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SB-1209 Local agency formation commission: indemnification. (2023-2024)

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Date Published: 09/30/2024 09:00 PM

Senate Bill No. 1209

CHAPTER 886

An act to add Section 56383.5 to the Government Code, relating to local government.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2024. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2024.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1209, Cortese. Local agency formation commission: indemnification.

Existing law, the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000, provides the exclusive authority and procedure for the initiation, conduct, and completion of changes of organization and reorganization for cities and districts, except as specified. The act continues in existence in each county a local agency formation commission (LAFCO) that consists of members appointed, as specified, and oversees those changes of organization and reorganization. The act authorizes a LAFCO to, among other things, review and approve with or without amendment, wholly, partially, or conditionally, or disapprove proposals for changes of organization or reorganization, as specified.

This bill would authorize a LAFCO to require, as a condition for, among other things, processing a change of organization or reorganization, that the applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the LAFCO, its agents, officers, and employees from and against any claim, action, or proceeding, as specified, to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval by the LAFCO. The bill would require the LAFCO to promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval by the LAFCO and require the LAFCO to fully cooperate in the defense. The bill would specify that an applicant who is a party to the agreement is not responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless the LAFCO if the LAFCO fails to notify the applicant or cooperate fully in the defense, and is not required to pay or perform any settlement relating to the agreement, unless the applicant approves the settlement. The bill would specify that nothing in its provisions are to be construed to prohibit the LAFCO from participating in the defense of any claim, action, or proceeding to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval by the commission if specified conditions are met, including that the LAFCO bears its own attorney's fees and costs of the claim, action, or proceeding.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 56383.5 is added to the Government Code, to read:

56383.5. (a) The commission may require, as a condition for processing a change of organization or reorganization, a sphere amendment or a sphere update, or any other action or determination requested from the commission, that the applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the commission, its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against the commission, its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval by the commission.

(b) (1) An agreement to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless entered into pursuant to subdivision (a) shall require the commission to promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action, or proceeding to attack, set aside, void, or annul an approval by the commission and shall require the commission to cooperate fully in the defense.

(2) An applicant who is a party to an agreement to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless entered into pursuant to subdivision (a) shall not be responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless if the commission fails to notify the applicant or cooperate fully in the defense pursuant to paragraph (1).

(c) An applicant who is a party to an agreement to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless entered into pursuant to subdivision (a) shall not be required to pay or perform any settlement relating to the agreement, unless the applicant approves the settlement.

(d) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the commission from participating in the defense of any claim, action, or proceeding to attack, set aside, void or annul an approval by the commission if both of the following conditions are met:

(1) The commission bears its own attorney's fees and costs of the claim, action, or proceeding.

(2) The commission defends the claim, action, or proceeding in good faith.