

Argument FOR Passage of Measure C

Submitted by Chester Public Utility District

Title: Professional Fire Dept. Option

Chester Fire Department has spent years relying on one-time dollars to balance its annual budget. As revenue from ambulance operations and fighting wildfires has dwindled, CFD is in desperate need of a stable funding source to continue providing fire protection.

This proposed tax measure would add a \$1,500/year tax to each parcel within the district. This cost of about \$125/month will allow the fire department to retain a full-time staff of professional firefighters with a guaranteed 24/7 response. In the future, the tax may be lowered if other revenues increase.

The current board of directors and administration at Chester Public Utility District/Fire Department have spent the last two years searching for other solutions to the department's fiscal problems and successfully identified some significant cost savings. The fire department, however, receives less than \$330,000 in tax revenue annually. The cost of a minimally-staffed department with 10 firefighters being paid for 24/7 professional coverage is approximately \$2,000,000.

The board and administration have also corrected several management deficiencies that have plagued the district for years. CPUD/CFD now posts all financial statements online each month and ensures that an annual audit is performed by an outside CPA firm.

It is important to note that if neither this measure nor Measure C passes, Chester will effectively be without local fire protection. CalFire will not take responsibility for the Chester area unless they are paid to do so. In emergencies Chester will rely on mutual aid from other fire departments.

You may vote yes on both Measures B and C; only the higher of the two will take effect if they both win voter approval.