

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: 3/23/05
Department Name: Clerk-Rcorder-Assessor
Department No.: 062
Agenda Date: 4/5/05
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: 10 min.
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Joseph E. Holland
Registrar of Voters

STAFF Bob Smith/Billie Alvarez

CONTACT: Elections Division, ext. 2204/2003

SUBJECT: Analysis for Six Special Districts Requesting Consolidation on the
Statewide General Election

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

Review and accept the attached analysis concerning the consolidation of the following six Special Districts with the Statewide General Election: the Carpinteria Valley Water District, the Carpinteria Valley Sanitary District, the Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection District, the Orcutt Fire Protection District, the Casmalia Community Services District, and the Cuyama Community Services District.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with actions required by law or routine business necessity.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

In accordance with Section 10404 of the Elections Code, these 6 Special Districts each submitted a resolution to move their Board of Directors Election from the odd-numbered year to the even-numbered year, and consolidate it with the Statewide General Election. The Board of Supervisors must consider the request and approve it by May 2, 2005, if provisions stated in the Elections Code Section 10404(e) are met. If the Board of Supervisors approves the resolution, these six Special District Board of Directors Elections will be consolidated with the Statewide General Election beginning on November 7, 2006, and continuing each even-numbered year thereafter. My office does not object to this request, since impacts associated with this consolidation are reasonable and there could be some financial gains for each of these districts. The elections staff, and vendors who assist them in conducting these elections, will be able to implement your decision and effectively complete the tasks necessary to consolidate these five Special District onto the ballot for the Statewide General Election.

Impact Analysis

A summary of the Impact Analysis follows:

- This move would leave only 3 Special Districts Board of Directors and the City of Santa Barbara mayor/city council to come to election on the odd numbered year.
- Fewer and smaller elections will occur on the odd-numbered years.
- An increased number of Ballot Types will be needed on even-numbered years.
- Extension of the term of office will occur for each of the districts' directors.
- Elections costs will be proportionately shared by participating districts.
- Higher voter turnout can be expected on even-numbered years.
- Competition for voter attention is increased on even-numbered years.

Mandates and Service Levels:

No change in programs or service level.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

See the attached analysis.

Special Instructions:

None.

Concurrence:

County Counsel.

ANALYSIS OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF
SPECIAL DISTRICTS
WITH THE STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION

Background

The following information provides an historical perspective on the transition of districts from odd to even numbered year elections. In 1985 twenty-two of twenty-four school districts moved their election from the odd-numbered years (UDEL Election) to the even-numbered years (General Elections). Santa Barbara High and Cuyama school districts moved their election in 1987 and 1989. By the UDEL Election in 1991 all school districts had moved. When all the school districts moved the election costs for the special districts increased. Several of the special districts contacted our office inquiring about the process for moving their election. In 1998 our office held a seminar for the special districts providing information and explaining the steps for moving their elections. By 1999 sixteen of the twenty-five special districts had transitioned to the even-numbered year. There are nine districts that hold their election in the odd-numbered years. The Carpinteria Sanitary Dist., Carpinteria Valley Water Dist., Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection Dist., Embarcadero Municipal Improvement Dist., Goleta Sanitary Dist., Goleta West Sanitary Dist., Casmalia Dist., Cuyama Community Services Dist., and the Orcutt Fire Protection Dist. In the last ten years five of the nine special districts Board of Director seats did not go to election but were appointed in lieu of election.

The California Elections Code, Section 10404 authorizes Special Districts, who elect members of their governing boards in the odd-numbered years, to submit a resolution to the County Board of Supervisors requesting the election of their directors be moved to the even-numbered year to consolidate with the Statewide General Election. The Carpinteria Valley Water Dist., Carpinteria Sanitary Dist., Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection Dist., Orcutt Fire Protection District, Cuyama Community Services Dist., and the Casmalia Community Services Dist. made such a request on March 3, 2005. Additionally, Elections Code, Sub-sections 10404 (c), (f), and (g) (1) require that other Special Districts within the county be advised of the consolidation; (2) the voters of the affected district be noticed by mail; and (3) a public notice be posted that describes the proceedings. Finally, Elections Code 10404, Sub-section (d) requires that the County Elections Official prepare and submit to the Board of Supervisors an impact analysis of the impacts of the proposed Consolidation.

Impact Analysis

In accordance with Section 10404 of the Elections Code, on March 3, 2005, the Carpinteria Valley Water, Carpinteria Sanitary, Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection, Orcutt Fire Protection, Cuyama Community Services Dist., and the Casmalia Community Services Districts submitted resolutions to consolidate their Board of Directors Election with the Statewide General Election beginning November 7, 2006. The Board of Supervisor must consider this request and approve it by May 2, 2005, if provisions stated in E.C. Section 10404(e) are met. If the Board approves the resolutions, the District Board of Directors Election for these districts will be consolidated with the Statewide General Election each even-numbered year.

Criteria For Denial Of Consolidation:

Your Board may deny this request in accordance with Elections Code Section 10404(e), if you find that the ballot style, voting equipment or computer capacity prevent the handling of additional elections or material. None of these issues present a problem in our county. Also, pursuant to Elections Code Section 10404(h), if a special district is located in more than one county, it may not consolidate if any county in which the district is located denies the request for consolidation. All the districts that have submitted resolutions are located entirely within Santa Barbara County, therefore this section does not apply.

Impacts Upon County Elections:

The move of the special districts will create additional ballot types and more multiple ballot types within a precinct. The majority of the special districts have already moved their election therefore this consolidation will have a minimal impact upon county elections personnel and the elections process. In addition, by the November 2007 District Election we expect that the remaining four special districts will move their election to the even numbered years.

Impacts Upon Districts Remaining in the odd-numbered year:

Five of the nine special districts that hold their election in November of the odd-numbered years have submitted resolutions requesting to move their election to the Statewide General Election in the even numbered years. This action will result in an increase in costs for the districts that are left on the odd-numbered year. Elections costs are divided proportionately among the districts that come to election. When fewer districts participate, the cost to each participating district is increased.

Impacts Upon the Special District Requesting the Move:

Board of Directors terms of Office: Pursuant to Elections Code 10404(i), the consolidation extends the term of the current Board of Directors by one year, which may or may not create an issue with the voters of the district.

Election Costs: Currently the districts share the cost of their election with the City of Santa Barbara and depending on the election maybe four other special districts. There will be a significant cost savings to the districts by moving their election to the statewide General Election. Generally speaking, the cost to a jurisdiction is less for a General Election than it is for a Unified District Election. This is because of the number of state and federal issues that are included on each General Election ballot and the districts will share the elections cost with all the school districts and other twenty special districts.

One-Time Cost: Additionally, Section 10404(f) requires the district to pay the cost of notifying the voters of the consolidation. The estimated cost to prepare, process and deliver this notice to the voters is listed below:

District	Registered Voters	Cost
Carpinteria Valley Water Dist.	8,473	\$ 4,600
Carpinteria Sanitary Dist.	7,505	\$ 4,100
Carpinteria-Summerland Fire Protection Dist.	10,207	\$ 5,500
Orcutt Fire Protection Dist.	1,466	\$ 800
Cuyama Community Services Dist.	235	\$ 450
Casmalia Community Services Dist.	51	\$ 200

Higher Voter Turnout: Another impact on the district will be exposure of their candidates and issues to an increased voter registration and higher voter turnout. Traditionally, General Elections attract more voter interest and greater voter participation. The district should expect a voter turnout of nearly double that of the Unified District Election. District candidates and their board of directors should take this fact into account when planning campaign strategies and outreach programs.

Competition For Attention: Not only will special district candidates be exposed to greater voter turnout during the General Election, they will, also, be competing for exposure with the Presidential, Congressional, Gubernatorial, state and county races, state propositions and county measures. This fact could delude their effort to address district issues to the voters, since voter attention could be focused on other high profile issues. To compound the challenge, the special district will find their issues near the end of the ballot that has contests printed on both the front and back of the card. The length and complexity of the ballot can influence the voter's mind set and attention span by the time they review the district candidates and issues.