

# EL DORADO LAFCO

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## LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

### *AGENDA OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2026*

#### *REGULAR MEETING*

**TO:** Bill Wilde, Chair, and  
Members of the El Dorado County Local Agency Formation  
Commission

**FROM:** Shiva Frentzen, Executive Officer

**AGENDA ITEM #3:** Consider Designation of Attendees for the CALAFCO Conference

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#### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Commission receive the information regarding the 2026 CALAFCO Conference and determine whether any Commissioners will attend.

#### **Background**

The 2026 Annual CALAFCO Conference will be held October 21-23 in Sacramento. Staff is requesting that the Commission designate up to two Commissioners if interested to attend the Conference.

Non-Member full Conference registration is \$1,680 per attendee. Additional Conference information is included in the 2026 Conference Flyer and Preliminary Program (Attachments A and B).

#### **Attachments:**

Attachment A: CALAFCO 2026 Annual Conference Flyer

Attachment B: CALAFCO 2026 Conference Preliminary Program



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# 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 • 8<sup>TH</sup> 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>

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



**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**

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# CALAFCO

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**OCTOBER 21 – 23, 2026**

Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel ♦ 1230 J St., Sacramento

## PROGRAM OF EVENTS

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

**8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. | PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES** *(Two options)*

**Mobile Workshop — Advance Registration Required**

**Departure:** Sheraton Grand Sacramento

**Capacity:** 50

**Tour:** Sacramento History Museum and Presentations on the Importance of Flood Control

**Presenters:** Scott Brown, District Manager, Reclamation District No. 1000; Lisa Kaplan, Sacramento City Councilmember and Sacramento LAFCO Commissioner; José Henríquez, Executive Officer, Sacramento LAFCO



Sacramento's history and development have long been shaped by water. This mobile workshop will explore how the city responded to devastating nineteenth-century floods and how decisions made then continue to influence land use, development, flood protection, water supply, and regional planning today. Participants will begin with a private tour of the Sacramento History Museum and a private tour beneath the streets of Old Sacramento, where they will see remnants of the extraordinary effort to raise portions of the city above floodwaters during the 1860s and 1870s. Following the tour, attendees will walk through Old Sacramento to the historic Delta King for lunch and presentations connecting Sacramento's past with today's challenges. Speakers will discuss reclamation districts, levees and flood protection infrastructure, changing federal standards, and the role these systems continue to play in protecting communities and California's water supply.

**SCHEDULE:**

8:00 a.m. — Check-in

8:30 a.m. — Depart Sheraton Grand Sacramento by bus

9:00 a.m. — Old Sacramento Underground & Sacramento History Museum Tours

10:30 a.m. — Walk to the Delta King

11:00 a.m. — Lunch and presentations

12:30 p.m. — Depart for the Sheraton Grand Sacramento

### 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | What is LAFCO?: The Game Show

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Presenters:** Paula de Sousa, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP and CALAFCO General Counsel; Joe Serrano, Executive Officer, Santa Cruz LAFCO; and Shane Stark, Commissioner, Santa Barbara LAFCO

Put your LAFCO knowledge to the test in this fast-paced, Jeopardy-style game show. Whether you are new to LAFCO or have years of experience, this interactive session will challenge contestants and audience members with questions covering LAFCO fundamentals, history, powers and responsibilities, terminology, and a few surprises along the way. Come ready to play, learn something new, and see how well you know the world of LAFCO. Friendly competition is encouraged, and bragging rights may be at stake.

### 1:30–1:50 p.m. | Conference Opening

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Opening Remarks:** Wendy Root Askew, Chair, CALAFCO

**Welcome:** Chris Little, Chair, Sacramento LAFCO

**Welcome to Sacramento:** Rosario Rodriguez, Chair, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

**Presentation of Colors:** Sacramento County Sheriff's Office and City of Sacramento Police Department

Join CALAFCO as we officially open the 2026 Annual Conference in Sacramento. CALAFCO Chair Wendy Root Askew will open the conference, followed by a welcome from Sacramento LAFCO Chair Chris Little and Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Chair Rosario Rodriguez. The opening program will also include the presentation of colors by the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office and the City of Sacramento Police Department.

### 2:00–3:15 p.m. | Beyond Growth: What's Next for LAFCO?

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator:** JD Hightower, Executive Officer, San Joaquin LAFCO

**Presenters:** Dr. Thomas Pogue, Executive Director, CBPR, University of the Pacific; Jim Simon, RSG; and Bernadette Austin, CEO, CivicWell

For decades, LAFCOs have helped communities manage growth, coordinate services, and promote orderly development. Today, many parts of California face a different reality, with slower population growth, aging infrastructure, workforce shortages, and increasing challenges to the long-term sustainability of local government services. This session will explore what these changing conditions may mean for LAFCOs and the communities they serve. Through statewide trends and local examples, panelists will discuss the evolving role of LAFCOs in service sustainability, regional collaboration, special district governance, infrastructure planning, and other emerging challenges facing local government.

### 3:15–3:45 p.m. | Refreshment Break with Sponsors

**Location:** Grand Nave Foyer

### 3:45–5:00 p.m. | Balancing Competing Priorities: Housing, Agriculture, Infrastructure, and the LAFCO Perspective

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator:** Wendy Root Askew, Chair, CALAFCO

**Presenters:** Katie Simmons, Deputy CAO, Butte County; Cheryle Hodge, Principal Planner, City of Sacramento; and Maryam Bral, Ph.D., Assistant General Manager, United Water Conservation District

Few LAFCO decisions involve a single consideration. Proposals may bring together the need for housing, agricultural land preservation, infrastructure and water availability, economic development, and a community's long-term plans for growth and services. Using examples from across California, this session will explore how LAFCOs evaluate proposals when important public interests compete. Panelists will discuss the questions commissioners and staff should consider, how short-term needs can be weighed against long-term impacts, and how LAFCO's unique perspective can contribute to thoughtful and well-informed decisions when there is no simple answer.

**5:15–6:45 p.m. | Welcome Reception**

**Location:** Grand Nave Foyer

**After 6:45 p.m. | Dinner on Your Own**

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**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22**

**7:00–8:45 a.m. | Breakfast**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**8:00–9:00 a.m. | Regional Caucuses & Elections**

**Central Region:** Bondi — Caucus Facilitator: Neelima Palacherla

**Coastal Region:** Tofanelli — Caucus Facilitator: JD Hightower

**Northern Region:** Beavis — Caucus Facilitator: Gary Thompson

**Southern Region:** Bataglieri — Caucus Facilitator: Shannon Costa

**9:15–10:00 a.m. | CALAFCO Annual Business Meeting**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Presiding:** Wendy Root Askew, Chair, CALAFCO

**Association Update:** Michelle McIntyre, Executive Director, CALAFCO

**Election Results:** José Henríquez, Executive Officer, CALAFCO and Sacramento LAFCO

CALAFCO members will come together for the Association's Annual Business Meeting, including an update on the work of the Association, consideration of Association business, and member comments.

**CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS • 10:15–11:30 A.M. (*Three Options*)**

**10:15–11:30 a.m. | What Your Reports Are Really Saying: And the Questions You Should Be Asking**

**Location:** Magnolia

**Introduction:** Shannon Costa, Executive Officer, Butte LAFCO

**Presenter:** Alicia Meyer, Senior Internal Auditor

A good staff report does more than present information; it should help decision-makers understand the issue, evaluate the evidence, and know where to focus their attention. But lengthy or technical reports can make it difficult to distinguish the most important information from the details surrounding it. This session will explore how to read reports with a more critical eye and identify what matters most. Using practical examples, Alicia Meyer will discuss how to recognize supporting report conclusions, evaluate whether the evidence and analysis are clear and complete, identify missing information, and ask better questions before decision-making. Attendees will gain practical tools for getting beyond the words on the page and using staff reports to support thoughtful, well-informed decisions.

## 10:15–11:30 a.m. | California Public Utilities Commission 101: Where State Regulation and LAFCO Intersect

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator & Panelist:** Joe Serrano, Executive Officer, Santa Cruz LAFCO

**Presenters:** Wilson Tsai, Program and Project Supervisor, Water Division, California Public Utilities Commission; and Jennifer Capitolo, Executive Director, California Water Association

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates privately owned utilities throughout the state, while LAFCOs oversee local government boundaries, organization, and service considerations. Although their responsibilities are different, their work can intersect when communities face questions about how essential services are provided. This session will provide an overview of the CPUC's role and explore where state utility regulation and LAFCO responsibilities may come together. Using issues such as struggling private water systems, panelists will discuss the responsibilities of each agency, when coordination may be helpful, and what LAFCO commissioners and staff should understand when regulated utilities become part of a local service or governance discussion.

## 10:15–11:30 a.m. | Legal Counsel Roundtable

**Location:** Compagno

**Facilitators:** Clark Alsop, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP; and Paula de Sousa, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP and CALAFCO General Counsel

Join Clark Alsop and Paula de Sousa for an informal discussion of current and emerging legal issues affecting LAFCOs. This roundtable for LAFCO legal counsel provides a venue for comparing notes, sharing experiences, and discussing the legal issues they are encountering in their work.

## 12:00–1:15 p.m. | Lunch & Keynote Address — California Senate Majority Leader Angelique Ashby

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Introduction:** José Henríquez, Executive Officer, Sacramento LAFCO

**Keynote Speaker:** Senate Majority Leader Angelique Ashby (8th District)  
California's local governments are navigating changing community needs, evolving state priorities, and an increasingly complex policy environment. Senate Majority Leader Angelique Ashby brings a perspective shaped by experience in both local and state government.

In this keynote address, Senator Ashby will share her perspective on the issues shaping California's future, priorities emerging from the State Capitol, and what they may mean for local governments and LAFCOs. Attendees will hear directly from one of California's legislative leaders about the challenges and opportunities ahead and the important role local government continues to play in serving communities across the state.



**CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS • 2:00–3:15 p.m.**

**2:00–3:15 p.m. | Strategic Public Engagement: A Plan for Any Scenario**

**Location:** Magnolia

**Moderator:** Rob Fitzroy, Executive Officer, San Luis Obispo LAFCO

**Presenter:** Whitney Szentesi, Public Communications Manager, City of San Luis Obispo

Significant policy decisions require more than meeting noticing requirements; they call for thoughtful, well-coordinated public engagement. Whitney Szentesi will share how the City of San Luis Obispo prepares its elected officials and executive staff to lead and set expectations during these moments, using practical tools like the City's five-step engagement playbook and targeted staff training. The session walks through what public engagement is, why it matters, and common challenges, while highlighting real examples of both successful outreach and missed audiences. Participants will explore four guiding principles for strong engagement and discuss how leaders can reinforce planning, quality, and community connection. Attendees will leave with actionable takeaways to strengthen engagement efforts within their own agencies.

**2:00–3:15 p.m. | Fire Services Under Pressure: What Should LAFCOs Be Watching?**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator:** Kurt Latipow, Senior Advisor, AP Triton

**Presenters:** Lewis Broschard, Fire Chief (ret.), Contra Costa Fire Protection District; Joe Serrano, Executive Officer, Santa Cruz LAFCO; Gay Jones, Commissioner, Sacramento LAFCO; and Jeffrey Small, General Manager, Capitol Public Finance Group, LLC

Fire agencies throughout California face rising costs, staffing shortages, aging infrastructure, increasing service demands, and growing expectations for emergency preparedness and wildfire response. While these pressures affect communities differently, LAFCOs may increasingly face questions about the long-term sustainability of fire protection services. How do you recognize when an agency is beginning to struggle? And when should LAFCO start asking questions? Panelists will discuss the issues affecting fire service delivery, the early signs that an agency may be under strain, and how communities are responding. The session will also look at how municipal service reviews, spheres of influence, and other LAFCO tools can help identify issues early and give communities an opportunity to consider their options before challenges become crises.

**3:15–3:45 p.m. | Refreshment Break with Sponsors**

**Location:** Grand Nave Foyer

**CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS • 3:45–5:00 p.m.**

**3:45–5:00 p.m. | Telling It Straight: Delivering Tough News About a Project Concept**

**Location:** Magnolia

**Moderator:** Rob Fitzroy, Executive Officer, San Luis Obispo LAFCO

**Presenters:** Kai Luoma, Executive Officer, Ventura LAFCO; Adriana Romo, Deputy Executive Officer, Los Angeles LAFCO; José Henríquez, Executive Officer, Sacramento LAFCO

Not every project concept is ready—or appropriate—for a formal LAFCO application. Long before a proposal reaches a commission agenda, early conversations can help potential applicants understand requirements, identify obstacles, and consider legal, financial, operational, and policy issues before significant time and resources are invested. This session will explore how LAFCO staff can approach these conversations constructively while providing clear and candid information about potential challenges. Using real-world examples, panelists will discuss managing expectations, communicating difficult messages, and lessons learned from proposals that changed course—or never moved forward. Attendees will gain practical approaches for helping applicants better understand the LAFCO process and make informed decisions about whether and how to proceed.

**3:45–5:00 p.m. | Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities: What Have We Learned?**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator & Panelist:** Paul Novak, Executive Officer, Los Angeles LAFCO

**Presenters:** Shannon Costa, Executive Officer, Butte LAFCO; Phoebe Seaton, Co-Director, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability

More than a decade after California established requirements for disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs), LAFCOs have gained considerable experience putting them into practice. Experiences vary widely across the state, and questions remain about identifying DUCs, available data and methodologies, acreage thresholds, routine annexations, and how the requirements apply in different communities. This session will look at what has been learned from more than a decade of implementation. Panelists will share practical experiences, discuss where the current framework has worked well and where challenges remain, and explore whether changes to LAFCO practices, available guidance, or the law itself may be worth considering.

**6:15–6:45 p.m. | Reception with Sponsors**

**Location:** Grand Nave Foyer

**6:45–8:30 p.m. | CALAFCO Awards Banquet**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Emcees:** Wendy Root Askew, CALAFCO Chair and Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair; Commissioner, Monterey LAFCO; Virginia Chang Kiraly, CALAFCO Board Director, Conference Planning Committee Member, and Awards Committee Member; Commissioner, San Mateo LAFCO

## **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23**

### **7:30–9:00 a.m. | Breakfast**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

### **7:30–8:45 a.m. | CALAFCO Board of Directors Meeting + Breakfast**

**Location:** Compagno

### **9:00–10:15 a.m. | AI and Local Government: What LAFCO Leaders Need to Know**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator & Panelist:** Jennifer Stephenson, Executive Officer, Calaveras, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, and San Benito LAFCOs

**Presenters:** Joe King, Technical Director, George Mason University Rapid Prototyping & Research Center; and Paula de Sousa, Partner, Best Best & Krieger LLP and CALAFCO General Counsel

Artificial intelligence is becoming part of local government operations, with public agencies exploring its use for research, report preparation, public communication, and other administrative functions. Along with these opportunities come important questions about accuracy, transparency, public records, privacy, accountability, and public trust. This session will examine AI from a LAFCO and local government perspective, with an emphasis on the policy and governance issues surrounding its use. Panelists will discuss practical applications and limitations, emerging legal considerations, agency policies and safeguards, and the oversight questions public officials and staff should understand as these tools become more widely used. Attendees will gain a practical framework for evaluating both the opportunities and risks of AI in public agencies.

### **10:30–11:30 a.m. | Legislative Update: What LAFCOs Should Be Watching**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Moderator:** Paul Novak, Executive Officer, Los Angeles LAFCO

**Presenters:** Anton Favorini-Csorba, Chief Consultant, Senate Local Government Committee; Jimmy MacDonald, Consultant, Assembly Local Government Committee; Kai Luoma, Executive Officer, Ventura LAFCO and Vice-Chair, CALAFCO Legislative Committee; and Geoff Neill, Senior Legislative Advocate, Nielsen Merksamer, LLP

Each year brings new legislation, emerging policy issues, and shifting priorities that can affect LAFCOs and the communities they serve. This session will provide an update on the 2026 legislative session while looking beyond individual bills to the broader issues and trends taking shape in Sacramento. Drawing on perspectives from the Senate and Assembly Local Government Committees and CALAFCO's Legislative Committee, panelists will discuss the issues receiving attention at the Capitol, what may be on the horizon, and what these developments could mean for LAFCOs statewide.

### **11:30 a.m. | Closing Remarks & Conference Adjournment**

**Location:** Camellia/Gardenia

**Closing Remarks:** Wendy Root Askew, Chair, CALAFCO