

West Marin Neighbors:

Measure W has been approved by the Marin County Board of Supervisors for the November, 2018 ballot. This measure will increase the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) – the tax charged to travelers for overnight lodging - from the current 10% to 14% in West Marin. The resulting funds will be used for community housing and support for emergency responders.

We, the campaign committee** working with Supervisor Rodoni on the ballot measure, believe that this increase will provide a tremendous benefit to our West Marin communities. This is a brief outline of how we anticipate the passage of Measure W will address these serious issues.

Unlike the current 10% tax, the additional 4% will specifically benefit West Marin, where the conversion of long-term rental housing to short-term AirBnB/VRBO rentals has created an enormous crisis in community housing availability. Members of our West Marin workforce and middle class families in general no longer can find housing in West Marin.

The same visitor influx that has taken so many homes off the long-term rental market in West Marin has also strained to breaking point the capabilities of the emergency responders in the area, often volunteer fire departments. One of our fire departments now rescues more people from the water than responds to fire calls. Medical calls are at an all time high. The departments are losing volunteers due to the shortage in housing.

If approved by the voters, the revenue from the additional 4% TOT tax will be split evenly between:

- Establishing a fund for community housing in West Marin and,
- Providing support for emergency responders in the region.

For specific facts and figures on the amount of dollars generated by the TOT and their potential uses, please see the attached FAQ's pages.

We believe that using Transient Occupancy Tax revenues from short-term rentals to create both community housing and support for local emergency responders in West Marin is an elegant and appropriate response to two acute local problems created by the same influx of visitors that has created these problems. It also bonds short-term rental owners with long-term housing advocates in their common desire to return a substantial portion of the TOT to its source in West Marin.

It should be noted that the ONLY people whose taxes are increased by this measure are overnight visitors to West Marin — who will be helping to preserve the communities they love to visit and would probably approve the additional charge if they knew its purpose.

We ask that you vote for Measure W in November.

**The ballot measure campaign committee consists of representatives from CLAM, the Bolinas Community Land Trust, Bear Valley Cottage, the San Geronimo Valley Affordable Housing Association, the Stinson Beach Affordable Housing Committee and community housing advocates and fire department staff from several West Marin communities.

FAQ's

What is the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)? The TOT is a tax charged to visitors in overnight accommodations (e.g., B&B's, motels, hotels, Airbnb, VRBO). It is collected by owners of short-term lodging from guests and paid monthly to Marin County, where it goes into the County's general fund. It is presently 10% of the rental amount.

What does the ballot measure W do? The ballot measure proposes increasing the Transient Occupancy Tax in West Marin from 10% to 14% and using the additional 4% for two purposes: creating community housing and supporting emergency responders in our West Marin communities. This will allow overnight visitors to West Marin to help address the two major problems that a growing visitor base has created in the region: 1. The conversion of existing long-term rental housing into short-term lodging, creating a severe lack of rental properties for fulltime residents, and 2. The increasing number of calls handled by our mostly-volunteer first responders/firefighters.

How much is the TOT in other counties? San Francisco is 16.25%, Napa is 14%, Sonoma is 14%, Monterey is 15.15%, San Diego is 15.75%, and Anaheim is 17%.

Do all Marin lodging operators currently collect the Transient Occupancy Tax? No. While there are presently no exact counts of how many short-term rental operators are not paying the required TOT, anecdotal evidence indicates that the number is substantial. In January of 2018 Marin County hired a consultant, Host Compliance, to identify those operators who are not presently complying with the law and paying the TOT. Marin County intends that its use of this information will ensure that all operators of short-term rentals will be licensed and in compliance with the TOT code by the end of this year. However, even with 100% compliance, TOT revenues, except for the 4% West Marin increase, will still go into the County's general fund.

Will the ballot measure raise the TOT in all of Marin County? No. The TOT will be increased only in West Marin. The boundary of the area affected is from Muir Beach to Dillon Beach, including Nicasio and the San Geronimo Valley.

Why just West Marin? Because of the large number of visitors attracted to West Marin, we collect almost 80% of all TOT revenues in Marin and our area has borne the brunt of supporting this ever-growing influx of visitors, creating large stressors on both the housing market and on our local volunteer emergency responders. Raising the TOT in West Marin in order to fund housing and emergency services allows overnight visitors who use the facilities and services of this beautiful area to contribute to keeping West Marin healthy and thriving.

How many visitors annually? According to the National Park Service in 2017 Muir Woods had 834,000 visitors, Stinson Beach National Park had 680,000 visitors and Point Reyes National Seashore had 2,466,000 visitors.

How much money are we talking about? The TOT revenues from 2017 for the entire County were approximately \$3,746,427, of which approximately \$2,800,000 was generated in West Marin. The proposed TOT increase will provide annual funding of approximately \$600,000 for community housing development, approximately \$600,000 to be shared among the fire departments serving West Marin.

How do we know that these funds will remain in West Marin? By limiting the increase to West Marin and passing the ballot measure with a 2/3 majority, the allocations of the funds delineated in the ballot measure are preserved by law in perpetuity. Only another ballot measure passed with another 2/3 majority can alter those allocations.

Who will decide what specific projects will be financed by the funds created by the TOT increase? The ballot measure will provide for the creation of two advisory groups, one for housing and one for fire, each group with a representative from each of the communities in West Marin. The advisory groups will meet to examine all proposals and opportunities to increase housing and first responder capabilities and select which ones to fund.

How will the funds be used? The cost of a single house or two fire trucks exceeds the amounts allocated for housing and the respective fire services. \$600,000 every year for the purpose of acquiring or creating long-term housing in West Marin will provide the land trusts in West Marin and other affordable housing developers with the money needed for offers, inspections and due diligence so that they can move quickly when purchase opportunities arise. It can be used for bridge loan funding for the acquisition of properties, loans or grants for rehab work on properties acquired by affordable housing organizations, repair loans or grants to owners willing to commit to below market rental rates and down payment assistance for buyers willing to commit to affordable housing deed restrictions. The assistance for renters would include security deposit loans, first-and-last month's rent loans, emergency rent loans or grants and modest rent reduction grants.

\$600,000 every year would be shared by the fire departments serving West Marin. The West Marin Fire Chiefs report that the number of calls to which they must respond increases as the size of the communities from which they draw their paid staff and volunteers declines. This decline is largely caused by the lack of community housing, and is the nexus between the two uses of the increased TOT funds. The Chiefs state that some of the uses of additional funds would be enhanced training, additional paid firefighter and paramedic staffing especially during peak visitor season, new equipment and recruitment and retention of volunteers which would include building public awareness of volunteer agency needs.

Institutional Supporters of W to Date: In no particular order, Stinson Beach County Water District, Inverness Public Utility District, Bolinas Fire Protection District, Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department, Stinson Beach Community Center, Stinson Beach Village Association, Stinson Beach Affordable Housing Committee, Muir Beach Community Services District, Bolinas Community Land Trust, San Geronimo Planning Group, Community Land Trust Association of West Marin, Housing Crisis Action Group, Tomales Volunteer Fire Company.

PLEASE VOTE YES ON W