

Attachment B

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COUNTY OF SONOMA MEASURE M BALLOT LANGUAGE (2018)

Ballot question

The ballot question was as follows:^[1]

“ To improve and protect Sonoma County's regional and neighborhood parks; safeguard water supplies, streams, rivers; reduce future wildfire risk; preserve fish and wildlife habitat; conserve natural areas for future generations; support community health and expand walking, hiking, and biking trails; shall Sonoma County establish a one-eighth cent special transaction and use tax (sales tax) countywide for a ten-year period, providing approximately \$11.5 million annually, with citizens' oversight and annual audits?^[2] ”

Impartial analysis

The following impartial analysis of the measure was prepared by the office of the Sonoma County Counsel:

“ Measure M asks voters whether the County should impose a one-eighth of one per- cent special sales tax countywide for a period of ten years to fund improvements and maintenance for both Sonoma County Regional Parks and local city parks. These improvements include water quality protection projects and fire safety measures listed in the Expenditure Plan attached to the Measure. If approved, Measure M would impose a special tax that will provide approximately \$11,500,000 annually. As a special tax, funds may be used only for the specific purposes set forth in the full text of the Measure published in this ballot pamphlet. The tax money will be placed in a special fund maintained in the County Treasury, and will be audited annually by an independent accountant.

The Expenditure Plan lists four categories of projects for funding, including: support for local city parks and recreation needs; investment in maintenance, safety, and recreation services for County regional parks, trails, and open space preserves; improving access to County regional parks, trails, and open space preserves; protecting natural resources; and improving waterways and water quality. Specific projects in each of these categories are listed in the Expenditure Plan. The Expenditure Plan provides that tax proceeds will be used to supplement existing funding for all benefited agencies and will not be used to supplant an agency's historical general fund support except during limited specified circumstances. If legal environmental review, such as under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or other applicable law, is ”

required for any particular project, the Plan provides that it be performed before the project is undertaken.

If voters approve Measure M, the Board of Supervisors will establish an independent Citizens' Oversight Committee to review the receipts and expenditures from the tax. The Committee will produce an annual oral or written report for the Board of Supervisors and respective city councils setting forth the Committee's finds and conclusions. Any written report will be available as a public record. Each year, Regional Parks and each incorporated city are required to prepare a report detailing the prior fiscal year's activities related to the tax and projects funded by the tax.

The tax proposed by the ordinance will become effective only if approved by a two-thirds majority of those voting on the measure.

A "yes" vote on Measure M will authorize the County to increase the sales tax rate one-eighth percent, or one-eighth cent on each dollar countywide.

The new rate would go into effect on April 1, 2019, and remain in effect until March 31, 2029. The proposed sales tax would be imposed and collected by merchants in the same manner as existing sales tax. The ordinance would raise the County's spending limit for the maximum period allowed by law to allow the County to spend the revenue raised by the tax.

A "no" vote on Measure M will prohibit the County from imposing the proposed sales tax.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to place this measure on the ballot.^[2]