

Sample Pro/Con for Sacramento County Measure B

Shall the ordinance enacting a 30-year countywide one half cent sales tax, raising approximately \$100 million annually, with independent oversight and audits, be adopted?

Measure B would impose a retail transactions and use tax in Sacramento County of 1/2 of one percent for 30 years from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2047, for the purpose of financing certain transportation improvements. The proceeds of this tax are to be used to fund local roadway and transit capital, operations and maintenance, project development, right-of-way, and construction of highway and expressway expansion and widening projects affecting multiple local entities, light rail and bus vehicle replacements operations and maintenance of existing and new services. It will also be used to fund project development, right-of-way, construction and operation of transit capital projects, including the City of Elk Grove SMART Corridors project providing connections between Elk Grove and the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SRTD) system, and senior and disabled transportation services. 0.3% of tax proceeds is budgeted for administration that will include funding for an Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee to review and audit tax expenditures. The maximum that can be spent on administration is 0.75% of Measure B tax proceeds.

Each recipient agency must prepare and adopt biennially a five year program that is approved by the Sacramento Transportation Authority Board. Authority allocations for the first five years (2017-2022) shall prioritize "Fix-it-First" road, transit, bicycle and pedestrian investments. During this five year period, not less than 75% of the funds identified in the local roadway and transit capital, operations and maintenance fund shall be used exclusively by all recipient cities and the County of Sacramento to improve streets, roads and bridges to a level providing safe, reliable and smooth street surfaces with little to no blemishes, potholes or substantial cracking. During this five year period, no less than 75% of the funds allocated to SRTD shall be used exclusively by SRTD for bus and light rail vehicle replacement, operations, maintenance and security for existing services, and SRTD shall increase annual ridership, shall meet or exceed a specified farebox recovery standard, and SRTD's operating reserves shall meet or exceed the requirements in the SRTD Board-adopted reserved policy.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE B

Measure B will provide every Sacramento County community dedicated local funding that can only be used to: repair roads, reduce traffic congestion, improve bike and pedestrian safety. It will also improve light rail and bus service, and extend light rail to the Airport and Elk Grove, plus repair and strengthen deteriorating bridges.

Measure B requires cities and the county to "Fix it First", which means they must fill potholes, repave streets and fix bridges before they can spend more money on new freeway or transit projects. Measure B requires 75% of all funds to be used for "Fix it First" repair and maintenance work during the first five years.

Measure B generates \$3 billion of local funding that will help generate tens of millions more in state and federal matching dollars for projects that we determine locally. That's money that can't be touched by the State or by Washington D.C.

Measure B includes strong accountability measures. It requires an independent citizens' oversight committee and annual financial and performance audits, and limits administrative expenses to less than 1%.

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE B

There's already a half-cent sales tax, Measure A, that raises a gusher of revenue for roads/transit: \$109 Million last year, \$659 Million since 2009 and will generate \$3 to \$4 Billion through 2039. Those funds are spent mostly on new construction while maintenance is badly neglected. Measure B will double the transportation tax but won't fix the problem- it compounds it.

Measure B is cleverly crafted by politicians to give the misleading impression that it will fix our roads. In fact, the "Fix It First" promise lasts only 5 years and can be waived by the politicians at any time. Measure B expenditures are heavily weighted towards big-budget construction projects that will enrich politically- connected contractors but won't fix our roads.

The claim that Measure B includes "strong accountability measures" is false. Measure A created a so-called "Independent Taxpayers Oversight Committee" that is not independent, contains not a single taxpayer representative, has not produced a single report, issued no meeting minutes and not produced any performance audits, even though such audits are mandated by law.