



Berthoud Fire Protection District

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"To Serve, To Care, To Support"

FACT STATEMENT OF DISTRICT'S NOVEMBER 6, 2018 BALLOT MEASURE FOR VOTER APPROVAL TO SUSTAIN CURRENT PROPERTY TAX REVENUE

THE FIRE DISTRICT:

Berthoud Fire Protection District has served the Berthoud community for 130 years, and is a Statutory Special District governed by a Board of Directors. Berthoud Fire works closely with Larimer County Sheriff's Office, Thompson Valley EMS, State of Colorado / Division of Fire Prevention & Control, and the Town of Berthoud.

Berthoud Fire provides fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical services, wildland protection, extrication, hazardous materials, risk reduction, and public education to an estimated 24,000 District residents, and nearly 100,000 commuters and visitors every day; an increase of more than 40% in the last 6 years. The District spans 103 square miles in the counties of Larimer, Boulder, and Weld, and includes significant portions of US Highway 287 and Interstate 25. Since 2012, the number of calls for service have increased 94%. Almost half of the calls are for emergency medical care, with another 12% for motor vehicle accidents.

THE ISSUE SUMMARIZED

Property taxes are where Berthoud Fire derive 89% of its operational budget. In 2018, due to a provision in the State Constitution called the Gallagher Amendment, Berthoud Fire saw an 18% decrease in its revenue, meaning budget cuts had to be made. This tax decrease is slated to happen again in 2020 with a loss of an additional 15% in revenue. The reduction will continue to ratchet down each year as property values in Colorado increase. While action would need be taken at a legislative level to fix the problem, fire districts across Colorado are seeking solutions on local levels to prevent further losses of their operational budgets.

Berthoud Fire is joined by several fire districts in all three counties it serves, who are also taking action with similar ballot measures. These Fire Districts include: Poudre Valley Fire, Front Range Fire, Estes Valley Fire, Wellington Fire, Rocky Mountain Fire, Lefthand Fire, Southeast Weld Fire, and Eaton Fire. Several additional Fire Districts are pursuing mill levy increases to offset their revenue losses.

THE BALLOT MEASURE:

On September 4th Berthoud Fire's Board of Directors held a special meeting to discuss what action they would take in placing a measure on the upcoming November ballot. After reviewing public feedback from a community survey, Board members decided not to pursue a mill levy

increase but instead to seek voter approval to counteract the harmful effects of Gallagher by sustaining current property tax revenue through the below ballot language:

BERTHOUD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BALLOT ISSUE 7B:

IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN ADEQUATE FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES, AND ONLY IF THE RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATE IS REDUCED BELOW THE CURRENT RATE ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 3 OF ARTICLE X OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION, SHALL THE BERTHOUD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (DISTRICT) BE PERMITTED TO ADJUST ITS PROPERTY TAX MILL LEVY TO OFFSET ANY DECREASE IN REVENUE CAUSED BY THE REDUCTION OF THE RESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT RATE; AND SHALL SUCH TAX PROCEEDS BE COLLECTED AND SPENT BY THE DISTRICT AS VOTER APPROVED REVENUE AND SPENDING CHANGES IN EACH YEAR, WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY CONSTITUTIONAL OR STATUTORY SPENDING OR REVENUE LIMITATIONS CONTAINED IN ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION AND SECTION 29-1-301 OF THE COLORADO REVISED STATUTES?

THOSE WHO SUPPORT 7B WOULD SAY:

This ballot measure allows the Fire District to maintain a predictable level of funding into the future that is not subject to the harsh impacts of the Gallagher Amendment. This flexibility will permit the Fire District to confidently account for the increased service demands of this growing area. Without this measure, the Fire District may be facing continued reductions in revenue, which could lead to significant revenue losses if residential values in Colorado stagnate or decline in the future. This measure is not a tax increase but grants the District the ability to collect revenues it would have collected had there been no change to the residential assessment rate.

THOSE AGAINST 7B WOULD SAY:

This ballot measure would disallow taxpayers from enjoying potential reductions in their tax bill based on the Gallagher Amendment's formula. The Gallagher Amendment has consistently decreased the burden on residential taxpayers since its approval in the early 1980s. The Fire District should rely on the residential growth in our area to supplement their revenues in years to come. In addition, even if this measure only grants the ability to adjust, it is likely that the Fire District will make the adjustment each year it is able.

FURTHER QUESTIONS?

For Questions on this ballot measure please contact the District's Public Information Officer May Soricelli msoricelli@berthoudfire.org. And follow the District's social media platforms for upcoming informational meetings and further information on the Gallagher Amendment.

To learn more about the relationship with Gallagher and Tabor that is causing the reductions, you can view a video produced by the Colorado Fiscal Institute which explains the impact of these provisions on fire districts in Colorado. The video is titled "The Gallagher Fire" by Colorado Fiscal Institute and can be found at berthoudfire.org.