

Santa Barbara LAFCO

Assembly Bill 3 (Williams) - Isla Vista Community Services District

February 5, 2015

Assembly Bill 3 - Proposed Formation of a Community Services District in Isla Vista

- Assembly Bill 3 (Williams) was introduced on December 1, 2014.
- Since AB 3 was introduced after the December 4, 2014, agenda packet was distributed, the Commission requested that a business item concerning the bill be scheduled for the next meeting.
- Although the language in AB 3 expresses the intent of the author to form the Community Services District (CSD) in Isla Vista, it is not explicit regarding the services that would be provided and how those services would be funded.
- The author has expressed his intent to form a CSD that would include a hybrid board of directors with property owners and well as registered voters. Under the Community Services District Law (Government Code Section 61000 et.seq.), CSD's are registered voter districts and the board of directors must be voters with the boundaries of the district. LAFCO does not have the authority to change the makeup of a CSD's board of directors. Therefore, the author intends to bypass the traditional LAFCO formation process.

LAFCO Ad Hoc Committee

- After numerous public comments on the bill at the December 4th meeting, including comments by Assemblyman Williams, the Commission appointed an Ad Hoc Committee of three members consisting of Commissioner Farr, Commissioner Geyer, and Commissioner Moorhouse, with Commissioner Farr as Chair.
- The task of the Ad Hoc Committee was to work with the Executive Officer, Assemblyman Williams' office and additional stakeholders, as appropriate, to gather information regarding the creation of a Community Services District and/or other governance options for the Isla Vista community. In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee was directed to report back to the Commission in the form of status reports as appropriate.

Developments since the December LAFCO Meeting

- The Ad Hoc Committee met on December 16, 2014 with a second meeting scheduled for February 2, 2015. As a result of the December 16, 2014 meeting, the California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO) working with the SBLAFCO Executive Officer, sent a “letter of concern” to Assemblyman Williams objecting to the intent to bypass the LAFCO review process. At the February 2nd meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee decided to recommend that the Commission approve its own “letter of concern” to be sent to Assemblyman Williams. A draft “letter of concern” will be discussed at the February 5th meeting.
- Since the bill was introduced on December 1, 2014, the Assemblyman and his staff have scheduled a series of meetings in Isla Vista between January 6th and March 5th to disseminate information on the bill. The intent is to reach out to stakeholders to determine which services and powers the proposed new Community Services District (CSD) should provide, how those services will be financed, and who will serve on the CSD Board of Directors. Members of the Ad Hoc Committee and staff have attended several of the community stakeholder meetings as well as Isla Vista property owner meetings on this matter.

Conclusion

- The proposal to form a Community Services District as a form of local governance in Isla Vista is intended to bypass the SBLAFCO process by implementing special legislation.
- LAFCO is the appropriate agency to review these types of district formations as established by the Cortese-Knox –Hertzberg Local Government Act of 2000.
- Whether or not a community services district is the appropriate form of local government for the community is a LAFCO decision that should not be bypassed.
- Community Services Districts have limitations on their powers and cannot provide additional levels of service without new revenues.
- Limited revenues would come from the dissolving districts or detachments from larger district that encompass the Isla Vista community. To collect additional revenues, such as a special tax, assessments or utility user taxes, an election must be held.
- However, the fundamental decision that needs to be made is how a CSD with limited revenues and powers can provide solutions to service and governance problems in Isla Vista before going down the path of forming such a district.

Recommendation

- It is recommended that the Commission review the report and provide direction to staff.