

**TESTIMONY OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
TO CHARTER COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3**

**CRITERIA FOR POTENTIAL ASSIGNMENT OF FUNCTIONS TO REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT**

The Regional Governance Committee (RGC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft Criteria for Potential Assignment of Functions to Regional Government. The RGC Steering Committee thoroughly discussed the draft Criteria at its September 30 meeting and has several comments to offer. Before offering specific comments we would like to identify four general issues which we discussed:

- First, it was somewhat difficult to analyze the merits of the draft Criteria before knowing whether the Charter would create a regional government with broad-based versus specific powers. Our opinions on the criteria may need to be refined after the Committee addresses this threshold issue.
- Second, our opinions about the appropriateness of the Criteria will also be affected by the ultimate process provided for in the Charter for determining regional functions. The opinions set forth below assume that this process will provide for meaningful involvement by local governments and special districts.
- Third, the appropriateness of the Criteria seems to vary somewhat according to the type of regional functions being discussed. Different criteria seem to apply better to planning functions versus service delivery functions, for instance.
- Fourth, we believe that any assignment of functions to regional government should be based on a clearly identified need. We understand that the Decision Criteria are intended to help identify when such a need exists, but the Committee's general principles should incorporate this concept in some manner as well.

Our suggestions for each of the eight draft Criteria follow.

CRITERION I: Is appropriate as drafted.

CRITERION II: Is appropriate as drafted.

CRITERION III: Should be edited to include language referencing "state or federal government funding", similar to Criterion II.

CRITERION IV: Should be deleted. The same concept is better addressed in Criteria VI and VII. If the Committee chooses not to delete this criterion, it should be edited to address true regional impacts, not simply impacts that affect more than one jurisdiction.

CRITERION V: Should be deleted for the same reason as Criterion IV: it is better addressed in Criteria VI and VII. If it is kept, it should also be edited to focus on truly regional benefits.

CRITERION VI: Should be edited to read as follows: "Whether coordination or performance at the regional level can be documented to be more cost-effective and efficient." These changes would broaden the concept beyond service delivery functions and would state the Committee's intent to base its decisions on solid, objective information. We also believe it is appropriate to delete items (A) and (B). They provide a partial list of potential causes of inefficiency; general

decision criteria should be focused on the desired result, not causes.

CRITERION VII: Should be changed to delete items (A) through (E) and add concepts related to:

- The diversity of the region's population; and
- The need for government to be accessible and accountable to its constituents.

Items (A) through (E) provide a partial listing of reasons why a function might be more effectively handled at a regional level; again, decision criteria should focus on the desired result, not causes. The concepts of diversity, accessibility and accountability will be important for the Charter Committee to consider throughout its deliberations. We are sure that you would agree that "bigger is not better" if it results in less reliable, less responsive service to taxpayers.

CRITERION VIII: Should be edited as follows: "Whether performance at regional level is needed to equitably distribute the costs and benefits of a facility or service." We believe this more clearly identifies the concept Criterion VIII is intended to address.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment. We support the Committee's process of identifying General Principles and Decision Criteria at the outset of the project to provide benchmarks for all of us to use throughout the process. The draft Criteria we reviewed provided an excellent starting point for discussion and we hope you will find our suggested changes useful to your deliberations. We would be happy to answer any questions which you may have, either in person or in writing.