

July 5, 2001 (Agenda)

Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara CA 93101

Response to County Grand Jury Report Regarding Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Dear Members of the Commission:

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission approve the enclosed response to the Grand Jury's report on fire protection and emergency services in Santa Barbara County, together with any changes deemed appropriate.

DISCUSSION

The 2000-2001 County Grand Jury prepared a report entitled "A Regional Approach to Providing Better Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services to Santa Barbara County's Residents."

It recommends that the Commission review the report and, utilizing a reorganization committee with representatives of the affected agencies, recommend consolidations or reorganizations of fire protection and suppression services including centralized dispatch for fire and emergency medical response services and the possibility of contracting with the California Department of Forestry for some or all of these services.

Members of the Grand Jury presented the report to the Commission on June 7 and public comments were received. The staff was directed to place this matter on the July 5 agenda in order to comply with the statutory requirement that the Commission provide a timely response to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

Local Agency Formation Commission
July 5, 2001 (Agenda)
Page 2

A draft report for your review and discussion is enclosed. It is intended to embody the comments made by members of the Commission at the June meeting.

If you have any questions please contact the LAFCO office.

Sincerely,

BOB BRAITMAN
Executive Officer

Enclosures

Letter from the City of Lompoc (6/5/01)
Draft response to Grand Jury Report

LAFCO

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July 5, 2001

Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County of Santa Barbara
County Courthouse
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Response to County Grand Jury Report Regarding Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services

Dear Judge:

This report is provided pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05.

The 2000-2001 County Grand Jury report entitled "Regional Approach to Providing Better Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services to Santa Barbara County's Residents" is directed specifically to the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (hereafter Commission).

On June 7 members of the Grand Jury provided an overview of the report to the Commission and testimony was received from interested parties. On July 5 the Commission determined not to undertake the requested evaluation at this time for the following reasons:

- It wishes to receive comments regarding the report from the affected fire protection and emergency service agencies within the County in order to determine the level of interest in proceeding with governmental or structural reorganizations that involve the Commission's statutory powers.

- It appears from public testimony that establishing a centralized fire and emergency services dispatch system holds the greatest immediate interest, perhaps as a beginning step toward other reorganizations or consolidations.

This particular change does not involve LAFCO since it is not a change of organization as that term is defined in the Commission's enabling statutes. This type of functional consolidation can be achieved through cooperation of the affected agencies and the County without the exercise of the Commission's regulatory powers.

- The Commission has experienced greatly expanded responsibilities as a result of the enactment of Assembly Bill 2838 (the Hertzberg Bill) which became effective January 1, 2001 and mandates among other things the periodic review of spheres of influence in conjunction with the preparation of municipal service reviews. The Commission's limited resources must at this time be directed toward these statutory responsibilities.

The Commission's determination not to pursue the Grand Jury's recommended study at this time should not be interpreted as disrespect towards the analysis prepared by members of the Grand Jury or lack of interest with regard to potential benefits that could accrue to the public from beneficial reorganizations of fire protection and emergency medical services.

If you have any questions the Court is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

TIM CAMPBELL
Chair

cc: Each member of the Commission
Fire Protection and Emergency Service Agencies