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Subject: Re: COMMENT TO COMMISSION – PLEASE READ agenda item 8a, Island Annexations
Date: Monday, October 5, 2020 9:26:52 AM

[External Email - Use Caution]

Resent with correct LAFCO email address

On Mon, Oct 5, 2020 at 9:17 AM Gary Orton <lexrex1215@gmail.com> wrote:

COMMENT TO COMMISSION – PLEASE READ
LAFCO Commission Meeting, 10-5-20, agenda item 8a, Island Annexations
Statement of Gary Orton for Napa County Progressive Alliance

I am speaking for the Napa County Progressive Alliance.

LAFCO has stated that an important purpose of island annexations is to “promote environmental justice because they provide current and future residents within the affected territory the right to participate in City elections going forward; a right currently absent despite the substantive social ties existing between the affected territory and City.” We agree.

The City of Napa is now conducting a \$25,000 engineering study of infrastructure deficiencies in the West Pueblo/Linda Vista island, where 65% of Napa islanders live. Tonight, the city’s General Plan Advisory Committee will consider a recommendation that the city annex its unincorporated islands but only if the existing infrastructure can be brought into compliance with city standards without any cost to the city. Ninety percent of island residents, a majority of whom are lower-income Latinx, live in one of two islands. Neither state law nor LAFCO policy require infrastructure upgrades as a condition of island annexation. The city has not provided any rationale or analysis for requiring upgrades as a condition of annexing fully developed, legacy subdivisions.

We request LAFCO continue to educate the city, county, and the public about the annexation process. At the last City of Napa Planning Commission meeting, one commissioner, in response to a concern raised about the city’s need to plan for and initiate island annexations, was under the impression that was LAFCO’s responsibility. No one corrected him. Perhaps the others do not know how the process works and that only the city has the power to initiate streamlined island annexations. Other frequently misunderstood elements of the annexation process that LAFCO could help correct include:

- Infrastructure upgrades are not required by law as a condition of annexation.
- Financing mechanisms for desired future infrastructure upgrades are not required by law as a condition of annexation.
- The city and county need to agree *only* on how they will split the property tax revenue the county currently receives.

Lastly, to increase transparency and public participation, we ask the commission to encourage the city to provide the public with

- A timeline that ensures annexations will be complete for inclusion in the 2022 reapportioned council districts,
- The rationale for any required infrastructure upgrades for fully developed islands as a condition of annexation, and
- The rationale for any perceived need to negotiate a new property tax split. The current agreement has been used since 1980 and allocates to the city 55 percent of the property taxes the county currently receives. Why would the current agreement be insufficient?

Supplemental Item Three

Thank you for your efforts to encourage the timely annexation of islands to provide island residents with the right to participate in elections and otherwise be meaningfully involved with respect to the public facilities and services affecting their health, safety, and well-being.

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