



TO: Honorable Members of the City Council

FROM: Mayor Jesse Arreguín (Author), Councilmembers Susan Wengraf (Co-Sponsor), Sophie Hahn (Co-Sponsor), and Rigel Robinson (Co-Sponsor)

SUBJECT: Designating the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission as the Citizens' Oversight Committee for Expenditure of the Proceeds of the Fire, Emergency Services and Wildfire Prevention Tax (Measure FF)

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution designating the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission as the citizens' oversight committee for the expenditure of proceeds from the Fire, Emergency Services and Wildfire Prevention Tax (Measure FF).

Should Measure FF pass on the November 3 ballot, the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission shall function as the citizens' oversight committee for expenditure of the proceeds of the Fire, Emergency Services and Wildfire Prevention Tax (Measure FF). For this purpose, in addition to its other powers, the Commission may: 1) request detailed expenditure plans for tax proceeds annually, which shall be provided to it as early in the budget process as feasible; 2) make recommendations to the City Manager and the City Council as to the rate at which the tax should be set and how any tax proceeds should be spent; and 3) obtain a report on actual expenditures. The City Manager shall cooperate with the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission in providing the information it requests. All expenditures also will be subject to an annual independent financial audit to confirm that expenditures are consistent with the intent of the measure.

BACKGROUND

Measure FF¹ would authorize a special parcel tax for the purpose of funding firefighter and emergency medical response, upgrades to the 9-1-1 dispatch system, hazard mitigation, and wildfire prevention and preparedness activities.²

In 2008, voters passed Measure GG to stop fire stations from being closed and services from being reduced, in the context of a major economic downturn. Measure GG designated the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission a formal oversight role, the duties of which are replicated, with respect to Measure FF, through the passage of this Council item.

¹ [Ballot Question and Full Text](#)

² [City Attorney's Impartial Analysis of Measure FF](#)

Citizen input and oversight are crucial for transparency and accountability. Our City Auditor also plays an important role, periodically auditing the use of funds. As with Measure D (2014), Measure U1 (2016), and Measures O and P (2018), various boards and commissions play a critical oversight role and make recommendations regarding expenditures.

Now, with rising challenges from climate change and fires, bigger demands on our emergency services, and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, Measure FF has been placed on the ballot by a unanimous City Council to provide funds to modernize our 911 dispatch system, upgrade equipment, hire additional paramedics, improve emergency alert systems and continue to clear fire fuels, among other things.

To ensure that monies from Measure FF, should it be passed by the voters, have the same oversight as monies from Measure GG, this item designates the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission to function as the citizens' oversight committee for expenditure of the proceeds of the Fire, Emergency Services and Wildfire Prevention Tax (Measure FF).

CONTACT

Mayor

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RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

**DESIGNATING THE DISASTER AND FIRE SAFETY COMMISSION AS THE
CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE FOR EXPENDITURE OF THE PROCEEDS OF THE
FIRE, EMERGENCY SERVICES AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION TAX (MEASURE FF)**

WHEREAS, Measure FF would authorize a special parcel tax for the purpose of funding firefighter and emergency medical response, upgrades to the 9-1-1 dispatch system, hazard mitigation, and wildfire prevention and preparedness activities; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, voters passed Measure GG to stop fire stations from being closed and services from being reduced, in the context of a major economic downturn. Measure GG designated the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission a formal oversight role, the duties of which are replicated, with respect to Measure FF, through the passage of this Council item; and

WHEREAS, citizen input and oversight are crucial for transparency and accountability, and our City Auditor also plays an important role, periodically auditing the use of funds; and

WHEREAS, as with Measure D (2014), Measure U1 (2016), and Measures O and P (2018), various boards and commissions play a critical oversight role and make recommendations regarding expenditures; and

WHEREAS, with rising challenges from climate change and fires, bigger demands on our emergency services, and the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, Measure FF has been placed on the ballot by a unanimous City Council to provide funds to modernize our 911 dispatch system, upgrade equipment, hire additional paramedics, improve emergency alert systems and continue to clear fire fuels, among other things; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Berkeley City Council that, to ensure that monies from Measure FF, should it be passed by the voters, have the same oversight as monies from Measure GG, this resolution designates the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission to function as the citizens' oversight committee for expenditure of the proceeds of the Fire, Emergency Services and Wildfire Prevention Tax (Measure FF).

