



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: August 7, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item X: Consideration of resolution ordering an election on a special tax, establishing specifications of the election order, and requesting consolidation with other elections occurring on Tuesday, November 6, 2012.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board of the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority ("MRCA") adopt the attached resolution ordering an election on a special tax, establishing specifications of the election order, and requesting consolidations with other elections occurring on Tuesday, November 6, 2012 in the Woodland Hills, Encino, Tarzana Hillside Areas.

Background: The MRCA is responsible for maintaining and improving open space, parklands and wildlife corridors, natural habitats, waters, land and facilities within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Zone. Unlike most public agencies, the MRCA does not receive permanent funding from local or state taxes. The MRCA now faces a significant reduction in funding for park maintenance and improvements, fire prevention, and acquisition, including the expiration of funding previously available from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District pursuant to Proposition A.

As a result of its revenue decrease and because the MRCA is responsible for maintaining extensive open space, parklands and wildlife corridors, natural habitats, waters, lands, and facilities, in addition to protecting water quality and providing park ranger safety and security patrols and fire prevention services including brush clearing, the MRCA is proposing a local funding measure. Approval of this funding measure is intended to allow the MRCA to avoid further reductions to its open space and parkland maintenance services as well as its fire prevention and safety services.

This proposed funding measure is specifically for a proposed community facilities district within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Zone in the City of Los Angeles and generally within the northern slope of the Santa Monica Mountains

west of Interstate 405 and east of the City of Calabasas (the “Woodland Hills, Encino, Tarzana Hillside Areas” or “Areas”). The MRCA currently maintains over 1,000 acres of local open space, parkland and wildlife corridors within these Areas.

The ballot proposition provides for a ten-year special tax of \$19.00 per developed parcel. If approved by 2/3rds or more of voters in Woodland Hills, Encino, Tarzana Hillside Areas who participate in the November 2012 general election, the special tax election would generate approximately \$305,000 per year. The special tax proceeds will be used for the purpose of open space, parkland and wildlife corridor maintenance and preservation, fire prevention and park ranger safety and security services in the Woodland Hills, Encino, Tarzana Hillside Areas and to fund the acquisition of additional open space in these areas.

The summary of the proposed ballot proposition is:

To protect, maintain and conserve local open space, parklands and wildlife corridors; protect water quality in local creeks and reservoirs; improve fire prevention including brush clearing, acquire open space, and increase park ranger safety and security patrols, shall the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority implement a special \$19 tax annually for ten years only, with all funds staying in the hillside communities of Woodland Hills, Encino, and Tarzana, and require independent citizen oversight and audits?

A citizens' oversight committee shall be appointed by the Board and shall review and report annually on the expenditure of the special tax revenues.

If the resolution is approved, MRCA staff will submit the measure and required documentation to the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters and will perform other tasks for proceeding with the election.