

Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century – A Look Back

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Overview

- Context and Recommendations of Comm'n
- Successes and Failures
- An Agenda for the Future?

Context of the Comm'n

- Appointed pursuant to 1997's AB 1484 (Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys)
- Assemblyman Hertzberg was Majority Leader, not yet Speaker
- San Fernando Valley Secession from Los Angeles was afoot
- Pete Wilson was Governor

The Commissioners

- Susan Golding, San Diego Mayor
- Ruben Barrales, San Mateo Supervisor
- Jacki Bachrach, City Councilmember and COG Exec. Dir.
- Marian Bergeson, OC State Senator
- Trish Clarke, Shasta Supervisor / Assn of Rural Counties / CALAFCO

The Commissioners (Cont.)

- Cody Cluff, Entertainment Industry Dev. Corp.
- Michael Colantuono, City Attorney
- Bob Hunt, SEIU Counsel
- Nicholas Petris, Oakland State Senator
- Tim Raney, Citrus Hts. Councilmember
- Carolyn Ratto, Turlock Councilmember / League of CA Cities

The Commissioners (Cont.)

- Bill Ross, City Attorney / Fire District Counsel
- John Schatz, Sta. Margarita Water Dist.
- Larry Zarian, Glendale City Council

The Process

- 16 months of work
- 25 days of hearings
- 160 witnesses
- 100 recommendations received
- 90,000 hits on website
- Substantial input from LAFCOs

The Big Picture

Report: “Four points should be recognized about the future role of government:”

- The future will be shaped by continued phenomenal growth
- CA does not have a plan for growth

The Big Picture (Cont.)

- Local budgets are perennially under siege
 - ERAF Shifts / VLF & Triple Flip / Prop. 1A
- The public is not engaged
 - Recall / historically low turnout in June 2006

Rec. 1: Streamline LAFCO

- Reorganize Cortese-Knox
- Adopt consistent procedures for voter & land owner petitions
- Require LAFCOs to adopt written policies
- LAFCO as conducting authority
- Exempt incorporations from CEQA

Rec. 2: LAFCO Independence

- Standardize LAFCO composition at 2 county, 2 city, 2 special district, and 1 public (w/ exceptions)
- LAFCO must select own EO and Gen'l Counsel
- Conflict of interest and lobbying disclosure
- Joint LAFCO funding by cities, counties, and special districts

Rec. 3: Tools to Prevent Sprawl

- Require pre-zoning for annexation
- Update spheres every 5 yrs
- LAFCO approval for extensions of backbone infrastructure
- Municipal service reviews every 5 yrs
- End unilateral termination of annexation and detachment proceedings by cities and districts

Rec. 4: Protect Open Space

- Better definition of “prime agricultural lands”
- LAFCO decisions must consider urban limit lines, densities, in-fill opportunities, regional growth goals
- LAFCO must deny project if would develop prime ag. or open-space land and alternatives exist
- LAFCO must consider water supply

Rec. 5: Local Fiscal Reform

- Comprehensively realign fiscal relationship of State and local gov'ts
- Full funding of state mandates
- Better information for taxpayers via property tax bills

Rec. 6: Incentivize Good Land Use Policy

- State infrastructure funds must incentivize good local planning and state policy should reflect these goals
- Reduce allocation of sales tax to point of sales and increase local share of property tax
- LAFCO policies should support growth planning goals

Rec. 7: LAFCO / Local Gov't Coordination

- Better communication between local gov'ts and school districts
- School district reorganizations should model the LAFCO process
- State should provide guidelines for comprehensive fiscal analyses to make them more valuable
- Study of water governance
- LAFCO review of contracts for service outside agency boundaries

Rec. 8: Enhance Public Participation

- Require LAFCO websites
- Expand LAFCO notice requirements
- LAFCO ability to fund incorporation efforts via State loan
- New SFV City should be able to incorporate with 5, 7 or 9 councilmembers
- Gov't should fund petition verification

Rec. 8. Public Participation (Cont)

- Campaign disclosure for reorganization proponents
- Commission to study fundamental change in state and local governance structures

Successes

- Cortese-Knox clarification
- Some rationalization of LAFCO processes
- Prime Ag. Land Definition
- LAFCO independence
- Review of spheres and MSR's
- LAFCO review of service contracts

Failures

- State / Local Fiscal Relationship remains dysfunctional
- Housing Affordability is Worse
- Sprawl Seems Unabated
- Water Governance, Supply and Quality all remain problematic

Questions for the Future

- Revenue Neutrality Barrier to New Cities Remains (VLF – Property Tax Shift Made it Worse)
- CEQA Barrier, as well
- No LAFCO review of backbone infrastructure
- No improvement in tax bills
- Few incentives for good planning
- Sales tax / property tax reform still in issue

Conclusion

- The CLG21C accomplished a lot of its “small bore” agenda and produced more than a report on the shelf
- We could not accomplish major land use policy changes because of the wide array of powerful stakeholders in opposition