



Date: December 28, 2009 for January 6, 2010 Agenda
To: Commissioners
From: Executive Officer
Subject: Appointment of a Water Policy Committee

Summary: At the November 2009 meeting, the Commission received a staff report initiating a review of Santa Cruz LAFCO's water policies. The Commission directed that the next agenda contain a business item to consider appointing a committee of LAFCO Commissioners to assist in the review of the water policies.

Recommendation: Consider appointing a water policy committee.

One of the Commission's high-priority tasks on its work program is to conduct a review of its policies specific to water services. The current set of policies has been drafted in several discrete steps over more than 30 years. Most policy development was addressed from a viewpoint that focused on general services. The Commission hopes that reviewing and revising the current set of water policies with a focus on water issues will result in an improved set of policies to guide LAFCO's decisions on future applications.

The Commission's rules allow a committee to be set up either by the Chairperson's appointment or by direct action of the Commission. A committee may include just Commissioners, or may include Alternates.

The Brown Act, concerning noticed meetings open to the public, applies to some committees and doesn't apply to others. The act applies to standing committees. The act does not apply to limited-term, ad-hoc, advisory committees consisting of less than a quorum of the legislative body. With a seven-person board, LAFCO's quorum is 4, and its committees typically contain 2 or 3 Commissioners.

Many of any LAFCO's decisions concern water, either directly when an application includes a water agency sphere of influence amendment, annexation, dissolution, or extraterritorial service; or indirectly when an application concerns a city sphere amendment or annexation that would result in a change of land use plans. Water issues are ubiquitous throughout the county. Given the high profile of water issues, staff RECOMMENDS that the Commission direct any water policy committee to operate with open, noticed meetings subject to the Brown Act.