

# ***San Geronio Pass Water Agency***

**DATE:** March 13, 2023  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Lance Eckhart, General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** **LAFCO 2023 Special District Selection Committee Ballot**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff has no recommendation.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Board consists of commissioners and alternates. In Riverside County, commissioners represent either the eastern or western portion of the County. However, Special Districts participate in the election for Special District commissioners. The current election is for one commissioner representing the eastern half of the County, and one commissioner representing the western half of the County.

## **ANALYSIS**

LAFCO, is the arm of the County government that deals with annexations, incorporation of new cities, changes in service areas, etc. It is governed by a board of directors that represent the County, cities, and special districts. The purpose of this proposed board action is for the Board to give direction to the President as to who it wishes to support for both a regular and alternate member of the LAFCO board representing Special Districts.

## **ACTION**

Board may choose to vote for one up to three candidates, ranking them in order of preference, using "1" for the first choice, "2" for the second choice, and so on. The Board may also choose to note vote. Completed ballots must be delivered to LAFCO no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 27, 2023. Only the presiding officer or another board member authorized by the Board of Directors to vote may cast the ballot.

## **Fiscal Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact to voting for LAFCO commissioners.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

LAFCO Official Ballot Instructions

LAFCO Official Election Ballot

LAFCO Instant Voting Runoff Election Process

Cástulo Estrada – Request for Support – Eastern Region

Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady – Request for Support – Candidate Statement  
– Western Region

Dr. Bruce Underwood – Candidate Statement – Eastern Region

Larry Smith - Candidate Statement – Western Region



February 23, 2023

via electronic mail

**2023 BALLOT INSTRUCTIONS FOR SPECIAL DISTRICT SELECTION COMMITTEE,  
ONE (1) EASTERN REGION MEMBER AND ONE (1) WESTERN REGION MEMBER  
OF THE RIVERSIDE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

To Special District Selection Committee Members:

**Please read these instructions carefully before completing your ballot.** As previously announced, a physical meeting of the Special District Selection Committee (SDSC) is not feasible at this time, therefore, the selection proceedings are being conducted by electronic mail or regular USPS mail. A nomination period for the positions in the title above was opened on Monday, January 23, 2023, and closed at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 21, 2023.

Enclosed you will find an official election ballot sectioned by region, as follows:

**One (1) LAFCO Regular Special District Member – Eastern Riverside County:** A total of three (3) eligible nominations were received for this position. Candidates are restricted to the eastern region area of the County.

**One (1) LAFCO Regular Special District Member – Western Riverside County:** A total of six (6) eligible nominations were received for this position. Candidates are restricted to the western region area of the County.

All members of the SDSC may cast a ballot for one (1) regular member from each region.

Pursuant to procedures adopted by the Selection Committee in 2016, the election for a LAFCO regular member position will be conducted using Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). IRV eliminates the requirement for the expensive and lengthy process of sending out a second runoff ballot to achieve a majority. An example demonstrating how IRV works is attached.

Please fill out your ballot by ranking each region's nominees in the order of preference, using "1" for your first choice, "2" for your second choice and so on. Please note ranking more than one candidate will not work against your first choice candidate, however, voting for only one candidate is allowed. Do not mark the same number beside more than one candidate and do not skip numbers.

**General Instructions and Information:**

- Completed ballots must be delivered via electronic mail to [rholtzclaw@lafco.org](mailto:rholtzclaw@lafco.org), or by regular mail delivered to the LAFCO office at 6216 Brockton Avenue, Suite 111-B, Riverside CA 92506 **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 27, 2023.**
- Only the presiding officer or another board member authorized by your board of directors to vote, may cast the ballot. Board members designated by their district board to vote in place of the presiding officer must provide that authorization (in the form of a resolution or minute order) to LAFCO no later than the time the ballot is cast. District managers or other staff members may not vote.
- The voting member must print his or her name on the ballot as well as sign and date the certification indicating he or she is authorized to vote for the district.
- We must receive a ballot with an original signature. However, if you deliver your ballot via electronic mail, you may return a scanned copy of the signed ballot by email to +
- Failure to follow these instructions will invalidate the ballot.

Finally, these positions ensure special districts are appropriately represented on our local boards. Appointments are only valid if ballots representing a quorum, from 28 of our 55 independent special districts, are returned. Please return your ballots in a timely manner.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (951) 369-0631.

Sincerely,



GARY THOMPSON  
Executive Officer

Attachments:

2023 Special District Selection Committee – Official Election Ballot  
Instant Runoff Voting Election Process (IRV)

## SPECIAL DISTRICT SELECTION COMMITTEE 2023 OFFICIAL ELECTION BALLOT

Name of District: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print District Name Here (required)

**Certification of voting member:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that I am (check one):  
Print Name Here (required)

- the presiding officer of the above-named district.
- a member of the board of the above-named district authorized by the board to vote in place of the presiding officer. [Authorization  previously transmitted  attached]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer Signature (required) Date (required)

### RIVERSIDE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION Regular Special District Members

**Vote for one (1) from each region**

**Please rank the candidates in preferential order, "1" being the first preference, "2" being the second, etc.**

**Eastern Region**  
 (Term runs through May 6, 2024)

	Circle rank for each candidate
<b>BRUCE C. UNDERWOOD</b> , Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District	1 2 3
<b>KIMBERLY BARRAZA</b> , Desert Healthcare District	1 2 3
<b>CÁSTULO R. ESTRADA</b> , Coachella Valley Water District	1 2 3

Listed in random drawing order conducted on 2-22-2023

**Western Region**  
 (Term runs through May 4, 2026)

	Circle rank for each candidate
<b>LARRY SMITH</b> , San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency	1 2 3 4 5 6
<b>CAROL L. GONZALES-BRADY</b> , Rancho California Water District	1 2 3 4 5 6
<b>STEPHEN J. CORONA</b> , Eastern Municipal Water District	1 2 3 4 5 6
<b>STEVE A. PASTOR</b> , Lake Hemet Municipal Water District	1 2 3 4 5 6
<b>ANGELA D. LITTLE</b> , Valley-Wide Recreation & Park District	1 2 3 4 5 6
<b>JOHN SKERBELIS</b> , Rubidoux Community Services District	1 2 3 4 5 6

Listed in random drawing order conducted on 2-22-2023

Completed ballots must be delivered via electronic mail to [rholtzclaw@lafco.org](mailto:rholtzclaw@lafco.org), or by regular mail delivered **no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 27, 2023** to Riverside LAFCO, 6216 Brockton Avenue, Suite 111-B, Riverside CA 92506.

# **INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING (IRV) ELECTION PROCESS**

## **Introduction**

In 2016, the Special District Selection Committee voted to utilize instant runoff voting (IRV) for all future elections to appoint members to the Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). IRV is a method of conducting elections with three or more candidates whereby a majority determines the winner without the need to have a second ballot/runoff proceeding. A separate runoff election could cause a delay of more than 90 days, as well as causing LAFCO additional expense. The explanation below and example that follows illustrates how the instant runoff voting method will be used for determining the winner in a fictional election for the Porcupine Lodge Board of Directors. A process similar to the one explained below will be utilized to determine the LAFCO Special District Member.

## **Ballot Specifications and Directions to Voters**

The ballot will allow a voter to rank candidates in order of preference. All nominated candidates are listed on the ballot. Voters will vote for candidates by indicating their first-choice candidate, their second-choice candidate and so on. The voter will indicate his/her first choice by marking or circling the number "1" beside a candidate's name, the second choice by marking or circling the number "2" by that candidate's name, the third choice by marking the number "3," and so on, for as many choices as the voter wishes. Voters are free to rank only one candidate, however, doing so does not offer any additional advantage to that candidate, as ranking additional candidates cannot help defeat a voter's first-choice candidate. Voters must not mark the same number beside more than one candidate or skip rank numbers.

## **Ballot Counting**

The ballots cast will be tabulated and the result declared by the official responsible for conducting the election. Votes will be counted for each candidate using the following procedure:

- The first choice marked on each ballot shall be counted. If any candidate receives a majority of the first choices, that candidate shall be declared elected.
- A majority is a number of votes greater than half of the total number of ballots received.
- If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, the candidate who received the fewest first choices shall be eliminated and each vote cast for that candidate shall be transferred to the next-ranked candidate on that voter's ballot. If, after this transfer of votes, any candidate has a number of votes constituting a majority, that candidate shall be declared elected.

## INSTANT RUNOFF VOTING (IRV) ELECTION PROCESS (continued)

- If no candidate receives a majority of votes from the continuing ballots after a candidate has been eliminated and his/her votes have been transferred to the next-ranked candidate, the continuing candidate with the fewest votes from the continuing ballots shall be eliminated. All votes cast for that candidate shall be transferred to the next-ranked continuing candidate on each voter's ballot. This process of eliminating candidates and transferring their votes to the next-ranked continuing candidates shall be repeated until a candidate receives a majority of the votes from the continuing ballots. This candidate shall be declared elected.

### **Example:**

Three candidates are running for the Porcupine Lodge Board of Directors: Paul Alto, Mort Bragg and Samantha Cruz.

60 ballots are cast, therefore a candidate needs a majority of 31 votes to win the election:

- Alto is ranked #1 by 15 voters
- Bragg is ranked #1 by 25 voters
- Cruz is ranked #1 by 20 voters

In the first round no one receives the required majority of 31 votes.

Alto, as the candidate receiving the fewest first choice (#1) votes, is eliminated. Those 15 ballots that had Alto ranked as their first choice are reviewed for their second (#2) choice. On those 15 ballots:

- Bragg is ranked #2 on 9 of those 15 ballots
- Cruz is ranked #2 on 4 of the 15 ballots.
- Two of the ballots did not pick a second choice candidate.

These second choice votes are added to the results of the first choice count as follows:

- Bragg has 25 plus 9 for a total of 34 votes
- Cruz has 20 plus 4 for a total of 24 votes

Thus, Bragg wins with 34 votes (the required majority was 31) and Cruz is second with 24 votes.

[https://www.rankedchoicevoting.org/single\\_seat](https://www.rankedchoicevoting.org/single_seat)



# COACHELLA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT

*Established in 1918 as a public agency*

GENERAL MANAGER  
Jim Barrett

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Robert Cheng

CLERK OF THE BOARD  
Sylvia Bermudez

ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER  
Dan Charlton

## **Cástulo Estrada for Riverside LAFCO Special District Representative**

February 27, 2023

As a local special district, you undoubtedly know of the two Riverside Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Special District board member vacancies. An election to fill these positions will take place following the nomination process, which closed on February 21, 2023.

I request your support and vote for Coachella Valley Water District Board Vice President Estrada, whom we have nominated for the eastern region vacant position.

Elected to the Coachella Valley Water District in 2014, he was re-elected in 2018 and appointed without opposition in 2022 to his current term, which ends in 2026. During his tenure at CVWD, he has led the formation of the Coachella Valley Disadvantaged Communities Infrastructure Task Force which collaborates with stakeholders to develop and implement master plans and pursue funding to develop clean drinking water and sanitation services for residents of the Eastern Coachella Valley. Last year, CVWD secured over \$75 million to fund DAC drinking water and sewer projects with two high-priority projects underway.

Mr. Estrada has served on the Salton Sea Authority Board of Directors since 2014, including a term as the President of the Board in 2019/2020 and his current term as Secretary. Mr. Estrada was also appointed by the State of California in 2019 and was reappointed through 2024 as a member of the State Water Resources Control Board's Statewide and Regional Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) Advisory Group.

Mr. Estrada brings a wide range of expertise in infrastructure planning and development and has demonstrated the ability to engage stakeholders collaboratively, which has yielded results. His dedicated leadership abilities have contributed significantly to the Coachella Valley and the surrounding areas he serves.

A native of the Coachella Valley, Mr. Estrada also serves as the Utilities Manager for the City of Coachella and has a civil engineering degree from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He resides in Coachella with his wife, Cindy, and two children.

**Please join us in supporting Mr. Estrada** as the Regular Special District Member of the Riverside LAFCO Eastern Area by casting your ballot before March 27.

Sincerely,

J. M. Barrett  
General Manager





March 1, 2023

To Special District Board Presiding Officers and District Clerks  
San Geronio Pass Water Agency  
1210 Beaumont Avenue  
Beaumont, CA 92223

To Whom It May Concern:

Board of Directors

**John V. Rossi**  
President

**Brian J. Brady**  
Senior Vice President

**Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady**

**J. D. Harkey**

**John E. Hoagland**

**William E. Plummer**

**Bill Wilson**

Officers

**Robert S. Grantham**  
General Manager

**Jake Wiley, P.E.**  
Assistant General Manager  
Engineering and Operations

**Kathleen M. Naylor**  
Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

**Kelli E. Garcia**  
District Secretary

**James B. Gilpin**  
Best Best & Krieger LLP  
General Counsel

On behalf of Rancho California Water District (Rancho Water), it is with great honor that we request your district's support and vote for Director Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady for the special district seat on the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO/Commission). Director Gonzales-Brady is a highly qualified candidate for this seat, and we are pleased to recommend her for your consideration.

As the immediate past-President of the Rancho California Water District Board of Directors, Director Gonzales-Brady provides a key presence in our community. However, the breadth of her focus extends beyond our service territory and encompasses the broader needs of the entire county. Director Gonzales-Brady has formed productive working relationships throughout our region and the special district community, and she conducts her work with intention and integrity.

Attached you will find a candidate's statement summarizing Director Gonzales-Brady's qualifications. She has a true passion for local governance and would value the opportunity to serve on the Riverside County LAFCO. Director Gonzales-Brady is happy to meet with anyone to discuss her commitment to the orderly growth and development of the region.

We encourage you to reach out to us or Director Gonzales-Brady if you would like to learn more about her qualifications, service to the region, and her dedication to the special district community. Rancho Water has the highest confidence in Director Gonzales-Brady and her proven leadership abilities. We are certain she will be a valuable and well-regarded member of the Commission. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you need additional information or if you would like her to contact your Board of Directors.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

**RANCHO CALIFORNIA WATER DISTRICT**

John V. Rossi  
Board President

Robert S. Grantham  
General Manager

**Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady**  
**Director, Rancho California Water District**



## Candidate Statement

Special District Representative, Riverside County  
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)

I am pleased to announce my candidacy for the special district representative seat on the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). I respectfully request your vote to the Commission.



Elected to the Rancho California Water District Board (Rancho Water/District) in 2017, I am the immediate past Board President and previously served as Senior Vice President in 2020. I also serve on the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Region 9 Board, represent the District as the Representative to the ACWA/Joint Powers Insurance Authority, and serve as a Board member of the Urban Water Institute. Prior to joining Rancho Water's Board, I was appointed by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors to the Board of Directors of the Temecula-Elsinore-Anza-Murrieta Resource Conservation District and worked with developers, California Fish and Wildlife, Corps of Engineers, County Flood Control and Bureau of Reclamation in this capacity.

My professional career in procurement, manufacturing, and construction has spanned several federally regulated industries, including electric and water utilities. A native Californian and vineyard owner, I am active in my community and associations such as Southwest California Legislative Council, an advocacy coalition, and was elected to the Board of Trustees, Water Segment, of the Southern California Water Coalition.

Special districts provide a unique, tailored, and critical service to the communities that we serve. As a segment of local government, we must have a strong voice in our county's orderly growth and operation. Both my professional career and elected government experience provide me with the unique ability to voice the concerns of our communities, make fair and equitable decisions, and ensure proper oversight of local government boundaries and operations.

I look forward to working with you now and in the future as we collectively support the future of Riverside County. Thank you for your support.



WORKING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

42135 Winchester Road

Temecula, CA

(951) 296-6900

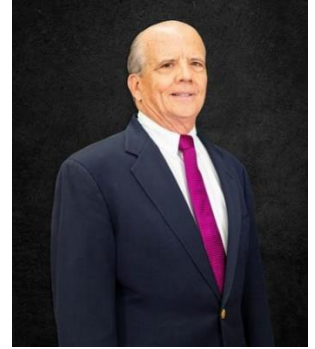
[RanchoWater.com](http://RanchoWater.com)



# CANDIDATE STATEMENT

**Dr. Bruce Underwood**

**Special District Representative, Riverside County  
Eastern Region  
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)**



I am pleased to announce my candidacy for the special district (eastern) representative seat on the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

Serving on the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District, I am the former President and a current Trustee. I began my service on the Board in 2018 and am currently serving my second term. My experience and commitment to supporting the vital role Special Districts play in our community is extensive, including past service on the Board of the Coachella Valley Recreation and Park District, and the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District. In my professional capacity I have also worked with several local Special Districts supporting their employees through healthy living initiatives.

My service in the community has also provided me unique perspectives on leadership and problem solving. I have had the great pleasure of working with organizations that make a difference in our community, including the Heart Institute of the Desert Foundation, The Regional Access Project, the American Preventive Care Association, and many more. I have also been afforded the opportunity to shape future leaders, working in education at Chapman University, University of California, Riverside, School of Medicine and for the Palm Desert campus of California State University, San Bernardino. In a career that has spanned twenty-five years of experience and community involvement, with increasing levels of responsibility and leadership, I have earned a reputation for professional competency and personal integrity among colleagues, clients, students, and community leaders.

Special Districts are unique, and they deserve representation with a depth of knowledge and understanding that spans the vast scope of critical services they provide. With Special District experience that stretches across the valley, and a broad scope of services, mine will be a voice of fair and reasoned oversight on this important commission.

I look forward to being your voice in government.



SAN GORGONIO PASS  
WATER AGENCY  
*A California State Water Project Contractor*

# Candidate Statement

## ***Special District Representative, Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)***

During the past 15 years, I have served the citizens of Riverside County as a City Council Member, Mayor, and Planning Commission Chairman. After living in Hemet for over 35 years, my wife and I relocated to Calimesa in 2015. In 2018 I was appointed to the planning commission and then elected to the city council. In 2020 I was elected to the San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency, where I currently serve. My peers elected me to serve two consecutive years as their President, a great honor. The past decade and a half have allowed me to serve on numerous regional boards, including the Riverside County Transportation Commission, Western Riverside Council of Governments, the Southern California Association of Governments, and the Airport Land Use Commission. On every board, I have had the pleasure of serving the citizens of Riverside County, acting on countless land use issues. My goal as an elected official has always been to champion the rights of citizens and promote effective public policy. Land use issues, just like water at times, can be both complex and contentious. Balancing private property rights alongside quality-of-life issues requires fully understanding all the facts. Experience has taught me to deal fairly and transparently in that decision-making process.

My years of public service, along with three decades of management in the construction industry, overseeing the building of major roadways, dams, and bridges, equipped me to better understand infrastructure issues and complex contract negotiations. Earning a degree in Business Management from the University of Redlands provided me with the necessary tools for making those difficult management decisions.

2008-2010 Chairman Hemet Planning Commission  
2010-2014 Hemet City Council Member  
2013-2014 Hemet Mayor  
2010-2014 Regional Commissioner  
RCTC-WRCOG-SCAG  
2018-2020 Calimesa City Council Member  
2018-2020 Regional Commissioner  
RCTC-SCAG-ALUC (alternate)  
2020 to present Director San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency  
2021 to present President San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency

Married 45 years to Roxanne Smith and have two children, Sheralee and Jeremy.

Respectfully,

Larry Smith, Board President

pp: Lance Eckhart, General Manager

President  
Larry Smith

Vice President  
Mickey Valdivia

Treasurer  
Chander Letulle

Secretary  
Robert Ybarra

Directors  
Dr. Blair M Ball  
Ron Duncan  
Kevin Walton

General Manager  
Lance Eckhart,  
PG, CHG

Legal Counsel  
Jeffrey Ferre