

January 11 2024 (Agenda)

Local Agency Formation Commission  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara CA 93101

## **Ad-Hoc Committee AG-Urban Recommendation**

Dear Members of the Commission:

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Commission receive a status update from the AG-Urban Ad-Hoc Committee and consider a recommendation to pursue a Sustainable Agriculture Lands Conservation Program (SALC) Grant and develop Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) between the eight Cities and the County individually to assist in establishing appropriate Spheres of Influence.

### DISCUSSION:

On October 5, 2023 the Commission appointed Commissioners Hartmann, Kyriaco, and Patino as an ad-hoc committee to provide guidance to staff on how to proceed with Public Workshops aimed at better understanding countywide growth projections and impacts to agricultural lands.

The ad-hoc committee was tasked with exploring the best alternatives to facing the challenges of balancing growth and protecting ag lands. In August, the Commission considered forming an Ad-Hoc Committee to look into Ag/Urban interface concerns, however, the discussion grew into a broader perspective of interest that would include the public, stakeholders, and interested parties. Associated with this discussion, included existing policies regarding Urban Utility services for Agricultural Parcels.

The ad-hoc committee convened twice to discuss the appropriate needs, options, other best practices used by other LAFCOs to be pursued by SBLAFCO. After consideration, the committee recommends the Commission to pursue a SALC Grant and develop a MOA Program with each City.

### **SALC Grant Program**

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program is designed to help California fight climate change by advancing healthy soils and permanently protecting agricultural and working lands at risk of development. To date, this program has permanently protected agricultural land roughly eight times the size of San Francisco, avoiding millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions associated with development on that scale. The Department of Conservation administers the Program on behalf of California Strategic Growth Council, developing guidelines, providing technical assistance to applicants, and identifying projects and communities with greatest impact on reducing emissions while protecting California's valuable natural and working lands. Over the life of the Program, Conservation staff have recommended 283 projects for funding.

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is a 10-member council comprised of seven state agencies and three public members with the mission to build healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all. Funded through California's Cap and Trade system and the California General Fund, SGC's grant programs, strategic initiatives, and interagency coordination focus on multi-benefit and community-centric solutions at the nexus of climate and equity.

With a team of scientists and other dedicated professionals, the Department of Conservation (DOC) administers a variety of programs vital to California's public safety, environment and economy. The services DOC provides are designed to balance today's needs with tomorrow's obligations by fostering the wise use and conservation of energy, land and mineral resources.

The goal is to gather a broad partnership of local groups to participate in the next round of grant funding. SBLAFCO along with others will apply for a planning grant to further goals of protecting at risk agricultural and working lands from development. For LAFCO we envision two major components, 1) expand the land inventory of viable AG/Farmland within and around the corridor of urban City limits, that can be identified as prime protection sites, thereby, also recognizing potential available areas for reasonable urban development. 2) Develop mitigation policies and measure to implement strategies on how best to target the acquire Ag/Farmland inventory site identified in goal #1. The second component would

likely follow up as a second grantee for acquisition or funding of agricultural easements as investment to further permanent protection.

**Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Program**

A MOA program should be developed to improve communication and coordination in planning for future growth and development between Cities and the County. Currently, no City has an MOA with the County. A Memorandum of Agreement between the City and County would be reviewed and amended to reflect any changes to the Sphere of Influence and provisions that are agreed to by the County and City. Using the information from the SALC grant and each City/County General Plans appropriate areas can be targeted for future development.

An MOA can provide more detail about what type of development might be expected in the SOI and assist in defining the boundary. This helps clarify expectations and provides guidelines that help guide future projects in the SOI. The MOA can also be used to specify a particular planning process or policies for specific areas. Also, the MOA should address other issues such as water & sewer resources and agricultural/open space preservation. A comprehensive SOI/MSR Program would include the MOA program that focuses on areas of communication and coordination between the Cities and County.

Please contact the LAFCO office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Mike Prater  
Executive Officer