



San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

FROM: ROB FITZROY, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DATE: APRIL 17, 2025

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSIONS UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

Action: Receive and file an informational report on CALAFCO and direct staff to proceed with CALAFCO membership renewal for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

BACKGROUND

The California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO) is a non-profit founded in 1971 dedicated to supporting LAFCOs and providing statewide coordination of LAFCO activities. CALAFCO is responsible for providing legislative representation and educational training to its member LAFCOs. It primarily serves as a conduit to the State Legislature and other governmental agencies throughout the state on LAFCO-related matters. San Luis Obispo LAFCO has been a member of CALAFCO for decades.

Key membership services include legislative working groups and committees, maintaining multiple Listservs for state-wide networking and support, hosting of annual conferences and workshops, and lastly, practitioner training to support the ever-changing landscape of the field. Annual member dues serve as the primary revenue source to help fund CALAFCO's budget. CALAFCO has a 16-member board of directors that oversees the agency's activities and a full-time executive director to administer the agency's daily activities.

DISCUSSION

This item is being presented to the Commission as an informational report regarding recent concerns related to the decision-making of the CALAFCO Board and the agency's organizational direction. This report also provides the staff's reasoning to recommend continued membership for FY 25-26 for at least one additional year.

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Recently, there have been several concerns among member LAFCOs across the State regarding recent decisions made by the CALAFCO Board, including perceived lack of transparency and membership engagement. A coalition of LAFCOs have written multiple letters and provided live comment at CALAFCO Board of Directors meetings expressing significant concerns. The following provides a summary of SLO LAFCO's concerns for the Commission review and considerations for renewing its membership with CALAFCO for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026:

- Continuous absence of collaboration among the Executive Officers and the CALAFCO Executive Director, as well as a lack of responsiveness from the former Executive Director to LAFCO staff
- Lack of transparency and membership engagement involving the restructuring of the CALAFCO legislative platform and complete dissolution of the legislative committee without notifying any LAFCOs
- Inconsistent and potentially disadvantageous actions relative to a legislative proposal vetted through the CALAFCO process – SB1209 (SLO LAFCO submitted a letter of opposition to SB 1209)
- Prioritization of external group interests over LAFCO practitioners by hiring an outside lobbying firm instead of consulting with LAFCOs
- Lack of training opportunities outside of the annual staff workshop

In response to the concerns expressed by LAFCOs across the state, the Board scheduled a meeting on January 10, 2025, to discuss and address the concerns outlined in the letters and took hours of testimony. The meeting was attended in person by staff from numerous LAFCOs. At the culmination of the meeting, the CALAFCO Board did not take any action to address the concerns expressed by its membership. In response, many member LAFCOs have chosen not to renew their annual memberships for the upcoming fiscal year. Since the January 10 meeting, CALAFCO's Executive Director resigned, and the CALAFCO Board recently held an additional meeting on February 7, 2025, to further discuss its membership concerns.

At that meeting, the CALAFCO Board approved and immediately implemented key policy changes developed in collaboration with member LAFCO staff. A letter submitted to SLO LAFCO (Attachment A) outlines key actions underway intended to rebuild trust and transparency and improve CALAFCO's communication and operational efficiency. These efforts include the following:

- Internal reorganization and assemblage of a highly qualified transition team
- Updated policy manual developed in collaboration with member LAFCO staff
- Recommended Bylaws update, which will be discussed widely to ensure full transparency and active participation
- Hosting regional focus groups and visioning sessions to engage members in shaping CALAFCO's future
- Facilitating a focus group for staff at the upcoming staff workshop
- Providing ongoing updates and open forums for discussion

Direction

CALAFCO is an important organization that has benefited LAFCOs for decades, particularly on legislative matters and education. It is to the advantage of all LAFCOs to see the organization succeed and improve. Staff is of the opinion that since corrective actions have been proposed, it is reasonable to allow time for those changes to be implemented before withdrawing from the organization. In light of CALAFCO's recent attempts to address these issues, SLO LAFCO staff recommend one-year renewal of our membership for FY 2025-2026. Staff will monitor CALAFCO's progress and suggest revisiting our membership status again as part of the FY 2026-2027 budget process. Staff will provide any updates as needed to your Commission over the next year. If the proposed corrective actions are not implemented over the course of the year, staff will likely recommend non-renewal.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: CALAFCO Letter dated March 14, 2025

Attachment A

CALAFCO Letter dated March 14, 2025



March 14, 2025

San Luis Obispo LAFCO
1042 Pacific Street, Suite A
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: Addressing Member Concerns & Strengthening CALAFCO's Future

Dear Chair Gregory, Commissioners, and Executive Officer Fitzroy;

We recognize that the current state of our organization is troubling to our valued members. We must, and will, do better regarding governance, transparency, and the overall direction of CALAFCO. As an organization committed to serving the best interests of LAFCOs across the state, we take your concerns seriously and want to assure you that we are actively taking steps to address them.

A Period of Transition & Rebuilding Trust

Every organization evolves as new paths are taken, and CALAFCO is currently undergoing a phase of transition and internal reorganization. Our goal is to emerge stronger, more transparent, and better positioned to serve our membership.

The Board of Directors and Regional Officers are fully engaged in this process, listening to feedback, and implementing meaningful changes that will reinforce trust and ensure the long-term viability of CALAFCO. We are committed to refocusing our mission, improving communication, and enhancing operational efficiency.

Key Actions Underway

To support this effort, we have assembled a highly qualified transition team:

- **José Henríquez (Interim Executive Director)** Currently the CALAFCO Central Region Officer and Executive Officer of Sacramento LAFCo, José is leading day-to-day operations, managing fiscal and budgetary matters, and facilitating member engagement.
- **Pamela Miller (Governance Consultant & Organizational Development Specialist)** – A former CALAFCO Executive Director, Pamela is conducting a full organizational assessment and comprehensive organizational structural assessment, reviewing policies and Bylaws, and assisting in the recruitment of a permanent Executive Director. She is also leading governance consultation and stakeholder outreach to ensure member voices are heard. Pamela will also be facilitating the March 20th Board retreat.
- **Jeni Tickler (Administrative & Event Planning Specialist)** A former CALAFCO Administrative Assistant, Jeni is handling critical administrative functions, including

financial management, membership support, and coordination of upcoming events such as the staff workshop.

Policy & Bylaws Updates

On February 7, 2025, the Board approved and immediately implemented key policy changes developed in collaboration with member LAFCo staff. An updated policy manual reflecting these changes will be published soon.

Additionally, a series of recommended changes to CALAFCO's Bylaws have been approved for presentation and potential member adoption at the October 2025 Annual Business Meeting. These recommendations will be widely discussed in advance through member outreach efforts to ensure full transparency and active participation.

Engaging Membership & Next Steps

We are committed to listening to you, our membership, and including you throughout this transition. To that end, we are:

- Hosting regional focus groups and visioning sessions to engage members in shaping CALAFCO's future.
- Facilitating a focus group for staff at the upcoming staff workshop.
- Providing ongoing updates and open forums for discussion.

We understand that trust is built through action, and we are dedicated to making the necessary improvements to better serve you. Your voices matter, and we encourage you to reach out with any questions, concerns, or insights.

For more information or to provide feedback, please contact:

- José Henríquez: jhenriquez@calafco.org
- Pamela Miller: pmiller@millermcg.com
- Jeni Tickler: jtickler@calafco.org

We appreciate your patience, engagement, and commitment to the future of CALAFCO. Together, we will strengthen our organization and reaffirm our mission to support LAFCOs statewide.

Sincerely,

CALAFCO Board of Directors