

Information presented to
the Commission at the

6-18-14 LAFCO hearing.

Date: June 15, 2014

To:

Jim Bagley
Kimberly Cox
James Curatalo
Steven Farrell
Robert Lovingood
Larry McCallon
James Ramos
Diane Williams

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LAFCO
San Bernardino County

Dear Commissioners,

Over the past two years during which our application to form a fire protection district for Baldwin Lake has been in process, we have sent you numerous updates and information pieces in an effort to ensure that you had the best possible understanding of all facets of the process underway. I believe and sincerely hope that all of you know how much we appreciate the time and interest you have invested in regard to Baldwin Lake fire protection matter. While we are hopefully nearing the point where the community will have a sustainable program for fire protection services, there is still work to be done and one very important factor that we want you to consider.

At the February LAFCO meeting where Staff presented the fire protection district proposal and the alternative plan for annexation of Baldwin Lake into the Big Bear City CSD, the Commission, at our request, stipulated that if the Staff's recommended plan of annexation was not successful, the Commission would take up consideration of our plan to form a fire protection district. I cannot overstate how important I believe this action was.

At the upcoming Commission Meeting on the 18th, Staff will ask the Commission to approve the annexation plan. This would start a 30 day reconsideration period to be followed by a 21 day period during which the voters and/or the property owners in Baldwin Lake will have the right to oppose the annexation plan either forcing it to a vote by the registered voters in Baldwin Lake or stopped entirely should the opposition during the 21 day period exceed 50.1% of either group.

The primary purpose of this letter is to ask the Commission to make sure that the provision stipulated at the February meeting keeping the fire protection district application "alive" be again stipulated to any Commission approval to proceed with the annexation plan. The reason for this is very simple; if the annexation plan does not succeed for whatever reason and the fire protection district application currently submitted cannot be acted upon by the Commission due to it having been "terminated", then the Baldwin Lake Fire Department will be forced to shut down and the community left with fire protection and emergency medical services for all practical purposes.

While our Committee remains supportive of the annexation plan there is a real possibility that it could fail for the following reasons and the community should not be left without services should that happen.

1. There is an extremely tight window in which annexation must be approved to enable the CSD to have the fire protection assessment fee added for the upcoming year. Any request for reconsideration of the annexation plan would stop this from happening and in our opinion cause the CSD to reconsider the annexation for economic reasons.
2. There remains a significant possibility that the community of Baldwin Lake will oppose the annexation plan which, depending on the level opposition, will either kill the plan altogether or at least stop the CSD from collecting the aforementioned assessment fee triggering the concern stated above. According to Ms. McDonalds survey, less than half the respondents supported annexation. In addition, almost all of the some 20 calls I get each week from the community are opposed to annexation in large part because they believe that the property taxes they already pay to the County should enable County Fire to provide the support necessary for the Baldwin Lake Volunteer Fire Department to continue operation without their paying a supplemental fee. They simply do not understand why their tax dollars are not used accordingly.

In conclusion, please make sure that the well-being and safety of the community remains the top priority.

As always, I thank you for your time.

Larry Winslow

Cc: Ms. Kathleen McDonald

Chief Jeff Willis, Big Bear Fire