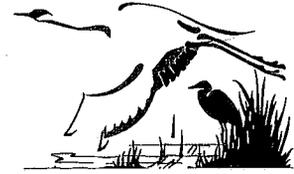


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May 4, 2012

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 3103 consists of a service review for the Hi-Desert Memorial Healthcare District (District) pursuant to Government Code Section 56430 and Sphere of Influence Update pursuant to Government Code 56425. The District encompasses approximately 1,302 square miles generally bordered by a combination of section lines on the west, the south line of Township 5 North from Range 6 East to Range 11 East on the north, section lines on the east and the Riverside/San Bernardino county line on the south. This area is generally referred to as the "Morongo Basin." The District provides health care services within the area identified above.

The Commission Staff is recommending that the existing Sphere be modified to include expansions and reductions to generally coincide with the Morongo Basin Ambulance Exclusive Operating Area (EOA), but exclude the entire Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center area and the northeastern-most portion of EOA 14. The alternative is to retain the Sphere in its current configuration. Commission Staff also proposes to modify the District's hospital (healthcare) function by changing the description as follows: "Establish, acquire, maintain and/or operate one or more healthcare facilities; operation of acute care and continual care hospital facility" and removing the following text "acute, emergency, continual medical care, hospital administration." As we have learned from previous sphere and service reviews, the designation of a sphere and retention of existing services, 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 range of services of a service agency does a potential for physical change in the environment occur.

The effects of the sphere and service review for the District, modification of the existing Sphere or retention of the existing Sphere as indicated, and modification of the District's service description do not appear to have any potential to alter the existing physical environment in any manner. Therefore, I recommend that the Commission find that a Statutory Exemption (as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA) applies to LAFCO 3103 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 3103.

In this case, adopting a modified Sphere or the existing Sphere of the District does not alter the existing operations or obligations of the area and does not adversely affect any existing physical facilities. Based on this review of LAFCO 3103 and the pertinent sections of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, I conclude that LAFCO 3103 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 3103 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