



Local ballot measure: R

R

Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County Bond

Ballot question

Central Fire District 911 Medical Emergency Response and Fire Protection Measure. To maintain 911 response times; protect local medical emergency and fire protection services; and prepare wildfires, floods, and earthquakes by upgrading and repairing aging lifesaving equipment and stations, shall Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County's measure authorizing \$221,000,000 in bonds at legal rates, levying \$29/\$100,000 of assessed valuation, generating \$11,600,000 annually while bonds are outstanding, be approved, requiring citizens' oversight, public spending disclosure, audits and all funds locally?

Pregunta de Boleta

Medida de Respuesta a Emergencias Médicas y Protección contra Incendios del Distrito Central de Bomberos 911. Para mantener los tiempos de respuesta del 911; proteger los servicios locales de emergencia médica y protección contra incendios; y prepararse para los tiempos de respuesta al 911; proteger los servicios locales de emergencia médica y protección contra incendios; y prepararse para incendios forestales, inundaciones y terremotos mediante la mejora y reparación de equipos y estaciones de salvamento envejecidos, ¿Se debería adoptar la medida del Distrito Central de Bomberos del Condado de Santa Cruz autorizando \$221,000,000 en bonos a tasas legales, imponiendo \$29/\$100,000 de valoración tasada, generando \$11,600,000 anuales mientras los bonos están en circulación, requiriendo la supervisión de los ciudadanos, la divulgación del gasto público, auditorías y todos los fondos a nivel local?

What your vote means:

YES	NO
A "yes" vote on Measure R is a vote to authorize the Fire District to issue and sell bonds in the amount of \$221,000,000 to be repaid by an annual ad valorem tax placed on real property.	A "no" vote on Measure R is a vote against the issuance of the proposed general obligation bonds.

For and against Measure R

Titles used by argument signers are for identification purposes only and does not necessarily reflect the position of the organization in question.

If an asterisk (*) follows a name, it means the person is signing on behalf of that agency/organization.

FOR	AGAINST
<p>Rolf Lingens* President, Professional Firefighters of Santa Cruz County</p> <p>Lori Long Retired Nurse, 36-year-old Live Oak Resident</p> <p>Terence Campion Business Owner</p> <p>Dan Haifley Environmental Activist</p> <p>Toby Goddard Retired Water Utility Manager</p>	<p>Michael D. Lelieur Public Works Manager</p> <p>Edwin Tonkin Live Oak Resident</p> <p>Angela Powell Community Member</p>



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Arguments and replies are the opinions of the authors. We print them exactly as submitted, including errors.

Argument for Measure R	Rebuttal argument for Measure R
<p>Vote Yes on R – give local firefighters the tools they need to maintain 911 response times and keep us safe in an emergency.</p> <p>In Santa Cruz County, we’re no strangers to natural disasters. From wildfires and earthquakes to extreme heat and floods — we’ve seen it all.</p> <p>Voting Yes on R will ensure local firefighters are prepared when the next disaster strikes.</p> <p>Aging, Unsafe Stations Put Firefighters at Risk and Affect Response Times</p> <p>Central Fire District’s firefighters and paramedics operate out of outdated stations that puts their lives at risk while on call and slows down response times. Stations are deteriorating, with mold and leaky roofs. They don’t meet earthquake standards and even flood during heavy rain. Our firefighters and our community deserve better.</p> <p>Seconds Can Be the Difference Between Life and Death</p> <p>More than 70% of all 911 calls to Central Fire are medical emergencies, such as heart attacks, strokes, and car accidents. Seconds matter in a life-threatening situation. Our firefighters should be worried about saving lives when an emergency strikes, not aging engines and inadequate stations.</p> <p>That’s why we need Measure R. It gives firefighters the lifesaving resources they need to help us in an emergency.</p> <p>Vote Yes on R — Help Firefighters Keep Us Safer, Faster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 911 emergency response times • Improve local fire protection and emergency medical services • Prepare for wildfires, earthquakes, floods, and other natural disasters <p>Every Penny Supports Local Fire and Emergency Medical Response in Central Fire District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state cannot touch Measure R, every penny stays local • An independent citizens’ oversight committee guarantees funds are spent only on voter- approved projects • Independent financial and performance audits and detailed public spending disclosures are required annually <p>In a life-threatening emergency, seconds are the difference between life and death. Let’s make every second count: Vote Yes on R.</p> <p>Rolf Lingens*, President, Professional Firefighters of Santa Cruz County Lori Long, Retired Nurse, 36-year-old Live Oak Resident Terence Champion, Business Owner Dan Haifley, Environmental Activist Toby Goddard, Retired Water Utility Manager</p>	<p><u>PLEASE VOTE “NO” ON MEASURE R Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County Bond</u></p> <p>We agree that our firefighter emergency services are vital for public safety.</p> <p>However, <u>We CANNOT Afford Another Tax.</u> Measure R is a TAX lasting <u>38 years</u> costing <u>\$221 (Million)</u> requiring payments of approx. <u>\$470 Million until 2063.</u></p> <p>Residents of Santa Cruz County are struggling to make ends meet. Food prices remain 21% higher than 3 years ago. Housing, child care, gasoline, and energy costs are at an all time high as well as health care, auto and fire insurance.</p> <p><u>WE ARE ALREADY OVER TAXED. NOW WE HAVE THE POTENTIAL of 3 ADDITIONAL TAXES on this Ballot.</u></p> <p>*Measure R does not exempt Seniors nor the Disabled. *Measure R causes rental increases for small business owners. As taxes increase, these costs get passed onto the consumer. *Measure R does not include provisions of <u>hiring local union workers</u> for their projects. *Measure R Taxes Could Increase as <u>Interest Rates can rise to 12%</u> on this bond. *Transparency - Central Fire is not abiding by <u>CA Law AB 195</u> which requires that the duration of the bond be listed on the ballot question. *Measure R Bond Tax Rate & Year of Application information is not Binding on the District. They are Projections and Estimates, only. Central Fire wants to Build <u>3 “NEW” Fire Stations</u> and a <u>“NEW” Training Facility.</u> We would all like shiny and new! But the reality is, sometimes <u>WE CAN’T AFFORD IT!</u> <u>NO MORE TAXES!</u> <u>Vote “NO” On Measure R</u></p> <p>Michael D Lelieur, Public Works Manager Edwin Tonkin, Voter</p>

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Argument against Measure R	Rebuttal to argument against Measure R
<p>PLEASE VOTE "NO" ON MEASURE R Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County Bond</p> <p>We urge you to Vote "No" on Measure R a 38 Year Tax costing \$221,000,000. (Million) requiring payments of approx. \$470,000,000. (Million) until 2063.</p> <p>With Santa Cruz County being the most expensive county to live in the U.S. we do not need more taxes.</p> <p>Inflation is at the highest it's ever been:</p> <p>Rent for a 3 bedroom 2 bath house in this county is \$5,000 a month. Gas in Santa Cruz County is \$5.30 a gallon.</p> <p>These taxes cause rental increases for small business owners and raise housing costs for homeowners and renters alike.</p> <p>Measure R does not exempt seniors or the disabled who are already struggling to stay in their homes.</p> <p>Our emergency service providers, fire & police are invaluable to our community. But we are TAXED OUT!</p> <p>Central Fire wants to acquire land, relocate & build new fire stations in Capitola, La Selva and Soquel. Will these new stations be in your residential neighborhood? What Noise Level & Traffic Impacts Will this Cause?</p> <p>Central Fire plans on building a Training Facility. Location Unknown? We already have 2 main training facilities; 1 In San Jose and 1 in Seaside. (Cabrillo College is currently used). Santa Cruz County is the 2nd smallest county in CA. So, Why build a local training facility here?</p> <p>With an economic uncertainty, Can you and your family really afford more debt lasting up to 38 years until 2063?</p> <p>Not The Right Time For More Taxes</p> <p>We Are Taxed Out!</p> <p>Vote "NO" On Measure R</p> <p>Michael D Lelieur, Public Works Manager Edwin Tonkin, Live Oak Resident Angela Powell, Community Member</p>	<p>Measure R's opponents are wrong about many of the facts on this measure, but they're right about one thing, "Our emergency service providers, fire & police are invaluable to our community."</p> <p>Measure R is the only option to help us improve our 911 response times and address the urgent needs at our fire stations.</p> <p>Our opponent wants to scare you with misinformation and faulty price tags. Here are the facts:</p> <p>Urgent Safety Needs Identified</p> <p>Before pursuing Measure R, the Central Fire District underwent a comprehensive, third-party audit, which found stations to be "inadequate." The necessary repairs identified far outweigh Central Fire District's operating budget.</p> <p>Strict Fiscal Accountability</p> <p>All funds for Measure R are spent locally and cannot be taken away by the State. An independent citizens' oversight committee, public audits, and detailed spending disclosures ensure Measure R is spent as promised to the voters.</p> <p>Protections for Longtime Residents and Renters</p> <p>The Measure R tax is based on assessed, not market, value! The longer you have lived in your home, the lower the tax. Plus, renters are exempt!</p> <p>Santa Cruz County experiences so many natural disasters: fires, earthquakes, and floods. It's worth asking ourselves, what's the cost of not passing Measure R in a community already struggling to secure fire insurance? Protecting lives and property during a catastrophic emergency should be one of our highest priorities as a community.</p> <p>Know the facts. Voting Yes on Measure R is the only way to improve our 911 response times, and improve fire and medical emergency services.</p> <p>John P Lucchesi, Soquel Resident 50 yrs Ralph "Rocky" Snyder, Local Business Owner Andrea Laheit, Nurse Practitioner Marguerite Li Lienthal, Retiree, Santa Cruz Resident Aidan Magee, Local Firefighter</p>

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Impartial Analysis of Measure R

Jason M. Heath, County Counsel

By: Ruby Márquez, Chief Assistant County Counsel

Under the California Constitution, Health and Safety Code, and other related statutes, fire protection districts may issue general obligation bonds for very limited purposes. These bonds are sold to the public and constitute a debt of the district. They are repaid by the levy of an *ad valorem* tax, which is calculated based on the current assessed value of each property and collected at the same time as other county taxes on real property.

Under existing law, the sale of such bonds must be approved by at least two-thirds (66.67 percent) of voters within the boundaries of that district. However, if Proposition 5 passes in the State of California concurrently in this election, only 55% voter approval will be needed for fire districts.

Measure R was placed on the ballot by the Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County (“the District”). The District proposes the sale of general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed \$221,000,000, which would raise an estimated \$11,600,000 annually.

Voters are referred to the full body of the measure for the complete Bond Project List, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Fire Station Improvement Projects, which may include constructing, modernizing, and /or improving the outdated fire stations in Soquel, Capitola, and La Selva Beach;
- Projects to Support Fire District Operations, such as constructing a new firefighter training facility; improving staff offices, training rooms, and other facilities; and acquiring or replacing fire apparatus and capital equipment; and/or
- Acquiring land for the construction or relocation of fire stations, and training and support services facilities.

The law does not allow these types of bond funds to be used for salaries or other operational expenses.

The District must follow certain accountability measures. This includes: 1) using the funds for the specific purposes and projects stated; 2) depositing the proceeds into a special account, and 3) the filing of annual reports by the Fire Chief as well as by an independent financial auditor. The Board also will establish and appoint a Citizens’ Oversight Committee to review expenditures.

At the time of filing, the District estimated the average annual tax rate at approximately \$29 per \$100,000 of assessed property value per year. The best estimate of the highest tax rate to be levied is approximately \$49 per \$100,000 of assessed property value per year. If all bonds are issued, the total debt service to be repaid, including principal and interest, would be \$470,000,000.

A “yes” vote on Measure R is a vote to authorize the Fire District to issue and sell bonds in the amount of \$221,000,000 to be repaid by an annual *ad valorem* tax placed on real property.

A “no” vote on Measure R is a vote against the issuance of the proposed general obligation bonds.

Tax Rate Statement Measure R

Jason Nee, Fire Chief, Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County

An election will be held in the Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County (the “District”) on November 5, 2024, to authorize the sale of up to \$221,000,000 in bonds of the District for the specific projects listed in the Bond Project List established by the District, as described in the proposition. If the bonds are authorized, the District expects to sell the bonds in two or more series. Principal and interest on the bonds will be payable from the proceeds of tax levies made upon the taxable property in the District. The following information is provided in compliance with sections 9400-9404 of the California Elections Code.

1. The best estimate from official sources of the average annual tax rate that would be required to be levied to fund that bond issue over the entire duration of the bond debt service, based on assessed valuations available



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at the time of the election or a projection based on experience within the same jurisdiction or other demonstrable factors is 29 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation (\$29 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation) of all property to be taxed. The best estimate of the final fiscal year in which the tax is anticipated to be collected is 2063-64.

2. The best estimate from official sources of the highest tax rate that would be required to be levied to fund that bond issue, and an estimate of the year in which that rate will apply, based on assessed valuations available at the time of the election or a projection based on experience within the same jurisdiction or other demonstrable factors is 49 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation (\$49 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation) of all property to be taxed. The best estimate of the year in which the highest tax rate will apply is anticipated to be 2034-35.

3. The best estimate from official sources of the total debt service, including the principal and interest, that would be required to be repaid if all the bonds are issued and sold is \$470,000,000.

Voters should note that such estimated tax rates are specific to the repayment of bonds issued under this authorization and are and will be in addition to tax rates levied in connection with other bond authorizations approved or to be approved by local voters for the District or for any other overlapping public agency.

Voters should note that estimated tax rate is based on the ASSESSED VALUE of taxable property on the Santa Cruz County's official tax rolls, not on the property's market value. Property owners should consult their own property tax bills to determine their property's assessed value and any applicable tax exemptions.

Attention of all voters is directed to the fact that the foregoing information is based upon the District's projections and estimates only, which are not binding upon the District. The actual tax rates and the years in which they will apply may vary from those presently estimated, due to variations from these estimates in the timing of bond sales, the amount of bonds sold and market interest rates at the time of each sale, and actual assessed valuations over the term of repayment of the bonds. The dates of sale and the amount of bonds sold at any given time will be determined by the District based on need for construction funds and other factors. The actual interest rates at which the bonds will be sold will depend on the bond market at the time of each sale. Actual future assessed valuation will depend upon the amount and value of taxable property within the District as determined by the Santa Cruz County Assessor in the annual assessment and the equalization process.

Full text of Measure R

MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS AUTHORIZING THE CENTRAL FIRE DISTRICT OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY TO ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO FINANCE THE ACQUISITION, IMPROVEMENT, UPGRADE AND MAINTENANCE OF FIRE STATIONS, FACILITIES, APPARATUS, EQUIPMENT AND REAL PROPERTY

FINDINGS

In the judgment of the Board of Directors (the "Board") of the Central Fire District of Santa Cruz County (the "District"), it is advisable to maintain essential fire services to the community by issuing general obligation bonds that will finance the acquisition, improvement, upgrade and maintenance of fire stations, facilities and real property, including (i) facilities, apparatus and equipment that support emergency lifesaving medical services, reduce 911 response times and maintain wildfire protection services, (ii) replacing/repairing outdated stations, and (iii) retrofitting fire facilities for earthquake safety (collectively, the "Projects");

The Board intends to issue general obligation bonds to finance the Projects and to fund certain costs in connection with the issuance of such general obligation bonds;

OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF BONDS

This measure (the "Measure") authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds (the "Bonds"), the object and purpose of which is to finance the Projects and certain costs in connection with the issuance of the Bonds.



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The Projects will be completed as needed, and each is assumed to include its share of costs, including planning and construction costs. The final cost of each Project will be determined as real property is purchased, plans are finalized, construction bids are awarded, or projects are completed.

Proceeds of the Bonds may be used to reimburse the District for amounts advanced from the general fund or other funds or accounts to fund Projects when such purchases are made prior to the availability of Bond proceeds.

REQUIRED APPROVAL

The Measure shall be deemed approved if approved by at least 2/3 of the registered voters voting on the proposition; *provided, however*, that if Assembly Constitutional Amendment ("ACA 1") is approved by California voters on the same date that voters of the District are voting on the proposed Bond measure, such measure shall be deemed to be approved if approved by at least 55% of the registered voters voting on the proposition.

ESTIMATED COST OF PROJECTS

The estimated cost of the portion of the costs of the Projects to be paid for from the Bonds is \$221,000,000.

The estimated cost includes legal and other fees and the cost of printing the Bonds and other costs and expenses incidental to or connected with the authorization, issuance or sale of the Bonds. The cost of the Projects includes planning and construction costs.

PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF BONDS

The aggregate principal amount of Bonds to be issued in or more series is not to exceed \$221,000,000.

MAXIMUM INTEREST RATE

The maximum rate of interest to be paid on the Bonds shall not exceed 12% per annum, which interest rate does not exceed the maximum rate permitted by applicable law.

ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following accountability measures apply to the issuance of Bonds pursuant to this Measure:

- (a) The specific purpose of the Bonds is to finance the Projects;
- (b) The proceeds from the sale of the Bonds will be used only for the purposes specified in this Measure, and not for any other purpose;
- (c) The proceeds of the Bonds will be deposited into an account to be created and held by the District;
- (d) The Fire Chief of the District shall file an annual report with the Board which report shall contain pertinent information regarding the amount of funds collected and expended, as well as the status of the Projects;
- (e) All expenditures will be subject to oversight by an independent oversight committee, composed of individuals appointed by the Board, to confirm that Bond expenditures are consistent with the intent of this Measure; and
- (f) All expenditures also will be subject to an annual independent financial audit to confirm that Bond expenditures are consistent with the intent of this Measure.

IDENTIFICATION OF TAX; USE OF REVENUE

The tax imposed by this Measure is an *ad valorem* tax levied upon taxable real property in the District. The tax will be used to pay the principal and interest on the Bonds.

BOND PROJECT LIST

This Bond Project List, describes the specific projects the District proposes to finance with proceeds of the bonds. In order to meet all identified facility needs, the District intends to complete projects using a combination of funding sources, including contributions, development impact fees, and grant funding (if available). Approval of this measure does not guarantee that all projects on this Bond Project List will be funded beyond the local revenues generated by this measure.



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Proceeds from the sale of bonds authorized by this measure shall be used only for the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, replacement, furnishing and equipping of fire facilities, and the acquisition or lease of real property for fire facilities, all as listed on the Bond Project List. Specific projects to be funded by the bond measure include, without limitation, the following:

A. FIRE STATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Construct, reconstruct, relocate, modernize, and/or improve outdated fire stations in Soquel, Capitola, and La Selva Beach;
- Acquire land for the construction and/or relocation of fire stations;
- Remove or replace existing, inadequate fire station buildings as needed; and
- Perform infrastructure improvements and site-work related to fire station construction, reconstruction, relocation, and improvement projects.

B. PROJECTS TO SUPPORT FIRE DISTRICT OPERATIONS

- Construct new firefighter training facility;
- Construct, reconstruct, relocate, and/or improve support services facilities, including fire staff offices, training rooms, governance facilities, and/or fire fleet services facility;
- Acquire land for training and support services facilities; and
- Acquire and/or replace life-saving fire apparatus and capital equipment.

For any project involving modernization or renovation of a building or the major portion of a building, the District shall be authorized to proceed with new replacement construction if the Board of Directors determines that replacement and new construction is economically more practical considering the building's age, condition and other relevant factors.

The listed projects will be completed as needed. Each project is assumed to include its share of furniture, equipment, architectural, engineering, and similar planning costs, program management, staff training expenses and a customary contingency, and escalation for unforeseen design and construction costs.

The budget for each project is an estimate and may be affected by factors beyond the District's control. The final cost of each project will be determined as plans are finalized, construction bids are awarded, and projects are completed. Based on the final costs of each project, certain of the projects described above may be delayed or may not be completed. Demolition of existing facilities and reconstruction of facilities scheduled for repair and upgrade may occur, if the Board determines that such an approach would be more cost-effective in creating enhanced and operationally efficient facilities. Necessary site preparation/restoration and landscaping, may occur in connection with new construction, renovation or remodeling, including ingress and egress, removing, replacing, or installing irrigation, utility lines, trees and landscaping, redirecting fire access, and acquiring any necessary easements, licenses, or rights of way to the property. Bond proceeds shall be expended only for the specific purposes identified herein. Proceeds of the bonds may be used to pay or reimburse the District for the cost of District staff when performing work on or necessary and incidental to the bond projects, but not for other administrator salaries.