

DRAFT

**SIERRA RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE UPDATE REPORT

**Report to the
Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission**

USOI-193

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21-day Public Review:
May 19, 2020 – June 9, 2021

Profile: Sierra Resource Conservation District		
Formation:	1957	
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Mailing Address	P.O. Box 693 Auberry, CA 93602	
Website	www.sierrarc.com	
Principal Act	California Public Resources Code, section 9151, et seq.	
Board of Directors (5-member)	<u>Name</u>	<u>Term</u>
	Peter Lassotovitch, president	Appointed 2010, current term expires 12/2022
	Alan Fry, secretary	Appointed 2010, current term expires 12/2022
	Ted A. Kimble	Appointed 2016, current term expires 12/2020
	Gary L. Temple	Appointed 2010, current term expires 12/2022
	Vacant	
Board Meetings	Fourth Monday of each month 4:00 p.m. at Clovis Veterans Memorial District Office, 808 4 th Street, Clovis, Ca 93612	
Staffing	a District Manager and three part-time employees	
Service Area and Sphere area	1,847,537 acres	
2019 Sphere Update Request	Additional 235,776 acres	
Budget	\$315,000 (Fiscal Year 2019, revenue/expenditures are secured for specific projects)	
District Long Range Plan	Yes	
District Policies	Yes	

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Executive Summary

On July 24, 2019, the Sierra Resource Conservation District ("Sierra RCD" or "District") filed an application with the Fresno Local Agency Formation Commission ("LAFCo") requesting a sphere of influence ("SOI") update (File No. USOI-193) that would expand the current District SOI westward to align with State Route ("SR") 99. The proposed SOI expansion would add approximately 235,776 acres of territory into the Sierra RCD SOI (Figure 2).

Portions of the cities of Clovis and Fresno are currently in the District. The proposed SOI expansion would add the remaining portion of the city of Clovis, additional territory in the city of Fresno, and add the entirety of the cities of Parlier, Sanger, and Reedley into the District SOI. In addition, the proposed SOI expansion would add into the District SOI the portions of Fowler, Selma, and Kingsburg that are east of SR 99. Apart from the urbanized cities, majority of the affected territory consists of agricultural land, scattered rural residences, and the unincorporated communities of Del Rey and Malaga.

The purpose of the requested SOI update and annexation application (File No. AD 19-3) is to extend service to communities and rural settlements that are not currently being served and represented in the conservation of local natural resources. Annexation of the affected territory would enable Sierra RCD to pursue grant funding to extend its technical assistance programs, provide educational material, and gather information in the affected territory that can further protect natural resources on a voluntary and non-regulatory basis. The District SOI update is necessary to facilitate the subsequent annexation application (File No. AD 19-3) of the affected territory into the District.

~~This review is organized in two parts: the first part provides an overview of services, programs, and the District's government structure; the second part analyzes the requested SOI update.~~

On June 9, 2021, the Commission updated the Municipal Service Review (LAFCo File No. MSR-21-7) prepared pursuant to Government Code section 56430 for the Sierra RCD. The Commission then voted unanimously to continue the hearing on the Sierra RCD Sphere of Influence ("SOI") amendment application (LAFCo File No. USOI-193) and related annexation application (LAFCo File No. AD-19-03) to August 11, 2021.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (“CKH”) directs LAFcos to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) ¹ for SOI updates.²

LAFCo prepared the MSR update for the Sierra RCD SOI pursuant to Government Code (“GC”) section 56430. An MSR gathers data to present an independent assessment of service provisions provided within a geographic area in the County. Furthermore, an MSR provides a foundation that may support future LAFCo actions. Therefore, an MSR is exempt from environmental review under CEQA guidelines section 15306, “Information Collection.”

However, this MSR update also evaluates the District’s request to LAFCo to expand the SOI that is essential to facilitate the successive annexation application. The affected territory consists of various land uses consisting of unincorporated agricultural land, rural residential, and urban land uses.

In conducting environmental review for the Sierra RCD SOI update and annexation, Sierra RCD assumed the role of Lead Agency pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines. The District determined that the proposal will not change the existing land uses nor change the land use designations depicted by either the Fresno County General Plan or any of the affected cities’ general plans proposed to be included in the Sierra RCD SOI update. Since it can be seen with certainty that the proposal does not have the potential to result in a significant effect on the environment, it is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA guidelines pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines. On July 24, 2019, the Sierra RCD filed a Notice of Exemption with the Fresno County Clerk’s Office (#E201910000260).

Acting as Responsible Agency pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, LAFCo considered the Notice of Exemption as prepared by the Lead Agency for its own review and update of the Sierra RCD SOI. LAFCo finds that it can be seen with certainty that the proposed SOI update does not have the potential to result in a significant effect on the environment, therefore the SOI update is not subject to CEQA pursuant to section 15061 (b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines.

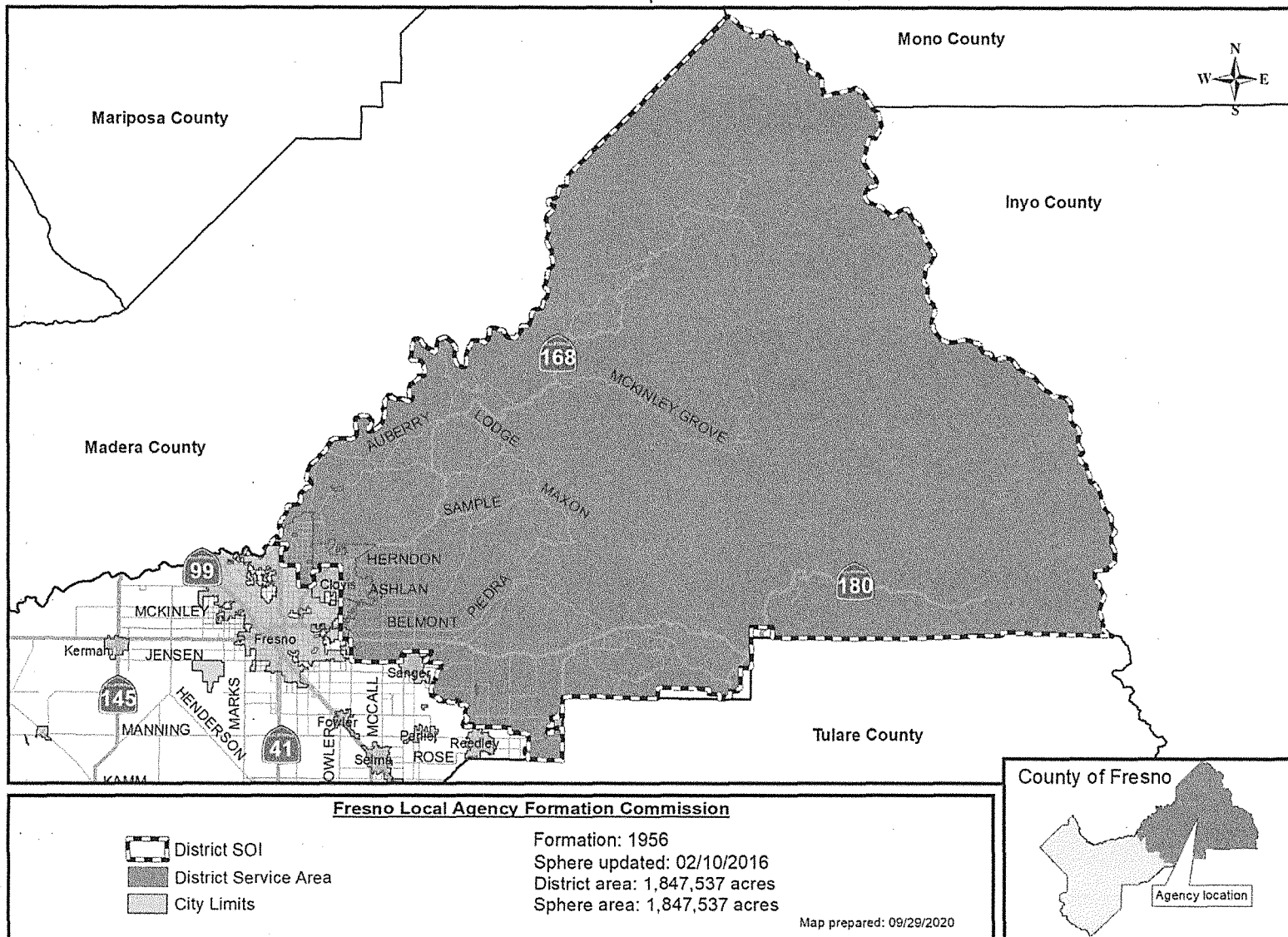
¹ California Environmental Quality Act, Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code.

² Government Code section 56428.

Figure 1 - District Map

Sierra Resource Conservation District

Authorized services: studies on preservation of natural resources



1. Sphere of Influence Application, USOI No. 193

On July 24, 2019, the District submitted a SOI update application (File No. USOI-193) and a related annexation application (File No. AD-19-3) to LAFCo. The SOI update is necessary to facilitate the subsequent annexation of the affected territory into the District's service area.

Background

In 2019, the Sierra RCD and Tranquillity RCD received grant funding from the Central Valley Regional Foundation to process SOI update and annexation applications with LAFCo. The grant funding assisted both RCDs to pay the LAFCo fees and request SOI expansions to account for locations in the County not inside an existing RCD. As planned, the SOI updates would facilitate the subsequent and coterminous annexation proposals, respectively.

According to Sierra RCD, the purpose of its requested SOI update and annexation application is to extend service to communities and rural settlements that are not currently being served and represented in the conservation of local natural resources. Annexation of the affected territory would enable Sierra RCD to pursue grant funding to extend its technical assistance programs, provide education material, and gather information in the affected territory that can further protect natural resources on a voluntary and non-regulatory basis.

The District is requesting LAFCo to expand the District SOI to include territory westward of the current District and it would align with the eastern edge of SR 99, see **Figure 2**. The SOI expansion would add approximately 235,776 acres into the updated District SOI. The proposed District SOI update would encompass a total of 2,083,313 acres.

Land uses in the affected territory

With respect to the proposed District SOI update, the 235,776-acre affected territory consists of various land uses. Approximately 171,747 acres in the affected territory are unincorporated and designated primarily for agriculture use by the County of Fresno Land Use Element. While approximately 64,029 acres are incorporated and identified for urban land uses by the cities' General Plans, respectively.

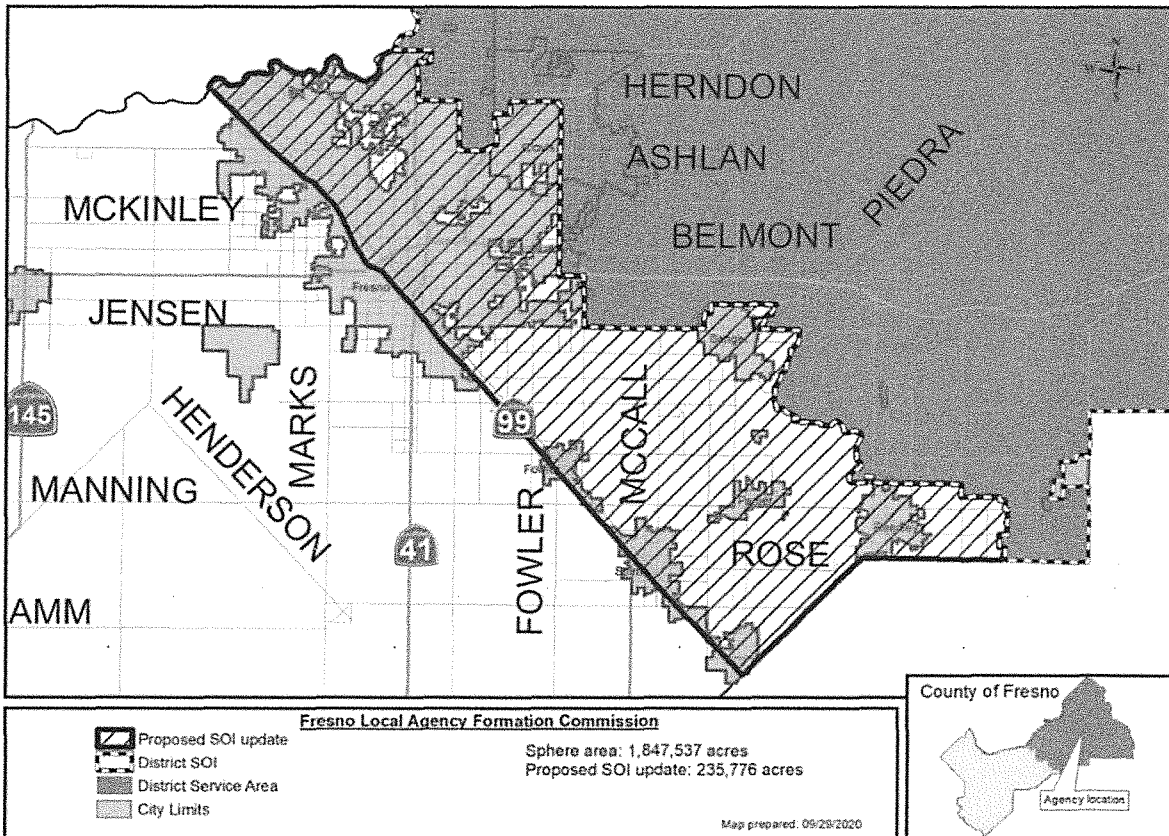
The proposed SOI expansion would add the remaining portions of Clovis, Fresno, Reedley, and Sanger into the District SOI. The city of Parlier would be included in the District SOI, as would the portions of the cities of Fowler, Selma, and Kingsburg that lay east of SR 99. **Table 1** shows estimated amount of incorporated acreages that are proposed to be included in the District SOI expansion. Annexation of the affected territory has the potential to add approximately 569,855 residents into the District.³ Most of the population resides within the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area and neighboring cities.

³ Estimated population from 360 Census Block Groups, U.S. Census, ACS five-year reports, 2012 to 2016.

Table 1 – Incorporated land per city proposed to be in Sierra RCD SOI

Cities in the affected territory	Estimated acres per city	Notes
Fresno	44,946	Only land east of SR 99
Clovis	5,101	
Sanger	3,504	
Reedley	3,439	
Selma	2,529	Only land east of SR 99
Kingsburg	1,699	Only land east of SR 99
Parlier	1,555	
Fowler	1,256	Only land east of SR 99
Total incorporated acreage	64,029	

Figure 2 - Proposed Sierra RCD SOI update



Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

Based on LAFCo's 2020 Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities ("DUC") database, there are 12 known DUC locations within the affected territory. Table 2 of this Section provides characteristics, demographics, and details related to each known DUC in the affected territory.

Table 2 - DUC data summary

	DUC Name	Census Tract	Block Group	MHI	Less than 80% Statewide Annual MHI	15 Units at a Density ≥ One Unit per Acre	Number of Registered Voters
1	Newmark and Annadale Avenues	62.01	1	\$48,125	Yes	Yes	75
2	Del Rey	69.00	1	\$25,809	Yes	Yes	384
3	S. Academy and Manning Avenues	85.01	1	\$22,431	Yes	Yes	13
4	E. Manning and McCall Avenues	73.03	1	\$43,583	Yes	Yes	23
5	E. Dinuba and S. Shaft Avenues	70.03	1	\$43,583	Yes	Yes	82
6	Khan Tract	73.03	1	\$43,583	Yes	Yes	178
7	Malaga	15.00	2	\$41,656	Yes	Yes	495
8	Sunnyside Part 1 and 2	30.03	1	\$19,478	Yes	Yes	1,714, part 1
		30.03	2	\$27,540			
		29.03	2	\$20,737			2,130, part 2
		29.04	1	\$34,000			
		29.04	2	\$46,618			
		29.05	2	\$27,396			
30.01	2	\$36,094					
9	Mayfair (east of SR 168)	32.01	1	\$41,618	Yes	Yes	1,881
		32.01	2	\$33,713			
		32.02	2	\$24,155			
		52.02	1	\$29,545			
10	Mayfair (west of SR 168)	32.02	1	\$24,155	Yes	Yes	2,130
		33.01	1	\$29,531			
		33.02	1	\$21,034			
		33.02	2	\$45,231			
		33.02	3	\$32,969			
		33.02	4	\$48,161			
11	Villa View Tract	12.01	1	\$26,406	Yes	Yes	23
12	Calwa	12.01	1	\$26,406	Yes	Yes	520
		12.01	2	\$21,324			
		12.01	4	\$48,162			

The affected territory encompasses census block groups that meet the Water Code definition of Disadvantaged Communities based on reported MHI levels. The following descriptions identify the locations in the affected territory that meet LAFCo's DUC criteria:

1. Newmark and East Annadale Avenues, this DUC is located within the Sanger SOI, east of the Sanger city limits. The DUC is located east of Newmark Avenue and north of East Annadale Avenue. The DUC encompasses 30 acres and it consists of 44 rural residential parcels. LAFCo estimate that this DUC has a density of one unit per acre. Water is attained through private wells and sewer is attained through private septic tank systems. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.
2. The unincorporated community of Del Rey is located near the intersection of South Del Rey Avenue at East Jefferson Avenue. The community of Del Rey has a population of 1,457 people, and a housing stock of 379 units. The Del Rey Community Service District provides potable water, sewer, storm drainage, and solid waste services. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.
3. The South Academy and East Manning DUC is located west of South Academy Avenue and south of East Manning Avenue, immediately south of Parlier's city limits and east of Parlier's Wastewater Treatment Plant. The DUC encompasses 20 acres and it consists of 24 dwelling units. Water is attained through private wells and sewer is attained through private septic tank systems. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.
4. The E. Manning Avenue and McCall Avenue DUC is located within the Selma SOI, south of East Manning Avenue and west of McCall Avenue. There are 17 dwelling units located within an area that encompasses approximately eight acres. Water is attained through private wells and sewer is attained through private septic tank systems. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.
5. The East Dinuba Avenue and South Shaft Avenue is located within the Selma SOI north of East Dinuba Avenue at the intersection with South Shaft Avenue. The DUC consists of approximately 65 dwelling units located within an area that encompasses approximately 49 acres. LAFCo estimates that the density is approximately one dwelling unit per acre within this DUC. Water is attained through private wells and sewer service is provided by the Selma-Kingsburg-Fowler County Sanitation District (via "out-of-District boundary customers"). Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.
6. The Khan Tract DUC is located within the Selma SOI south of East Dinuba Avenue and east of Leonard Avenue. The DUC encompasses approximately 56 acres, and LAFCo estimates that there are approximately 131 dwelling units within this DUC. LAFCo estimates that the density is approximately two dwelling units per acre within this DUC. Water is attained through private wells and sewer service is provided by the Selma-Kingsburg-Fowler County Sanitation District (via "out-of-District boundary customers"). Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District.

7. The unincorporated community of Malaga is located at the southeast corner of the Muscat Avenue and Chestnut Avenue. The DUC boundary encompasses approximately 95 acres, and LAFCo estimates there are approximately 241 dwelling units within this DUC. Based on dwelling unit estimates, there is at least two dwelling units per acre within this DUC. The Malaga County Water District provides potable water, sewer, and solid waste services within the community. County Service Area No. 33 (Malaga) provides public street lighting and landscaping services. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.
8. Sunnyside part 1 located within the Fresno SOI, and generally located north of Kings Canyon Avenue and along both sides of Minnewawa Avenue. The DUC consists of several neighborhoods that make up the Sunnyside Community. This narrative provides a two-part summary for an area that consists of approximately 900 parcels that encompass approximately 660-acres. The City of Fresno provides water and sewer service within the DUC. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.

Sunnyside part 2 is bounded by Olive Avenue to the north, Minnewawa Avenue to the east, Belmont Avenue to the south, and Peach Avenue to the west. The area also includes areas south of Belmont Avenue, west of Bush Avenue, north of McKenzie Avenue, and east of Winery Avenue. A minor portion of the DUC is located north of SR 180, west of Helm Avenue, south of Tyler Avenue, and east of Willow Avenue. This DUC consists of approximately 639 properties. The City of Fresno provides water and sewer service within the DUC. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.

9. The Shields Avenue and Cedar Avenue DUC is located within the Fresno SOI, enclosed by Shields Avenue to the north, Winery Avenue to the east, Clinton Avenue to the south, and extends across State Route 168 over to Cedar Avenue in the west. The DUC also includes an area south of Cambridge Avenue, west of Maple Avenue, north of University Avenue, and east of SR 168. This DUC is also known as the "Mayfair" community. The DUC encompasses 533 acres consisting of approximately 1,030 parcels. LAFCo estimates that the density is approximately two dwelling units per acre within this DUC. The City of Fresno provides water and sewer service within the DUC. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.
10. The E. McKinley and N. First Avenue DUC is located within the Fresno SOI, enclosed by the Fresno city limits. The DUC is bounded by Princeton Avenue to the north, Cedar Avenue to the east, McKinley Avenue to the south, and First Avenue to the west. This DUC encompasses the westside of the "Mayfair" community. The DUC area encompasses 490 acres and it consists of approximately 1,235 unincorporated parcels. LAFCo estimates that the density is approximately three dwelling units per acre within this DUC. The City of Fresno provides water and sewer service within the DUC. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.

11. The Villa View Tract DUC is located within the Fresno SOI, east of Orange Avenue and north of Belgravia Avenue. The nearest major intersection to the DUC is Church Avenue at Orange Avenue. The DUC encompasses 10 acres consisting of 22 properties. LAFCo estimates that the density is approximately two dwelling units per acre within this DUC. The City of Fresno provides water and sewer service within the DUC. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.
12. The unincorporated community of Calwa is located within the Fresno SOI near the southeast corner of Church Avenue and Orange Avenue. LAFCo estimates that there are approximate 385 dwelling units in an area that encompasses approximately 179 acres. LAFCo estimates that the density is approximately two dwelling units per acre within this DUC. The City of Fresno provides water and sewer service within the DUC. Fire protection is provided by the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Storm drainage is provided by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.

According to the District Manager, the District's ability to extend service to the communities and rural settlements depends upon its ability to secure grant funding for specific technical assistance programs, education materials, or data gathering projects related to resource conservation. At the time this report was prepared, the District started coordinating efforts to pursue grants to engage and assist local growers and disadvantaged communities in the affected territory.

Present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area

The proposed District SOI update and subsequent annexation has the potential to include either a portion or all the following local agencies into the District's SOI and service area:

- **Cemetery Districts:**
 - Fowler, Selma, and Kingsburg (portions east of SR99)
- **Community Service Districts:**
 - Del Rey and Bluffs
- **County Service Areas by Number:**
 - 7 (San Joaquin Suburban Estates), 2 (Tanaya Park), 14 (Belmont County Club), and 33 (Malaga)
- **Fire Protection Districts:**
 - Fig Garden and North Central (east of SR99)
- **Health Care District:**
 - Selma, Tri-County (formerly Kingsburg)
- **Mosquito Districts:**
 - Fresno Mosquito and Vector Control District
- **Police Protection District:**
 - Fig Garden Police Protection District
- **Public Utility Districts:**
 - Pinedale Public Utility District
- **County Sanitation Districts:**
 - Selma-Kingsburg-Fowler (portions east of SR99)
- **County Water Districts:**
 - Pinedale and Malaga

During the preparation of this report, three irrigation districts and Kings River Conservation District expressed concerns about the expansion of the Sierra RCD's boundaries. According to the agencies, the

proposal has the potential to create redundancies in the affected territory with existing water management agencies that already collect fees to provide and promote the conservation of local natural resources such as water and agricultural land. Staff notes that the District’s service area currently overlaps with the four concerned agencies. Based on ArcGIS mapping estimates, Tables 3 and 4 show current and proposed Sierra RCD boundary overlaps with the four concerned agencies.

Table 3- Existing Overlap with Sierra RCD

Commenting Agencies	Existing District overlap with Sierra RCD in acres
Alta Irrigation District (multiple county agency)	24,043
Consolidated Irrigation District (multiple county agency)	2,856
Fresno Irrigation District	62,289
Kings River Conservation District (multiple county agency)	76,417

Alta Irrigation District’s (“AID”) service area encompasses approximately 133,500 acres. Currently 24,043 acres of AID’s service area (18 percent) overlaps with Sierra RCD. The proposed District SOI update and annexation would increase the AID and Sierra RCD overlap by an additional 9,425 acres. As proposed, the Sierra RCD and AID’s overlap would increase to 25 percent.

Consolidated Irrigation District’s (“CID”) service area encompasses 138,535 acres. Currently 2,856 acres of CID’s service area (two percent) overlaps with Sierra RCD. The proposed District SOI update and annexation would increase the CID and Sierra RCD overlap by an additional 42,777 acres. As proposed, the Sierra RCD and CID overlap would increase to 33 percent.

Fresno Irrigation District’s (“FID”) service area encompasses 245,000 acres. Currently 62,289 acres of FID’s service area (25 percent) overlaps with Sierra RCD. The proposed District SOI update and annexation would increase the FID and Sierra RCD overlap by an additional 46,200 acres. As proposed, the Sierra RCD and FID overlap would increase to 44 percent.

Kings River Conservation District’s (“KRCD”) service area encompasses 1,311,156 acres. Currently 76,417 acres of KRCD’s service area (five percent) overlaps with Sierra RCD. The proposed District SOI update and annexation would increase the Sierra RCD and KRCD overlap by an additional 87,075 acres. As proposed, the Sierra RCD and KRCD overlap would increase to 12 percent.

Table 4 – Proposed Overlap Increases with Sierra RCD

Commenting Agencies	Additional overlaps proposed by Sierra RCD in acres
Alta Irrigation District	9,425
Consolidated Irrigation	42,777
Fresno Irrigation	46,200
Kings River Conservation District	87,075

Sphere of Influence update Analysis

One of the objectives of the LAFCo is to make studies and to obtain and furnish information which will contribute to the logical and reasonable development of local agencies in the County and to shape the development of local agencies so as to advantageously provide for the present and future needs of the County and its communities.⁴

In reviewing the District’s SOI update request, staff considered the comment letters provided to LAFCo regarding Sierra RCD’s proposals. In addition, LAFCo staff convened the District Managers of AID, CID, FID, and KRCD on at least three occasions to detail their specific concerns regarding the proposed SOI update.

Other than the comment letters provided to LAFCo, LAFCo staff did not identify any existing service issues in the areas that currently overlap with Sierra RCD. Furthermore, no written evidence was provided to LAFCo that identifies an occasion where the duplication of services occurred among Sierra RCD and either AID, CID, FID, or KRCD.

The concerned agencies informed LAFCo that they respectfully oppose the Sierra RCD’s proposed expansion because there is no need for another special district to overlap with the existing water management agencies or KRCD. The district managers of AID, FID, CID, and KRCD informed LAFCo that their agencies could provide services related to resource conservation, that landowners within the affected territory are represented and will continue to be represented on matters related to groundwater management and preservation of local resources by either AID, FID, CID, or KRCD. Furthermore, technical assistance efforts are already provided by either the North Kings Groundwater Sustainable Agency or the Central Kings Groundwater Sustainable Agency.

⁴ Fresno LAFCo Policies, Standards, and Procedures Manual, Policy 101.06, Commission Objectives.

In light of the data collected during the MSR process and in the preparation of this SOI report, as well as from conversations with the District Manager of Sierra RCD, it is staff's opinion that the SOI update and annexation could assist local growers and DUCs (rural communities) in the affected territory benefit from the District's non-regulatory technical assistance programs. The District does not levy taxes, nor collects special assessments, nor plans to begin collecting fees for its planned programs. Much of the planned services and programs in the affected territory are anticipated to be funded through state or federal grants. As noted in the MSR, California law empowers RCDs to seek the cooperation of local, state, and federal agencies in order to avoid duplication of surveys, investigations, and research activities.⁵

LAFCo expects that Sierra RCD will continue to collaborate with the various agencies and organizations to avoid service redundancies and align programs and priorities that can produce the best grant funds to assist residents and landowners in the affected territory. The District demonstrates that it has adequate planning efforts in place to extend conservation services and programs to the affected territory that is planned to be included in the District.

2. Sphere of Influence Update Determinations

In determining the SOI of each local agency, the commission shall consider and prepare a written statement of its determinations with respect to each of the following items pursuant to Government Code Section 56425 (e):

- 1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agriculture and open space.**
 - Majority of the District's service area encompasses unincorporated land. Land in the valley floor consists of active agricultural operations and sparse rural residential. While land along the Sierra Nevada foothills and mountain areas consists of grazing land, rural residential, public lands and open space.
 - The County of Fresno is the land use authority for unincorporated territory inside the District. While the cities of Clovis, Fresno, Sanger, Reedley, and Orange Cove are the land use authorities for their respective portions of territory also inside the District.
 - The largest population concentration in the District occurs in the Fresno-Clovis Metropolitan Area and neighboring cities.

⁵ Public Resources Code section 9402.

- Within the affected territory, the city of Parlier would be included in the District SOI update, and only the eastern portions of the cities of Fresno, Fowler, Selma, and Kingsburg would be added into the District SOI.
 - The District does not have land use authority and as a result, the proposed District SOI update will not affect the present or planned land uses in the affected territory.
- 2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area.**
- The District has an adopted “Long Range Plan for years 2020 to 2025” that presents the District’s mission to address critical local concerns including but not limited to: 1) Water use management, 2) Land use planning 3) Fuels reduction management, 4) Invasive species control and management 5) Air quality effects on agriculture and human health.
 - The District's mission and functions are to take available technical, financial, and educational resources, and coordinate them at the local level to promote the conservation of natural soil, water, agriculture, wildlife, rangelands, oak and forest lands, and air resources within its service area.
 - The District anticipates that annexation of the affected territory would enable landowners to benefit from the District’s technical assistance programs, funds for services related to education, and investigative studies that support the protection and enhancement of natural resources within rural areas and disadvantaged communities on a voluntary and non-regulatory basis.
- 3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services that the agency provides or is authorized to provide.**
- The District does not own or operate any public facilities, capital infrastructure, or equipment necessary to provide a direct service to its continuance.
 - California's Resource Conservation District Law empowers the District to conduct surveys, investigations, research items relating to the conservation of resources, the preventative, the control measures, and works for improvement when needed, and to publish the results of such surveys and disseminate the information. A list of all the powers and duties granted to RCDs can be found under section 9401 of the PRC.
 - California's Resource Conservation District Law authorizes the District’s directors to seek the cooperation of local, state, and federal agencies in order to avoid duplication of surveys,

investigations, and research activities. The District has executed several Memoranda of Understanding with various agencies and organizations for cooperation in the conservation of natural resources.

- The District's primary source of revenue is government grants and contributions for the purpose of facilitating water and land conservation programs. The District states that grant revenues to maintain its various programs are at adequate levels; however, loss of existing grants could be detrimental to certain programs.
 - The District's ability to expand its service capacity is contingent upon its ability to secure grant funding, contributions, and expand critical partnerships.
- 4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the Commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.**
- Being that the affected territory encompasses census block groups that meet the Water Code definition of Disadvantaged Communities, the affected territory includes various communities that are relevant to the agency's service provisions.
 - According to the District Manager, the District started coordinating efforts to pursue grants to engage and assist local growers and disadvantaged communities in the affected territory.
- 5. For an update of a sphere of influence of a city or special district that provides public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection, that occurs pursuant to subdivision (g) on or after July 1, 2012, the present and probable need for those public facilities and services of any disadvantaged unincorporated communities within the existing sphere of influence.**
- Based on LAFCo's 2020 DUC database, this MSR and SOI update report identified twelve (12) locations that meet LAFCo's DUC criteria.
 - The District does not provide public facilities or services related to sewers, municipal and industrial water, or structural fire protection.

3. Recommendations

In consideration of information gathered and evaluated in this Municipal Service Review, it is recommended the Commission:

1. Approve the recommended sphere of influence update determinations, together with any changes deemed appropriate.
2. Find that LAFCo, as a Responsible Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) considered the Notice of Exemption prepared by Sierra Resource Conservation District, Lead Agency, for its review and update of the District SOI.
3. Find that as a Responsible Agency, Fresno LAFCo, it can be seen with certainty that the proposal does not have the potential to result in a significant effect on the environment, and that the proposal is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3). Therefore, the proposal is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3).
4. Revise the Sierra Resource Conservation District SOI to include 235,776 acres consisting of unincorporated and urban land, as depicted in Figure 2 of the SOI update report.

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