



LOS OLIVOS WATER RECLAMATION

May 27, 2016

Chair Craig Geyer and Members of the Commission
Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Business Item No. 3 on the June 2, 2016 Agenda
Request to Delay Including Los Olivos in SYCSD's Sphere of Influence

Dear Chair Geyer and Members of the Commission:

The Los Olivos Water Reclamation Steering Committee was formed to ensure that the Los Olivos community can determine the best way to address our wastewater challenges in a way that protects water quality, maintains our rural character, safeguards property values, and is economically responsible and feasible.

Over the past three years, our efforts and the number of engaged property owners has grown as the complexity and urgency of our wastewater management situation has changed. We formed in 2013 to address the issues facing our downtown core; with the recent implementation of LAMP, our efforts have expanded to finding a solution that best addresses the needs of our entire community.

These efforts include considering the potential formation of a Los Olivos Community Services District. The Steering Committee is actively developing a proposal for the community's consideration, but the community and LAFCO need additional financial information before a petition can be submitted.

We therefore respectfully request that the Commission ask staff to delay consideration of the SYCSD sphere of influence proposal until the Steering Committee's subsequent Community Service District formation proposal is ready for the Commission's consideration. The additional time will allow all Los Olivos property owners and the Commission to consider all of the community's options simultaneously. A similar request was made to SYCSD, and it declined to honor it.

With feasibility studies already underway, a long delay is not required, and the delay would result in the development of quality information to inform the Commission's decision. Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services has graciously funded and is administering an Engineering Focused Feasibility Study. It is expected to be complete in July.

The Steering Committee has contracted with Berkson Associates to conduct a Wastewater System Financial Feasibility Study and Plan for Service, which will be done in mid-September. The Steering Committee intends to circulate a CSD formation petition to the community and then—assuming there is community support—to LAFCO shortly after receiving the Berkson study.

With the results of the Focused Feasibility Studies just weeks away, we believe it is premature to act on SYCSD's proposal to include Los Olivos in its Sphere of Influence when there is no hard data to support the proposal and no consensus among affected Los Olivos property owners that annexation to SYCSD is the best or desired path forward for our community.

Additionally, while the June 2 discussion focuses on Santa Ynez's sphere of influence request, the discussion and any ultimate decision is a much bigger one for us – it is a fundamental decision about who governs our town and who answers to residents and property owners about how our tax dollars are responsibly spent and managed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Herthel
For the Los Olivos Water Reclamation Committee

cc: Paul Hood, Executive Officer
Larry Fay, Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services
Richard Berkson, Berkson Associates
John Bakker, Esq.

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