

## **Section 28c**

**Assembly Bill Would Create 'Superagency'  
(Regional board would govern state; Solano split in two)  
Kitty Griffin, Staff Writer, Benicia Herald, Benicia, California  
(3/23/1990)**

# Assembly bill would create 'superagency'

MARCH 23 1990

Regional board  
would govern state;  
Solano split in two

By KITTY GRIFFIN  
Herald Staff Writer

Solano County could be split in two, with Benicia and Vallejo drawn into a Bay Area regional government with the rest of the county in a Sacramento Area regional government, if a controversial bill introduced this month becomes law.

Local governments would be forced to conform their air, water, transportation, open space, housing and infrastructure according to a regional general plan overseen by an 11-member board.

Assembly Bill 4242, introduced by Speaker Willie Brown March 2, was scheduled for its

first hearing before an Assembly select committee on regional issues Thursday afternoon. It will come up for another hearing April 2, before the combined local government policy committees of the Senate and Assembly, and the Senate and Assembly growth committees.

If it survives, it would impose regional general plans, devised by 11-member "superagencies" called Regional Development and Infrastructure Agencies, upon all the cities and counties in each of seven areas: the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento Valley Region, Central Valley region, San Diego Region, Los Angeles Region, South Central Coast Region and North Central Coast Region.

Solano County is the only one whose territory would be split; the division is based on the fact that Benicia and Vallejo lie

within the Bay Area's "air basin," while all the other cities in the county are within the Sacramento air basin, a designation set for air quality planning.

So far, according to Todd Kaufman of the Assembly Of-

fice of Research, which developed the bill, no legislators have taken sides. Everyone is waiting to get questions answered, he said.

The bill arose from a two-year study released Jan. 1, called "California 2000: Getting Ahead of the Growth Curve," explained Peter Detwiler, consultant for the Senate Local Government Committee.

Detwiler said it started when Brown found himself in the middle of a controversy between the Port of Oakland and the Port of San Francisco, leading him to discover that there are seven port authorities in the Bay Area.

Confusion caused by what some see as too many local governments acting independently was one of the reasons Brown instructed the Office of Research to do the

## Today

Box Office/A7  
Churches/A5  
Classified/B2-7  
Diversions/A7  
For the Record/A2  
Forum/A12  
Scoreboard/A10  
Sports/A9  
Spotlight/A8

Today's Herald includes an insert from Pacifica Pizza. If your newspaper does not have this insert, call 745-0733 by 9 a.m. and they will be delivered to you.

See REGION, Page A6

study, Detwiler said.

Brown's bill starts with the findings of the report:

• Explosive population growth in California strains public facilities, traffic, waste disposal and sewage capacity, air and water quality, and housing.

• Governments scramble to compete for sales and property taxes that accompany development, provoking growth problems which they can't agree on.

• Voluntary agreements among local governments on growth problems fall apart under pressure.

• Regional single-purpose agencies are in no position to make the kinds of trade-offs to bring about cooperation.

• Regional agencies lack clout and money, although regional authority to make decisions is necessary to solve economies of scale in infrastructure development — such as streets and sewers — to site

locally undesirable developments — such as landfills — to integrate planning and to make better trade-offs possible to achieve overall benefits.

Therefore, a new reorganization of local governments is needed.

In a nutshell, the superagencies will take on the planning tasks of local regional agencies dealing with air quality, water quality, and transportation. In the Bay Area, these would be the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Their individual budgets would be taken over by the new organization.

The superagency would draw up regional plans in each of those three areas, as well as a housing plan identifying housing needs, a sphere of influence plan that would limit how far a city would be allowed to annex,

and a plan for providing infrastructure in the regionally shared areas.

It would point out logical areas for agriculture, open space, regional parks, and conservation areas or sites.

According to Kaufman, its authority would come from a requirement that all local plans be consistent with the regional general plan. He noted that at present, the air, water, and transportation regional agencies have no real authority over local governments, as do the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the California Coastal Commission. Kaufman said AB 4242 would add similar power to the other three agencies.

Its board would consist of two county supervisors from throughout the regional area, chosen by their peers; two councilpersons chosen by their

peers; one representative from a special district; and six board members elected at large.

There is an elaborate description of how those board members can be recalled should they become unpopular before their four-year terms are completed.

"It's classic good government, but not anchored in political reality," Detwiler said. Kaufman expressed optimism, but said much depends on how elected officials will see the new structure affecting their own interests.

Solano County Administrator Kent Taylor said Thursday he has not read the bill, but has heard about it.

"It isn't the first time the Legislature has toyed with the idea of regional government," Taylor said.

"There seems to be renewed belief that a level of government broader than the

local level is magically going to be able to solve all our problems. I'm a bit skeptical.

"It seems to me it would make more sense to Solano County if there could be some kind of forum in which the cities could work together in a formal organization, rather than having the county separated into two vast regions, with the cities having to make their desires known to two levels of government," Taylor said.

A poll conducted in November by the Bay Area Council showed that 76 percent of residents in the nine-county area see themselves as residents of a Bay Area region, but are divided as to whether local authority should be given up to regional authority in solving regional problems.

They favor regionalism more in theory than in practice, the poll showed.