

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Agenda Number:**  
**Prepared on:** 2/28/02  
**Department Name:** County Administrator  
**Department No.:** 012  
**Agenda Date:** 3/5/02  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimate Time:** 1 hr.  
**Continued Item:** NO  
**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Michael F. Brown  
County Administrator

**STAFF CONTACT:** Michael F. Brown  
568-3404

**SUBJECT:** County Formation Process

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## Recommendations:

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Receive a report on the timing and process requirements relating to the formation of a new county.
2. Direct staff to conduct any research and analysis with respect to the feasibility and impacts of dividing Santa Barbara County into two counties that the Board may determine to be appropriate.

## Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

Analysis of this issue is consistent with Goal No. 1: An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community.

## Executive Summary and Discussion:

In accordance with California County Formation Law a group of proponents called the Citizens for County Organization, Inc. have initiated the legally required procedures for subdividing Santa Barbara County into two counties. This issue has profound fiscal, economic, social and historical potential impacts on all current and future residents of the county. The attached report prepared by County Counsel Shane Stark summarizes the requirements and process for the formation of new counties. Also attached are copies of a graphic summary which will be presented during the Board Hearing on this matter which summarize the process and timeline.

**Mandates and Service Levels:**

Once proponents of county formation have initiated the process and unless and until they determine to stop the process and/or fail to obtain the required signatures to place the question on the ballot, the process goes forward. Unlike annexation to a city or formation of a new city, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and the Board of Supervisors have no substantive or policy role or control with respect to the process.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Should the proponents obtain the requisite signatures a County Formation Commission will be established which is required to be funded by Santa Barbara County. The operation of this commission is likely to cost many hundreds of thousands of dollars. In a manner similar to the studies which were undertaken for annexation and city incorporation, it is likely that county staff will be required to spend an extensive effort in providing information and ensuring that the analysis of the County Formation Commission is sound and accurate. The cost of this process represents hundreds of thousands of dollars of staff time which will be diverted from the conduct of County service operations.

Attachments (3)