

From: lafco@sblafco.org
To: [Natasha Carbajal](#)
Subject: FW: LOCS D extension request- purposely withholding public information- Resolution 19-04 legal work product
Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 10:51:04 AM

Public Comment for Bus #2

Mike Prater
Executive Officer
Santa Barbara LAFCO
105 E. Anapamu Street, Santa Barbara, CA. 93101
t. (805) 568-3391 f. (805) 568-2249
www.sblafco.org

From: michelle@dewerdfamily.com <michelle@dewerdfamily.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 10:11 AM
To: 'Email Lafco' <lafco@sblafco.org>; 'Email Lafco' <lafco@countyofsb.org>
Cc: 'Lisa Palmer' <Lisa@lpalmerconsulting.com>; 'Thomas Fayram' <tom.fayram.locsd@gmail.com>; 'Hartmann, Joan' <jhartmann@countyofsb.org>; 'Nelson, Bob' <bnelson@countyofsb.org>; SupervisorWilliams@countyofsb.org; saurik+ivcsd@saurik.com; apatino@cityofsantamaria.org; julie.kennedy6@gmail.com; 'Greg Parks' <grparks@mac.com>; 'Brad Ross' <rossbrada@gmail.com>
Subject: LOCS D extension request- purposely withholding public information- Resolution 19-04 legal work product

April 4, 2023

Santa Barbara LAFCO Meeting, Thursday, April 6, 2023.

I apologize that I may not be able to attend the meeting. Please read the following letter into the record:

Dear LAFCO Commissioners,

I am writing with respect to Business Agenda Number 2 regarding the Los Olivos Community Services District's request for a time extension. Unfortunately, during this five-year odyssey of the LOCS D, it appears that the district has lost its way, and the project has gone off course.

In August 2019, after a series of public workshops, the Board unanimously adopted Board Resolution 19-04, describing a phased approach that would start with the downtown core and expand as necessary based on groundwater monitoring data. In 2020, the LOCS D acquired from Santa Barbara County a small parcel of land near the downtown core to accommodate a treatment system. Fast forward five years after the LOCS D was formed, unfortunately, a large chunk of property tax assessments the LOCS D collected did not fund the expected groundwater monitoring. Instead, the assessments funded contracts to build a giant sewer treatment facility outside of the district, potentially including effluent ponds, and a site selection consultant (work-product that was "re-jiggered" by the LOCS D board to get the sewer treatment facility site they wanted and as far away from their homes). Putting a sewer treatment facility near the backyards of families outside of the district who have no knowledge, no benefit, no say, and no vote is not being a very good neighbor.

Sadly, the project looks nothing like Resolution 19-04. Spending years of assessment fees on a project the public knew nothing about was reckless. Their premature and arbitrary decision to pursue a hostile taking of a parcel of agricultural land for such a grossly incompatible project will be incredibly expensive and potentially lead to litigation.

Public agencies must be open and transparent regarding taxpayer money expended. One more bizarre detail: descriptions of the legal work the LOCSD was paying to the law firm meant to serve the District suddenly became hidden from the public in 2021. I repeatedly requested this information, resorting to a Public Records Act request, and to date, the LOCSD has been unresponsive and will not provide the information. A lack of transparency erodes public trust.

If LAFCO grants the extension, please urge the LOCSD to operate in a transparent manner and post relevant financial and operational documents to its website when available, just as LAFCO transparently operates.

I appreciate all your help.

All the best,

Michelle de Werd
P.O. Box 277
Los Olivos, CA 93441
Cell (805) 350-0300