



**Local Agency Formation Commission of Napa County**  
Subdivision of the State of California

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*We Manage Local Government Boundaries, Evaluate Municipal Services, and Protect Agriculture*

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**Agenda Item 7f (Consent/Information)**

**TO:** Local Agency Formation Commission

**PREPARED BY:** Brendon Freeman, Executive Officer B F

**MEETING DATE:** June 1, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Work Program Update

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**BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY**

This is a consent item for information purposes only. Accordingly, if interested, the Commission is invited to pull this item for additional discussion with the concurrence of the Chair. No formal action will be taken as part of this item.

The Commission's Work Program for Fiscal Year 2025-26 with comments on recent updates is included as Attachment 1. In addition, a recent Letter to the Editor in the Napa Valley Register about LAFCO that highlights some of the Commission's current work activities is included as Attachment 2. A brief summary of recent and ongoing studies in the Work Program follows.

***Napa Sanitation District Sphere of Influence (SOI) Update***

This activity was completed by Commission action on April 6, 2026.

***Countywide Fire & Emergency Medical Services Municipal Service Review (MSR)***

An administrative draft MSR prepared by a consultant, AP Triton, has been undergoing review. The County of Napa requested changes to the report, which would result in an additional delay if granted. See item 7d on today's agenda for an item related to this project.

***City of St. Helena MSR/SOI***

An administrative draft MSR and SOI review was prepared by a consultant, RSG. The City of St. Helena was provided a copy of the administrative draft and given approximately six weeks to review and provide comments. It is anticipated a public draft report will be presented to the Commission on August 3, 2026.

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Beth Painter, Chair  
Councilmember, City of Napa

Paul Dohring, Commissioner  
Councilmember, City of St. Helena

David Oro, Alternate Commissioner  
Councilmember, City of American Canyon

Belia Ramos, Vice Chair  
County of Napa Supervisor, 5th District

Anne Cottrell, Commissioner  
County of Napa Supervisor, 3rd District

Joelle Gallagher, Alternate Commissioner  
County of Napa Supervisor, 1st District

Jeffrey Crosswhite Commissioner  
Representative of the General Public

Eve Kahn, Alternate Commissioner  
Representative of the General Public

Brendon Freeman  
Executive Officer

***Strategic Planning and Future Work Program***

Staff believes it would be appropriate for the Commission to schedule a strategic planning workshop prior to adoption of the next annual Work Program. Typically, the Commission relies on an active strategic plan to inform its annual work programs. The Commission presently does not have an active strategic plan to refer to. Staff will return with options.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Work Program Update for Fiscal Year 2025-26
- 2) Letter to the Editor on LAFCO

## Napa LAFCO Work Program for Fiscal Year 2025-26

		Timeline	Comments
<b>STUDIES</b>	Napa Sanitation District SOI (In-House)	Revised Draft in April 2026	Completed on 4/6/26.
	Countywide Fire & EMS MSR (Consultant)	Draft report TBD	Previous Countywide Fire MSR completed in 2006. Contracting with AP Triton to prepare the report. Currently reviewing a request from the County for substantial updates.
	City of St. Helena MSR & SOI (Consultant)	Draft report in August 2026	Previous MSR & SOI completed in 2008. Contracting with RSG to prepare the report. Administrative draft currently undergoing review by St. Helena. Draft on schedule for 8/3/26.
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	Audit	Annual	Presented by the County Auditor-Controller on 2/2/26.
	Budget	Annual	Proposed budget adopted on 4/6/26. Final budget on 6/1/26 agenda for adoption.
	Legislation	Annual	Ad hoc Legislative Committee comprised of Commissioners Kahn and Oro. Will advise the Commission in taking positions on bills affecting LAFCOs. Lack of CALAFCO membership resulted in a loss of regular legislative updates from the Capitol.
	New Commissioner Orientation	Ongoing	New Commissioner Jeffrey Crosswhite recently completed orientation with staff.
	Policies	Ongoing	Ad hoc Policy Committee comprised of Commissioners Gallagher and Ramos. Reviewing all local policies and recommending amendments as needed.
	Proposals	Ongoing	See "Current and Future Proposals" staff report on each meeting agenda for a status update.
	Staff Training	Ongoing	Staff Analyst and Clerk require ongoing training on LAFCO's administrative functions and application processing.
	Website/Document Management	Ongoing	Staff continuously updates information on website including agendas, minutes, meeting recordings, audits, budgets, etc.
<b>OTHER</b>	Special Projects & Studies	TBD	To be determined in budget cycle and strategic planning. Typically involves a contract with a consultant to be funded with reserves. See Countywide Fire & EMS MSR in "Studies".
	Education & Outreach to Stakeholders & Public	Ongoing	Proactive engagement with local agencies. Conduct regular presentations for miscellaneous groups and organizations. Leverage website whenever possible. EO recently completed a video recorded introduction to LAFCO.
	Climate Resiliency in LAFCO's Work	Ongoing	Research policies & best practices of other LAFCOs. Consider adopting additional local policies.
	Coordination & Provision of Broadband Services	Ongoing	Participate in the North Bay Broadband Consortium. Coordinate with other LAFCOs. Little progress made to date. Not generally a LAFCO issue throughout California.
	2025 CALAFCO Annual Conference	October 22-24, 2025	Two staff and one commissioner attended. Conference report presented on 2/2/26.
	2026 CALAFCO Staff Workshop	May 6-8, 2026	One staff member attended. Workshop report on today's agenda.

[https://napavalleyregister.com/opinion/letters/letter-the-countys-other-watchdog/article\\_3b19bddb-f87b-47f3-96d0-27fb957f39ba.html](https://napavalleyregister.com/opinion/letters/letter-the-countys-other-watchdog/article_3b19bddb-f87b-47f3-96d0-27fb957f39ba.html)

## **Letter: The county's other watchdog**

**Brendon Freeman**

Apr 24, 2026

The recent commentary from Tammy Smith and Robert Van Der Velde, "Watchdogs wanted" (published on April 12), provided a compelling look at the vital role the Civil Grand Jury plays in Napa County. While I agree that their work is essential, it is important to note that they are not the only independent watchdog ensuring our local government remains efficient and transparent.

As the Executive Officer of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Napa County ([napa.lafco.ca.gov](http://napa.lafco.ca.gov)), I believe it is crucial for residents to understand that our agency serves as a parallel pillar of oversight. While the Civil Grand Jury investigates operations, LAFCO is tasked with the long-term sustainability and logical boundaries of our cities and special districts.

LAFCOs were established in 1963 and are political subdivisions of the State of California responsible for providing regional growth management services in all 58 counties. LAFCO's creation was engendered by Gov. Pat Brown to more

effectively address the needs of California's growing and diversifying population with an emphasis on promoting governmental efficiencies. Toward this end, LAFCOs are commonly referred to as the Legislature's "watchdog" for local governance issues.

A primary tool in our watchdog arsenal is the Municipal Service Review (MSR). These MSRs are not just bureaucratic exercises; they are deep dives into how services are delivered to our communities. MSRs also explore how service delivery models could evolve in the future through changes in boundaries or governance for cities and special districts.

A prime example of this impact was our comprehensive **Napa Countywide Water and Wastewater MSR**. This report didn't just sit on a shelf; it provided the evidence-based roadmap needed to address critical infrastructure and governance challenges, proving that proactive oversight makes a tangible difference.

For years, dedicated leaders like Commissioner Kenneth Leary have championed the importance of MSRs, recognizing that clear-eyed analysis is the first step toward meaningful reform. Commissioner Leary advocated for MSRs as a tool that can support the most vulnerable members of our local communities and even the playing field.

However, a watchdog is only as good as its last look. While past reviews have served us well, it is time to turn a fresh eye toward our county's evolving needs with a new cycle of MSRs. Moving forward, LAFCO is committed to ensuring our oversight remains current and proactive with a clearly defined process.

In terms of opportunities for public engagement, LAFCO is nearing the completion of two MSR's that will be circulated for review and comment prior to LAFCO taking any final actions: (1) Comprehensive City of St. Helena MSR; and (2) Countywide Fire and Emergency Medical Services MSR.

Democracy thrives when multiple eyes are watching. Whether it is through the volunteer service of the Civil Grand Jury or the statutory oversight of LAFCO, our shared goal remains the same: local government that is accountable, efficient, transparent and ready for the future.

**Brendon Freeman**

**Napa**



**Mail Bag: Find out what your neighbors have on their minds**