

Siskiyou County Local Agency Formation Commission
Regular Meeting
September 9, 2025

The Siskiyou County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) meeting of September 9, 2025, was called to order by Chair Ogren at approximately 9:00 a.m. in the Siskiyou County Meeting Chambers, 311 Fourth Street, 2nd Floor, Yreka, California.

Present: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni, Valenzuela, and Ogren

Absent: Commissioner Baker

Also Present: Hailey Lang, Executive Officer; Rachel Jereb, Deputy Executive Officer; Rick Dean, Director, Community Development Department; Janine Rowe, Commission Clerk

Minutes:

June 10, 2025: It was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Commissioner Mazzoni, to approve the June 10, 2025, Minutes as presented.

Voted upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present, with the exception of Commissioner Harkness who was absent for that meeting.

Unscheduled Appearances: None

Chair Ogren requested that future Agendas be revised to reflect that a maximum of three (3) minutes will be allowed for each person wishing to speak on an item not on the Agenda.

Conflict of Interest: None

Presentation of Documents: None

Availability of Public Records: The Chair read the item into the record.

Changes to the Agenda: None

New Business:

Agenda Item 1: Nomination of Siskiyou LAFCO Commissioner Nancy Ogren to the CALAFCO Board of Directors (Action Item)

Chair Ogren is requesting Commission support to run for the County Member seat for the Northern Region of CALAFCO.

Chair Ogren turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Harkness.

Staff Report:

A presentation of the project was provided by Executive Officer Hailey Lang.

Ms. Lang told the Commission that Commissioner Ogren was seeking a nomination to run for the CALAFCO Board and that she has met the requirements, and staff is requesting support for her.

Motion: Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Valenzuela, seconded by Alternate Commissioner Harkness, to nominate Commissioner Ogren to run for the County Member seat for

the Northern Region of CALAFCO.

Voted upon and the Chair declared the motion carried unanimously by those Commissioners present on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Harkness, Mazzoni and Valenzuela

Noes:

Absent: Commissioner Baker

Abstain:

Chair Ogren resumed as Chair of the meeting.

Items for Discussion/Direction:

1. List of Cemetery Districts in Siskiyou County including Locations and Budgets

Ms. Lang reminded the Commission that Senate Bill 777 proposes changes to the Health & Safety Code to require local LAFCOs to take over abandoned cemetery districts, including their endowment care funds. In response, Siskiyou LAFCO staff reviewed the county's active cemetery districts and their budgets which revealed many are financially struggling.

Ms. Lang said if the bill passes, Siskiyou LAFCO could be obligated to assume control of any district that ceases operations, raising concerns about the responsibilities and logistics involved. She said the bill has passed several Senate committees and is approaching a third reading, but its final form remains uncertain due to ongoing amendments.

Ms. Lang said many LAFCOs oppose the bill, arguing that such responsibilities should fall to counties instead.

Commission Questions/Discussion:

Ms. Lang noted that LAFCO would be responsible for managing seven cemetery districts if they were abandoned, including all aspects like maintenance and finances. Commissioner Valenzuela added that the financial burden would fall on the county's general fund and suggested that rural counties likely face similar challenges. He recommended keeping RCRC (Rural County Representatives of California) informed on the issue, and he was concerned that Senate Bill 777 would not benefit cemetery districts or counties and suggested sending a letter to the bill's author.

The Commission discussed the challenges small cemetery districts face, including board recruitment and financial sustainability, and proposed consolidation as a potential solution. They explored ideas like forming a unified board, pooling resources, and seeking county support or grant funding. Commissioner Valenzuela emphasized the need for incentives for the districts to consolidate to ensure long-term viability and stated that counties are not equipped to manage cemetery districts effectively.

Public Comment: Donna Baciagalupi of Montague said she is on the Board of Directors for the Shasta Valley Cemetery District. She said managing eight cemeteries with just two staff

members (one maintenance worker/groundskeeper and a part-time office assistant) is proving extremely difficult, especially with aging equipment and minimal resources. She said a proposed resident fee tax to support operations was rejected, leaving the team stretched thin. She said while consolidation of cemetery districts is a promising idea, any takeover would require accompanying financial support. She said the endowment fund is around \$300,000, and it is legally restricted and can't be used until the cemetery is full. Despite low burial activity, maintenance demands remain constant, and she wondered whether LAFCO is the right agency to manage such daily, hands-on responsibilities. Ms. Baciagalupi said there was a volunteer group at one time, but they ran into legal and insurance issues so they disbanded. Commissioner Valenzuela recommended bringing the matter to the Board of Supervisors to apprise them of the issue in case the Senate bill passes. Ms. Lang said she would keep Chair Ogren apprised of additional text amendments.

Chair Ogren asked Ms. Baciagalupi to explain how endowment funds work. Ms. Baciagalupi said that under the Health & Safety Code, cemeteries must remain open to the public even when plots can no longer be sold, with endowment funds serving as a safeguard for long-term maintenance. These funds, collected as a \$250 fee from each plot sale, are held by the county and can only be used once the cemetery is full. She said while the interest earned can support limited maintenance projects, the principal cannot be used for operations or equipment purchases.

As far as donations are concerned, Ms. Baciagalupi said public cemeteries don't typically receive them and they're not allowed to do fundraisers. There was discussion about other nonprofit and nonpartisan entities doing fundraisers and potentially donating part of the funds to the cemetery district. The donations would also have to be specifically designated for a particular use by the district.

Commissioner Harkness noted that the language of the bill and amendment has been modified quite a bit and now primarily directs the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau to convene a workgroup and produce recommendations by June 1, 2026. She believes there is an opportunity to participate in the workgroup, which includes organizations like CALAFCO, the League of California Cities, C-SAC, Urban Counties of California, and RCRC.

Ms. Baciagalupi added that their cemetery board has only three directors instead of the required five, making decision-making difficult. Commissioner Valenzuela reiterated the potential benefits of consolidating districts to address staffing challenges and again suggested a future discussion with the Board of Supervisors to which Chair Ogren agreed, noting public perception issues and the need for proper checks and balances.

In conclusion, the Commission and staff will monitor the bill and possibly bring the issue to the Board of Supervisors later in the year.

Miscellaneous:

- 1. Future Meetings:** There are no items for an agenda for the Tuesday, October 14, 2025, meeting; therefore, the next regularly scheduled meeting will be on January 13, 2026.

2. **Correspondence: None**

3. **Staff Comments:** Ms. Jereb told the Commission that the Commission Clerk is retiring and this is her last meeting.

4. **Commission Comments: None**

Adjournment: The meeting was concluded at approximately 9:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Hailey Lang, Secretary

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