

**Local Agency Formation Commission  
of Colusa County**

**Municipal Service Review**

**and**

**Sphere of Influence**

**HOLTHOUSE WATER DISTRICT**

**Adopted  
March 6, 2008**

**LAFCO Resolution 2008-0004 – Municipal Service Review  
LAFCO Resolution 2008-0007 – Sphere of Influence**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 LAFCO's Responsibilities**

This Municipal Service Review (MSR) has been prepared for the Colusa Local Agency Formation Commission (Colusa LAFCO). Local Agency Formation Commissions are quasi-legislative local agencies created in 1963 to assist the State in encouraging the orderly development and formation of local agencies. This MSR consists of a review of water service as provided by the Holthouse Water District.

The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 (Government Code §56000, *et seq.*) is the statutory authority for the preparation of an MSR, and periodic updates of the Sphere of Influence of each local agency. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research has issued Guidelines for the preparation of an MSR. This MSR adheres to the procedures set forth in the MSR Guidelines.

A Sphere of Influence is a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency, as determined by the affected Local Agency Formation Commission (Government Code §56076). Government Code §56425(f) requires that each Sphere of Influence be updated not less than every five years, and §56430 provides that a Municipal Service Review shall be conducted in advance of the Sphere of Influence update.

### **1.2 Municipal Service Review Requirements**

The statute as amended by AB1744 and regulations call for a review of the municipal services provided in the county or other appropriate area designated by the LAFCO. The LAFCO is required, as part of the MSR, to prepare a written statement of findings of its determinations with respect to each of the following:

1. Growth and Population
2. Capacity and Infrastructure
3. Financial Ability
4. Shared Facilities
5. Government Structure and Accountability

### **1.3 Sphere of Influence Requirements**

In determining the Sphere of Influence for each local agency, LAFCO must consider and prepare a written statement of determinations with respect to each of the following:

1. The present and planned land uses in the area, including agricultural and open space lands;
2. The present and probable need for public facilities and services in the area;

3. The present capacity of public facilities and adequacy of public services which the agency provides, or is authorized to provide; and
4. The existence of any social or economic communities of interest in the area if the commission determines that they are relevant to the agency.

## **2. SETTING**

### **2.1 Colusa County**

Colusa County is located approximately thirty-five miles north of Sacramento, along the I-5 corridor. The County is approximately thirty-five miles long (north to south) and forty-five miles wide (east to west). It is bounded by Yolo, Sutter, Butte, Glenn and Lake Counties.

It is primarily a rural agricultural county, with a total population of about 17,000. There are two incorporated cities: Colusa (5,000) and Williams (3,000). Interstate 5 bisects the County running north and south.

To the west of I-5 is flat agricultural land, running into the Coastal Mountain range. The highest point in the County is located in the Coastal Range, at over 7000 feet. East of I-5, the topography is flat. The Sacramento River roughly forms the eastern boundary of the County.

Agriculture is the major industry in the County. Colusa was identified by UC Davis Cooperative Extension Specialist Al Sokolow as having the highest percentage increase in agricultural growth in California during the period 1985-1995 (115% increase).

The total on-farm agricultural value in the county in 1997 was \$333 million. The major crops produced include rice, processing tomatoes, almonds, wheat, vegetable seeds, walnuts and prunes. Land is relatively inexpensive and water is both available and high quality, compared to other California locations.

While the environment defines the breadth of crops produced locally, agriculture is clearly increasing in importance. Rice remains the number one crop, with acreage remaining fairly stable. There is currently a transition from row crops to perennial crops (almonds, grapes, walnuts) and from low-value agronomic crops to higher value vegetables or other row crops.

Environmental issues (air quality, water quality, soil degradation, etc.), commodity marketing and economic sustainability are the major challenges facing local producers.

The rural nature, low population and ethnic makeup of Colusa County all contribute to "quality of life" issues. There are not many organized activities or employment

opportunities for young people, so the local youth become bored with the community and emigrate after graduating from high school.

Retention of young people is one of the biggest problems, as the current producers retire or exit farming. Owing to a small consumer base, local merchants have difficulty remaining in business and many residents export money out of Colusa by shopping in neighboring counties. Economic development is a high community priority.

The school-age youth in the County are over 50 percent Hispanic, one of the highest in the state. Cultural barriers, communication skills and community infrastructure to support this segment of the citizens are all major challenges.

The unemployment rate is often the highest in the state (reaching over 30% during the winter months). The per capita income is among the lowest.<sup>1</sup>

## **2.2 Colusa County Population**

The 2006 population of Colusa County is estimated at 21,272, a 13.1% increase from 2000. This is nearly double the 7.6% increase for the State.<sup>2</sup>

The age distribution of the Colusa County population in 2005 as compared to that of California is shown below:

	<u>Colusa</u>	<u>California</u>
Under 5 years old	8.0%	7.4%
Under 18 years old	29.1%	26.9%
65+ years old	13.0%	10.7% <sup>3</sup>

Colusa County has more younger and more older members of the population than the State. This creates a greater burden on both workers and tax-payers in the County.

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<sup>1</sup><http://cecolusa.ucdavis.edu/profile.htm>

<sup>2</sup><http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06011.html>

<sup>3</sup><http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06011.html>

In 2005 the residents of Colusa County identified themselves as follows, compared to the residents of the State:

<u>Race</u>	<u>Colusa</u>	<u>California</u>
White	93.5%	77.0%
Black	1.0%	6.7%
American Indian	2.4%	1.2%
Asian	1.7%	12.2%
Pacific Islander	0.7%	0.4%
Two or more races	0.6%	2.4%
<b>TOTAL POP. (rounded to nearest tenth)</b>	<b>99.9%</b>	<b>99.9%</b>
Hispanic or Latino Population	49.1%	35.2% <sup>4</sup>

The 2000 educational level of the Colusa County Population is lower than that of the State as a whole with 64.0% (of population aged 25 or older) High School graduates compared to 76.8% Statewide, and 10.6% Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 26.6% Statewide.<sup>5</sup>

The Median household income in 2004 was \$38,350, compared to \$49,894 Statewide.<sup>6</sup>

### **3. HOLTHOUSE WATER DISTRICT**

#### **3.1 Location and History**

The District is located in northern Colusa County west of I-5, west of McDermott Road, northwest of Maxwell. Part of the land in the District has been planted to almond orchard in the past five years.

Holthouse Water District was created in 1977.<sup>7</sup> It is a subcontractor under the Colusa County Master Water Contract with the Bureau of Reclamation. The District has 1,860 acres<sup>8</sup> and a water allocation of only 2,450 acre feet from the Tehama-Colusa Canal. This is only slightly more than one acre-foot of water per acre of land but many crops require two to three acre-feet of water per growing season.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup><http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06011.html> (Included in race figures above)

<sup>5</sup><http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06011.html>

<sup>6</sup><http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06011.html>

<sup>7</sup> Colusa LAFCO, John Benoit Executive Officer, PO Box 2694, Granite Bay CA 95746.

<sup>8</sup> Colusa LAFCO, John Benoit Executive Officer, PO Box 2694, Granite Bay CA 95746

<sup>9</sup> Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, "Best Management Practices for Irrigation Management", August 1994, Bulletin XCM -173, [www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/crops/xcm173.pdf](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/crops/xcm173.pdf).

There are three landholders: Leo Holthouse, Allen Etchepare, and Jean Etchepare. There are no residents in the District.

Contact information for the District is as follows:

Holthouse Water District  
PO Box 658  
Maxwell, CA 95955  
(530) 438-2850

The District has three Board members, Leo Holthouse, Allen Etchepare and Jim Rickert. In December 2007, Leo Holthouse will leave the Board and be replaced by his son-in-law, Ron Lee. Jean Etchepare is the District Secretary.<sup>10</sup> The District has a Board meeting each December. There is no formal budget but the landowners farming the land pay the expenses.<sup>11</sup>

### **3.2 Water Supply**

Water for the Holthouse Water District is stored in the Shasta Reservoir behind Shasta Dam constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Water flows down the Sacramento River where it is diverted to the Tehama-Colusa Canal and thence conveyed to the Holthouse Water District.

The system was designed to divert water from the Sacramento River into the settling basin by virtue of a dam across the Sacramento River located in Red Bluff, California. And although the system operated in this manner for some years, environmental concerns and regulatory requirements have altered the operational practices of the dam.

Where, at one time, the dam could be counted on to divert water as early as March, current regulations generally prevent the dam gates from being lowered until May 15th.<sup>12</sup>

To overcome this limitation and provide water to irrigators, the Bureau of Reclamation installed three pumps in the latter half of the 1990's, each with a capacity of between 80 and 100 cubic feet per second (cfs), with provisions for the placement of a fourth pump. The installation of the fourth pump occurred in 2006. However, irrigation demand can reach between 800 and 1000 cfs before May 15th, when the dam becomes operational.

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<sup>10</sup> Holthouse Water District, Jean Etchepare, Secretary, [jme@efarmsmail.com](mailto:jme@efarmsmail.com), November 16, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Holthouse Water District, Jean Etchepare, Secretary, [jme@efarmsmail.com](mailto:jme@efarmsmail.com), November 16, 2007

<sup>12</sup> Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, <http://www.tccanal.com/>

To make up for the shortfall, current practice is to dam up Stony Creek in Orland and back-flow water through canal gates that were actually intended to let water out of the canal into Stony Creek. Between the pumps on the Sacramento River at Red Bluff, and the reverse flow diversion at Stony Creek, the demands of irrigators have been met, but generally without any reserve.<sup>13</sup>

Holthouse Water District has a contract with the US Bureau of Reclamation total of 2,450 acre feet annually. This number is subject to Reclamation's yearly allocation. Reclamation makes the allocations based on several factors, such as how much rainfall, water in the reservoirs, snow pack, et cetera.

In 2007 Holthouse Water District had a Cost-of-Service Rate of \$25.93 per acre-foot, but since the landowners qualify for ability-to-pay relief they only had to pay \$16.42 per acre-foot.<sup>14</sup> When the District was formed, all that was necessary were the turnouts on the Tehama-Colusa Canal. The water is gravity-fed through ditches.<sup>15</sup>

#### **4. MUNICIPAL SERVICE REVIEW**

Colusa LAFCO is responsible for determining if an agency is reasonably capable of providing needed resources and basic infrastructure to serve areas within its boundaries and within the Sphere of Influence.

LAFCO evaluates the present and long-term infrastructure demands and resources available to the District, analyzes whether resources and services are, or will be, available at needed levels, and determines whether orderly maintenance and expansion of such resources and services are planned to occur in line with increasing demands.

The Municipal Service Review Guidelines prepared by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research recommend issues relevant to the jurisdiction be addressed through written determinations called for in the Cortese-Knox Hertzberg Act.

Written Determinations are provided for each of the five factors, based on the information provided in this Municipal Service Review.

##### **4.1 Growth and Population Projections for the Affected Area**

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<sup>13</sup>Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, <http://www.tccanal.com/>

<sup>14</sup> US Bureau of Reclamation, Jake Barens, Repayment Specialist, PO Box 988 Willows, CA 95988, [jbarens@usbr.gov](mailto:jbarens@usbr.gov), November 16, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Holthouse Water District, Jean Etchepare, Secretary, [jme@efarmsmail.com](mailto:jme@efarmsmail.com), November 16, 2007.



**Purpose: To evaluate service needs based on existing and anticipated growth patterns and population projections.**

#### **4.1.1 Population Growth**

There is no population within the District. The District is farmland and it is better for residents of Colusa County to live in area where municipal services are provided such as Maxwell.

#### **4.1.2 MSR Determinations on Growth and Population**

1-1) The population of the District is zero and is expected to remain the same.

### **4.2 Capacity and Infrastructure**

**Purpose: To evaluate the infrastructure needs and deficiencies in terms of supply, capacity, condition of facilities and service quality.**

#### **4.2.1 Infrastructure Background**

The water is from the Tehama-Colusa Canal and is inadequate for the District. The infrastructure is limited to the turn-outs from the Canal and gravity-fed ditches.

#### **4.2.2 MSR Determinations Regarding Capacity and Infrastructure**

2-1) The water allocated to the District is inadequate for the needs of the land in the District because the land has been planted to almond orchard in the past five years.

### **4.3 Financial Ability**

**Purpose: To evaluate factors that affect the financing of needed improvements and to identify practices or opportunities that may help eliminate unnecessary costs without decreasing service levels.**

#### **4.3.1 Financial Considerations**

The District does not have a separate financial structure. The water users pay for the water and maintenance directly.

#### **4.3.2 MSR Determinations on Financial Ability**

- 3-1) The District may need to contract with another Water District for management services in the future.

#### **4.4 Opportunities for Shared Facilities**

**Purpose: To evaluate the opportunities for a jurisdiction to share facilities and resources to develop more efficient service delivery systems.**

##### **4.4.1 Facilities**

The District does share facilities because the Tehama-Colusa Canal provides water for many districts.

##### **4.4.2 MSR Determinations on Shared Facilities**

- 4-1) The District-specific water conveyance facilities cannot be shared with any other district.

#### **4.5 Government Structure and Accountability**

**Purpose: To consider the advantages and disadvantages of various government structures that could provide public services, to evaluate the management capabilities of the organization, and to evaluate the accessibility and levels of public participation associated with the agency's decision-making and management processes.**

##### **4.5.1 Government Structure**

The contracts with the US Bureau of Reclamation secure the water rights for the landowners. The District would not want to make any changes that could cause the loss of water rights or insufficient water for the landowners now in the District.

The District has a three-member Board of Directors. Because there are so few landowners and no residents within the District, public participation is not an issue.

##### **4.5.2 MSR Determinations on Government Structure and Accountability**

- 4-1) The government is accountable to the US Bureau of Reclamation for payment for water received and for various forms.

#### **5. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

Information contained in the Municipal Service Review and this Sphere of Influence update is only current as of the date of adoption.

LAFCO Policy 3.3(e) calls for an updated Master Services Element at the time a proposal is made. Policy 2.14 essentially requires an updated Master Services Element any time conversion of agricultural land meeting the definition contained in the California Government Code §56064 is proposed.

The Sphere of Influence for the Holthouse Water District was adopted to extend one mile from the District Boundary in all directions in 1985 and was updated in 1990 with no change.<sup>16</sup> Based on present conditions, this Sphere of Influence is no longer suitable for the District and a reduced Sphere of Influence is in order.

The proposed Sphere of Influence for the Holthouse Water District will be smaller than the District Boundary and will allow detachment of parcels so they can be annexed to the adjacent Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (GCID).

The Sphere of Influence for the District will be the same as the District Boundary but will not include the following three parcels:

1. Allen Etchepare: 320.0 acres, APN 011-190-010
2. Jeanmarie Etchepare: 86.3 acres, APN 011-140-010
3. Jeanmarie Etchepare: 28.9 acres, APN 011-220-078

The 28.9 acre parcel was previously annexed into the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District but was never detached from the Holthouse Water District.<sup>17</sup>

The Sphere of Influence will be 1,557.8 acres and will include only land owned by the Holthouse family.

## **5.1 Land Use**

### **5.1.1 Present and Planned Land Uses in the Area, Including Agricultural and Open Space Lands**

The General Plan designation for the Holthouse Water District is AG (Agriculture) and the zoning is EA (Exclusive Agriculture). There is a small part

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<sup>16</sup> Colusa LAFCO, John Benoit, Executive Officer, PO Box 2694, Granite Bay CA 95746.

<sup>17</sup> Holthouse Water District, Jean Etchepare, Secretary, [jme@efarmsmail.com](mailto:jme@efarmsmail.com), November 16, 2007.

of the District designated UA (Upland Agriculture) and zoned AP (Agriculture Preserve).<sup>18</sup> This area is not affected by the proposed detachments.

None of the parcels to be detached are included in a Williamson Act Contract.<sup>19</sup>

#### **5.1.2 SOI Determinations Present and Planned Land Use**

1-1) The land within the District is used for agriculture.

1-2) The reduced Sphere of Influence is logical because there is not enough water to serve all the land in the District.

### **5.2. Municipal Services: Present Need**

#### **5.2.1 Facilities and Services: Present and Probable Need**

There is a need for the water provided to irrigate the crops in the District. The water provided is not sufficient for the entire District so a reduced Sphere of Influence is appropriate.

#### **5.2.2 SOI Determinations for Facilities and Services**

2-1) The facilities are adequate to supply the amount of water available from the Tehama-Colusa Canal.

### **5.3 Public Facilities Future Capacity**

#### **5.3.1 Facilities and Capacity**

There is no way to increase the amount of water allocated to the Holthouse Water District so there is no need to increase the water delivery facilities. Depending on weather conditions less water may be available in dry years.

#### **5.3.2 SOI Determinations for Public Facilities Present and Future Capacity**

3-1) The amount of water available from the Tehama-Colusa Canal is limited and variable due to the weather conditions.

### **5.4 Social or Economic Communities of Interest**

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<sup>18</sup> Colusa County Planning Department, 220 12<sup>th</sup> St. Colusa CA 95932, Phone: 530- 458-0480, November 26, 2007.

<sup>19</sup>Colusa County Assessor, 547 Market Street, Colusa CA 95932, Phone: 530-458-0450, November 26, 2007.

#### **5.4.1 Holthouse Water District**

The Holthouse Water District was formed to get T-C Canal water for the Holthouse lands. Other lands were included in the District but these lands are adjacent to the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District and could be better served by the GCID.

#### **5.4.2 SOI Determinations for Social or Economic Communities of Interest**

- 4-1) The Holthouse Water District serves agricultural land owned by the Holthouse family. There is no social or economic community in the conventional sense of the phrase.

## REFERENCES

Colusa County Assessor, 547 Market St., Colusa CA 95932, (530) 458-0450, November 26, 2007.

Colusa County Planning Department, 220 12<sup>th</sup> St. Colusa CA 95932, (530) 458-0480, November 26, 2007.

Colusa LAFCO, John Benoit, Executive Officer, PO Box 2694, Granite Bay CA 95746.

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, “Best Management Practices for Irrigation Management”, August 1994, Bulletin XCM -173, [www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/crops/xcm173.pdf](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/crops/xcm173.pdf).

Holthouse Water District, Jean Etchepare, Secretary, [jme@efarmsmail.com](mailto:jme@efarmsmail.com), November 16, 2007.

<http://cecolusa.ucdavis.edu/profile.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drip\\_irrigation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drip_irrigation), October 9, 2007

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06011.html>

Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, <http://www.tccanal.com/>, October 8, 2007.

<http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/html/cvp.html>, October 8, 2007.

<http://www.usbr.gov/library/glossary/#hmr>, October 8, 2007.

US Bureau of Reclamation, Jake Barens, Repayment Specialist, PO Box 988 Willows, CA 95988, [jbarens@usbr.gov](mailto:jbarens@usbr.gov), November 16, 2007.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CKH Act</b>	Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000
<b>CEQA</b>	California Environmental Quality Act
<b>District</b>	Holthouse Water District
<b>GCID</b>	Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
<b>HWD</b>	Holthouse Water District
<b>I-5</b>	Interstate Highway 5
<b>LAFCO</b>	Local Agency Formation Commission
<b>MSR</b>	Municipal Service Review
<b>SOI</b>	Sphere of Influence SOI
<b>TCCA</b>	Tehama Colusa Canal Authority
<b>USBR</b>	United States Bureau of Reclamation

## DEFINITIONS

**Acre foot:** The volume of water that will cover one acre to a depth of one foot, 325,850 US gallons or 1,233,342.2 liters.

**Bureau of Reclamation:** (USBR, Reclamation, BOR). The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.<sup>20</sup>

**Central Valley Project:** The Central Valley Project (CVP), one of the nation's major water conservation developments, extends from the Cascade Range in the north to the semi-arid but fertile plains along the Kern River in the south. Initial features of the project were built primarily to protect the Central Valley from crippling water shortages and menacing floods, but the CVP also improves Sacramento River navigation, supplies domestic and industrial water, generates electric power, conserves fish and wildlife, creates opportunities for recreation, and enhances water quality.<sup>21</sup>

**Drip irrigation:** Drip irrigation, also known as trickle irrigation or micro-irrigation is an irrigation method that minimizes the use of water and fertilizer by allowing water to drip slowly to the roots of plants, either onto the soil surface or directly onto the root zone, through a network of valves, pipes, tubing, and emitters. Modern drip irrigation has arguably become the most important innovation in agriculture since the invention of the impact sprinkler in the 1930s, which replaced wasteful flood irrigation. Drip irrigation may also use devices called micro-spray heads, which spray water in a small area, instead of dripping emitters. These are generally used on tree and vine crops with wider root zones.<sup>22</sup>

**Exempt land:** Irrigation land in a district to which the acreage limitation and pricing provisions of Reclamation law do not apply.<sup>23</sup>

**Gravity flow:** Flow of water in a pipe on a descending path.

**Irrigate:** To supply (dry land) with water by means of ditches, pipes, or streams; water artificially.

**Irrigation system:** A complete set of system components including the water source, the water distribution network, and the general irrigation equipment.

**Lateral:** A pipe line other than the main water pressure line used to move water to the various delivery devices.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.usbr.gov/library/glossary/#hmr>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/html/cvp.html>

<sup>22</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drip\\_irrigation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drip_irrigation)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.usbr.gov/library/glossary/#hmr>

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**Operations and maintenance costs:** The ongoing, repetitive costs of operating and maintaining a water system.

**Pumping plant:** Facility that lifts water up and over hills.

**Pumplift (pumping lift):** The vertical distance that a pump will raise waters. Distance water must be lifted in a well from the pumping level to the ground surface.

**Tehama-Colusa Canal:** The Tehama-Colusa Canal is 110 miles long and serves 14 water districts. The system was designed to divert water from the Sacramento River into the settling basin by virtue of a dam across the Sacramento River located in Red Bluff, California.

**Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority:** The Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority operates and maintains two canal systems owned by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Corning Canal and the Tehama-Colusa Canal.<sup>24</sup>

**Water transfers:** Selling or exchanging water or water rights among individuals or agencies. Artificial conveyance of water from one area to another.

**Water user:** Any individual, district, association, government agency, or other entity that uses water supplied from a Reclamation project.

**Water year (WY):** Period of time beginning October 1 of one year and ending September 30 of the following year and designated by the calendar year in which it ends. A calendar year used for water calculations.

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<sup>24</sup>Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority, <http://www.tccanal.com/>  
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