

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 26, 2011

TO: LAFCO Commissioners

FROM: Marjorie Blom, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION REGARDING REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION POLICIES

Per the Commission's request, at its December 1, 2010 meeting, copies of agricultural preservation policies from various county LAFCOs and a summary of Stanislaus LAFCO's adopted agricultural and open space policies were provided for the Commission's information.

LAFCOs throughout the State have adopted various policies in order to reflect the goal of preserving prime agricultural land. These policies range from including very specific standards and mitigation measures, to those that are generalized and less stringent.

Stanislaus LAFCO's adopted policies reflect the State's charge of encouraging annexation and development to take place on "non-prime" agricultural and open space lands located within cities' boundaries and spheres of influence prior to development of "prime" agricultural land and open space outside these boundaries; and encouraging planned, orderly, and compact urban development.

Multiple Commissioners expressed a preliminary interest in examining the language of these policies further and requested that Staff place an item on the agenda for discussion.

OPTIONS

The Commission may consider directing staff to pursue any or all of the following options:

Option 1: Formation of a Subcommittee

The Commission could form a subcommittee of two (2) members to work with staff to review its adopted agricultural and open space policies and bring back recommendations or possible revisions to the Commission for their review.

Option 2: Hold a Study Session or Workshop

The Commission could hold a study session or workshop during a regularly-scheduled LAFCO meeting to further discuss agricultural land preservation policies.

Option 3: Direct Staff to Prepare Draft Revisions to Existing Policy

The Commission may also direct Staff to bring back draft revisions to the adopted agricultural policies. The goal of these revisions would be to strengthen and expand upon existing policy, consistent with State law, and to clarify the Commission's expectations for future applications. The draft revisions would be brought back for the Commission's review during a public hearing at a regularly-scheduled LAFCO meeting.

cc: Dean Wright, LAFCO Counsel