



FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSESSMENT

WHAT IS A FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSESSMENT?

A fire suppression assessment is a property-related special assessment against real property within the Fresno County Fire Protection District service area to fund fire suppression services.

WHAT WILL THE ASSESSMENT BE USED FOR?

The Fresno County Fire Protection district plans to build three new fire stations by 2012 using separate funds. The assessment would be used to hire the firefighters and pay for the new equipment to make those new stations completely operable.

HOW CAN THE FRESNO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT IMPLEMENT AN ASSESSMENT?

Property owners that will be affected must first approve the proposed assessment. Proposition 13 restricts the amount of ad valorem taxes (based on value of your home) on your property. Article XIID of the State Constitution and Proposition 218 provide the guidelines that must be followed to approve the new assessment.

HOW DO I VOTE?

Property owners will receive a notice and ballot in the mail specifying the total assessment amount, the property's specific assessment, how to cast a vote, and the date, time and place of the Public Hearing. Ballots must be turned before the close of the public input portion of the Public Hearing. Ballots and notices must be mailed out at least 45 days before the Public Hearing.

WHY IS THIS A PROPERTY OWNER VOTE?

Only property owners would pay the assessment, the assessment must be based on the benefit properties receive from fire services and it may only be imposed if a majority support the assessment. Therefore, the property owners of the affected properties are the qualified voters.

HOW WILL MY VOTE BE COUNTED?

Ballots will be weighted according to the proportionate financial obligation of the property (i.e. the amount of the assessment against the property). Each \$1 of the fire assessment = 1 vote. The assessment may be imposed only if weighted ballots submitted in support of the assessment exceed weighted ballots in opposition.

HOW WILL I KNOW THAT ASSESSMENT PROCEEDS ARE SPENT PROPERLY?

By law, a special assessment can only be used for the improvements and services that have been identified and budgeted for within the district service area. In addition, the assessment will be included in the district annual budget, which is audited each year by an independent accounting firm and made available for public inspection. The Fresno County Fire Protection District Board of Directors has also agreed to appoint a citizens oversight committee to monitor assessment expenditures.

HOW LONG WILL THE ASSESSMENT LAST?

There is no sunset clause on the assessment.