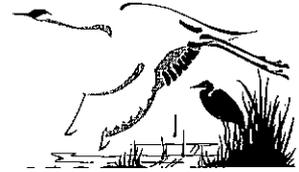


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January 10, 2011

Ms. Kathleen Rollings-McDonald
Local Agency Formation Commission
215 North "D" Street, Suite 204
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490

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LAFCO
San Bernardino County

Dear Kathy:

LAFCO 3111 consists of a service review for the Joshua Basin Water District (District) pursuant to Government Code Section 56430 and Sphere of Influence Update pursuant to Government Code 56425. The District encompasses approximately 98 square miles generally bordered by the Joshua Tree National Park on the south, primarily the Town of Yucca Valley and the Hi-Desert Water District on the west, County Service Area 70 Improvement Zone W-1 on the northwest, primarily the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center on the north, and the City of Twentynine Palms and the Twentynine Palms Water District on the east. The District is currently authorized to provide water service and limited sewer services. The District did not propose any modifications to its existing Sphere. The Commission staff is recommending that the existing Sphere be expanded to the west, encompassing about 160 acres into an area that is currently not within any Sphere.

As we have learned from previous sphere and service reviews, the designation of a Sphere, which focuses on a planning boundary, does not by itself cause any modifications to the physical environment. Only when the subsequent step is taken to physically revise the jurisdictional boundary or to provide new services to an area outside of the Sphere does a potential for physical change in the environment occur. Thus, either of the proposed Sphere alternatives presented above is not judged to pose any adverse changes to the physical environment.

The effects of the sphere and service review for the District does not appear to have any potential to alter the existing physical environment in any manner. Affirmation of the current Sphere or expansion of the Sphere, as proposed, does not have any potential for causing physical changes in the environment. Therefore, I recommend that the Commission find that a Statutory Exemption (as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA) applies to LAFCO 3111 under Section 15061 (b) (3) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which states: "A project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA." It is my opinion, and recommendation to the Commission, that this circumstance applies to LAFCO 3111.

In this case, adopting an expanded Sphere does not alter the existing operations or obligations of the District and does not adversely affect any existing physical facilities. Based on this review of LAFCO 3111 and the pertinent sections of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, I conclude that

LAFCO 3111 does not constitute a project under CEQA and adoption of the Statutory Exemption and filing of a Notice of Exemption is the most appropriate determination to comply with CEQA for this action. The Commission can approve this review and finding for this action and I recommend that you notice LAFCO 3111 as statutorily exempt from CEQA for the reasons outlined in the State CEQA Guideline sections cited above. The Commission needs to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the County Clerk to the Board for this action once the action is completed.

A copy of this memorandum and the NOE should be retained in LAFCO's project file to serve as verification of this evaluation and as the CEQA environmental determination record. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Dodson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Dodson