

From: Annika Peacock [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 28, 2024 8:43 PM
To: Public - Shared Mailbox
Subject: Fwd: Protest letter against proposed cpud special election tax measures

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Subject: Protest letter against proposed cpud special election tax measures

Dear Members of the Plumas County Board of Supervisors,

As a concerned resident of Chester and an active participant in local governance matters, I am writing to express my profound objections to the two proposed tax bills by the Chester Public Utility District (CPUD). While I understand the importance of funding essential services like fire and emergency medical services, the manner in which these tax bills have been proposed, their lack of accountability measures, and the questionable financial management of CPUD compel me to urge you to reconsider their approval.

1. **Inequitable Taxation:** The proposed tax amounts are not only exorbitant but also place an unfair financial burden on residents. In times where every dollar counts for our community, it is imperative that taxation be both reasonable and equitable. For instance, parcel owners with multiple co-located units will pay less per unit than other parcel owners, and there is no exception for seniors, disabled, or veterans.

2. **Lack of Accountability:** There is a glaring absence of clear, defined mechanisms within the tax bills to ensure that the collected funds are allocated and spent responsibly. Without stringent accountability measures, there is a risk of further mismanagement and misuse of these crucial public funds.

3. **Operational Uncertainty of the Fire District:** The renewal of operating insurance for the fire district remains uncertain. Imposing hefty taxes when the very existence of the fire service is in question does not seem justifiable or prudent.

4. **Irregularities in Tax Bill Approval Process:** The process by which these tax bills were passed raises serious concerns. The CPUD board meeting where these decisions were made was marked by irregularities and a lack of adherence to established rules of order, undermining the legitimacy of the entire process.

5. **Too Little, Too Late:** While the need for funds is undeniable, there is a concern that even with these tax bills, the financial and operational challenges facing CPUD may be too deep-rooted to resolve without a comprehensive and strategic overhaul of the district's governance and financial management practices.

6. **Ongoing Recall Efforts:** It's imperative to note that there is a recall underway for 4 of the 5 board members, with the 5th expected to face recall as soon as he meets the 90-day threshold as per Division 11 of the Recall Elections [11000 - 11386]. This underscores the widespread lack of trust and dissatisfaction with the current board, further questioning the legitimacy of the tax measures they have passed.

I urge the Plumas County Board of Supervisors to critically reassess the approval of these tax bills. It is crucial to ensure that any taxation is not only fair and justified but also comes with stringent accountability for how the funds are used. Our community deserves transparency, responsible governance, and the assurance that our hard-earned money is being utilized to genuinely and effectively serve the public good.

Hiskey, Allen

From: No Reply <[REDACTED]@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, February 3, 2024 8:01 AM
To: Public - Shared Mailbox
Subject: Public Comment Submission

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Submitted by: Stephen Voboril

Email Address: [REDACTED]@[REDACTED]

Commented on event: <https://plumascoca.portal.civicclerk.com/event/1373/overview>

If you are having trouble viewing the URL above, cut and paste the string into your browser window.

User comment: My comment is on Agenda item CPUD ballot Measure. This measure was passed by the board of Directors of the CPUD that has been elected / appointed to represent the Chester community. This is a very complicated and last resort option to save the Chester Fire Department. It has been a subject of reluctant discussions for the last 6 years and we can't kick the can any farther. We need the Community to Vote and decide what our Fire Department will look like. I do not believe we have enough funding to keep the Doors open at the reduced staffing we have now for very long, so the Voters need to decide ASAP what they can afford and it needs to be added the Property tax bill in

November. This will allow us to move forward on the rebuilding of our Fire Department. 

Hiskey, Allen

From: Kyle Howard kvn@frontier.com
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2024 10:06 AM
To: Clerk of the Board - Shared Mailbox dmch@frontier.com
Subject: Chester Fire Tax Measure

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Plumas County Board Of Supervisors,

I can not express enough how strongly my family & I believe in the tax measure being proposed for vote on the ability to keep the Chester Fire Department funded !!! This is a safety & liability issue for not only the citizens of Plumas County but for your board also. This feeling holds true for virtually everyone I know & everyone that I have spoken to. It is really a matter of common sense. GIVE US THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE/VOTE !!! At your February 6th, 2024 @ 10am board meeting.

Kyle V. Howard

Kyle V Howard, Owner
P.O. Box 1668
Chester, Ca. 96020
530-258-3541 Office
530-258-1601 Cell
Lic. # 927562

Art Tharpe
144 Meadow Road
Chester, CA 96020

February 1, 2024

Plumas County Board of Supervisors
Attn: Allen Hiskey, Clerk to the Board
520 Main St., Room 309
Quincy, CA 95971

Dear Chairman Hagwood and Members of the Board,

As a member of the Chester Public Utility District board, I am concerned about recent actions and attempts to block the proposed tax measures that have been submitted to be placed on the May ballot.

There is a small group of people who seem to be actively working to ensure that Chester Fire Department is forced to close. Such a closure would not be in the best interest of Chester, the entire lake basin, or Plumas County.

It is of paramount importance that the people of Chester have the opportunity to choose their destiny and vote, either for or against these measures. The information and influences being given to county officials appear to have an agenda other than the best interests of the people.

Please vote to approve placement of the assessments on the ballot. To vote against this measure is a vote against all of Chester itself.

Sincerely,

Calvin Arthur (Art) Tharpe

Hiskey, Allen

From: Robin Malby [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 12:31 AM
To: Clerk of the Board - Shared Mailbox
Subject: Chester Fire Department

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To the Plumas County Board of Supervisors,

My husband and I have owned a vacation home in Chester in the Martin Ranch area since 2011. Having grown up in Chester, my husband feels strong ties to the town and to Lake Almanor, where his childhood home was located.

I have grown to love the beauty of the lake and surrounding mountains and to appreciate the connection and camaraderie small town living brings.

We were very surprised to hear about the financial difficulties Chester Fire Department is now in, and that the Fire Department is at extreme risk of closing down.

We have had several conversations with a board member of the Chester Public Utility District. This board has been tasked with finding ways to keep the fire department afloat. They have put in countless hours and attended several meetings in order to come up with feasible solutions.

They have proposed a measure with two different tax amounts to be placed on the ballot this spring. By offering two different fees, one smaller and one larger, they have in effect created a "sliding scale" so Chester residents can choose what they feel they can afford to pay. These much needed funds would help to keep the fire department functioning.

We have become aware that there is a small group of Chester residents who don't want this proposed measure on the ballot. They have become quite vocal and their reasoning not only omits pertinent facts but appears to be self-serving. By pushing to keep the above mentioned measure off a spring ballot, they deny the citizens of Chester the right to vote on this crucial issue.

As homeowners in the city of Chester, my husband and I feel strongly that we should be given the opportunity to vote on funding to support and keep the Chester Fire Department open. The Public Utility District measure needs to be on the ballot so we don't lose our fire department entirely.

How can the city of Chester, located in a state that fluctuates in and out of severe drought patterns and surrounded by forest weakened by the Dixie Fire, expect to retain all of its current population without a fire department? The safety and security of a functioning fire department is essential for living in any town or city in any state in this country.

We love our time spent in Chester and Lake Almanor. We have donated to local organizations, frequented local businesses and contributed to local fundraisers. We always try to give back and feel a part of this lovely community. However, if the fire department is allowed to fold, we will have no choice but to sell. We cannot take the risk of losing all of our investment should a fire occur, nor incur the loss of a 911 emergency resource. We have talked with some of our neighbors who have expressed the same conclusions.

Hiskey, Allen

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 1:36 PM
To: Clerk of the Board - Shared Mailbox
Subject: tax measures

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Good day. I have lived in Chester since 1980 and am saddened to see the mess our fire department and EMS are in. I am also saddened that the last measure to add a tax to keep these services afloat failed to pass. I am not sure why there is an organized effort to keep new tax measures off the May 7, 2024 ballot but I do believe it is the right of the folks that depend on these services to have these measures ON the ballot. Since the Dixie fire it has been a struggle for all of us to get reasonable fire insurance and if we cannot maintain a viable fire department we will ALL surely lose our insurance. Please help save our services by allowing these measures on the ballot. Thank you.

Sincerely, Bev Herman

Hiskey, Allen

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 4, 2024 8:05 PM
To: Clerk of the Board - Shared Mailbox
Subject: Chester Fire Department

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To the Plumas County Board of Supervisors:

I graduated from Chester High School in 1971. Having lived on the Lake Almanor peninsula I saw the formation and development of the first volunteer fire department. My father and others recognized the need to have a local fire house, equipment and firefighters much nearer to their homes and businesses. Prior to this the peninsula was, at least in part, reliant on Chester to respond to fires. Chester was a responsive resource for this, and many other essential services. Chester remains an essential service provider to the area. Without a local and staffed fire house within town I am concerned that the dynamics of Chester will take a significant change for the worse.

In addition to the obvious delay in response time to a fire, there is a significant negative impact to the cost of fire insurance (if it is available to buy). The issue of fire insurance cost and availability will be a big consideration to current home owners, who may then decide to sell, or to purchasers who may elect not to buy. Should these circumstances occur the value of homes (and ultimately businesses) could see significant decline. Ironically, however, the impact to those least able to afford it will likely be negative also, since rent will be increased to cover additional insurance costs. Remember too, bank loans to purchase properties require the borrower have adequate insurance. These potentials could be the leading edge of a downward trend in business revenue and property values within the community. Naturally, such impacts would lead to a loss of property tax and other revenue to the county which I am sure the board would hope to avoid.

As homeowners in the city of Chester we should be given the opportunity to vote on funding to support and keep the Chester Fire Department open. The Public Utility District measure needs to be on the ballot so we have the opportunity to not lose our fire department entirely.

Chester has always been available to meet the need of the greater Lake Almanor basin. An operating fire station within the community is every bit as vital to the health of the community and individuals as is any other community service.

Doug Malby

Hiskey, Allen

From: Frank Green, frank4@outlook.com
Sent: Saturday, February 3, 2024 7:19 PM
To: Clerk of the Board - Shared Mailbox
Subject: In Support of the Two Chester Public Utilities District Tax Measures

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February 2, 2024

Dear Plumas County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing in support of placing the two parcel tax measures requested by the Chester Public Utility District on the May 7, 2024 ballot. I am also writing to refute some of the claims being made by a small group of Chester residents who object to the proposed ballot measures.

Claim #1. Alleged inequitable taxation: What is “inequitable” is in the eye of the beholder. While arguments can be made for using something other than a parcel tax to support Chester Fire Department, since 1978 when Proposition 13 passed, parcel taxes have been common way for special districts both in Plumas County and all over California to raise revenue. As of August 24, 2023 there have been 960 parcel taxes on various ballots in California since 2008. Many were flat parcel taxes, some had other structures, but in every case, there would be some way to argue that the tax was “inequitable”.

Claim #2. Alleged lack of accountability: This complaint is unfounded. CPUD financials are done by an outside CPA monthly, and books are audited by an outside firm annually. The accountability of CPUD has improved dramatically since the new general manager was hired. In addition, the proposed tax measures have built in language that strictly limits the use of the money generated, as well as requiring annual audits specifically to ensure proper management of those funds.

Claim #3. Alleged operational uncertainty of the fire district: Renewal of the operating insurance for Chester Fire District is NOT uncertain, but it will remain expensive. It is true that former management did let the operating insurance of CFD lapse. As a result of this negligence the cost of insurance is much greater (more than \$84,000 greater) than previously. It was the current general manager who discovered that the fire district was operating without insurance and rectified that situation.

Claim #4. Alleged irregularities in the tax measure approval process: CPUD is committed to making sure the customers served by this district have the opportunity to vote on whether they want to continue to have a fire department and what they want the nature of the fire department to be. The CPUD Board did have to call a special meeting to get the proposed tax measures approved in time to get them on the May ballot, but they followed the step-by-step processes recommended by the Board’s attorney, who has years of experience in