



Town of Moraga

MAYOR'S OFFICE

July 14, 2021

Board of Directors
Moraga-Orinda Fire District
1280 Moraga Way
Moraga, CA 94556

RE: Opposition to an Increase in the Fire Flow Tax Rate for the Moraga Fire Flow Tax Zone

Dear MOFD Chair Jorgens and Board Directors:

We understand that at your Board meeting of July 21, 2021 you will discuss the Fire Flow Tax and adopt the rates for Fiscal Year 2021/22. We also understand that a question has been raised by a Board member as to whether the rate paid by property owners in the Moraga Fire Flow Tax (FFT) zone (which includes all of the Town of Moraga as well as 840 parcels in the City of Orinda and additional parcels in unincorporated Contra Costa County), should be increased. On behalf of our constituents, we firmly oppose the imposition of a rate that is higher for property owners in the Moraga FFT zone than property owners in the Orinda FFT zone.

Funding of MOFD has been addressed multiple times, including as documented in the June 15, 2016 MOFD staff report entitled "Analysis of Funding Equity Between Taxpayers of Orinda and Moraga." This report states that the intent at formation was to have an integrated fire district with no separation by service zone and an equalized Fire Flow Tax throughout the district. MOFD's actions in 1999 to combine the financial operating and capital accounts reflects MOFD's commitment to integrated fire services.

Reverting to separate accounting for the Moraga and Orinda Fire Flow Tax zones may result in a finding that property owners in the Moraga FFT zone pay relatively more for their share of service due to the higher cost of providing service in the Orinda FFT zone due to multiple factors. These factors include the following: large portions of the Orinda FFT zone are in a CAL FIRE designated very high fire hazard severity zone; emergency responses to many properties in the Orinda FFT zone are impeded due to the rural, narrow and hilly nature of many roads; the necessity of ongoing extensive fire prevention work in North Orinda; inadequate water supply issues in parts of North Orinda; and, that three of the five MOFD fire stations are in Orinda. The higher fire insurance rates that many who live in the Orinda FFT zone pay is a clear indication of why those who live in the Orinda FFT zone should actually pay more for the fire services that MOFD provides.

There is no articulated basis for assessing property owners in the Moraga FFT zone a higher Fire Flow Tax. We are aware of no analysis that shows that property owners in the Moraga FFT zone are not contributing their fair share to MOFD. Nor are we aware of funding shortfalls or the need to fund capital improvements for property owners in the Moraga FFT zone.

MOFD's 2016 "Analysis of Funding Equity Between Taxpayers of Orinda and Moraga" explored funding equity and concluded that the intent of MOFD was to provide integrated fire services and that MOFD has provided all services on an integrated basis. We oppose another study that would divert funding and staff resources away from the mission of fire protection and emergency medical services.

On behalf of our constituents, we urge the MOFD Board to approve a continued 6 cent Fire Flow Tax rate for property owners in both the Orinda and Moraga Fire Flow Tax Zones and not spend taxpayer dollars on an expensive analysis to explore changes to the integrated system to deliver fire services that benefits ratepayers in all areas of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Sincerely,



Mike McCluer, Mayor
Town of Moraga