



Planning Napa's Future, One SOI at a Time

By **Brendon Freeman, Executive Officer, Napa LAFCO**

In 2025, Napa LAFCO's most pivotal deliberations have centered on spheres of influence (SOIs), the Commission's most powerful long-range planning tool.

In April, the Napa Commission tackled a significant SOI amendment for American Canyon's Green Island area. The hearing drew robust testimony from the Farm Bureau, Greenbelt Alliance, Save the Bay, and Napa County, highlighting the diverse interests and high stakes surrounding land use in this part of Napa County.

By August, attention shifted to the draft SOI update for the Napa Sanitation District. That process sparked a broad discussion about the long-term viability of extending sewer service to the Monticello study area.

This discussion addressed the core issue of balancing growth with resource protection.

These actions highlight LAFCO's distinct role in determining where growth occurs, how services are delivered, and how open space and agricultural lands are preserved. Looking ahead, Napa LAFCO is currently reviewing its local SOI policy, with proposed amendments set for Commission consideration in October.

As other Commissions across California evaluate their own SOI updates, Napa's experience serves as a timely reminder that these tools remain essential for community planning, service management, and protecting the landscapes that define them.