



Date: January 25, 2010 for February 3rd Agenda
To: LAFCO Commissioners
From: Executive Officer
Subject: CALAFCO Proposal to Elect CALAFCO Board Members by
Region

Summary: The CALAFCO Board of Directors is proposing to reorganize the selection process for CALAFCO Board members in an effort to keep Southern California LAFCOs from leaving CALAFCO, and to improve the association.

Recommendation: Receive report.

LAFCO Commissioners will remember that some Southern California LAFCOs have been dissatisfied with aspects of how the California Association of LAFCOs (CALAFCO) is being run. A key concern was that Southern California was underrepresented on the CALAFCO Board. This problem was exacerbated when the October 29, 2009 CALAFCO Board elections resulted in only 1 of the 15 Board positions being held by a Southern Californian. Since October, the Southern California LAFCOs have discussed leaving CALAFCO and setting up a parallel association in Southern California. In fact, four LAFCOs have given notice that they are going to leave the association on June 30, 2010, and one is considering leaving.

The CALAFCO Board met on January 15, 2010, and decided to put an offer on the table. Their proposal is to amend the association Bylaws to provide for the CALAFCO Board to contain 16 Board members, with four members (county, city, district, public) elected in each of four regions. A longer explanation follows in a letter from the CALAFCO Executive Director.

No action is required at this time by Santa Cruz LAFCO. Staff will agendize the Bylaws amendment proposal when we receive the ballot materials from CALAFCO.

January 20, 2010

Dear Executive Officers:

As you know, the CALAFCO Board of Directors met last Friday. The meeting largely dealt with the regional proposal that the Board presented to the membership at the annual meeting last October. That proposal was to create regions simply for the purpose of communication, and to retain the current statewide election process. Previously I sent you the Board Agenda Packet with the staff report and member comments on the proposal.

All 15 members participated in the meeting. The Board held a thoughtful discussion of how to proceed, particularly with the likelihood that at least five members would leave if another path was not found. Paramount in their consideration was the best interest of CALAFCO and the critical importance of preserving the membership of all LAFCOs. The Board recognized that without the current 57 members, CALAFCO would no longer carry the influence that it currently enjoys with state decision-makers and would face severe budget deficiencies. It would also lose the expertise and involvement of members who have made significant contributions to CALAFCO and member LAFCOs over the past 38 years. The Board carefully reviewed the comments and feedback from members, results from the 'clicker session' at the annual conference, and the staff reports and comments.

The Board received critical new information in late December and early January that some members have or will be giving notice to end their participation in CALAFCO. These members felt that the interests of their region are not represented within the Association. To date, four LAFCOs have given notice and another LAFCO is considering a similar action in the immediate future. Those letters were included in the Board Agenda Packet.

As a direct result of this new information, the Board moved for a change in direction.

The Board did not adopt the October 2009 proposal to establish regions for the purpose of meeting, sharing ideas or sharing resources. It recognized that those relationships were already happening where appropriate and it did not want to create the need for additional meetings or costs to the members. More important, the October proposal did not address the fundamental concern about lack of balanced representation on the Board of Directors.

Instead, the Board reconsidered and approved a variation of the original recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee presented on 15 May 2009. That recommendation is to elect Board Members by region rather than statewide. The Board recognized that the real value will be to ensure that the Board of Directors is balanced and representative of the broad range of LAFCO interests: rural-urban-suburban; north-south; coastal-mountain-valley; city-county-special district-public. It is truly in that balance that CALAFCO finds its foundation of credibility and objectiveness with state decision makers.

This was a difficult decision for the Board members. The change in direction was taken because the Board believes it is critical to keep CALAFCO together as a statewide organization, and that this immediate action is the best approach to retain the Association and the benefits it brings to its members.

Therefore the Board decided to create regions within the state only for the purpose of electing representatives to the CALAFCO Board. There were three separate votes taken on various aspects of the proposal. All were unanimous of those present. The components of the recommendation are briefly described below. We are still working out some of the final details and language. As more information is available I will forward it to you. In the meantime, here is the outline:

1. Four regions would be established within CALAFCO (northern, coastal, central and southern). The existence of four regions would be established in the Bylaws; however the specific counties in each region would be by policy so they can be changed by the Board in the future if requested by members.
2. Each region would have one city, one county, one special district and one public member; increasing the Board from 15 to 16 members.
3. Each region would elect its own four members by region. Elections would be done in caucus by each region at the CALAFCO annual conference.
4. The regional elections would commence at the Palm Springs conference in October, 2010. This will require a change in the Bylaws this spring. The Board directed staff to prepare a mailed ballot for members in late May so that the final results are known in early July for Board nominations and dues notices.
5. The Board agreed to a "fresh start" election in October. All 16 seats will be up for election; 8 for a one-year term and 8 for a two-year term.

We are currently working on the specific proposed Bylaw language, policy manual language and the regional map. The Board will be reviewing and voting on that language in the next two weeks. Once that is approved we will prepare complete information packets for each LAFCo to review and share with your commission. CALAFCO Board members and staff will be available to meet with your commission if requested to explain the proposal and answer questions.

It is clear from the discussion at the Board meeting and with members that this proposal will result in a stronger Board and stronger Association. Member support is critical. Without the support of the members it is also clear that the future of CALAFCO is in doubt.

I look forward to talking with you more regarding the proposal as the details are completed. Thank you for your consideration. Cheers! BC

Bill Chiat, Executive Director

California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions