

EL DORADO LAFCO

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

AGENDA OF AUGUST 24, 2011

REGULAR MEETING

TO: Ron Briggs, Chair, and
Members of the El Dorado County Local Agency Formation
Commission

FROM: José C. Henríquez, Executive Officer

AGENDA ITEM #5: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT THE
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND COUNTYWIDE FIRE
SUPPRESSION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MUNICIPAL
SERVICE REPORT AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE STUDY
(LAFCO PROJECT NO. 2008-02)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission:

1. Receive and discuss the information related to the update of the spheres of influence for eleven fire suppression and emergency services agencies and one county service area;
2. Open the public hearing on this matter;
3. Accept the statutory exemption from environmental review as the appropriate environmental review;
4. Adopt the municipal service review and updates to the spheres of influence for these twelve agencies; and
5. Direct staff to complete the necessary filings and transmittals as required by law.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION

State Law requires that the Commission update the spheres of influence for all agencies within El Dorado County every five years starting in January 1, 2008. State Law also requires that a municipal service review for an agency be performed before the Commission can update a sphere of influence. This municipal services review and sphere of influence study is part of the Commission's Fiscal Year 2008-09 Work Plan and its adoption satisfies all of the requirements under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act of 2000.

BACKGROUND

As part of its periodic review of agency performance, LAFCO used the factors found in Government Code §56430 and LAFCO Policy 4.4. The MSR also built on the information contained in the 2009 Fire and Emergency Study produced by Citygate. In essence, this Commission and any member of the public should take away four things from the conclusions in the MSR:

- 1) Response time performance in the County is very good, despite a default 2.0 staffing per engine, regardless of the agency in question. Operationally, the 14 fire suppression agencies function as one entity.
- 2) The true costs of providing service are actually hidden very well. In the rural districts, the reliance on volunteers allows the agencies to achieve staffing levels without adding to the payroll. In the districts that staff ambulances, JPA funds are used to pay the salaries of additional firefighters beyond what the agencies could otherwise afford given their revenue streams.
- 3) Agencies are more likely to be in dire financial straits if 70% or more of their firefighter corps is composed of volunteers and/or if nonrecurring revenues (supplemental funds, grants or strike team revenues) comprise 30% or more of their budget.
- 4) The current service model is unsustainable long term. The reliance on volunteers will be undermined by demographics: The county is growing older and the job-to-home commute times for residents in the desirable ages (18-45 year olds) is getting longer. The insufficiency of revenues for the rural districts, most notably the eight former recipients of Aid to Fire, threatens to undermine the agencies' ability to adequately staff their stations and agencies. This, in turn, stresses the response system and threatens to undermine the mutual aid agreement.

While the MSR identifies these issues, it recommends the adoption of status quo spheres of influence for all agencies covered in the report. The report acknowledges that moves by outside entities could undermine the fragile and very contentious discussions among agencies. For example, fire districts in the Georgetown Divide have had on-again off-again discussions on consolidation for 20 years. The latest attempt may bear fruit, with Georgetown and Garden Valley FPDs in the homestretch of discussions that started a year ago. Consequently, LAFCO staff recommends continuing to provide support to these districts without advocating a position.

Attachments

Attachment A: Countywide Fire and Emergency Studies MSR/SOI Study