

Measure M Moraga School District Parcel Tax – COCOTAX Opposes

As written, this tax will continue **forever**. While the district's current shortfall is real, we cannot predict future budget situations with certainty. Any number of changes could occur, including the state's allocation formula, employee benefit costs, etc. We commend the current school board for its leadership and fiscal stewardship to date. However, **that does not mitigate the need for safeguards against the performance of future board leadership.**

It is disappointing that a school district that has previously shown responsibility, has put forth a measure that is less than transparent, and does not honor the right of voters to have ultimate control over the use of their tax dollars.

A set term (sunset clause) on this new tax is vital for several reasons:

- To ensure the funding need still exists
- To ensure the tax is still the best form of raising the required revenue
- To hold leadership accountable for spending funds wisely
- Although the measure's language suggests that voters can repeal the measure at any time, this is misleading, as the measure provides no effective mechanism for doing so. The term "until repealed by the voters" is the term used to placate voters that vastly understates a laborious initiative process.

This may look a lot like the \$192 parcel tax from 2013 (not the 2016 Measure V bond) currently on your tax bill, however the Full Ballot Text of this measure is not identical. This measure contains the option for the District to add up to 3% (cost of living index), **cumulatively**, every year. Given that this tax is forever, it undermines the voters right to maintain control over their taxes.

Public education invariably occupies a prominent position in the political landscape, which by nature creates uncertainty. As a result, **there are any number of ways that school funding could fundamentally change.**

Voters should turn down this proposal and ask the school board to include a reasonable sunset clause in order to ensure voters aren't stuck paying permanent taxes to cover a potentially temporary need.

Taxpayers are entitled to the opportunity to periodically re-assess the need for these funds, just like they were given with the current parcel tax.