



## **Solano County Frequently Asked Questions about Reducing Wildfire Risk**

### **What are some of the wildfire threats Solano County faces?**

California's fire seasons are longer, hotter and more destructive than ever before. Two years ago, Solano County residents were threatened by the LNU Lightning Complex Fire. Despite the heroic efforts of local firefighters, the fire burned 42,000 acres and resulted in the destruction of 309 homes and 854 structures in Solano County alone. According to local firefighters on the scene, had winds shifted, pushing the fire into more densely developed neighborhoods, many more homes could have burned and many lives threatened.

### **What measures can be taken to reduce the risk of wildfires?**

While wildfire starts are difficult to prevent, proactive steps can reduce the risk of wildfire spread, ensure firefighting resources are ready to respond quickly and ensure for early alerts and quick evacuations in order to save lives. Solano County is working with local fire departments to ensure we are ready for the next wildfire that threatens local residents, neighborhoods and businesses.

### **What specifically is Solano County doing to prepare for future wildfires?**

Specifically, Solano County is developing plans to ensure adequate numbers of on-duty professional firefighters as well as training and support for areas that rely on volunteer firefighters. Additionally, removing dry brush, dead trees and other hazardous fire fuels is critical for reducing wildfire risk. This includes creating fire breaks and vegetation management plans for private, public and open space areas to keep potential fire fuels at safe levels.

### **Where will funding to support these efforts to reduce wildfire risk come from?**

In order to increase fire prevention and protection efforts in Solano County, the Board of Supervisors is considering placing an 1/8 cent sales tax measure on the November 2022 ballot. If approved by local voters, the measure would generate approximately \$9 million annually in locally controlled funding to support general county services.

### **What programs would a local funding measure support?**

If approved by a majority of voters, a measure could provide locally controlled funding to address the following needs:

- Reducing the risk of wildfires and prevent the spread of wildfires from wildland areas to neighborhoods
- Improving rapid 9-1-1 response times, early fire detection and evacuation planning
- Reducing flammable brush and vegetation in public open spaces
- Reducing fire risk from homeless encampments

**How do I know funds from the measure would be used responsibly?**

While the proposed measure is still being discussed and drafted, a sales tax measure would include strict fiscal accountability protections, including:

- Independent oversight, mandatory financial audits and annual reports
- All money would be controlled locally and could not be taken by the State
- The measure would be paid not just by residents but also those who visit and shop in Solano County
- Groceries, prescription medicine and other essential purchases are exempt from sales tax

**Could the State take funding away from a potential measure?**

No. The funds could not be taken away by the State, ensuring that our tax dollars are used locally.

**Would a potential measure ensure that Solano County's visitors pay their fair share?**

Yes. Visitors who work or shop in our County and enjoy its many benefits would also pay the sales tax, ensuring that local homeowners and renters don't shoulder the entire burden.

**How much could a potential measure cost?**

The Board of Supervisors is considering seeking voter approval for increasing the sales tax rate by 1/8 cent, which would add less than 13¢ to a \$100 purchase.

**Are there protections for people on fixed or limited incomes?**

Yes. By law, essential purchases like groceries and prescription medicine are exempt from a sales tax so it is not a burden to those on fixed or limited incomes.

**Don't sales tax measures hurt local business?**

No, there is no evidence that increasing sales tax rates discourages patrons from supporting local businesses. An extra 13¢ per \$100 spent is not enough incentive for a consumer to change their buying habits. Plus, essential purchases are exempt from a sales tax.

**What is vegetation management?**

Vegetation management refers to the process of assessing and removing hazardous fuels, such as plants, brush, shrubs and trees to reduce the fire hazard and lessen the impacts of wildfire.

**What are hazardous fuels?**

Hazardous fuels are defined as any kind of living or dead vegetation that is combustible and can feed a wildfire. These include invasive, unnatural, fire-prone, non-native landscapes that carry fire to structures and homes. When vegetation or fuels, accumulate, they allow fires to burn hotter, faster and with greater intensity.

**What is defensible space?**

Defensible space is the buffer created between a building on a property and the grass, trees, shrubs or any wildland area that surround it. Defensible space will help slow or stop the spread of wildfire and protect a home from catching fire – either from direct flame contact or radiant heat. Defensible space is also important to help protect firefighters when they are defending homes and neighborhoods.

**When would the potential measure be on the ballot?**

The potential sales tax measure would appear on the November 8, 2022, General Election ballot. All registered voters will receive a ballot in the mail for this election in early October.

**Would I be able to vote on the potential measure?**

All registered voters living in Solano County would be eligible to vote on the potential measure.

**How can I register to vote or learn more about voting?**

You can register to vote at [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov). To find out more about voting in this election, please contact the Solano County Registrar of Voters at (707) 784-6675.