

EL DORADO LAFCO

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

AGENDA OF MAY 22, 2019

REGULAR MEETING

TO: Shiva Frentzen, Chair, and
Members of the El Dorado County Local Agency Formation
Commission

FROM: José C. Henríquez, Executive Officer

AGENDA ITEM #9: **CONSIDER GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT ON FIRE
DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION AND CONSIDER RESPONSE
TO GRAND JURY CASE 18-01**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission consider its response to the Grand Jury case 18-01 relating to fire district consolidation.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION

Grand Jury Case 18-01 discusses the many challenges rural fire districts have with sustainability and documents some of the ongoing efforts countywide to achieve costs savings through one of four types of consolidation: administrative, functional, operational and full (LAFCO is only involved in the latter). Responses to the case's findings and numbered recommendations is required by California Penal Code §§933 and 933.05. While LAFCO is not listed as a respondent agency, it is named in the report on several occasions and should, therefore, submit a response.

BACKGROUND

In its report, the Grand Jury details the financial challenges to rural fire districts, from the passage of Proposition 13 to current, as well as various efforts that were undertaken to address local rural fire districts, from 2010 (the creation of the Citygate Report) to current (the January LAFCO study session as well as a January meeting convened by County Administrator Don Ashton and the County's meeting in March concerning its Strategic Plan).

The Grand Jury Report concludes with the following findings:

- F1. Fire service sustainability is an issue confronting many rural counties in California.
- F2. AB 8 did not account for future fire district demographic changes. It also did not account for the additional financial burden of using salaried firefighters in lieu of volunteers in rural fire districts.
- F3. There are significant on-going discussions regarding County fire services sustainability encouraged by the County Board of Supervisors and LAFCO.
- F4. There is significant interest among elected County Fire Protection District Board members to address and identify solutions to fire services sustainability in the County.
- F5. Meaningful change to fire service sustainability in the County is challenging and will require continued and open dialogue among fire professionals, elected fire board members, the Board of Supervisors and other County officials.

It also contains the following recommendations:

- R1. The Board of Supervisors, in conjunction with LAFCO and elected fire protection district board members, should continue to explore options and models for County-wide fire service sustainability.
- R2. The Board of Supervisors should solicit assistance from the State to develop a solution to this issue.

The report only names the County Board of Supervisors as respondents to the report. While not obligated to respond, the Commission should consider whether it chooses to respond to Finding F3 and Recommendation R1 with one of the following as required by Penal Code Section 933.05:

- a) Respondent agrees with finding;
- b) Respondent disagrees wholly with finding; or
- c) Respondent disagrees partially with finding.

If respondent uses option b or c then the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation.

Staff recommends that the Commission respond that it agrees with Finding F3 and Recommendation R1. LAFCO can have a role to play in these discussions and will definitely be involved if there has to be some type of governmental reorganization as part of the solution.

Attachments

Attachment A: Grand Jury Report

Attachment B: Letter to Judge Kingsbury in Response to Grand Jury Case