



San Diego County
Local Agency Formation Commission
 Regional Service Planning | Subdivision of the State of California

5f

AGENDA REPORT
 Consent | Information

May 4, 2020

TO: Commissioners

FROM: Keene Simonds, Executive Officer
 Holly O. Whatley, Commission Counsel

SUBJECT: Response to COVID-19

SUMMARY

The San Diego County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will receive a report on administrative adaptations undertaken in response to COVID-19. This includes closing the office to the public and a temporary transition to telework for all employees with limited exceptions. The report is being presented for information while providing the Commission the opportunity to provide related feedback proceeding forward.

BACKGROUND

State Emergency

Governor Newsom declared a statewide emergency on March 4, 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19. A series of Executive Orders followed between March 12th and 24th and includes a shelter-in-place order for Californians less critical and/or essential operation workers. The County of San Diego and City of San Diego have also issued similar local orders.

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LAFCO as an Essential Function

San Diego LAFCO qualifies as an essential function under the Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-33-20. This involves providing regulatory approvals and related oversight of local agencies delivering critical public services and infrastructure. In so doing, LAFCO qualifies under the March 22, 2020 directive from the State Public Health Officer issued pursuant to Executive Order N-33-20 listing “Other Community Based Government Operations and Essential Functions” as “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers.” Relatedly, and consistent with maintaining the continuity of government, LAFCO has continued to receive and process jurisdictional change applications and this includes receipt of five proposals after the State issued the shelter-in-place order.

DISCUSSION

This item provides San Diego LAFCO with a summary of actions undertaken in response to COVID-19 and the associated Executive Orders issued by Governor Newsom. The summary is provided for information with an opportunity for the Commission to provide related feedback to the Executive Officer and Counsel proceeding forward. A summary of actions follows.

- **Office Closure**

The LAFCO office has been closed to the general public beginning on Thursday, March 12th. A notice of the closure has been posted on the front door, building entrance, and online. The office’s main telephone line has also been redirected to a mobile phone issued to Administrative Assistant Erica Blom to help ensure timely responses during normal business hours.

- **Transition to Telework**

All LAFCO employees have transitioned to telework on a temporary basis and perform their assigned duties over 40-hour workweeks at home with limited exceptions as detailed below. This transitioned was facilitated by assigning laptop computers to all employees with the ability to remotely access the LAFCO network. The Executive Officer retains the discretion to adjust these telework arrangements as needed to ensure LAFCO work is timely and efficiently completed while also taking into consideration the Governor’s directive regarding social distancing and the future lifting and/or easing of such restrictions.

- **Limited Office Attendance**

A limited amount of physical attendance at the LAFCO office remains necessary. Most of the physical office attendance involves Administrative Assistant Erica Blom reporting on Tuesdays and Thursdays to collect and send mail – including issuing application notices that require distribution by first-class mail – and perform accounts receivable/payable. Executive Assistant Ruth Arellano reports to the office on Wednesdays as needed to prepare checks and payroll. The Executive Officer similarly reports on Fridays as needed to sign checks and payroll. No other employees are permitted at the office.

- **Disinfection Services**
The LAFCO office is now regularly disinfected (wipe-downs) twice daily by County General Services. Regular evening janitorial services also continue.
- **Employee Supervision**
The Executive Officer maintains regular contact with all employees through e-mail and telephone to discuss work assignments. Weekly video-conference meetings with all staff are also conducted on Tuesdays using Zoom.
- **Advisory Committees**
LAFCO transitioned both recent meetings of the Cities and Special Districts Advisory Committees to conference-calls on March 13th and March 20th, respectively. Should the shelter-in-order continue staff will transition future meetings to video-conference.

ANALYSIS

San Diego LAFCO continues to conduct regular business while adapting to COVID-19 and the associated needs for physical distancing. This includes transitioning to telework and making use of the internet, email, and telephone in processing applications and continuing work in several municipal service reviews and other projects listed in the workplan. A related progress report on the workplan is provided as Agenda Item No. 5d.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is presented to San Diego LAFCO for information only. It is recommended the Commission review the report with the invitation to provide feedback.

ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION

This item is being presented for information only; no action.

PROCEDURES

This item has been placed on the San Diego LAFCO's agenda as part of the consent calendar. A successful motion to approve the consent calendar will include taking affirmative action on the staff recommendation unless otherwise specified by the Commission.

Respectfully,



Keene Simonds
Executive Officer

Attachment: none

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