LAFCo
of Merced County

Local Agency Formation Commission
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340
Phone (209) 385-7671 / Fax (209) 726-1710
www.lafcomerced.org

DATE: April 9, 2025

TO: LAFCO Commissioners

FROM: Bill Nicholson, Executive Officer BN

RE: Summary of California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO) restructuring efforts from recent, February 26, 2026, Board Meeting (Agenda Item VII.A)

Attached is a summary of the results from the CALAFCO Board meeting retreat held on February 26th, entitled "Strong Foundation and Clear Direction: CALAFCO's Priorities for 2026 and Beyond"

This summary presents the positive direction CALAFCO is heading after the recent period of turmoil, and self-reflection. It demonstrates that the Board has listened to its membership – which has recently grown again with the announcement by Los Angeles LAFCO that they have rejoined the Association. Hopefully, more Southern California LAFCOs will follow in the near future.

I will likely have more to report after attending the upcoming CALAFCO Staff Workshop in May.

Attachment

cc: LAFCO Legal Counsel

California Association of
Local Agency Formation Commissions

CALAFCO

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY GROWTH

# Strong Foundation and Clear Direction

## CALAFCO's Priorities for 2026 and Beyond

***On February 26, the CALAFCO Board of Directors spent a full day focused on where the organization is headed and what members can expect over the next two years.***

CALAFCO is in a strong position. Education programs are active and growing. Member outreach has improved. Governance has been reformed. The Board is clear on priorities and ready to execute.

Board members said so themselves, candidly and consistently throughout the retreat. Progress over the past year is real and visible, and the Board's focus now is on sustaining that momentum with consistent, reliable follow-through.

The retreat centered on fundamentals: the services members rely on, the reliability they expect, and the discipline required to deliver at that level.

**HERE IS THE BOARD'S TWO-YEAR VISION:**

### 1. Education Is the Top Priority

The Board identified education as the organization's highest priority. That includes CALAFCO University, the Staff Workshop, the Annual Conference, and webinars. The direction is to keep building on what is working and make sure programming stays practical and relevant for both commissioners and staff. A new emphasis includes making materials available after events conclude, so sessions have lasting value as an ongoing resource members can return to throughout the year.

### 2. Legislative Work: Present, Strategic, and Grounded

The Board wants CALAFCO to maintain a credible presence in Sacramento and serve as a resource for policymakers on LAFCO-related issues. Legislative efforts will be disciplined and selective, focused on issues with clear statewide relevance and genuine member support. Capacity is finite, and the Board is committed to directing it where it will have the most impact.

### 3. Governance Reforms Are in Place: Focus Shifts to Implementation

Recent changes to CALAFCO's governance structure, including allowing Executive Officers to serve on the Board and removing seat-type restrictions, were broadly supported at the retreat. The focus now is on making those changes work well in practice. Members were direct about the importance of clear roles. The Board sets policy direction, and the Executive Director manages day-to-day operations. That clarity benefits everyone.

## 4. Communication Is Improving and Will Keep Getting Better

> Transparency and member outreach have improved, and Board members have noted it. The next step is to make communication even clearer and easier to access. Members want concise, timely updates on major initiatives, Board decisions, and working group activities. The website is on the agenda as well, with plans to develop it into a stronger information hub.

## 5. Building a Sustainable Staffing Model

> The Board recognized the substantial work accomplished over the past year and is committed to building on it with a durable staffing structure. Expectations and resources need to align, and the organization is working toward a model that supports the Executive Director with the right capacity to deliver on member priorities over the long term.

## 6. Dues Structure Review Is a Near-Term Priority

> The Board identified the dues structure as a priority for the coming year. The goal is a structure that is fair, transparent, and tied directly to the value members receive, with particular attention to equity across counties of different sizes. Members can expect an open process with clear communication as this work moves forward.

## 7. Serving Current Members and Growing the Community

> The Board is committed to re-engaging LAFCOs that have stepped away and staying connected to those considering membership. The clearest path to both is continue deliver consistent value to current members. A strong track record of reliability and responsiveness is what makes membership worth maintaining and worth joining.

## 8. The Direction Is Clear

> The Board left the retreat with a shared, practical commitment: stay focused, deliver on the fundamentals, and build on what is working. That means stronger education, clearer communication, an improved website, stable staffing, a fair dues structure, and consistent outreach to members across California.

**CALAFCO's strength comes from the people it serves. Questions, feedback, or ideas? Reach out to your Board representative or contact the CALAFCO office directly.**