

LAFCO Sued By Environmentalists Over Palmwood

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The Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has now been joined as an additional party in a suit brought by two environmental groups against the city of Desert Hot Springs over the recent annexation of the Palmwood development.

[Court paper](#) 

Filed at 3 p.m. today, the amended suit claims among other things that LAFCO did not follow California Law when it approved the Palmwood Annexation.

“LAFCO actions in approving the Annexation Project violated provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act and the CEQA guidelines (California Code of Regulations...” said the amended suit filed by the Center For Biological Diversity and the Sierra Club, the two groups suing to block the annexation.

“The rushed environmental review that Desert Hot Springs used is the same one LAFCO relied on,” said Jonathan Evens of The Center For Biological Diversity. “LAFCO’s own rules dictate the project should not have gone forward.”

The naming of LAFCO in the suit puts additional pressure on that agency over its April 26, 2007 decision approving the Palmwood annexation. Earlier this month, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission both filed requests for reconsideration with LAFCO.

Those reconsideration requests are scheduled to be taken up by LAFCO on June 28, 2007. At that meeting, LAFCO could decide to reverse its decision to grant the Palmwood annexation according to Wayne Fowler, Senior Government Analyst at LAFCO.

Today was the last day the environmental groups could join additional parties under the original court filing. With the filing, LAFCO becomes a formal party being sued over its role in granting the annexation.

Also named in the suit with Desert Hot Springs and now LAFCO is Michael Crosby, the developer of Palmwood, and Landmark Properties, a stakeholder in Palmwood.