



Building Strong Relationships

Special Districts & LAFCo

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSIONS

What LAFCo Does

LAFCos were created by the Legislature in 1963 to be the “legislature’s watchdog” in managing the orderly growth and development in California. LAFCos are primarily governed by act under the authority of the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (GC §56000). The principle goals of LAFCo are:

- ◆ Promote orderly growth
- ◆ Prevent sprawl
- ◆ Preserve agricultural and open space lands
- ◆ Assure efficient delivery of municipal services



LAFCo Responsibility

LAFCo is responsible for authorizing:

- ◆ Formation of new special districts
- ◆ Incorporation of new cities
- ◆ Changes in boundaries of cities and districts
- ◆ Annexations to local agencies
- ◆ Establishment and changes to spheres of influence
- ◆ Changes in district authorized services
- ◆ Mergers, consolidations and dissolutions of local agencies
- ◆ Extension of services outside of boundaries
- ◆ Provision of municipal services to previously unserved areas
- ◆ Periodic review of municipal services provided by local agencies



- ◆ Elimination, reduction or deactivation of a service
- ◆ Extension of services outside the district boundary
- ◆ Consolidation or merger with another agency
- ◆ Naming a successor agency
- ◆ Dissolution of the district
- ◆ Municipal Service Reviews

Meet Early with LAFCo Staff

Early engagement is key in building effective relationships. If your district is considering any of the changes which may require LAFCo authorization, meet with the Executive Officer as soon as possible. The application requirements, process and fees vary and the LAFCo staff can help you get started in the right direction. Some applications may take significant time and study in order to complete.

Depending on the application, the district may be required to complete a:

- ◆ Fiscal study
- ◆ Municipal service review
- ◆ Business or financial plan
- ◆ CEQA environmental study
- ◆ Water management plan
- ◆ Infrastructure capacity study
- ◆ Negotiation with other agencies



Special Districts and LAFCo

Special districts come to LAFCo for a number of different authorizations. This list is general and may depend on the principal act the district was formed under. If you are unsure, please consult with the LAFCo Executive Officer.

Among the changes a district is likely to need LAFCo authorization are:

- ◆ Annexations and boundary changes
- ◆ Changes to the sphere of influence
- ◆ Activation of a new service or latent power (even if it is allowed under the principle act)

Districts on LAFCo

Half the counties in California have special districts on their LAFCo. CALAFCO encourages all districts to seek to expand their LAFCo’s membership to include district members. It’s an opportunity for districts to have a voice in major decisions affecting the growth and services in their county. For resources visit www.calafco.org/special_district_resources.



More Information

Please visit www.calafco.org for detailed information on LAFCos, LAFCo law and a directory of LAFCos and officials in the state.