

**RICHARDSON BAY SANITARY DISTRICT MEASURE C**

**C** **MEASURE C:** Shall the order adopted on September 13, 2012 by the Local Agency Formation Commission of the County of Marin, ordering the consolidation of the Alto, Almonte, Homestead Valley and Richardson Bay Sanitary Districts into a single district known as the Southern Marin Sanitary District be confirmed subject to the terms and conditions specified in the order?

**YES**

**NO**

**IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE C**

**Impartial Analysis of the Proposed Consolidation of the Alto, Almonte, Homestead Valley & Richardson Bay Sanitary Districts**

This ballot measure, if approved by a majority of electors voting in this election, would consolidate the Alto, Almonte, Homestead Valley and Richardson Bay Sanitary Districts into a single sanitary district to be known as the Southern Marin Sanitary District. The consolidation has been initiated and approved by the Marin Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO).

In making its approval, Marin LAFCO made findings that consolidation would reduce costs and improve local government accountability.

The areas affected by the consolidation include the unincorporated Alto, Almonte, Homestead Valley, Strawberry and north Tiburon areas plus a portion of the Town of Tiburon between Gilmartin Drive and Monterey Drive.

The four sanitary districts affected by this consolidation provide sewage collection service. The districts operate sewer mains and pump stations and jointly treat their sewage through the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM).

Consolidation would affect governance and management functions of the districts. The consolidated sanitary district would be governed by a single, five-member board consisting of representatives of each existing district for a period of two years. Thereafter, board members would be elected at large.

Services after consolidation would be financed by existing fees. No new or increased taxes or assessments are included in this measure.

The assets and liabilities of the four existing districts will remain segregated in four rate zones following consolidation. Expenditures of reserves generated in any existing district rate zone on improvements in another rate zone are prohibited under legally enforceable terms and conditions of approval.

The above statement is an impartial analysis of Measure C. If you desire a copy of the measure, please call the Marin County Elections Department at (415) 473-6456 and a copy will be mailed at no cost to you.

s/PETER BANNING  
Executive Officer

**ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE C**

Rising sea levels, aging collection systems and deferred maintenance are among the infrastructure problems facing Southern Marin that must be addressed based on region-wide priorities. This consolidation provides the most effective governance arrangement to achieve that goal.

That is why Marin Local Agency Formation Commission, an independent agency, approved this consolidation in a 6-1 vote. They concluded, after extensive study, that (1) operating costs of sewer service would be reduced due to economies of scale and (2) government accountability would be improved.

- ECONOMIES CREATED BY CONSOLIDATION of sewer services provide for increased buying power, replacing management personnel with operating personnel, centralization of common functions, faster response time to spills and faster adoption of operational improvements.
- SMALLER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER. The four limited-purpose districts are among the county’s smallest. Almonte district’s population is only 1,064, and Alto’s a mere 928. The total for all four districts is 14,819. Together they incur the overhead of 20 board members, 4 managers, and 48 meetings per year. The stipends and staff time required to support such top-heavy governance are duplicative.
- EXISTING RATES WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY CONSOLIDATION. Each district’s assets are protected under enforceable terms and conditions of LAFCO’s approval.
- “LOCAL CONTROL” IS ACTUALLY ENHANCED BY CONSOLIDATION. Citizen participation is only meaningful if the activities and decisions of an elected board are known to its constituents and attract their involvement. Public participation in meetings of these districts is negligible.
- THERE HAVE BEEN NO CONTESTED ELECTIONS IN MORE THAN TEN YEARS. Maintaining separate districts clearly does not contribute to political accountability.

The Tamalpais and Alto Richardson Bay Fire Districts were consolidated into the Southern Marin Fire District in 1999, creating significant cost savings without loss of local control. We are confident this sewer district consolidation will be equally successful.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MARIN COUNTY  
s/Marjory Eller, President  
MARIN LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
s/Jeffry Blanchfield, Chairman

## **REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE C**

Consolidation has no relationship to rising sea levels and nothing to do with response time to spills. Its effect on contested elections is a matter of speculation and it certainly would adversely affect local control. Consolidation, as envisioned by Measure C is a gross over reach of discretionary authority by LAFCO. It is a solution to problems that do not exist and would create problems where there are none.

Richardson Bay Sanitary District's (RBSD) collection system is in excellent repair and upon completion of its current Capital Improvement Program in 2014, 75% of RBSD pipes will be in new condition.

LAFCO has offered no persuasive evidence that consolidation would improve the economics, governance or anything else in any of these districts. To the contrary, the operating personnel envisioned by the LAFCO plan will increase costs by replacing lower paid contract managers with full time public service employees with full benefits such as retirement, health care, sick leave, insurance and vacations that do not now accrue to the contract managers. These four districts are well run, efficient and collaborative. Consolidation offers unnecessary contention and disharmony.

RBSD's rates are the lowest in Southern Marin. The LAFCO plan ultimately envisions one uniform rate district wide, which can only be achieved by raising RBSD rates. Consolidation will ultimately result in increased costs to RBSD rate payers while reducing their control. Measure C should be defeated.

s/BRUCE ABBOTT  
RBSD President

## **ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE C**

There is no advantage for Richardson Bay Sanitary District (RBSD) rate payers in Measure C. The RBSD Board has studied this proposal extensively, and believes it will result in increased costs to its rate payers and will engender disharmony among the former districts of which it is to be comprised.

RBSD, whose rates are approximately half that of the other districts, have not increased rates in more than 25 years. The establishment of Rate Zones with boundaries identical to the corresponding former districts (each with the same rate that existed before consolidation) defeats the purpose of consolidation. Rate Zones require the segregation and maintenance of separate accounts for each Rate Zone, resulting in increased administrative staffing requirements and costs.

Consolidation ultimately envisions elimination of Rate Zones with one uniform rate across the consolidated district, but LAFCO offers no explanation of how a uniform rate can be established without raising the much lower relative rates of RBSD. RBSD believes that to be not possible. Consolidation will eliminate the part time contract managers (with no benefits) now utilized by the other districts who must ultimately be replaced by full time public sector employees with full benefits, substantially increasing costs. RBSD, while contributing two thirds the capital assets of the consolidated district will be initially awarded one third of the members of the combined board of directors, thereby subjecting RBSD leadership to loss of control of Richardson Bay property and reposing control in directors with loyalty to former smaller districts with economic incentives inconsistent with the interest of RBSD.

Measure C is a bad idea for Richardson Bay rate payers. There was too little planning and there are too many unanswered questions.

s/BRUCE ABBOTT  
President

s/EDWARD SOTELO  
Secretary

s/ROY BENVENUTI  
Director

s/FORREST MORPHEW  
Director

s/RON KOSCIUSKO  
Director

## **REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE C**

The residents of the Richardson Bay Sanitary District would not be disadvantaged by consolidation. The assertion that the potential election of directors from outside RBSD would somehow be a loss of local control for its residents is merely an opinion that supports retaining the offices of all the members of all four boards despite the cost. RBSD rates are low because, unlike the other three districts, they are substantially subsidized by property tax revenue that has built a multi-million dollar reserve. Neither the property tax subsidy nor the rate would be affected by consolidation.

Separate zones protect accumulated reserves. A uniform sewer service rate is not anticipated following consolidation because the rate zones CANNOT be discontinued “. . . until such time as rates among the zones are substantially equal, reserves in balance, and infrastructure condition within each zone is substantially in balance as determined by the successor district governing board”, a very high standard.

Consolidation does not assume increased staffing costs unless the new district elects to provide new services.

Maintaining the sewer system in each of four small, inefficient sanitary districts, each with its own governing board and general manager, is unnecessary and needlessly expensive. Cost savings – or funds for new services – will be available for better service by eliminating 15 redundant board members and the management staff required for their support.

Consolidation is the best answer.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MARIN COUNTY

s/Marjory Eller, President

MARIN LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

s/Jeffry Blanchfield, Chairman