

CoCoTax

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



June 14, 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday June 25, 2021 at 7:45 a.m. - LIVE! In person!
BREAKFAST MEETING with DEBI COOPER,
Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder
Topic: "Voting in a Pandemic"
Location: Black Bear Diner, 807 Camino Ramon, Danville
Members \$25, Guests \$30, register at www.cocotax.org
Event sponsored by Ryder Brose, Invest With Integrity
Join us as we finally have the opportunity to welcome our new
County Clerk-Recorder in a personal way and hear her thoughts.



Friday July 23, 2021
Breakfast Meeting with Guest Speaker Monica Nino
Contra Costa County Administrator
Location: Denny's 1313 Willow Pass Rd., Concord
Event sponsored by Western States Petroleum Assn.



Dinner with HON. CATHARINE BAKER
Now serving on the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)
Friday, July 30, 2021
5:30 p.m. Social/No-host bar, 6:30 p.m. Buffet dinner
Zio Fraedo's, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill
Members \$60 Non-Members \$70



CoCoTax Officers

Susan Pricco
President

James Pezzaglia
1st Vice President

Ryder Brose
2nd Vice President

Paul Bleeg
Treasurer/Secretary

Honorable Mike McGill
Past President

Denise Sheehan
Business Manager

UPDATES ON CURRENT COCOTAX POSITIONS

Disappointing news from our friends at CalTAX: " CalTax-sponsored legislation AB 879 (Rubio), which would have created a COVID-19 tax amnesty program was held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and will no longer move forward". We oppose ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry), which would make it easier to raise local taxes by lowering the vote threshold for sales and parcel taxes that fund a broad definition of infrastructure



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

We oppose the State Capitol Annex Project The billion-dollar project would demolish the historic Capitol East Annex with General Fund taxpayer dollars at a time when we face a \$54 billion budget deficit. www.SaveOurCapitol.org for more information.
We oppose the increase by BAAQMD (Bay Area Air Quality Management District) which shows a lack of accountability/transparency in their budget.

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 On Facebook:
**Contra Costa
Taxpayers Association**



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We oppose AB 71, the so-called "Bring California Home" homelessness funding" bill https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB71 which is an unnecessary tax, harmful to businesses and not an appropriate way to address homelessness.

LUNCHTIME SPEAKER SERIES

May 21, 2021

Guest speaker: Noted syndicated columnist Dan Walters of CalMatters.com

CalMatters is a non-profit news organization with 50 employees. It was founded due to a need for in-depth journalism. Veteran journalist Dan Walters has been commenting on California and politics for decades.

Currently, he says the State budget can only be described as "strange." It has grown immensely over the years: \$7 billion in 1975 to now \$175 billion. Governor Gavin Newsom claims a budget "surplus" of \$75 billion, however, the State Analysts believe the "surplus" is closer to \$35 billion. The "surplus" is actually derived from projected revenues over two years. "Revenues" are actually very difficult to project in a current year, let alone two years ahead. Large changes in revenue can be due to the volatility of the main sources - 70% comes from personal income taxes. The volatility of investments, including the stock market, is often a large part of upper income taxpayers. 47% of California State income taxes come from the top 1% of earners.



The Gann Amendment requires that "excess revenues" be returned to the taxpayers. Governor Newsom has interpreted this as a way to enlarge "social budgets" and create about 400 new social spending programs. This creates a great danger as social programs never seem to end. The way they will continue is only by advancing ever-increasing taxes. California currently takes about 12% of personal income in taxes. The greatest pressure has been to raise local sales taxes and parcel taxes. California is already a top taxation state.

While CA has had a major exodus to more affordable states, most notably Texas. Most leaving have been lower income, seeking a more affordable life. It is not known how many are also from the top 1% (the State's primary revenue source). If the Federal tax rate is increased, combined with the \$10,000 limit on State & Local deductions added to ever higher state taxes, the pressure to leave will become all the greater.

Another major issue for California is redistricting, due to the recent Census. Our state will lose one congressional seat, most likely from the Los Angeles area.

CoCoTax is extremely fortunate to have such a respected political watchdog and analyst speak with us on a personal level. The presentation is available on our YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u87Juwtn8_Y

Fire Districts Talk Consolidation

For some time, we have been aware of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) woes, mostly generated from the increasing needs for service in this rapidly growing area of the county. Several months ago, the topic of a consolidation with Contra Costa Fire Protection District (Con Fire) and ECCFPD was broached and a study for feasibility was ordered. Somehow, the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District (RHFPD) was invited to be included in the study and

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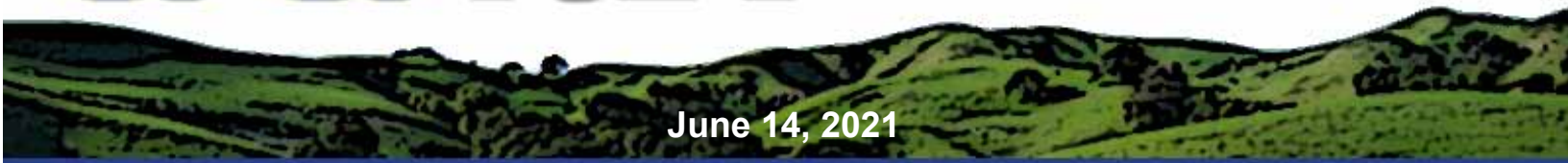


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did so. Last year, the Pinole Fire Department did a similar study in 2019. Then the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) entertained an agenda item for a similar consolidation discussion.

The Contra Costa Fire Protection District, covering unincorporated areas of the county and several additional areas, is operated under the authority of the County Board of Supervisors. The other districts are controlled by their city or a separately elected Board.

Much of this consolidation discussion is news to residents. Why consolidation? Good question. In some cases, the discussion is financial, but not for all. Is bigger better? Time has told us that is not always the case. Many cities strongly adhere to their local control, some paying additional fees/parcel taxes to support and retain their fire departments.

To change the structure for consolidation does not even require a vote of residents, only a majority vote of the Boards, who may not know or choose the will of the community.

The questions that needs to be asked – what is the benefit to residents? What happens to local control? What services may change? What assurances of service are being offered to residents? Clearly there is a cost factor, but how will money from the current independent smaller districts be allocated within the much larger district? Who wants this consolidation and why?

Clearly, there is a lot of investigation that is warranted, and the answer may not be the same for all districts. Clarity, transparency, and full information with community involvement is paramount.

Pension Committee

The CoCoTax Pension committee readies to release its report on CalSTRS. Watch for it!

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