

STAFF REPORT
Meeting Date: July 21, 2004

Agenda Item 8
REVISED

TO: LAFCO Commissioners
FROM: Everett Millais, Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Sphere of Influence Review and Update: LAFCO 04-11S
Ojai Valley Sanitary District

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue action to a future date and direct that there be new notice about a future hearing date.

DISCUSSION:

This matter was originally noticed to be heard on June 9, 2004, based on the assumption that the sphere of influence update for the Ojai Valley Sanitary District would be considered exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Prior to the June 9 meeting, however, a member of the public expressed concern about the District's sphere of influence update being considered as exempt. Subsequently, the sphere of influence update was again presented to the District Board for discussion on June 21. At that meeting the District Board voted to request that an initial study be prepared pursuant to CEQA with a possible outcome of a Negative Declaration being recommended to LAFCO as a part of any sphere of influence update.

At both the March 29 and June 21 meetings with the District Board I indicated that LAFCO was prepared to update spheres of influence based on the updates being considered exempt under CEQA or upon a determination that there are no significant environmental effects and no mitigation measures are necessary (a Negative Declaration). I advised the Board, however, that I would not undertake any other environmental work or specialized studies without further direction from the Commission

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due to staff time and budget constraints. Should such further environmental analysis be necessary before LAFCO could consider a sphere of influence update, I told the District Board that I would recommend that the District fund LAFCO's expenses for hiring consultants to prepare the extra environmental analysis. This is the same information I have been relaying to other districts as a part of the sphere of influence update process.

I completed a CEQA checklist in draft relating the Ojai Valley Sanitary District sphere of influence update and met with an environmental sub-committee of the District Board on Monday, July 19. Based on the CEQA initial study I recommended that the initially proposed boundaries for the sphere of influence update be redrawn to lessen any potential growth-inducing impacts. The District Board sub-committee agreed. To prepare and have further review by the District will take at least another two months. In recognition of this fact, it is recommended that this matter be continued to a future date and that new notice be provided for the future hearing date..