



FIRE SERVICE SALES TAX MEASURE H

January 27, 2024

Sea Ranch Forum

For informational/educational purposes only



BACKGROUND

Efforts to Improve Fire and EMS Services

- Measure G:
 - March 2020
 - Placed on the ballot by County of Sonoma
 - Failed passing 66.67% threshold by 1.83%
- Fire Service Working Group (FSWG)
 - Operates as a subsection of Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association (SCFCA)
 - Lead work group to develop new measure

COUNTYWIDE FIRE PREVENTION & RESPONSE PROPOSED MEASURE, MARCH 2024



"Funding from a countywide half cent sales tax will allow the Sonoma Valley Fire District, which includes the City of Sonoma, to implement significant improvements to our emergency services. Several needs were recently confirmed during a comprehensive analysis of the Fire District's Operations and Facilities. This tax measure will fund 15 new permanent Firefighter/Paramedic positions and expanded services in fire prevention and fuels reduction programs. Funds will be used to staff an additional ambulance, which will improve response times throughout the District, and ensure there are Firefighter/Paramedics at the Sonoma Developmental Center grounds. The funding will also enable the Fire District to upgrade two of our existing Fire Stations. Lastly, this tax measure will support Sonoma Valley Fire District's neighboring fire agencies, allowing increased staffing and capacity to expand emergency response and resiliency in the Sonoma Valley, helping wildfires from becoming major incidents."

- Steve Akre, Sonoma Valley Fire District's Fire Chief

REVENUE WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS TO COUNTY RESIDENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Recruitment and retention of local firefighters | ✓ Provide staffing to rural and underserved communities |
| ✓ Improved response times | ✓ Supports an improved local dispatch center |
| ✓ Increased wildfire prevention and response | ✓ Enhanced vegetation management and fuels reduction |
| ✓ Expanded paramedic services | ✓ Provides collaborative technology platforms |
| ✓ Infrastructure improvements | |
| ✓ Red flag and winter storm upstaffing | |

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **How much will this tax generate?**
This ½ cent sales tax is expected to generate approximately \$60 million annually to address the current and future funding challenges that face EVERY fire agency in the county.
- **How will the expenditures be governed?**
Revenue will go directly to fire agencies. Their governing bodies, either City Councils or District Boards will be responsible for ensuring that the funds are spent in accordance with the ordinance. Additionally, an independent oversight committee will review the expenditures of each agency.
- **How much funding will my local fire department get?**
Sonoma Valley Fire District, including the City of Sonoma, will receive 6.38 % of the annual tax revenue, estimated at nearly \$3.8 million, plus cover the cost of emergency dispatch which is an additional \$250,000 annually.
- **What will the funding be used for?**
 - Hire and retain 15 additional local firefighter/paramedics
 - Funding for volunteer firefighters
 - Increased fire prevention and vegetation management resources
 - Critical facility upgrades at two fire stations



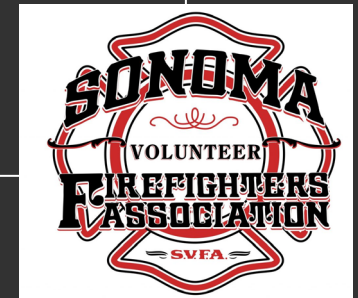
For more information, please visit
SonomaChiefs.org





NEW STRATEGY

- Petition driven Citizen's Initiative:
 - Requires 50% +1 to pass
 - Polls at 65%-67%
 - Negatives towards:
 - No sunset or County managed funds
- FSWG focus on improved relationships and unity
- Changed FSWG Representation
- Improved Union and Volunteer involvement
- Strong pro campaign by L-1401, including L3593





NEW ORDINANCE



Managed by the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association



Change of allocation



Community Oversight Committee enhanced



Emphasis placed on adding local firefighters and building fire stations



NEW ORDINANCE CONTINUED

Title:

- “Improved and Enhanced Local Fire Protection, Paramedic Services and Disaster Response Initiative”

Program Categories (6):

- Wildfire prevention, preparedness, emergency response and vegetation management
- Recruitment and retention of local firefighters
- Updates to essential equipment and facilities
- Transfer of funds among designated local agencies or entities
- Implementation costs
- Countywide expenditures



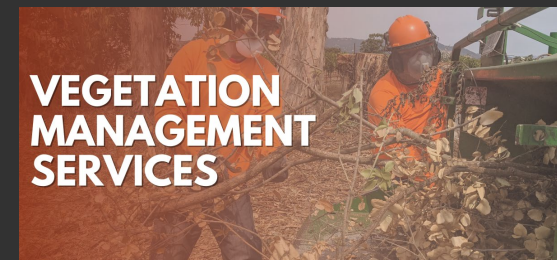
NEW ELEMENTS

- Governance: Independent Oversight Committee
 - Independent County Residents –Eleven (11) appointed members
- New Allocation Plan
 - Data driven: uses local deployment analyses & IAFF deployment maps
 - Estimated to generate \$60M-\$65M annually directly to the fire service
 - 10% is allocated to new Vegetation Management efforts throughout Sonoma County
 - Countywide Funding Distributed through the SCFCA
- Annual Performance Audit Requirement



PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

- Firefighter Unions
- Volunteer Firefighters
- Vegetation Management
 - Firesafe Sonoma
 - Ag and Open Space
- Outreach
 - City Managers Association
 - Mayors and Councils
 - Fire District Elected Directors
 - Taxpayer groups
 - Board of Supervisors
 - Civic groups
 - Business owners





COUNTYWIDE BENEFITS

- New Vegetation Management – Added Capacity
 - Dedicated Year-Round Fuels Crew
 - Full-time Executive Director for FSS
 - 7 Regional Veg Mgt Coordinators/Inspectors
 - Focus on Wildfire Prevention
- ~200 new Firefighter/Paramedics
- 30 Fire Station Rebuilds

- Additional Countywide Benefits:
 - REDCOM Dispatch Fees & enhancements
 - Severe Weather Upstaffing funding
 - Technology and Training enhancements
 - Recruitment and Retention Funding

