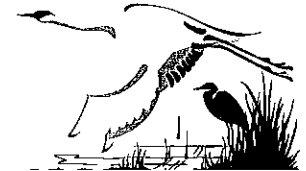


**Response from
Commission's Environmental Consultant**

Attachment 7

TOM DODSON & ASSOCIATES
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SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92405
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JUN 30 2011

LAFCO
San Bernardino County

June 24, 2011

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

Dear Kathy:

LAFCO 3125 consists of a service review for the City of Big Bear Lake (City) pursuant to Government Code Section 56430 and Sphere of Influence Update pursuant to Government Code 56425. The City study area encompasses approximately 8.75 square miles (about 5,500 acres) generally bordered by a combination of Division Road, parcel lines and other road centerlines within the community of Moonridge on the east, a combination of section lines and parcel lines along the foothills of Bear Mountain and Snow Summit ski resources, Cherry Lane and Sky High Drive, and Cedar Lake on the south, section lines at Papoose Bay on the west, and a combination of the centerline of Big Bear Lake and north shore portion of the lake east of the Stanfield Cutoff causeway.

The Commission staff is recommending that the Commission consider expanding the Sphere by 720 acres. This would include expanding the Sphere for the City along the west by approximately 240 acres (Area 1) to include the area currently within the Big Bear Lake Fire Protection District's existing sphere and include a portion of the lake. The intent is to bring the City's sphere of influence to the centerline of the lake, which would reduce any potential service delivery confusion along the southern shoreline of the lake. It would also include expanding the Sphere for the City along the south by approximately 480 acres (Area 2) to include an area currently within the Big Bear Fire Protection District's existing Sphere of Influence. Of course, the Commission could also make a decision to maintain the existing Sphere of Influence.

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 City of Big Bear Lake, retain the existing Sphere or expansion of the current Sphere as outlined above, does not appear to have any potential to alter the existing physical environment in any manner. Affirmation or expansion of the current Sphere does not have any potential for causing physical changes in the environment because it is solely a planning boundary. Therefore, I recommend that the Commission find that a Statutory Exemption (as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act, CEQA) applies to LAFCO 3125 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 3125.

In this case, expanding the existing Sphere or retaining the existing sphere does not alter the existing City operations or obligations and does not adversely affect any existing physical facilities. It modifies a planning boundary only. Based on this review of LAFCO 3125 and the pertinent sections of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, I conclude that LAFCO 3125 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 3125 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