

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: TONY GOSSNER, FIRE CHIEF  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
LYNDA HOPKINS, SONOMA COUNTY SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT  
DAVID RABBITT, SONOMA COUNTY SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT  
SUBJECT: STUDY SESSION PRESENTED BY THE COUNTY SUPERVISORS TO DISCUSS A PROPOSED ONE-HALF PERCENT (0.5%) SALES TAX MEASURE ENTITLED THE "SONOMA COUNTY WILDFIRE PREVENTION, EMERGENCY ALERT, AND RESPONSE TRANSACTIONS AND USE TAX ORDINANCE"

AGENDA ACTION: RECEIVE THE INFORMATION FROM THE COUNTY SUPERVISORS; DISCUSS AND ASK QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE PROPOSED TAX MEASURE.

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Fire Department that the Council receive the information presented by the County Supervisors. The focus of the study session is to evaluate the proposed one-half percent sales tax measure entitled the "Sonoma County Wildfire Prevention, Emergency Alert, and Response Transactions and Use Tax Ordinance". If approved by the voters, this Ordinance will impose a one-half percent (0.5%) transactions and use tax to be used exclusively to supplement existing funding for disaster alerts, vegetation management, fire suppression and firefighting services and wildfire prevention provided by the County of Sonoma and 38 fire agencies throughout the incorporated and unincorporated County territory. This item is provided solely for Council's information and the only action requested is to receive the information provided during the Study Session. This format will allow the Council to discuss and ask questions and to become familiar with what benefits the proposed tax measure will provide.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed County tax measure is designed to provide more efficient, effective, and sustainable fire response, emergency alert, and wildfire prevention capabilities that protect the health and safety of the public in Sonoma County.

The tax proceeds must be spent for the purposes authorized in the Expenditure Plan and shall include the following:

- 1) Installing alerts, warnings and sirens
- 2) Improving vegetation management, wildfire prevention, preparedness, and response
- 3) Attracting and retaining qualified local firefighters and emergency personnel
- 4) Incentivizing consolidation and address other fire response and prevention needs
- 5) Modernizing Fire Department equipment, facilities and stations

The tax proceeds must be spent for the purposes authorized in the Expenditure Plan and may not be used for other purposes. The revenues collected from the tax shall be used only to supplement existing services and shall not be used to pay for existing operations.

### BACKGROUND

To improve the County response to wildfire emergencies and better protect its residents, the County proposes to adopt a retail transactions and use tax ordinance that will establish a local funding source for wildfire prevention, emergency alerts, vegetation management, fire suppression and firefighting services provided by the County of Sonoma and the fire agencies throughout the incorporated and unincorporated territory of the County.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

No prior City Council review has taken place concerning this County tax proposal.

### ANALYSIS

The County Supervisors will present a thorough analysis of the proposed County tax measure. The measure is intended to improve local fire prevention and protection by establishing a one-half of one percent sales tax increase and will provide approximately \$51,000,000 annually subject to the Expenditure Plan limits explained earlier in this report, with annual audits and citizen oversight.

FISCAL IMPACT

Fiscal impacts of this proposal will be to increase funding to the County of Sonoma by approximately \$51,000,000. The financial benefits to the City of Santa Rosa are projected to be:

\$3.4 million per year for alerts, warnings, sirens, vegetation management and wildfire prevention and preparedness response which includes 22 positions.

\$152,000 per year for equipment and facilities for three fire stations.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – County Ordinance
- Attachment 2 – County Expenditure Plan
- Attachment 3 – County Resolution Calling Special Election Sales Tax Measure
- Attachment 4 – County PowerPoint Presentation

CONTACT

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