



## AGENDA ITEM 9A

**MEETING:** September 18, 2024  
**TO:** Humboldt LAFCo Commissioners  
**FROM:** Colette Santsche, Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** **Status of Expiring Commissioner Terms**  
The Commission will receive a report identifying members whose elected terms of office are scheduled to expire in 2024.

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### BACKGROUND

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 states the composition of Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCos) shall generally include seven regular members consisting of county (two), city (two), special district (two), and public (one) representation. Each category represented on LAFCo also has one alternate member. Appointments for the county, city, and special district seats are made by the board of supervisors, city selection committee, and mail ballot processed by LAFCo, respectively. Appointments for public seats are made by the other regular members. The term of office of each member shall be four years and until the appointment and qualification of his or her successor in accordance with Government Code Section 56334.

### DISCUSSION

#### *County Member Selection:*

County members are appointed annually during the first meeting of the County Board of Supervisors in January. On January 9, 2024, the Board appointed Supervisor Bushnell, Madrone, and Wilson (alternate) to serve on LAFCo for the 2024 calendar year.

#### *City Member Selection:*

Commissioner Losey's term of office on LAFCo expired at the end of June 2024. In addition, the Commissioners appointed to the terms ending in 2026 indicated they are no longer able to serve on LAFCo. The City Selection Committee met on August 14, 2024. During the meeting, Mayor Cheryl Kelly from the City of Trinidad and Mayor Meredith Matthews from the City of Arcata were appointed as Regular City Members. Additionally, Mayor Debra Garnes from the City of Rio Dell was appointed as Alternate City Member.

#### *Special District Member Election:*

Commissioner Lake's term of office on LAFCo expired at the end of June 2024. LAFCo staff sent out a Call for Nominations on January 24, 2024 and two nominations were received for Heidi Benzonelli (Humboldt CSD) and David Couch (McKinleyville CSD). Ballots were mailed on April 5<sup>th</sup> and were due by June 7<sup>th</sup> so that the selected Regular Special District member may be seated at the July 2024 LAFCo meeting. However, a quorum of votes was not received prior to the deadline. As such, staff continued the voting period until August 9<sup>th</sup>. At the end of the extended voting period, a quorum was

achieved (25 votes) and Heidi Benzonelli declared the new Regular Special District Member with 21 votes. As there were only two candidates and two available seats, David Couch was seated as the Alternate Special District Member. See Attachment B for additional details.

*Public Member Selection:* Commissioner Lee's term of office on LAFCo expired at the end of June 2024. A public notice and press release was released the first week of May, with an application deadline of June 14, 2024. The Commission appointed a Public Member Selection Committee that reviewed applications and conducted interviews. After the review process, the subcommittee recommended Elaine Weinreb to the full Commission for appointment. Ms. Weinreb was appointed by the Commission at the July 17<sup>th</sup> Regular Commission meeting for a term ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2028.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report.

**Attachments**

Attachment A: Current LAFCo Membership and Terms

Attachment B: Special District Member Election Results

**ATTACHMENT A  
Current LAFCo Membership and Terms**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Appointed</b>	<b>LAFCo Term (June 30)</b>
Michelle Bushnell	Regular/County	1/9/2024	By Annual appointment
Steve Madrone	Regular/County	1/9/2024	By Annual appointment
Mike Wilson	Alternate/County	1/9/2024	By Annual appointment
Meredith Mattews (City of Arcata)	Regular/City	8/14/2024	2024-2028
Cheryl Kelly (City of Trinidad)	Regular/City	8/14/2024*	2022-2026
Debra Garnes (City of Rio Dell)	Alternate/City	8/14/2024*	2022-2026
Heidi Benzonelli (Humboldt CSD)	Regular/District	8/9/2024	2024-2028
Troy Nicolini (Peninsula CSD)	Regular/District	10/28/2022	2022-2026
David Couch (McKinleyville CSD)	Alternate/District	8/9/2024*	2022-2026
Elaine Weinreb	Regular/Public	7/17/2024	2024-2028
Gordon Johnson	Alternate/Public	3/15/2023*	2022-2026

\*Appointed to serve remainder of unexpired term



**Date:** August 16, 2024  
**To:** Board of Directors of Independent Special Districts  
**From:** Colette Santsche, Executive Officer  
**Subject: RESULTS - Independent Special District Election**

Thank you to everyone who participated in the special district election and submitted a ballot. Heidi Benzonelli secured the majority of votes and will be seated as the new Regular Special District Member on LAFCo, serving a four-year term ending June 30, 2028. David Couch will be seated as the new Alternate Special District Member, serving the remaining unexpired term ending June 30, 2026, previously held by Heidi Benzonelli. Congratulations to both candidates!

The updated listing of special district members appointed to LAFCo is provided below:

Designation	Current Member	Term of Office (ends on June 30)
Regular Member	Heidi Benzonelli, Humboldt Community Services District	2024 - 2028
Regular Member	Troy Nicolini, Peninsula Community Services District	2022 - 2026
Alternate Member	David Couch, McKinleyville Community Services District	2022 – 2026

Election Summary: Previously, a request for nominations was sent to independent special districts on January 26, 2024. The nomination period ended on March 29, 2024, with two nominations received by the deadline. Subsequently, an official ballot was mailed on April 5, 2024, which provided each independent special district the opportunity to vote for one candidate. The deadline to return completed ballots was originally set for June 7, 2024. However, a quorum of ballots was not received by the deadline and the balloting period was extended with a final deadline of August 9, 2024. Tabulation of ballots was conducted on August 12, 2024, with a total of 25 out of 48 independent special districts submitting ballots. The ballot count results are provided below.

Election Results  
 Regular Special District Member  
 (For term ending June 30, 2028)

Candidate	District	Votes
Heidi Benzonelli	Humboldt Community Services District	21
David Couch	McKinleyville Community Services District	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>

Please contact LAFCo at (707) 445-7508 or [info@humboldtlafo.org](mailto:info@humboldtlafo.org) if you have any questions.