NEWSLETTER OF THE CONTRA COSTA TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

CoCoTax

Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending

May 6, 2020

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Message from Jack Weir

We are living in unprecedented times.

COVID-19 has threatened not only the health and livelihood of countless people, but also the fabric of our society. It has deepened divisions between us, and sown distrust between people of differing opinions.

Meanwhile, the federal budget deficit reaches unprecedented levels, the ramifications of which remain unclear. Troublingly, this mindset of unfettered spending threatens to spread to states, cities, and counties around the country.

Closer to home, the pandemic's economic fallout jeopardizes the financial stability of local cities and agencies. For years, we have admonished our leaders to prepare for the downturn that would surely arrive. They have failed to heed our warning. Rather than reforming, many are calling for more tax revenue. We will vigorously protect Contra Costa taxpayers from bearing the brunt of their failings, particularly when we face increased financial burdens of our own.

As an organization, our top priorities include the following:

- Continuing to expose the reckless pension programs that decimate local budgets.
- Leading the local effort to protect Proposition 13 from November's "split roll" initiative.
- Keeping an eye on wasteful government spending.
- Vigilantly monitoring other tax measures that might appear on the ballot this fall.

For too long, spending interests have exerted undue influence over state and local budgets. Our only chance to resist them is to amplify our voice. We are proud of the impact we've had given our numbers and limited funding. To turn the tide, we must increase our membership, our funding, and our reach. You can help by taking one or more of the following actions:

- Volunteering your time to serve on one of our committees.
- Introducing a friend (or two or three) to CoCoTax.
- Supporting our efforts with a financial contribution.

As always, we appreciate your dedication to maintaining the integrity of local government.

Jack Weir
Executive Director,
Contra Costa
Taxpayers Association

CoCoTax

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CoCoTax President's Report – May 2020

After a challenging April, the month ahead brings many unknowns. The Legislature is posturing to go back in session, some businesses are opening up, different states will have different limitations, and most everyone has a face mask just in case. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been managed worldwide in many different ways, the results of those decisions and practices will have lasting effect.

At this time, we do know that the Stay-At-Home orders have impacted life at every level. Public meetings are no longer public in the usual manner. CoCoTax is aware that several agencies that had positioned to place tax measures on the ballot have been impeded in those decisions. Some have been tabled for a time beyond the November election. But as restrictions are lifted, some items may now be accelerated.

The Split Roll measure appears to have accomplished its goal and will be on the November ballot. We strongly assert our opposition to the split roll, underhandedly being marketed to voters as the "California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act" – a direct attack to your wallets.

California State Senator Glazer has rewritten his proposed SB 1349. It appears to be a copy of the defeated Measure J, for a ½ cent sales tax increase. We opposed the measure, and the voters soundly voted it down. Guess they didn't get the message.

Contra Costa Board of Supervisors had been moving towards a proposal for a one-cent county sales tax increase. The committee formed for that purpose was stalled and it will be "interesting" to see where that discussion picks up.

El Cerrito is discussing bankruptcy, which may or may not have been accelerated due to the coronavirus emergency. Already a high taxed city, this is not good news for residents.

Pinole, Hercules, and Antioch all decided not to pursue Charter City status (in order to impose a Real Property Transfer Tax) at this time.

The Brown Act provisions have been bypassed in many ways due to COVID-19, though many public agencies have undertaken methods to continue business in an open fashion. Some have been more successful than others. Keep an eye on your local officials and what is being discussed.

It appears that CoCoTax will not be able to hold speaker breakfasts or events for some time. This impacts us both financially and as an organization. By now, you should have received our correspondence for our Spring Appeal. **Please, if you can, support us financially**. CoCoTax does not get a stimulus check, nor have we received assistance.

As soon as it is safe, we hope to step up breakfast meetings and other events. We have many questions about our government agencies doing business during the last couple of months and what plans are being made. We have contacted several of them about providing speakers and have received a positive response.

I look forward to seeing everyone out and about soon.

Susan L Pricco
President, Contra Costa Taxpayers Association
"Good government at affordable cost"

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