



Local ballot measure: T

T

Zayante Fire Protection District Tax

Ballot question

To maintain a reliable daytime response and replace emergency vehicles, Shall a new Zayante Fire Protection District special tax of \$50.00 for vacant parcels less than 5 acres, \$100.00 for vacant parcels 5 acres or more; and \$290.00 for residential, commercial, other improved parcels be adopted replacing its existing \$68 per parcel tax, with an annual increase not to exceed CPI, initially raising an estimated \$440,000 annually until rescinded or replaced by voters?

Pregunta de Boleta

Para mantener una respuesta diurna confiable y reemplazar los vehículos de emergencia, ¿Se debería autorizar un nuevo impuesto especial del Distrito de Protección contra Incendios de Zayante de \$50.00 para parcelas vacantes de menos de 5 acres, \$100.00 para parcelas vacantes de 5 acres o más; y \$290.00 para parcelas residenciales, comerciales y otras parcelas mejoradas que se adopten en reemplazo de su actual impuesto de \$68 por parcela, con un aumento anual que no exceda el IPC, recaudando inicialmente un estimado de \$440,000 anuales hasta que sea revocado o reemplazado por los votantes?

What your vote means:

YES	NO
A "yes" vote on Measure T is a vote to allow an annual parcel tax ranging from \$50 to \$290, depending on the size and improvements of the land, with a possible annual increase not to exceed the CPI.	A "no" vote on Measure T is a vote against the parcel tax.

For and against Measure T

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>John Schneider* Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p> <p>Lyle Fleming* Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p> <p>Priva Tarbet* Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p> <p>Kristi Locatelli* Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p>	<p>Jennifer Gomez Resident</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 T	Rebuttal argument for Measure T
<p>The Zayante Fire Protection District has a long tradition of providing excellent and vital service to our mountain community. The district is struggling to sustain the service our community wants and deserves. The Board has made many budget cuts, including laying off staff and cutting salaries. We cannot continue to operate in this manner.</p> <p>We are asking for a parcel rate of approximately \$24 a month for the residents of our community. The increase in revenue will give us the opportunity to staff our station during the daytime when volunteers are at work. It will also allow us to purchase new fire engines and emergency equipment.</p> <p>This new parcel rate is a \$215 annual increase from residents to sustain our volunteer fire district. Volunteer fire districts all over the state are being outpriced. The Zayante Fire District Volunteers seek to continue to respond to our neighbors' calls, whether that is a structure fire, vehicle accident, medical emergency, or hazardous conditions.</p> <p>Please join us in supporting our local volunteers at the Zayante Fire District. They are neighbors serving neighbors.</p> <p>John Schneider*, Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p> <p>Lyle Fleming*, Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p> <p>Priva Tarbet*, Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p> <p>Kristi Locatelli*, Director, Zayante Fire Protection District</p>	<p>No Rebuttal argument for Measure T was filed.</p>

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Argument against Measure T	Rebuttal argument against Measure T
<p>As wildfires and storm events become more frequent and severe, volunteer fire departments are struggling to maintain adequate organization, staffing, and equipment to address present and future disasters. Layoffs and budget cuts have become common when “scaling-up” is needed.</p> <p>The benefit analysis supporting this rate increase was not done by an independent 3rd party. The amount being requested is not adequate to sustain the Zayante Fire Department. ZF <u>WILL</u> need come back to the voters to ask for more money in the near future.</p> <p>The costs of maintaining fire department infrastructure, equipment and salaries, disability claims & pensions can no longer be sustained in the long term with such a small population/tax base.</p> <p>The Zayante Fire Station is poorly located to serve the majority of Lompico and Zayante residents, as nearly 85% of residences are beyond a 5-minute drive time. Almost half of residences are outside of a 15-minute drive time.</p> <p>Additionally, many homes already can’t be adequately served because they are inaccessible to fire trucks. Private roads are either too narrow and/or too damaged by potholes and slip-outs. Many private roads also lack of turn-arounds or have hazardous and overgrown vegetation that would prevent safe entry and exit during a fire.</p> <p>Our community needs leadership and proactive storm and wildfire management strategies such as fuel breaks, controlled burns and other fuel management projects, escape routes, and private road repair and maintenance to prepare in advance of another catastrophic wind-driven wildfire. This proposed benefit assessment is not enough, wasn’t produced by an outside consultant, and does not address the overarching threat to our community.</p> <p>Jennifer Gomez, Resident</p>	<p>The argument against Measure T as stated is unsubstantiated, false, and misleading.</p> <p>The Zayante Fire Protection District has a long history of being fiscally conservative while fulfilling its mandate to provide needed and vital services to our mountain community.</p> <p>The measure is on the ballot because the district has been struggling to sustain the service our community wants and deserves. The Board has made many budget cuts, including laying off staff and cutting salaries.</p> <p>The proposed revenue measure is long overdue and will enable the district to staff our station for more days and hours and purchase much-needed equipment, especially for critical emergencies.</p> <p>The additional revenue will be carefully used to continue providing the top-quality services that our district’s community wants and needs to respond to structure fires, vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, or dangerous and hazardous conditions.</p> <p>We are in this Together! Vote YES on Measure T.</p>

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Impartial Analysis of Measure T

Jason M. Heath, County Counsel

By: Ruby Márquez, Chief Assistant County Counsel

Under the California Constitution, Health and Safety Code, and other related state laws, fire protection districts may levy a parcel tax to raise revenues if approved by at least two-thirds (66.67%) of voters within the boundaries of that district.

Measure T was placed on the ballot by the Zayante Fire Protection District (“the District”). The District seeks voter approval for a parcel tax in varying amounts, as follows:

- \$50.00 for vacant parcels of less than 5 acres;
- \$100.00 for vacant parcels of 5 acres or more; and
- \$290 for residential, commercial, and parcels listed with miscellaneous improvements.

Additionally, this parcel tax includes an annual adjustment clause, which would allow for a possible increase not to exceed the local Consumer Price Index (“CPI”), a metric used to measure the average change in prices for goods and services.

In 2016, District voters approved a parcel tax at a rate of \$68 per parcel that began on July 1, 2017. If approved by voters, Measure T would replace this existing parcel tax beginning on July 1, 2025, and continue until ended by voters. The District anticipates this tax would raise \$440,000 annually.

The District has submitted a statement of purpose on how the funds from the parcel taxes will be used, including:

- Allowing the District to utilize paid daytime staff in order to maintain reliable daytime response times; and
- Allowing the District to replace, maintain, and update the emergency response fleet of vehicles.

As a special tax, the District will only be allowed to use the proceeds for the specific purposes as included within the Measure. Voters are referred to the full text and materials in the Voter Information Guide for complete details.

Additionally, the law requires the District to follow certain accountability provisions during the duration of the special parcel tax. This includes: 1) creating a special account into which the proceeds of the tax shall be deposited, and 2) requiring the preparation of an annual report containing the amount of taxes collected and expended as well as the status of any projects funded by these proceeds.

A “yes” vote on Measure T is a vote to allow an annual parcel tax ranging from \$50 to \$290, depending on the size and improvements of the land, with a possible annual increase not to exceed the CPI.

A “no” vote on Measure T is a vote against the parcel tax.

Full text of Measure T

The Zayante Fire Protection District would like to apply a parcel tax of \$50.00 for vacant parcels of less than 5 acres; \$100.00 for vacant parcels of 5 acres or more; and \$290.00 for residential, commercial, and parcels listed with miscellaneous improvements, to be implemented on July 1, 2025. This would repeal the parcel tax that was implemented in 2016. The new parcel tax will be a \$215.00 annual increase for the residents of our district. This new tax would include an annual adjustment clause used by the County of Santa Cruz.

Purpose: The purpose is to maintain the future viability as a Volunteer Fire Department. This will allow the district to utilize paid daytime staffing to meet community needs when volunteers are out of the district for work. It will also allow the district to maintain and update the emergency response fleet. The Zayante Fire Protection District has a long history of providing excellent service and being fiscally responsible with taxpayers' money. Zayante Fire Protection District receives the lowest tax revenue of any fire district in Santa Cruz County, and is the largest, geographically, in the San Lorenzo Valley.