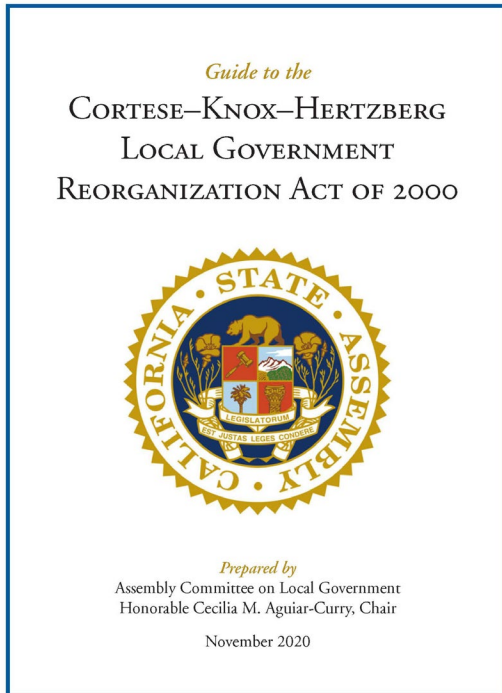




# **An Introduction to Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCoS)**

**February 25, 2021**

**Pamela Miller  
CALAFCO Executive Director**





# What is a Local Agency Formation Commission?

- ❖ Independent regulatory authority of the State of California
- ❖ Created in 1963 to be the Legislature's "watchdog" to manage the orderly growth and development of cities and districts
- ❖ Also known as the State's steward of "good government"





# Why LAFCo was created

- ❖ Post World War II population and housing boom in California
- ❖ Following street cars, there were suburbs and a scramble to finance and extend services
- ❖ City annexation "wars," proliferation of limited purpose special districts
- ❖ Governor Pat Brown's Commission on Urban Problems focused on need to encourage orderly boundaries





# **Legislative Solution in 1963 State Law, Local Flexibility**

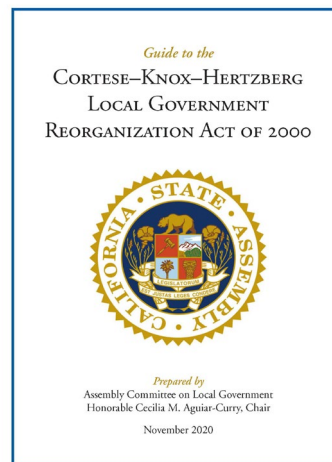
- ❖ No state commission or statewide agency
- ❖ Local control – no state appointees or funding
- ❖ A LAFCo in every county
- ❖ Each LAFCo independent
- ❖ Local flexibility – local policies
- ❖ 6 major revisions to State law over 58 years
- ❖ Unique to California





# LAFCo statutory mission

- ❖ Encourage orderly boundaries
- ❖ Discourage urban sprawl
- ❖ Preserve agriculture and open space
- ❖ Promote efficient and sustainable public services







# What does LAFCo do?



- ❖ City Incorporation and Disincorporation
- ❖ District Formations and Dissolutions
- ❖ Annexations/Detachments
- ❖ Consolidations, Mergers, Subsidiary Districts
- ❖ Service Extensions outside a District or City (special rules for fire contracts)
- ❖ Activate Latent Powers and divestiture of powers
- ❖ Reorganization (one or more of the above)
- ❖ Approve/update Spheres of Influence for Cities and Districts
- ❖ Conduct Municipal Service Reviews



# **LAFCo is Independent**

- ❖ Commissioners make final decisions
- ❖ Adopt local policies
- ❖ Decisions cannot be appealed to other administrative bodies
- ❖ LAFCo Staff accountable to Commission and statutes





# LAFCo Composition

At the least:

- ❖ 2 County Supervisors
- ❖ 2 City Council members
- ❖ 1 public member
- ❖ Alternate for each category

31 LAFCos also include:

- ❖ 2 Special District members plus an alternate
- ❖ Some LAFCos have “special seats”







# Representation of Special Districts on LAFCo





# How is LAFCo Funded?

- ❖ Must adopt a budget for each fiscal year by June 15 (per CKH)
- ❖ Funded by the county, cities, and special districts in equal shares
- ❖ Local funding formulas are allowed
- ❖ Processing fees help offset expenses for proposals





# Local Agencies Regulated by LAFCo

## ❖ Include:

Cities, independent & dependent special districts

## ❖ Do NOT include:

- ◆ Community facilities or Mello-Roos districts
- ◆ School or college districts
- ◆ County boundaries
- ◆ Bridge and highway districts
- ◆ Improvement districts & Zones of benefit
- ◆ Air pollution/quality districts
- ◆ **JPA**s (however, must submit agreements)
- ◆ **Mutual Water Companies** (however, must submit maps)





# LAFCo REGULATORY Function

- ❖ Administer and evaluate boundary *changes* and reorganizations of existing agencies and creation of new ones based on codified factors
- ❖ Monitor/control *extension* of public services
- ❖ Prohibited from “directly” regulating land use





# LAFCo PLANNING Function

- ❖ Develop and update **Spheres of Influence** for cities and districts
- ❖ Prepare **Municipal Service Reviews** for all local jurisdictions
- ❖ Work cooperatively on growth, preservation, and service delivery issues







# LAFCos as a **RESOURCE...**

- ❖ Shared service models, studies and exchanges; information about other local service delivery options
- ❖ Model inter-agency agreements
- ❖ Models for tax sharing, revenue generation, governance options, social justice, etc.
- ❖ Training and educational resources for compliance with State laws and best practices
- ❖ Historical, current and trending info – 58-year record of formations and boundary changes
- ❖ SOI studies since early '70s; municipal service reviews since early 2000s; GIS data layers and maps







# Subject to State Laws

- ❖ Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act
- ❖ Brown Act / Public Records Act
- ❖ CEQA
- ❖ Revenue & Tax Code
- ❖ Political Reform Act / Other Conflict of Interest Laws
- ❖ Principal Acts





# Who is CALAFCO?

- ❖ Founded in 1971, a 501(c)3 non-profit
- ❖ Serve all 58 LAFCOs with educational, technical and legislative resources that otherwise would not be available
- ❖ No registered lobbyist on staff
- ❖ No direct oversight or authority over member LAFCOs
- ❖ Act as resource to other State agencies, the Legislature and State Administration
- ❖ Offer a structure for sharing information among the various LAFCOs and other governmental agencies
- ❖ Support over 750 LAFCo commissioners and staff
- ❖ Two part-time staff





# **CALAFCO as a RESOURCE**

Executive Director: Pamela Miller  
1020 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 222  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-442-6536  
pmiller@calafco.org

**[www.calafco.org](http://www.calafco.org)**

