



AGENDA ITEM 8C

MEETING: May 20, 2026
TO: Humboldt LAFCo Commissioners
FROM: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: **Status of Applications, Projects, and Agency Coordination**
The Commission will receive a report summarizing active and future proposals, projects, and agency coordination efforts. This report is being presented for information only.

BACKGROUND

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 delegates Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCos) with regulatory and planning duties to coordinate the logical formation and development of local governmental agencies. This includes approving or disapproving proposals for annexation, sphere of influence amendments, and outside agency service requests.

DISCUSSION

Following is a summary of active and future proposals.

Active Applications

Humboldt CSD McKay Ranch Annexation

Staff has recorded the Certificate of Completion, establishing an effective date for the annexation of May 15, 2026. Staff will also file the Statement of Boundary Change with the State Board of Equalization.

Ferndale Fire Protection District Goodwill Response Area Annexation

LAFCo has received an application from the Ferndale Fire Protection District (FFPD) for annexation of 45,455 acres (71.02 square miles) of land located generally south, southeast and southwest of the existing FFPD boundary, including Capetown, Upper Bear River Road, and Bunker Hill Road areas. This annexation would be contingent on approval of a special tax by voters that would repeal and replace the prior special assessment that currently provides funding for the District. Staff be initiating the property tax exchange agreement process with Humboldt County prior to scheduling the hearing for potential Commission action.

Special Studies

North Coastal Fire Study

At its November 19, 2025 meeting, the Commission authorized staff to coordinate the North Coastal Fire Study to evaluate governance and funding options in the Trinidad, Westhaven, Big Lagoon, and Orick areas, in partnership with the City of Trinidad, County Service Area No. 4 (Humboldt County), and the Trinidad Rancheria, with consulting services provided by Matrix Consulting Group. The participating agencies have agreed to share the cost of the study equally, with LAFCo managing the consultant contract and invoicing. A preliminary data request has been distributed to each service provider and

service recipient to begin compiling baseline information that will help Matrix better understand current operations, resources, and service levels. Staff is also coordinating with Matrix to schedule a site visit to allow the consultant to meet with participating agencies and observe facilities and service areas in person.

Legislative and Policy Initiatives

Commercial Timberlands Advocacy

At its November 19 meeting, the Commission adopted a Resolution of Support and approved a budget amendment to advance legislative advocacy efforts addressing the statutory exclusion of commercial timberlands in Fire Protection District Law (Health & Safety Code § 13811). Since that time, LAFCo staff has coordinated with Scott Alonzo from Assemblymember Chris Rogers' office regarding potential amendments to modernize the statute. While draft bill language was developed and converted to an unbacked Request Number (RN), Assemblymember Rogers has indicated he is unable to carry the bill in the 2026 session. Staff has since met with Staci Heaton at Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and Matt Dias at Calforests to discuss stakeholder perspectives and potential paths forward. Those discussions highlighted general agreement that local fire districts should be compensated for unreimbursed emergency services on commercial timberlands but also identified concerns regarding proportionality and funding structure. Given that legislative jackets are largely full for 2026, there is time to refine the policy framework and build broader consensus. Staff anticipates continued coordination with RCRC and Calforests to evaluate options, including potential cost-recovery models and clarification of statutory definitions. Staff also intends to engage CalChiefs and the Fire Districts Association of California to further assess statewide interest and support before pursuing future sponsorship opportunities.

Agency Coordination

Fire Services Coordination Efforts

A portion of Measure Z funds granted to the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association has been allocated to providing technical assistance for sustainable community fire protection to address the lack of complete community coverage and sustainable revenue. An informal working group consisting of County of Humboldt (Board of Supervisors, Public Works, and County Administrative Office), LAFCo, and Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association representatives continue to meet as needed to address service and funding needs on a countywide basis, including the following fire services planning efforts:

- Mattole Reorganization including Petrolia FPD, Telegraph Ridge FPD, and Honeydew VFC.
- Highway 299 goodwill response area between Blue Lake and Willow Creek FPDs, including legislative options to address rural highway calls.
- Direct charge list support for various departments.
- Annual Reports for the Humboldt County Fire Chief Association's highlighting service calls and achievements of emergency response providers throughout Humboldt County.
- Creating a toolkit for new and existing fire districts to understand all statutory, financial and reporting requirements under state law.

McKinleyville Incorporation Exploration

The McKinleyville Municipal Advisory Committee (MMAC) established the McKinleyville Incorporation Exploration Subcommittee (MIESC) in 2022 to research and evaluate the potential incorporation of McKinleyville as a city. The subcommittee meets regularly to gather information, discuss governance and service considerations, and engage the community on incorporation-related issues. Current efforts include community outreach and evaluation of potential incorporation boundaries and service responsibilities with assistance from a Planning Assistance Team. Cal Poly Humboldt is also preparing an Economic Development Study that includes community input and will help inform governance and economic considerations related to incorporation. In addition, funding has been secured to prepare an Initial Feasibility Analysis (IFA) to evaluate the preliminary fiscal and operational feasibility of incorporation. The IFA will help determine whether the community should consider pursuing a formal incorporation application with LAFCo, which would then require preparation of a Comprehensive Fiscal Analysis under State law.

Recent Inquiries and Coordination

- 1) Coordinated with Patrick Creek CSD regarding McKinleyville incorporation planning and outreach efforts. Attended the March 18, 2026, McKinleyville Incorporation Exploration Subcommittee (MIESC) meeting and provided follow-up information regarding the Town of North Tahoe incorporation process. Attended an Initial Feasibility Analysis coordination meeting on March 26 and provided follow-up contact information for financial consultants. Prepared large scale maps depicting the McKinleyville CSD boundary and land use designations for the Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) listening session held on April 18 in McKinleyville. Also provided information regarding statutory provisions related to incorporation financing and state loan authority.
- 2) Coordinated with County Counsel, a County Supervisor, State Division of Drinking Water regulators, Alderpoint County Water District, and a local reporter regarding the District's PG&E payment and funding challenges, including ongoing efforts to secure technical assistance and funding support for a rate study, feasibility planning, and short-term operations and maintenance needs.
- 3) Responded to an inquiry from Patrick Creek Community Services District regarding procedures and authority for placing direct charges on the tax roll.
- 4) Responded to inquiry regarding fire protection requirements and jurisdictional authority on Tribal lands.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report.