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To: Chair Woods and Yolo LAFCo Members

From: Christine Crawford

Re: Agenda Item 5 – Supplemental Correspondence

Date: April 18, 2023

Please see the attached comment letter submitted by staff for the Board of Supervisors meeting this morning.

Staff's efforts to maintain some or most of LAFCo's fire district MSR reorganization recommendations for Area 4 was not successful.

Christine Crawford

From: Christine Crawford
Sent: Monday, April 17, 2023 2:28 PM
To: Oscar Villegas; Gary Sandy; Angel Barajas; Lucas Frerichs; Jim Provenza
Cc: Marianne Estes; Dotty Pritchard; Tara Thronson; Monica Rivera; Sheila Allen; Gerardo Pinedo; Mark Bryan; Chad Rinde; Elisa Sabatini; Leslie Lindbo; Philip Pogledich; Eric May; Olin Woods; Julie Dachtler; eric.zane (Eric.Zane@cityofwoodland.org)
Subject: LAFCo Comments Re BOS Agenda Item #28 Fire Protection Sustainability - Recommended Action B

Chair Villegas and Members of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors,

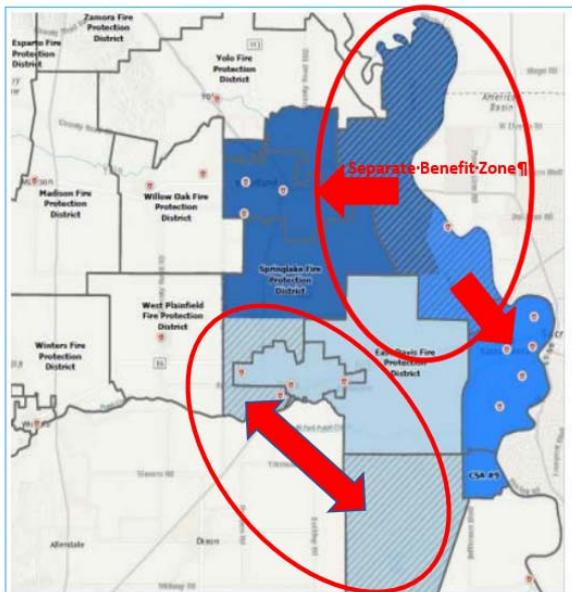
I've reviewed the fire protection sustainability staff report's Recommended Action B proposing to modify the Board's December 6, 2022, decision regarding the successor agency for Elkhorn FPD, and end the Board's future consideration of any other improvements to the Area 4 districts' governance. I am advocating that the Board consider two alternative recommendations that would satisfy the concerns expressed by East Davis and Springlake FPD commissioners. These alternative recommendations would be a much better solution that the BOS can adopt at tomorrow's meeting.

Alternative Recommendations for Action B

The staff report's Recommended Action B for Area 4 is a new option that has not been discussed with LAFCo previously. It does not meet one of LAFCo's key goals for government simplicity and transparency for the public as discussed below. Since LAFCo will be ultimately processing this proposal, I feel it's important to offer these alternate recommendations for Area 4 that is a better win-win solution:

1. Rather than moving all of Elkhorn's territory into CSA No. 9, move the area being served by Woodland into the Springlake FPD as a separate zone of benefit (which creates accounting firewalls to address Springlake's concern about its current residents having to subsidize areas in the Elkhorn district)
2. Rather than not address the City of Davis's service of three separate County-run districts at all, move the Davis service area of Springlake FPD into No Man's Land FPD (leaving East Davis untouched)

These alternate recommendations address both the East Davis and Springlake commissioners' concerns over impacting the districts that are performing well operationally, AND mostly addresses LAFCo's recommendation of aligning districts to their city service area.



Background

LAFCo's purpose is to organize local government. And as you know, the Board of Supervisors looked to LAFCo to recommend a reorganization of the fire districts. Accordingly, on September 27, 2022, the BOS adopted LAFCo's Municipal Services Review as the guiding document for the County's reorganization efforts. And on December 6, 2022, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution of application to LAFCo to dissolve the Elkhorn FPD and annex its territory into Springlake FPD and CSA No. 9, consistent with LAFCo's MSR. County Staff was to conduct further outreach to the districts affected by the other Area 4 reorganizations and return to the Board at a future date with options to consider.

Given that the districts in Area 4 contract with city fire departments for services, one of the key recommendations for Area 4 is to align outdated the FPD boundaries to each city's service area. But the appointed volunteer fire commissioners for two FPDs want to maintain the status quo for their districts because operations are going well. And they are, thanks to the cities, which perform almost all the districts' services. But governance is not just about operations; it's also about transparency and accountability to the public.

Springlake FPD's service is already divided between two cities. As a constituent, if I live in North Davis Meadows and call 911, City of Davis personnel responds. But if I call my Springlake FPD, City of Woodland staff responds. And if I want to attend a district meeting, I go to Woodland city offices. The District's confusing governance structure has real-world ramifications, not just in how citizens receive services, but also how the constituents hold the district accountable.

We have an opportunity to clean up these outdated boundaries, and the staff report's recommendation doesn't address this part of the problem. And it even exacerbates it by setting up yet another district (CSA No. 9) to be divided between two cities (Woodland and West Sacramento). This is totally unnecessary to address the concerns identified by the commissioners.

The far simpler solution would be to maintain the Board's December 6, 2022, decision to move Elkhorn's territory being served by Woodland to Springlake FPD and have CSA No. 9 continue to cover the areas being served by the City of West Sacramento. If the concern is that Springlake residents might subsidize Elkhorn residents, there are better ways to solve this concern via a zone of benefit, rather than creating another disjointed district.

As to the reorganization of the three Districts being served by the City of Davis, if staff's reluctance to address this issue is driven by the forceful opinions of the Board's appointees to the East Davis FPD, then the Board of Supervisors should at least consider moving the area in Springlake FPD being served by the City of Davis to the No Man's Land FPD, which has no fire commission (but one could be formed). This would reduce the number of districts being served by the City of Davis from three to two and aligns the boundaries with the city service area.

The alternate recommendations suggested above satisfy the vocal fire commissioners' desire to remain untouched (even though they are ultimately under the Board of Supervisors' control) AND more closely aligns the districts to the city service boundaries. I will be available at tomorrow's Board meeting to answer any questions, if needed.

Thank you for your consideration,
Christine

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