



AGENDA ITEM 8D

MEETING: March 18, 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

City of Trinidad Out of Agency Service Request (Water)
See agenda Item 7A.

Humboldt CSD McKay Ranch Annexation

Humboldt LAFCo approved the McKay Ranch Annexation on January 21, 2026, which triggered a 30 day reconsideration period which has since expired. LAFCo staff coordinated with the County Surveyor to review the legal description and will be recording the Certificate of Completion and submitting the Board of Equalization Statement of Boundary Change filling in the coming weeks.

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 will be distributing a Notice of Filing to affected and interested agencies and will 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, likely in late April, 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 Arcata FPD regarding potential funding strategies.
- 2) Reviewed the draft Initial Feasibility Analysis (IFA) scope of work for the McKinleyville Incorporation Exploration Subcommittee (MIESC).
- 3) Provided the California Special Districts Association (CSDA) Humboldt Area Chapter with a list of special districts possessing recreation powers.
- 4) Responded to an inquiry regarding stormwater drainage and culvert maintenance responsibilities.
- 5) Coordinated with Humboldt CSD regarding the Grant School hydrant installation and reliance on the exemption provided in Government Code Section 56133(e)(1).
- 6) Responded to the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District regarding division boundaries and associated GIS shapefiles.
- 7) Coordinated with County GIS staff and provided a link to the Humboldt LAFCo online mapping tool and data portal containing jurisdictional boundaries and spheres of influence shapefiles.
- 8) Responded to an inquiry regarding LAFCo's limited jurisdiction related to Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs).
- 9) Responded to an inquiry regarding a proposed water system serving a subdivision, including considerations related to out-of-agency service versus annexation (preferred) and associated timing.

- 10) Coordinated with Westhaven Community Services District regarding potential service area and boundary change considerations.
- 11) Responded to an inquiry regarding special district authority to adopt a resolution for placing delinquent charges on the County property tax roll.
- 12) Responded to a public inquiry regarding LAFCo's jurisdiction and oversight role, clarifying the Commission's responsibility to evaluate services, governance, infrastructure, and capacity through Municipal Service Reviews, while district governing boards retain primary responsibility for governing and oversight of day-to-day operations and staffing.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report.