



Santa Cruz County
Civil Grand Jury

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

LAFCO Response

4 messages

Joe Serrano <Joe.Serrano@santacruzcounty.us>

Tue, Sep 15, 2020 at 10:15 AM

To: "grandjury@scgrandjury.org" <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Good Morning,

I wanted to confirm that you received LAFCO's response to the Grand Jury's report titled "Ready? Aim? Fire! Santa Cruz County on the Hot Seat." A hard copy was mailed on September 2nd. A PDF version of the letter is also attached to this email.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you.

-Joe

Joe A. Serrano

Executive Officer
Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County

701 Ocean Street, Room 318-D, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Email: joe@santacruzlafco.org

Phone: (831) 454-2055



9-2-20 LAFCO Response Letter re Grand Jury Report.pdf
319K



Santa Cruz County
Civil Grand Jury

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

LAFCO Dates re Fire Report Response

2 messages

Joe Serrano <Joe.Serrano@santacruzcounty.us>

Thu, Dec 3, 2020 at 2:35 PM

To: "rich.goldberg@scgrandjury.org" <rich.goldberg@scgrandjury.org>

Cc: "grandjury@scgrandjury.org" <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Hello Mr. Rich,

One of the grand jury members, Ms. Elaine, stopped by the LAFCO Office today and inquired about the timing of LAFCO's response to the Grand Jury's most recent fire report. In August 2020, LAFCO received a copy of the report titled "Ready? Aim? Fire! Santa Cruz County on the Hot Seat." A response letter was reviewed and approved by the Commission on September 2, 2020. The adopted response letter was then submitted to the Grand Jury via email that same day (see attachment). I hope this answers Ms. Elaine's question. If not, please let me know so I can address her request promptly.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you.

-Joe

Joe A. Serrano

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September 2, 2020

The Honorable Judge John Gallagher
Santa Cruz Courthouse
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: LAFCO Response to the Grand Jury’s “Ready? Aim? Fire! Santa Cruz County on the Hot Seat” Report

Dear Honorable Judge Gallagher:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Grand Jury’s report titled “Ready? Aim? Fire! Santa Cruz County on the Hot Seat.” This report reviewed the external and internal aspects of the fire protection districts within Santa Cruz County and requested that the Local Agency Formation Commission (“LAFCO”) provide comments. LAFCO’s statutory authority is derived from the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code section 56000, et seq.).

Among LAFCO’s purposes are: Discouraging urban sprawl, preserving open space and prime agricultural lands, efficiently providing government services, and encouraging the orderly formation and development of local agencies based upon local conditions and circumstances (Government Code Section 56301). The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act identifies factors that must be considered, and determinations that must be made, as part of LAFCO’s review of boundary changes and service reviews.

These provisions of law are the legislative basis for LAFCO’s locally adopted Policies and Procedures Relating to Spheres of Influence and Changes of Organization. These policies establish guidelines for the Commission and staff. The adopted policies are available on LAFCO’s website: <https://www.santacruzlafco.org/policies-rules/>.

In order to fulfill the request to provide comments on the Grand Jury’s report, LAFCO’s comments will be based on the direction found in the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act and the Commission’s adopted policies.

1. Finding (F23): No single organization in the County is assuming a leadership role in Fire Hazard Mitigation. It is not clear whose responsibility it is to minimize this County wide risk.

PARTIALLY DISAGREE: There are several fire service providers throughout Santa Cruz County, including 2 cities, 10 fire districts, and 1 county service area. It is LAFCO’s understanding that the County of Santa Cruz adopted a five-year Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in September 2015. Based on LAFCO’s research, similar mitigation plans have been adopted by other fire protection service providers, as shown in **Table A**. While there is no single countywide hazard mitigation plan, various local agencies have taken steps to develop guidelines within their jurisdiction to address any potential emergencies throughout Santa Cruz County.

Table A: Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

Local Agency	Hazard Mitigation Plan	Source
County		
Santa Cruz	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2015-2020)	http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Portals/0/Local%20Hazard%20Mitigation%20Plan%202015-2020.pdf
Cities		
Capitola	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2013)	https://www.cityofcapitola.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community_development/page/1463/local_hazard_mitigation_plan.pdf
Santa Cruz	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2018-2023)	https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showdocument?id=77162
Scotts Valley	Emergency Operations Plan (2015)	http://scottsvally.org/DocumentCenter/View/975/Scotts-Valley-Emergency-Operations-Plan-PDF
Watsonville	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)	https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/DocumentCenter/View/13999/00_Public-Review-Draft-Watsonville-LHMP?bidId=
Fire Districts		
Aptos/La Selva	Emergency Services Master Plan (2017)	https://www.aptosfire.com/DocumentCenter/View/377/Emergency-Services-Master-Plan---Volume-1-of-2-Technical-Report?bidId=
Central	Standards of Coverage and Management/Administrative Assessment (2017)	https://www.centralfpd.com/DocumentCenter/View/1139/Standards-of-Coverage-and-ManagementAdministrative-Assessment?bidId=

- 2. Finding (F26): Reporting data, statistics, and formats utilized by fire agencies throughout the County are highly inconsistent, uncoordinated, and therefore not readily evaluated and compared. The standard Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating system would be useful to adopt. Response time data are not well described or consistently reported by the jurisdictions, making accurate assessment difficult, especially by other agencies or by the public.**

PARTIALLY AGREE: State law requires LAFCO to periodically review and update the services and spheres of all cities and special districts in Santa Cruz County (Government Code Section 56425 and 56430). These reports include an analysis of the agencies' ongoing operations, current financial performance, existing governance structure, ability to provide services, and its importance within its jurisdictional area. The service reviews conclude with determinations required under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act. It is staff's goal that these reports be used as a resource, not only by the Commission to fulfill a state mandate, but by the agency to use as a platform to consider new levels of efficiency, and also by the public to better understand the agency's purpose, past achievements, areas of improvement, and its overall future. The Commission has recently restructured the service review format, which now offers more analysis and recommendations.

- 3. Finding (F28): The 2016 LAFCO Municipal Service Review of Fire Districts report and its 2006 predecessor do not adequately address district performance in the areas of Fire Risk Reduction (specifically: inspections, vegetation management, and education).**

PARTIALLY AGREE: As previously mentioned, Government Code Section 56430 requires LAFCOs to conduct service reviews for each city and special district within the County. Typically, these reports are conducted every five years. Unlike the previous service reviews, the next round of reports will include a more in-depth analysis with additional key findings and determinations. The Commission has adopted a Multi-Year Work Program to ensure that all 81 local agencies under LAFCO's jurisdiction will have a service review completed in a timely fashion (see **Attachment 1**). It is staff's goal to develop a comprehensive service review for all the fire districts within Santa Cruz County. This report is tentatively scheduled for consideration by the Commission in October 2021.

- 4. Finding (F29): The Grand Jury finds that formally specified baseline and target performance statements, in alignment with the Center for Public Safety Excellence Assessment Process, neither currently exist nor are they reported by fire departments in the County as required by best practice standards. There are no goals set or measures made of progress for review by the Board of Supervisors regarding County Fire/CAL FIRE performance. Other fire districts in the County are similarly remiss in reporting to their governing bodies. Appropriate goals would include progress on response times, vegetation management, and code inspection progress, all of which are necessary to properly quantify the budget and resources required for full-time, volunteer, and prison inmate workforces, in appropriate, affordable proportions.**

PARTIALLY AGREE: As previously mentioned, the Commission will consider a comprehensive service review for all the fire districts in October 2021. This report will analyze several factors, including but not limited to, average response times, types of calls, mutual and automatic aid agreements, office management and operation efficiencies, ISO ratings, and determinations identified under LAFCO law.

5. **Recommendation (R1): Santa Cruz County, under the auspices of the Emergency Management Council (EMC) with LAFCO support, should study a governing structure that would tie all fire agencies in the County together with common leadership, objectives, sharing of data, and maximized use of resources. (F23, F25).**

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE:
As previously mentioned, the Commission will consider a comprehensive service review for all the fire districts in October 2021. It is staff's goal to develop a thorough report that highlights best practices, evaluates areas of improvement, identifies ways to maximize resources, and explores opportunities to improve levels of efficiency. Examples of recently adopted service reviews are available on LAFCO's website: <https://www.santacruzlafco.org/reviews/>. Staff recommends reviewing reports adopted from August 2019 to present in order to observe the new analytical format.

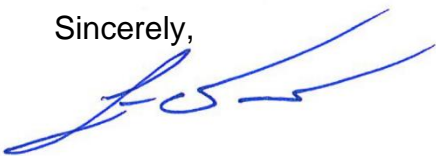
6. **Recommendation (R13): LAFCO review of County fire districts should include the review of fire risk reduction plans and achievements, and LAFCO should perform this specific and focused review for all districts by June 2021. (F2, F28).**

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE:
As previously mentioned, State law requires LAFCOs to conduct service reviews for each city and special district every five years. The Commission's Multi-Year Work Program identifies when a service review will be conducted between 2020 to 2024. It is staff's goal to develop a comprehensive service review for all the fire districts by next year. The report will include a review of fire risk reduction and achievements, as well as best practices and lessons learned from the recent fires.

7. **Recommendation (R14): LAFCO should increase its comprehensive review of County fire district services from once every 10 years to once every five years. (F23, F25).**

HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE:
LAFCO staff agrees with the Grand Jury that service reviews should be conducted in a timely fashion. That is why the Commission has adopted a work program that identifies each service review for the next five years, as shown in **Attachment 1**.

Sincerely,



Joe A. Serrano
Executive Officer

Attachment: LAFCO Multi-Year Work Program

cc: Fire Protection Agencies within Santa Cruz County (13 in total)

Service Review Work Program (2020 to 2024)

Adopted on November 6, 2019

	Last Service Review Cycle	Next Service Review Cycle
Cities		
Capitola	August 2017	August 2022
Santa Cruz	December 2018	December 2023
Scotts Valley	October 2016	October 2021
Watsonville	April 2018	April 2023
Cemetery District		
Pajaro Valley	April 2015	March 2020
County Service Areas		
CSA 2 (Place de Mer)	October 2019	October 2024
CSA 3 (Aptos Seascape)	June 2019	June 2024
CSA 4 (Pajaro Dunes)	October 2016	October 2021
CSA 5 (San Dollar/Canyon del Sol)	October 2019	October 2024
CSA 7 (Boulder Creek Country Club)	October 2019	October 2024
CSA 9 (County Public Works)	July 2015	May 2020
CSA 10 (Rolling Woods)	October 2019	October 2024
CSA 11 (County Parks)	May 2018	May 2023
CSA 12 (Septic Maintenance)	August 2018	August 2023
CSA 13 (Hutchinson Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 15 (Huckleberry Woods)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 16 (Robak Drive)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 17 (Empire Acres)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 18 (Whitehouse Canyon)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 20 (Trestle Beach)	October 2019	October 2024
CSA 21 (Westdale)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 22 (Kelly Hill)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 23 (Old Ranch Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 24 (Pineridge)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 25 (View Point Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 26 (Hidden Valley)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 28 (Lomond Terrace)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 30 (Glenwood Acres)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 32 (View Circle)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 33 (Redwood Drive)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 34 (Larsen Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 35 (Country Estates)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 36 (Forest Glen)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 37 (Roberts Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 38 (Sheriff's Patrol)	August 2018	August 2023
CSA 39 (Reed Street)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 40 (Ralston Way)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 41 (Loma Prieta Drive)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 42 (Sunlit Lane)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 43 (Bonita Encino)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 44 (Sunbeam Woods)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 46 (Pinecrest Drive)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 47 (Braemoor Drive)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 48 (County Fire)	June 2018	June 2023
CSA 50 (The Vineyard)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 51 (Hopkins Gulch Road)	July 2017	July 2022

Service Review Work Program (2020 to 2024)
Adopted on November 6, 2019

	Last Service Review Cycle	Next Service Review Cycle
CSA 52 (Upper Pleasant Valley Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 53 (County Mosquito Abatement)	October 2018	October 2023
CSA 54 (Summit West Water)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 55 (Riverdale Park)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 56 (Felton Grove)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 57 (Graham Hill)	June 2019	June 2024
CSA 58 (Ridge Drive)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 59 (McGaffigan Bill Road)	July 2017	July 2022
CSA 60 (Huckleberry Island)	July 2015	August 2020
Fire Districts		
Aptos/La Selva	October 2016	October 2021
Aromas Tri-County	October 2016	October 2021
Ben Lomond	October 2016	October 2021
Boulder Creek	October 2016	October 2021
Branciforte	October 2016	October 2021
Central	June 2018	June 2023
Felton	October 2016	October 2021
Pajaro Valley	October 2016	October 2021
Scotts Valley	October 2016	October 2021
Zayante	October 2016	October 2021
Port District		
Santa Cruz Port District	July 2019	July 2024
Reclamation District		
No. 2049	November 2017	November 2022
Recreation and Park Districts		
Alba	March 2016	March 2021
Boulder Creek	March 2016	March 2021
La Selva Beach	March 2016	March 2021
Opal Cliffs	March 2016	March 2021
Resource Conservation District		
Resource Conservation Districts of Santa Cruz County	July 2015	July 2020
Regional Open Space District		
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	November 2019	November 2024
Sanitation Districts		
Davenport	October 2019	October 2024
Freedom	October 2019	October 2024
Salsipuedes	October 2019	October 2024
Santa Cruz County	October 2019	October 2024
Water Districts		
Central	August 2017	August 2022
Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency	November 2017	November 2022
San Lorenzo Valley	July 2014	November 2020
Scotts Valley	October 2016	October 2021
Soquel Creek	May 2017	May 2022

Footnote - Proposed dates may be subject to change but shall occur within that designated year