

When the proponents of an initiative measure submit a petition to the County Elections Official stating their intention to circulate and gather signatures to qualify a measure on the ballot for the next election, the California Elections Code requires the County Counsel to prepare an impartial title and summary of that measure. The County Counsel makes no conclusion in this summary about the accuracy of any representations in the measure, nor the legality of its provisions, if enacted. Nor does the County Counsel take a position on this proposed measure.

AN INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS

The County Counsel has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

SAFE DRINKING WATER, CLEAN BEACHES, WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION, AND WILDLIFE PROTECTION INITIATIVE

The stated purpose of this proposed initiative measure is to safeguard water quality, preserve clean ocean and beach areas, reduce wildfire risks, protect forests, enhance wildlife habitats, and improve community spaces. These efforts would be funded by a special parcel tax of \$87 per year, with certain parcels exempt as set forth in the initiative. The collected funds would be distributed to local government agencies and other entities identified in the initiative and would be spent on eligible projects as outlined below.

If the initiative is approved by a majority of voters in the County, Chapter 4.65 will be added to the Santa Cruz County Code. Proposed Chapter 4.65 is set forth in full in the initiative. The proposed chapter contains separate sections for definitions, imposition of the special parcel tax, fund creation, an expenditure plan, implementation, and oversight and accountability, among others.

The initiative places responsibility on the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to distribute the funds collected by the special parcel tax. Forty percent of the available funds will be distributed to eligible applicants for eligible projects through a grant program administered by the County of Santa Cruz. Twenty percent of the available funds will be distributed to incorporated cities within the county for eligible projects. Twenty percent of the available funds will be distributed to the County of Santa Cruz for eligible projects. Finally, twenty percent of the available funds will be distributed to the Resource Conservation District and a local land stewardship implementation partner for completion of eligible projects on private lands that result in a public benefit.

Eligible projects include those focusing on water conservation, water quality, flood protection and restoration, protection of public access to beaches, wildlife protection, pollution reduction, development of shaded fuel breaks and reduction of hazardous fuels, forest management, wetlands restoration, trail development, park improvements, recreation programs, climate risk-reduction, and other projects identified in more detail in the initiative. Sections of the proposed code chapter establish a basis for prioritizing among eligible projects.

The initiative creates a Citizens Oversight Advisory Board that will conduct hearings and receive public input on allocations related to expenditures under the initiative, receive reports from local agencies on projects funded through the initiative, and approve a five-year vision plan to help identify and prioritize fund expenditures.

The special parcel tax approved under this initiative will be in place until ended by voters.

As submitted, this measure includes over sixteen pages of single-spaced text. Voters are referred to the initiative documents for complete details.