

Mr. Hattam,

LAFCO Executive Officer's letter of July 8 comprehensively outlined LAFCO's response to your letter of July 3, 2023, including SDCWA's CEQA claims. As your email from July 8, 2023, notes, the arguments in it are from SDCWA's submission in September 2020, which LAFCO has addressed throughout the administrative review of the application and in its June 5, 2023, staff report. The detachment squarely falls within the Class 20 exemption. The two districts will continue to provide water service within their existing geographic areas. And, as you know, the examples listed in Class 20 are illustrative but not exhaustive of all reorganizations that it may apply to, including the two detachment proposals before LAFCO now. In short, SDCWA's CEQA claims, and in particular its argument regarding "unusual circumstances," are unfounded. There is no evidence that the detachments are distinct from other projects qualifying for the Class 20 exemption generally. By contrast, there is substantial evidence to support no unusual circumstances exist to take either detachment proposal outside of Class 20. Simply repeating SDCWA's arguments does not change this fact, nor does it support changing the exemption determination in the first instance. Staff stands by the exemption determination, SDCWA's arguments notwithstanding.

Holly O. Whatley