

SACRAMENTO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

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December 4, 2013

TO: Sacramento Local Agency Formation Commission
FROM: Peter Brundage, Executive Officer
RE: Media Communication Policy and Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Media Communication Policy and Guidelines outlined in this report.

DISCUSSION:

The Commission requested that staff prepare and report back on a Media Communication Policy.

Sacramento LAFCo strives to provide the public accurate, factual, and timely information, communicated in a professional manner, and in accordance with the laws regarding public information and data practices.

This policy provides guidelines for all external communications from Sacramento LAFCo using various mediums including:

- Printed materials such as newsletters, articles, and brochures.
- Electronic materials such as email, postings to web sites or social media sites.
- Media relations such as requests for interviews, news releases, and media inquiries.

Sacramento LAFCo also recognizes that employees may sometimes comment on LAFCo matters outside of their official role as an employee of Sacramento LAFCo. Therefore, this policy also provides guidelines for employees when communicating as a private citizen on matters pertaining to LAFCo issues and business.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS (OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL)

All LAFCo staff and consultants have a responsibility to help communicate accurate and timely information to the public in a professional manner. Any employee or consultant who identifies a

mistake in reporting should bring the error to the attention of the **Executive Officer** or the current Chair Person. Regardless of whether the communication is in the employee's official role or in a personal capacity, employees must comply with all laws related to trademark, copyright, software use etc. Employees must also follow all LAFCo policies that may apply. Examples of relevant policies include:

- **Respectful Workplace Policy.** Employees or consultants cannot publish information that is discriminatory, harassing, threatening, or sexually explicit.
- **Data Practices Policy.** Employees or consultants cannot disclose private or confidential information and must route data practices requests to the responsible authority.
- **Political Activity Policy.** Employees or consultants cannot use LAFCo resources or participate in personal political activity while on LAFCo time or while discharging LAFCo duties and responsibilities. No employee may act in a manner that suggests that LAFCo either supports a particular candidate or political issue, or endorses the personal political opinions of the employee.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIAL LAFCo COMMUNICATIONS

Handling General Requests:

All staff is responsible for communicating basic and routine information to the public in relation to their specific job duties. Requests for private data or information outside of the scope of an individual's job duties should be routed to the Executive Officer or Assistant Executive Officer.

Handling Media Requests:

With the exception of routine events and basic information that is readily available to the public, all requests for interviews or information from the media are to be routed through the Executive Officer, Assistant Executive Officer, or legal counsel. Media requests include anything intended to be published or viewable to others in some form such as television, radio, newspapers, newsletters, and web sites. When responding to media requests, employees or consultants should follow these steps:

1. If the request is for routine or public information (such as a meeting time or agenda) provide the information and notify the Executive Officer of the request.
2. If the request is regarding information about LAFCo personnel, potential litigation, controversial issues and projects, an opinion on a LAFCo matter, or if you are unsure if it is a "routine" question, forward the request to the Executive Officer. An appropriate response would be, "I'm sorry, I don't have the full information regarding that issue. Let me take some basic information and submit your request to the appropriate person who will get back to you as soon as he/she can."

3. Staff will advise the Commission of controversial news coverage in advance whenever possible.
4. Ask the media representative's name, questions, deadline, and contact information.

Communicating on behalf of Sacramento LAFCo

The Executive Officer, Assistant Executive Officer, or legal counsel are authorized to communicate on behalf of LAFCo in interviews, publications, news releases, on social media sites, and related communications. Other employees or consultants may represent LAFCo if approved by one of these individuals to communicate on a specific topic. When speaking on behalf of LAFCo:

- Employees must identify themselves as representing Sacramento LAFCo. Account names on social media sites must clearly be connected to LAFCo and approved by the Executive Officer.
- All information must be respectful, professional, factual, and truthful. Corrections must be issued when needed.
- Personal opinions generally don't belong in official LAFCo statements. One exception is communication related to promoting LAFCo benefits and services. Employees who have been approved to use social media sites on behalf of the Commission should seek assistance from the Executive Officer on this topic.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

It is important for employees to remember that the personal communications of employees may reflect on Sacramento LAFCo, especially if employees are commenting on LAFCo issues or pending projects and business. The following guidelines apply to personal communications including various forms such as social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, etc), letters to the editor of newspapers, and personal endorsements.

- Remember that what you write is public, and will be so for a long time. It may also be spread to large audiences. Use common sense when using email or social media sites. It is a good idea to refrain from sending or posting information that you would not want your boss or other employees to read, or that you would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper.
- Sacramento LAFCo expects its employees and consultants to be truthful, courteous and respectful towards supervisors, co-workers, citizens, customers and other persons associated when conducting LAFCo business.

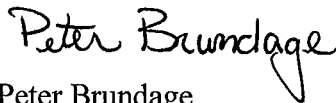
- If you publish something related to LAFCo business, identify yourself and use a disclaimer such as, "I am an employee or consultant of Sacramento LAFCo. However, these are my own opinions and do not represent those of Sacramento LAFCo."
- LAFCo resources, working time, or official LAFCo positions cannot be used for personal profit or business interests, or to participate in personal political activity.
- Personal social media account names or email names should not be tied to Sacramento LAFCo or Saclafo.org.

QUESTIONS

Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Executive Officer.

SACRAMENTO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

Respectfully Submitted



Peter Brundage
Executive Officer