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May 26, 2015

Assembly Member Das Williams
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4005
Sacramento, Ca 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 3 –Notice of Opposition

Dear Assembly Member Williams:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of my opposition to AB 3. The Isla Vista self-governance issue is one that should not be rushed or circumvent Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCO) process. A completed self-governance financial feasibility study and LAFCO's comprehensive review of the viability of the proposed Community Services District (CSD) is needed to inform a sustainable plan for Isla Vista. Without these steps and continued community discussion over the best course of action, a viable solution may not be reached. I appreciate your leadership and community driven efforts to address long standing problems in the Isla Vista Community; however, I have concerns with the approach taken and cannot support this legislation.

There is no question that Isla Vista faces many challenges that must be addressed. Previous attempts at self-governance have all failed due to lack of funding. This bill is moving forward without a completed financial feasibility study. It is critical that the community be informed of its self-governance options first rather than after a bill is established. It is through a financial feasibility study that objectively analyzes options and costs that stakeholders can begin to formulate a sustainable long-term plan for Isla Vista self-governance. Moreover, this bill gives the CSD the ability to levy a Utility User Tax (UUT). Should voters approve this tax, a precedent will be set and the untended consequences of Isla Vista being the only CSD in the state with this power are unknown. In addition, it is unclear without a comprehensive fiscal analysis whether this approach is viable to support CSD services. It is also important to point out that the proposed district does not provide additional services that the County of Santa Barbara does not already provide. The tax suggested does nothing more than replace the funds lost due to the elimination of the Redevelopment Agencies. Many Isla Vista residents are concerned with being doubly taxed for the same services provided.

Proceedings to initiate the formation of a CSD should go through the LAFCO review process. The LAFCO has jurisdiction over CSD pursuant to the Cortese-Knox-Hertsberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000. The bill has gone through multiple revisions and everyday new concerns or questions arise. The President of the University of California has made his concerns known regarding the precedent that would be set including UCSB within the CSD boundaries and taxing the campus facilities both off and on the campus. LAFCO is the appropriate forum for public review and determination of financial feasibility and services to be provided.

In closing, more answers are needed before rushing into a solution. Time should be given to complete a financial feasibility study and LAFCO review process. A careful consideration of options is needed to address the long standing problems in Isla Vista. Thank you for your consideration of my concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or comments regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger S. Aceves', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roger S. Aceves
Councilmember

cc: Paul Hood, Executive Director Santa Barbara LAFCO
Pamela Miller, Executive Director CALAFCO
Hannah-Beth Jackson, California State Senator
David Mullinax, Regional Public Affairs Manager, League of California Cities
Kirsten Z. Deshler Director, Governmental Relations, UCSB
Goleta City Councilmembers
Michelle Greene, City Manager
Tim Giles, City Attorney