitola Mall redevelopment, and the city’s response to state housing mandates, among other priorities.

Clarke lists key accomplishments in his first four years of service as rebuilding the Capitola Wharf, reopening the Rispin Mansion Park, and the upcoming opening of Treasure Cove, the universally accessible playground at Jade Street Park.

9A: ATTACHMENT 19

sacbee.com

El Dorado Hills inches closer to cityhood as environmental study comes back

Corey Schmidt

4–5 minutes

El Dorado Hills, photographed on Jan. 10, 2026, moves closer to cityhood after the community service district' Board of Directors received a draft environmental study Thursday night. SCOTT LORENZO Special to The Bee

El Dorado Hills is one step closer to cityhood — and greater influence on land use — as its draft environmental study appeared before the community services district's board Thursday night.

The study determined there would be no significant environmental implications if El Dorado Hills incorporated, according to a presentation to the board. However, the study does not consider possible future facilities, such as a city hall, since the results can't be based on hypothetical scenarios to be determined by a future deciding body. Future studies would take place for those potential projects.

California's last four incorporations received a similar result, according to the staff report. This includes Mountain House in San Joaquin County and Jurupa Valley, Eastvale and Menifee in Riverside County.

El Dorado Hills decided to pursue the environmental study in May of last year, according to the staff report. It considers items like wildfires and air quality. The community services district worked with Environmental Science Associates to execute the requirement, including consulting with Native American tribal partners. The study cost $67,000, split between the community services district and the cityhood committee.

There are still several hurdles, including a comprehensive financial analysis to determine feasibility and voter approval. General Manager Stephanie McGann Jantzen earlier this year said cityhood will not make the 2026 ballot.

El Dorado Hills will likely have an updated timeline for the financial analysis later this month, McGann Jantzen told the board.

This isn't the first time El Dorado Hills has considered cityhood. In 2005, the community considered consolidating with the Springfield Meadows Community Services District, now known as Rolling Hills Community Services District, according to the staff report. Voters rejected the proposal with only 43.6% voter approval.

Conversations resurfaced in 2020 when an ad hoc committee was formed, soliciting interest from local agencies, like the El Dorado Hills Fire Department and El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission, to form a working group. A preliminary financial analysis at that time showed El Dorado Hills would likely be viable as a new city, but the board didn't move forward.

The community services district is responsible for items related to parks, waste collection, cable television, design review. If cityhood is granted, land use decisions could join the mix. El Dorado County currently makes those decisions. If cityhood comes to fruition, the community services district could become a subsidiary of the city, according to the staff report.

Land use has been a contentious topic in El Dorado Hills of late. Three residents recently appealed a 10-home Serrano development for concerns about parks and traffic safety. Additionally, the county is debating a proposed Costco development in the eastern suburb, sparking debate about if tax revenue from the development should be set aside to help nearby roads. Increased traffic from the proposed Costco could cause accelerated roadway deterioration.

Following Thursday's discussion, staff will move forward with public noticing for input.

Corey Schmidt is a watchdog reporter for the Sacramento Bee, focusing on Folsom, El Dorado Hills and Sacramento County's eastern suburbs. Previously, he was the government watchdog reporter for the St. Cloud Times in Minnesota. Schmidt received his bachelor's degree from DePaul University in Chicago and his master's degree from Yale University.

9A: ATTACHMENT 20

padailypost.com

Los Altos Council to vote on giving fire stations to fire agency – Palo Alto Daily Post

4–5 minutes

Santa Clara County firefighters put out a blaze in Los Altos in this 2019 file photo.

BY ELAINE GOODMAN
Daily Post Correspondent

Los Altos City Council will vote Tuesday (July 14) on giving the Santa Clara County Fire District $1.5 million for maintenance of two fire stations — one of the final steps in the city's annexation into the fire district.

Council already approved in April giving the fire district the fire stations at 765 Fremont Ave. and 10 Almond Ave.

The transfer of the fire stations and the $1.5 million payment are part of the city's plan to join the county fire district, rather than contracting with the district for fire services as it has been doing for 30 years. Instead of renegotiating the contract every 10 years, annexation into the district would provide "stability" to the city when it comes to fire services, the city said. The current contract expires at the end of this year. But not everyone has been comfortable with the idea.

When council voted in April to give county fire the two fire stations, the item was on the consent calendar, in which several items are voted on together without discussion. Similarly, the $1.5 million payment to the fire district is on the consent calendar for Tuesday's meeting.

Some residents wanted the vote on the fire station transfer to be moved to a later meeting so it could be fully explained and discussed.

'Irreplacable public assets'

Resident Maria Bautista called the fire station properties "irreplaceable public assets" and said the city should get an independent appraisal before giving them to the county.

"These are valuable, strategically located properties in one of the most expensive real estate markets in the country," Bautista said in a letter to council. "Transferring them without establishing their value even in an agency-to-agency context is inconsistent with the fiduciary duty council owes Los Altos residents."

Resident Alice Mansell was concerned about the deal's lack of transparency.

"It is a land title contract to transfer forever the ownership of parcels valued (at) over $30 million from the city to the county with not one draft nor the final contract anywhere for public review," Mansell said in a letter submitted to the Post.

Not enough time

Mansell said the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission, or LAFCO, which has the power to approve or reject annexations, didn't give residents enough time to file protests following its June 3 vote to approve Los Altos' annexation into the fire district. The 21-day protest period included the July 4 holiday, she noted, and residents had to print out a protest form and mail or hand-deliver it to county offices in San Jose. Los Altos property owners and registered voters were eligible to submit protests.

LAFCO held a hearing to receive protests on July 9, the submission deadline. LAFCO Executive Officer Neelima Palacherla will review any written protests received and decide how to proceed.

Taxes won't change

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors serves as the fire district's board of directors, so Los Altos won't have a direct say in fire services after the annexation. The city said the annexation won't increase taxes for Los Altos residents. County fire will receive part of Los Altos' share of property tax. Under a service plan the city and fire district agreed to, the fire district must provide service at a level equal to or greater than what is now provided, according to a frequently asked questions page on the city's website. The city said the fire district has reduced service only twice in its 75-year history.

As for the two fire stations the city is giving to county fire, a sale of the property by the county would violate the agreed-upon service plan, the city said. In addition, the city has a permanent first right of refusal if the county wants to sell the fire station property.

9A: ATTACHMENT 21

santacruzsentinel.com

Felton Fire Protection District passes assessment for new funding

Gabrielle Gillette

4–5 minutes

FELTON — Felton property owners approved a special benefit assessment Friday to increase financial support for the Felton Fire Protection District.

The special assessment, a part of California's Proposition 218 allowing voters to approve funding for local infrastructure and public services, examines each individual property within the Felton fire district to determine a new fee amount that individual property owners will pay to help sustain the fire department's services. The funding from the assessment is estimated to generate about $1.7 million per year from annual fees for property owners in the district.

Following a public hearing on Friday, the assessment passed with 67.88% of the vote across over 900 ballots sent out, according to the Felton Fire Protection District. It needed at least a simple majority to pass. Ballots were mailed out May 20.

"Financially, we needed this to survive," said interim Fire Chief Isaac Blum.

The Felton Fire Protection District serves over 6,000 permanent residents spanning from Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park to Fall Creek State Park. The district also provides its services to the additional 1.5 million visitors to the area. According to the ballot information packet, the district struggles to keep pace with its call volume that has risen over 180% in the past few decades.

The fees that property owners will pay in the 2026-27 fiscal year will vary depending on structure size, level of fire danger in the area or if the property is commercial or residential.

Money acquired from the assessment will go toward improving the district's fire station, which is over 71 years old and has never had any significant maintenance, Blum said. The district will also use the funding to replace fire apparatus like aging fire engines and pickup trucks.

Funding included within the assessment is also set to provide funding for full-time staff members. Currently the Felton Fire Protection District is made up of volunteer firefighters — a model Blum said is not sustainable for the service they provide.

When Blum became interim fire chief in 2024, the district was operating with only four firefighters for about 900 calls for service a year, he said.

Though the district has since grown to about 30 people, it still struggles financially, using most of the allocated funds to keep the lights on, insurance paid and water flowing through the station. The Felton Fire District is currently the lowest funded fire agency in Santa Cruz County, Blum added.

"Essentially, we've come from a struggling, underfunded volunteer fire district transitioning into what should amount to an adequately funded, highly motivated kind of career/volunteer fire force," Blum said.

The district will be set to hire a full-time fire chief, a full-time engine company, an administrative assistant and continued response from volunteers, bringing them to three paid firefighters and two volunteers per day.

The Felton community was highly supportive of the initiative, Blum said, and even went so far as to not add an ending date to the assessment to re-evaluate its need.

“The reason why is because we know we’re always going to need fire protection in the community,” Blum said. “So it made no sense to put all this adequate funding in place to do all of these amazing things that the community is going to receive and then in five years run out of money or have to go back out to the community and have that possibility that we would have to reduce staffing or services.”

In addition to tangible funding, the assessment election has also provided the Felton Fire Protection District with more awareness and support from the community. Once the district started hosting town hall sessions in the spring and more community members learned about what goes into running a volunteer fire department, people started showing out in their appreciation, Blum said.

Community members made meals and brought sleeping bags and cots for the firefighters to use in place of beds, which the station does not have.

“On a humanitarian level, the community has really come out in support of us, and it’s amazing to see that,” Blum said.