

**SACRAMENTO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**  
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**Sacramento, California 95814**  
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October 5, 2005

TO: Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission

FROM: Peter Brundage, Executive Officer  
Donald J. Lockhart AICP, Assistant Executive Officer

RE: **Open Space Progress Report: Proposed Open Space and Prime  
Agricultural Land Preservation Policies for Evaluating Sphere of  
Influence and Annexation Proposals**

**RECOMMENDATION**

This report is for information only, no action is required. Staff recommends your Commission schedule a public Workshop for November 2, 2005, to consider the proposed policies. It is anticipated that the final policy recommendations will be presented to your Commission December 7, 2005.

**BACKGROUND**

**Open space lands are necessary for quality of life and we must care for the land today so future generations may enjoy its physical and spiritual benefits tomorrow.**

At the direction of your Commission, staff has completed the public outreach effort for the proposed Open Space and Prime Agricultural Land Preservation policy development. The outreach has included four public workshops, one each in Elk Grove, Galt, Herald, and Rancho Cordova. We have also discussed the draft policies with ECOS, the BIA, all of the city Planning Directors and the County of Sacramento Planning Director. The draft policies have been widely distributed, as well as posted @ [www.SacLAFCo.org](http://www.SacLAFCo.org).

**Review of LAFCo Legislative Mandate**

Government Code Section 56377 guides development away from agricultural and open-space lands:

In reviewing and approving or disapproving proposals which could reasonably be expected to induce, facilitate, or lead to the conversion of existing open-space lands to uses other than open-space uses, the commission shall consider all of the following policies and priorities:

- (a) Development or use of land for other than open-space uses shall be guided away from existing prime agricultural lands, in working landscapes or in open-space use toward areas containing non-prime agricultural lands, unless that action would not promote the planned, orderly, efficient development of an area.
- (b) Development of existing vacant or non-prime agricultural lands for urban uses within the existing jurisdiction of a local agency or within the sphere of influence of a local agency should be encouraged before any proposal is approved which would allow for or lead to the development of existing open-space lands for non-open-space uses which are outside of the existing jurisdiction of the local agency or outside of the existing sphere of influence of the local agency.

LAFCo has the opportunity to contribute to countywide considerations by shaping the form and path of growth, through adopted policies. The draft policies reflect the mission of LAFCo as being one to influence and guide development from prime agricultural land, not to stop growth.

As you know, your Commission plays a role in regional planning issues by taking into consideration a wide range of land use and growth factors when acting on matters under your jurisdiction. LAFCo has broad statutory responsibility to facilitate planned, orderly, efficient patterns of urban development; preserve prime agricultural lands; and discourage sprawl. Your decisions ***must balance*** the competing needs for affordable housing, economic opportunities, public safety and the preservation of natural resources.

By making decisions about the extent of the geographic area over which a local government or special district may control planning, services provision and development, LAFCo may influence the extent and path of growth and development both locally and regionally. LAFCo should act as a filter for the timing and direction of new growth precipitating changes of Sphere or jurisdictional boundaries. Your Commission must weigh the needs and resources of each community, the regional implications, and impacts to environmental resources.

In fulfilling our mission, LAFCo has two opposing mandates which it must balance:

- (1) Provide land for orderly development and efficient service delivery;
- (2) Preserve and protect open space and prime agricultural lands.

**Executive Officer's Recommendation**

Direct staff to return in November for a Commission Workshop regarding the **Sacramento LAFCo Policies, Procedures and Guidelines** Proposed Open Space and Prime Agricultural Land Preservation Policies for Evaluating Sphere of Influence and Annexation Proposals.

Respectfully submitted,

**SACRAMENTO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

Peter Brundage  
Executive Officer

DL:Maf  
(Open Space Progress Report)