



## **BOARD MEETING AGENDA SUBMITTAL**

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**TO:** GCSB Board of Directors

**FROM:** Peter Kampa, General Manager

**DATE:** October 13, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item 6G: Consideration of a Formal District Position on the County's Measure U Related to the Proposed Increase in Transient Occupancy Tax

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends the following action:

*It is recommended that the Board consider the request for support for Measure U and take action appropriately.*

### **BACKGROUND:**

The county has placed Measure U on the November 2020 ballot with the intent of increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) charged by the county by 2%. If successful, this revenue will be generated based on the cost of rooms and occupancy, and available to the county to fund general expenditures. A successful Measure U and increase in revenue for the county would reduce impacts due to the increasing cost of providing services including fire, parks, libraries and law enforcement.

It is appropriate for the District to take a position on a measure such as this, especially when it can have a beneficial impact on services or financial contributions provided by the county to the benefit of the District taxpayers. Supporting such a measure does not necessarily lend itself to approval by the voters, nor does it gain the District any political advantage. District support can simply signify that we understand the measure and hope that the county is successful, and that we do not oppose the measure.

In the attached email, it has been requested that GCSB sign on in support of Measure U. The requesting group submitted the OpEd to the Union Democrat, which has been published. If the District voted in support and so directed, we could sign on to future support writings. We are prohibited from spending any public money to advocate for the measure as a District.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

None

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Support request email

**From:** [Virginia Richmond \(Gustafson\)](#)  
**To:** [Pete Kampa](#)  
**Subject:** County Measure U  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 30, 2020 2:33:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [OpEd2.docx](#)

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Pete,

As you probably know, the Tuolumne County budget was passed last week with huge cuts to many essential services, such as libraries, parks, fire protection and law enforcement.

A group of us are planning an OpEd in the Union Democrat to urge passage of Measure U (the tourist tax), which seems to be the last hope for many departments. I've attached a near-final draft here.

Would you like to sign it with us? I'm hoping to get many local "influencers" and community organizations to support it, and GCSD would be a great addition.

Please let me know what you think.

thanks,

Virginia Richmond

Support Measure U Committee

President, Friends of the Groveland Library

## We Need 'U'

We are writing in support of Measure U which increases the Transit Occupancy Tax ("tourist tax") charged to guests at hotels and other lodgings, from 10% to 12% in line with neighboring counties. It is paid by tourists and other visitors; we pay a similar (or higher) tax if we book a room or a camp site in other parts of California.

Over the last several years, Tuolumne County's budget has been drastically reduced. For example, in just the past two years we have seen the County Library budget slashed by more than \$300,000, half the staff laid off and Twain Harte library and the Bookmobile eliminated.. Many other vital services have been cut, operating hours have been reduced and there have been layoffs every year. With fire safety becoming an ever more critical, we need Measure U now more than ever.

Clearly the county can no longer cut its way out of this financial crisis. We must increase revenue. The Measure U Tourist Tax is a way to increase county revenue *at no cost to local residents*.

This small increase on visitors' hotel or Airbnb bills translates into a significant revenue source for our community. The "Tourist Tax" increase could bring in \$1.85 million annually and would allow county departments – including Fire, Libraries, Parks and Pools, Probation, Roads and Sheriff -- to get back to serving residents properly.

- For example, the sheriff acknowledges, "Given our current staffing levels, the Sheriff's Office is unable to consistently provide coverage in outlying areas such as the 108 Corridor and the communities of Groveland and Pine Mountain Lake. Those communities deserve better service."
- Much of the critical Fire Department equipment is outdated and in need of upgrades. This includes such vital items as water tenders, engines and Jaws of Life. This is potentially catastrophic for all of us.
- We need our parks and pools open for healthy family recreation.
- Our libraries serve not only readers, but also people who need access to computers to apply for jobs, file for unemployment, or take adult literacy classes. They also serve as emergency warming or cooling centers.

Tourists and visitors utilize many of the services we pay for with our taxes such as roads, fire and sheriff protection, and parks and libraries. *It's time for visitors to pay their fair share.*

We urge everyone to support Measure U with your vote. Finally here's a tax you can approve, but not have to pay!

Signed,

Malcolm Carden, President, Friends of the Tuolumne County Library

Virginia Richmond, President, Friends of the Groveland Library

Pat McCrea, President, High Country Friends of the Library  
Jeff Warren, President, Columbia College Foundation  
Jerry Baker, Founder, Camp Tuolumne Trails  
Wynette Hilton, Superintendent, Big Oak Flat-Groveland School District  
Connie Corcoran, Director of Library Services (retired)  
Dan Hawks, Chief Probation Officer  
Harriet Codeglia, President, So. Tuolumne Historical Society  
Scott Viets, Producing Artistic Director, Sierra Repertory Theatre  
Sharon Hunt-Stevenson, President, Groveland Rotary  
Kathleen Morse, Ph.D., President, Northside Pet Connection  
Ted Michaud, Commission on Aging  
Steve Griefer, President, Pine Mountain Lake Board of Directors  
Brian Greene, Columbia College Librarian  
?? Andy Murphy, Assistant Fire Chief  
?? Chris Fritz, Firefighters

Etc. etc etc.