

### 2024 Commissioners

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*City Member*

Anna Velazquez  
*City Member, Alternate*

#### Counsel

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*General Counsel*

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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

### Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County Receives Prestigious Statewide Award for Ag Land Protection

On October 17, 2024, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Monterey County was honored with the Mike Gotch Excellence in Public Service Award for Agricultural Land Protection by the California Association of Local Agency Formation Commissions (CALAFCO) at its 2024 Annual Conference. The award recognizes LAFCO's ongoing commitment to preserving agricultural lands while fostering responsible, balanced growth through the adoption of its innovative 2024 Agricultural Preservation Policy Amendment.

Since 2000, Monterey County LAFCO has successfully protected nearly 2,100 acres of farmland as a direct result of its Agricultural Preservation Policy. The 2024 Amendment builds upon this foundation, providing clear guidance on agricultural preservation and mitigation requirements for city annexations of farmlands.

The Amendment offers clear, streamlined criteria for annexation applicants, ensuring transparency and certainty about the mitigation measures necessary to protect agricultural lands. The Amendment also strengthens the LAFCO mandates under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Act, which require the protection of prime agricultural lands while supporting orderly urban development.

"This recognition underscores our commitment to safeguarding Monterey County's agricultural economy while supporting sustainable community growth," said Kate McKenna, AICP, Executive Officer of Monterey County LAFCO. "We are honored to receive this award and will continue to prioritize balanced growth that benefits both our agricultural sector and local communities."

The 2024 Amendment was developed through extensive collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including Salinas Valley cities, farmers, developers, and local nonprofits. This broad-based engagement was instrumental in shaping the Amendment to integrate the diverse perspectives of those most impacted by land use and growth in the region.

This award highlights LAFCO's leadership in promoting responsible urban expansion while ensuring that Monterey County's farmlands are preserved for future generations.

For more information about LAFCO's work and the 2024 Agricultural Preservation Policy Amendment, please visit: [www.monterey.lafco.ca.gov](http://www.monterey.lafco.ca.gov)

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