



AGENDA ITEM 9E

MEETING: January 21, 2026

TO: Humboldt LAFCo Commissioners

FROM: Colette Santsche, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Status of Current and Future Proposals

The Commission will receive a report summarizing active and future proposals. 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 Proposals

Humboldt Community Services District

See Agenda Item 7A.

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. Deposits have been requested from each agency to authorize commencement of the study, and the consultant will invoice monthly to allow tracking against the not-to-exceed amount. Any costs anticipated to exceed the approved budget will be brought back to the participating agencies for review and mutual agreement prior to proceeding. LAFCo anticipates authorizing commencement of the study within the next couple of weeks.

Commercial Timberlands Legislative Advocacy

At its November 19, 2025 meeting, the Commission adopted a Resolution of Support and approved a \$5,000 budget amendment to support legislative advocacy efforts addressing the statutory exclusion of commercial timberlands in Fire Protection District Law. Since that time, staff and the LAFCo Chair met with Assemblymember Chris Rogers' legislative analyst on December 16, 2025, to discuss the merits and structure of potential bill language. Staff also met with Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) legislative staff on December 18, 2025, to coordinate regional engagement and

stakeholder strategy. Most recently, staff met with Sierra Pacific Industries Weaverville District Manager on January 12, 2026, to discuss the impacts of current law on local fire districts and explore interim and long-term policy considerations. Staff will continue coordinating with legislative offices, regional partners, and affected agencies as the bill concept advances.

Future Proposals

There are several potential new proposals to the Commission in the near future based on discussions with proponents. A summary of these anticipated proposals follows.

Ferndale Fire Protection District Annexation

The Ferndale FPD Board adopted a Resolution of Application on January 12, 2026, initiating annexation proceedings for adjacent unincorporated territory currently served on a longstanding goodwill response basis. At the same meeting, the Board adopted a Special Tax Ordinance and a Resolution calling a special tax election to be submitted to District voters at the November 3, 2026 Statewide General Election. The proposed annexation is conditioned upon voter approval of the special tax and, if approved by LAFCo, would encompass approximately 37,000 acres south of the City of Ferndale toward the Capetown area and Bear River. LAFCo staff anticipates a full application will be filed in the coming weeks and is coordinating with the District regarding application materials, scheduling, and public noticing as the process moves forward.

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:

- Petrolia FPD/Telegraph Ridge FPD/Honeydew VFC Reorganization and special tax.
- 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.

Recent Inquiries/Coordination

1) Coordinated with the newly established Southern Humboldt Fire & Rescue Joint Powers Alliance, consisting of 13 participating fire agencies, regarding issuance of a Notice of Formation and Activation to relevant agencies. 2) Attended the Humboldt Area Chapter meeting on December 1st. 3) Compiled and organized formation records for the Telegraph Ridge FPD. 4) Coordinated with County staff on dependent fire district formation and appointment requirements and delegated authority. 5) Attended the

CALAFCO Regional and Board Structure Working Group meeting on December 9th, and met with North Coast LAFCo Executive Officers on December 17th to review and discuss draft regional structure concepts. 6) Attended the Blue Lake FPD's Board meeting on December 15th to discuss potential special tax and annexation options. 7) Responded to Arcata FPD inquiry regarding existing property tax allocations. 8) Coordinated with McKinleyville Incorporation Exploration Subcommittee members and assisted with development of the scope of work for an Initial Feasibility Analysis.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission receive and file this report.