

League of Women Voters of Boulder Valley

2000 - Election

Boulder County Ballot Issues

Ballot Issue 1A

WORTHY CAUSE TAX

This ballot issue, referred by the County Commissioners, seeks to extend an existing sales tax of 0.05% (five cents on a \$100 purchase) for three years in order to provide funding for capital needs of non-profit organizations in Boulder County. The organizations furnish health-care and transitional housing to low-income families in the county. The funds would be used for upgrading current facilities and building new ones.

Major Provisions

This ballot issue, referred by the County Commissioners, seeks to extend an existing sales tax of 0.05% (five cents on a \$100 purchase) for three years in order to provide funding for capital needs of non-profit organizations in Boulder County. The organizations furnish health-care and transitional housing to low-income families in the county. The funds would be used for upgrading current facilities and building new ones.

Background

The "Emergency Services" tax was approved by voters in November 1998 to provide funds to county emergency squads for the purchase of equipment and facility improvements. This 0.05% sales tax was to be levied for two years only, ending 12/31/2000. The County Commissioners meet on a regular basis with representatives of private non-profit human services organizations. Recognizing that these groups have a need for money for capital improvements, the commissioners proposed to extend the current "Emergency Services" tax for three years in order to raise about \$6 million. The tax will be given to groups that provide health, dental and transitional housing services to low-income families and individuals in Boulder County. The money will be used to expand facilities and buy equipment, not for staff or operational expenses. The money will be given to specific groups, like the People's Clinic, Clinica Campesina, Salud Clinic and Dental Aid, for existing programs.

Those in **FAVOR** say

1) Boulder County has a pressing need for more transitional housing and health services. A tax of 5 cents on a \$100 purchase will increase the number of transitional housing units by more than 50% and provide health services to the growing number of families who do not have health insurance or adequate means to afford private care;

- 2) This is an extension of an existing tax for three more years. The sales tax percentage will not increase if this issue is approved;
- 3) The money will be used for proven programs by existing non-profit organizations.

Those **OPPOSED** say:

No organized opposition has been identified.

Ballot Issue 1B

OPEN SPACE TAX

Major Provisions

This measure extends for eight years, from 11/01/2002 through 12/31/2009, Boulder County's sales and use tax of 0.10 percent, currently dedicated to recycling, and dedicates it after 12/31/2001 to open space instead. It provides for the issuance of up to \$80.8 million in revenue bonds, with a repayment cost of up to \$151 million. It provides the county with bonding authority to finance the acquisition of open space lands by purchases of properties, leases, development rights, conservation easements, rights of way, and/or mineral and water rights. This measure also provides revenue to improve and manage open space property, including, but not limited to, trails, facilities, wildlife habitat improvement, fences, and water resources.

- A YES vote means the current sales and use tax for recycling is extended to 12/31/2009 and is dedicated to open space after 12/31/2001.
- A NO vote means the current tax for recycling remains in effect until 12/31/2001.

Background

The measure was referred to voters by the County Commissioners. The county presently levies a sales tax dedicated to open space. In 1993 voters approved an open-space sales tax of 0.25 percent to expire 12/31/2009, but in 1999 approved a ten-year extension through 12/31/2019. The bonding amount is nearly used up. Sales tax revenues for recycling are estimated to be sufficient for the building of the recycling facility. Voters are being asked to extend the recycling tax as an additional open space tax.

Those in **FAVOR** say

- 1) The measure brings no increase in the current sales tax rate but rather extends an existing tax;
- 2) The measure allows purchases to be made sooner and thus more economically, as land prices will continue to rise;
- 3) Acquisition of open space needs to keep pace with the rate of new development;

4) Open space lands do not require schools, roads, sewer, and other services and the county has less need to increase property tax revenue to cover these services.

Those **OPPOSED** say:

- 1) The measure creates, from 2002 to 2009, a second open-space sales tax levied concurrently with the existing 0.25 percent, for a total of 0.35 percent;
- 2) An economic downturn and the accompanying decrease in sales tax revenues for repayment of the bonds could necessitate raising the property tax mill levy;
- 3) Boulder County has enough public land, including city and county open space, BLM land, and national forest;
- 4) Removing land from possible housing development may increase housing prices in the area and force more workers to commute.