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30 March 2012

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Ms. Sunne Wright McPeak
California Forward Leadership Council Member
1107 9th Street, Suite 650
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Sunne:

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Stakeholder Roundtable. Today I received the agenda for the Thursday/Friday meeting along with the revised framework. Having not been consulted regarding the original or revised recommendations for Principal 5, I wanted to correct some inaccurate information and offer a suggestion or two prior to the meeting tomorrow.

The framework states that LAFCos are staffed by city and county representatives. This is inaccurate. LAFCo staff are independent of any local agencies and specifically report to their commission. The independence of staff was a key component in the major revision of LAFCo law (Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000). Commissioners are locally appointed and consist of elected officials from city councils, board of supervisors and, in many cases, special district boards. There is also a public member on every commission. In some instances it may be accurate to say that the commission could have a built-in political constraint since they are making decisions which might affect their jurisdiction.

We urge California Forward staff to look at the Municipal Service Reviews prepared by LAFCos for cities, special districts subject to LAFCo review, and county municipal services. You will find they already include substantial information, such as inventories of local agencies, sphere and service boundaries (LAFCos may actually have the most accurate maps), role of agencies in service deliveries and opportunities for efficiencies or reorganizations. Granted the level of detail varies from LAFCo to LAFCo – often depending on the financial resources available – however the foundation of information called for in Draft Proposal 5A exists in many parts of the state. LAFCos are limited in that they do not have oversight of school districts, college districts, transportation agencies, joint power authorities, or private service providers (such as investor-owned utilities or mutual water companies).

We continue to be concerned with the focus on Regional Councils of Governments. While recognizing the important role many regional councils play, they are not organized under any state law, membership consists only of the county and cities, and they are generally transportation-focused. LAFCos have been conducting service reviews for over a decade. It seems that the emphasis on Draft Proposal 5A should be on enhancement and better use of the existing service review resource rather than establishing a new process with Regional Councils to conduct this work.

With respect to Draft Proposal 5B, perhaps California Forward is not aware of the extensive amount of work that went into the deliberations and recommendations from

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the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century. The Commission released a report – very similar to the cited New York report – entitled *Growth Within Bounds: Planning California Governance for the 21st Century*. This resulted in the substantial rewrite of Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. Before recommending the creation of yet another commission and report, it may be of greater value to revisit the findings in *Growth Within Bounds* and evaluate the recommendations and outcomes in terms of the goals of California Forward and today's circumstances. It may also be of value to review the earlier commission and report from 1960 which ultimately resulted in the creation of LAFcos: *Meeting Metropolitan Problems: Report of the Governor's Commission on Metropolitan Area Problems* (Governor Edmund Brown).

Finally, earlier this month voters approved the 482nd city in California, Jurupa Valley in Riverside County.

We hope you find these comments of value. Thanks again for the opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Chiat', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

William Chiat
Executive Director