

**PANEL: LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSIONS – THEIR INFLUENCE ON
MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICTS**

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The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Act was passed in 1965. The Knox Bill which gave rise to the LAFCO structure contained a very substantial bias against special districts. But we believe that the very strength of home rule in California has derived from the fact that many agencies, representing many people, are contributing to the practice of local government, from the policy level to the actual execution of specific functions.

The special district has been a very disturbing thing to many people for a long period of time. In 1931 there was an effort made to arrest, or to make extremely difficult the formation of new districts – this was called “The District Investigations Act.” It deterred the development of mosquito control for many years. It was only after the application of this Act to mosquito abatement district formation had been set aside that the legislature decided it should no longer apply.

The LAFCO aspect of harnessing and arresting new polit-

ical subdivisions was brought into being in 1965. It amounted to an intermediate level sounding body which could look at and make determinations about the desirability of various forms of local government. When we consider that there are 58 counties in California, roughly five times that many major cities, and 100 times that many special districts of all kinds, it is quite clear why there has been concern about the districts.

Probably the first impact of LAFCO on mosquito abatement districts took place in Contra Costa County. Somehow the feeling existed in Contra Costa County that the executive officer of LAFCO needed to make inroads by taking on various unnecessary special districts. In this county there are two mosquito abatement districts, plus an area with no organized control. For certain persons it seemed like an excellent opportunity to make a change by bringing the entire matter to issue.