

MEASURE "M"

Mariposa County Disaster Response, Public Safety and Vital Services Measure

To reduce the threat of wildfires; enhance fire protection and 911 emergency response; maintain law enforcement; repair damaged roads; protect water quality, open space; retain and attract jobs and businesses; and other general services, shall Mariposa County's existing transient occupancy tax paid only by hotel/short-term rental guests be increased by 2%, providing \$3,000,000 annually until ended by voters, requiring independent audits, all funds used locally?"

Yes

No

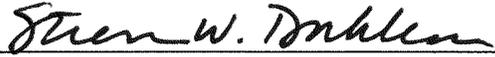
IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE "M"

COUNTY OF MARIPOSA

Measure "M" has been placed on the ballot by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors. At the present time, the County's Transient Occupancy Tax ("TOT") rate is ten percent (10%). The Board of Supervisors has determined that a two percent (2%) increase is needed to help maintain or improve fire protection, maintenance of roads, law enforcement and emergency response services, workforce housing, water quality protection, and other general County services. TOT is paid by persons occupying lodging in Mariposa County for thirty (30) consecutive days or less. If approved, the TOT will become twelve percent (12%) of the rent charged by hotel and short-term rental operators. By way of example, if this measure is approved, for a room that costs \$100 per night, the TOT due would increase from \$10 to \$12. Measure "M" requires a majority vote of the electorate voting on the measure at the election held on November 6, 2018.

A "yes" vote on this measure is a vote to approve and authorize an increase to the existing Transient Occupancy Tax from ten percent (10%) to twelve percent (12%). A "no" vote on this measure would not allow the County to increase the existing Transient Occupancy Tax, leaving that tax at ten percent (10%).

Date: August 15, 2018


Steven W. Dahlem, County Counsel

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE M
Statement in support of tourist tax increase to for local needs

Measure M would improve the County's fire and medical response, reduce the threat of wildfires, improve County road quality, maintain the high standards of our Sheriff's office, enhance economic development and support infrastructure for workforce housing by increasing the tax tourists pay (TOT) when staying in hotels and short-term rentals in Mariposa County. The Measure requires audits and budget accountability to ensure funds are expended as promised.

Yosemite is a world-class destination. Nearby destinations like Mammoth Lakes and South Lake Tahoe charge over 15% TOT/hotel tax. Mariposa County has had a 10% TOT since 1996. A citizen survey conducted earlier this year showed substantial support for a 4% increase. In deference to concerns from the lodging industry, the Board of Supervisors chose to put only a 2% increase (to 12% total) on the ballot, which has become Measure M. This increase amounts to \$2 on a \$100 room, but could raise \$3 million annually for the priorities mentioned.

Mariposa Supervisors are united in their commitment to growing our professional and volunteer firefighting capabilities and proactive fire prevention actions throughout the County. The Sheriff's Office continues to deal with unprecedented challenges in maintaining the safe and secure way of life we all so treasure. A state road survey has shown the County needs more than \$60 million in repairs to achieve a sustainable condition. We all know of the need to develop more housing and attract more jobs.

Measure M would provide funds that would help keep our County safe and prosperous. Please join with us in supporting Measure M.

s/ Kevin Cann,
Mariposa County Supervisor District IV

s/ Doug Binnewies
Sheriff, Mariposa County

REBUTTAL TO THE ARGUMENT IN FAVOR
OF MEASURE M

The Board of Supervisors considered and rejected an approach that would have ensured Measure M funds would forever go to the vital public services identified. But the measure is written instead so that 100% of the additional revenue will be lumped into the general fund where the supervisors can spend it however they please, now and in the future, serving only to perpetuate the County's spending problem.

And no, Mammoth Lakes and South Lake Tahoe do not charge "over 15% TOT/hotel tax"; they charge 13% and 12%, respectively. For all counties bordering Mariposa, where visitors to Yosemite might actually stay, the TOT rates are 10% or less, just like three-fourths of all cities and counties across California.

And yes, while our TOT rate has not changed since 1996, the County's TOT revenue has grown substantially, by 192% from \$5.1 million to \$14.9 million, while our population has grown only 9.8% and inflation has increased costs only 57%.

Rather than impose a Win/Lose tax increase, we encourage the supervisors to support the Win/Win project in the County's own economic vitality strategies since 2007 to increase occupancy in the current "off season" by enhancing conferencing capabilities. Not only would that help fund vital public services, it would generate more and more steady revenue for local businesses, and create more job opportunities and higher incomes for residents. Everybody wins. Public/private prosperity.

Please tell the Supervisors you also prefer the Win/Win approach to increasing TOT by voting NO on Measure M.

s/ Gerald Fischer, President Yosemite Management Group
s/ Gary Francisco, Small Business Owner
s/ Roger Biery, Former President EDC of Mariposa County



ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE M

Mariposa County government does not have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem.

Mariposa County already receives more travel-generated tax revenue per household than all but one of California's 58 counties. According to the most recent *California Travel Impacts* study, Mariposa County received \$4,760 per household in 2017, nearly six times the state average of \$810.

This same study also found that 58.9% of Mariposa County's sales tax is generated by visitors, the highest percentage of all 58 counties and eight times the state average of 6.8%.

In total, the transient occupancy and sales taxes tourists pay amount to some \$15 million annually, which is approximately half of Mariposa County's discretionary general fund.

And don't believe the misleading claims about Mariposa County's existing 10% Transient Occupancy Tax rate being too low. Of the 450 separate jurisdictions (cities and counties) throughout the state whose TOT rates are reported in the *California Travel Impacts* study, the average is 9.63% and three-fourths charge 10% or less.

We agree with the importance of the services identified in the measure, and have the utmost respect for first responders. We strongly disagree, however, that the Board of Supervisors has done what it can -and should- to maximize county revenues through other means. Raising taxes should be the last resort and not an easy way to avoid doing the job they were elected to do.

Rather than spend up to \$45,000 for a consultant to help pursue this tax increase, taxpayer money might be better spent studying how other rural counties are able to serve their residents with far less revenue from tourism.

We encourage Mariposa County residents to support the many local businesses that depend on the tourist spending by voting NO on Measure M.

s/ Gerald Fischer, President Yosemite Management Group
s/ Doug Shaw, Co-owner Yosemite Bug Rustic Mountain Resort
s/ Roger Biery, Former President EDC of Mariposa County

REBUTTAL TO OPPONENTS OF MEASURE M

Opponents of Measure M go to great lengths to describe how the economy of Mariposa County is dependent on the tourism business. If anyone doubted that fact, the recent economic collapse during the Ferguson Fire and Yosemite closure made it abundantly clear. A 2006 study by the Sierra Business Council declared that 87% of the paychecks generated in Mariposa County came from the churn of Yosemite tourist dollars. While we are constantly looking to grow other businesses, tourism is the one that pays the bills for the foreseeable future. We also remain resolute in not selling out to the Costco and Walmart "big box" theory of false income for the community.

Mariposa County charges 10% tax (TOT) on overnight stays. Opponents accurately point out that mirrors the state average. Destinations like Yosemite though, such as Palm Springs, Mammoth Lakes and South Lake Tahoe average 15% and above. Places like Bakersfield, Los Banos, Reedley and Tulare certainly have a lower TOT because we typically drive "through" them not "to" them. Destination areas in California and across the country charge higher TOT than other towns because tourism is their business and there is no credible evidence that a 12% TOT will cause the loss of one single hotel stay.

Without the 2% increase requested by Measure M, Mariposa County will be relegated to substandard fire protection, deteriorated roads getting worse, and a Sheriff's Office which has little hope of keeping up with the ever increasing crime migrating from the Central Valley.

s/ Kevin Cann
Mariposa County Supervisor

s/ Doug Binneweis
Sheriff, Mariposa County



MEASURE M - Mariposa County Disaster Response, Public Safety and Vital Services Measure (Vote for 1)

Precinct	Times Cast	Registered Voters	YES	NO	Total Votes
Electionwide					
Countywide					
1001	276	335	201	70	271
1002	141	198	78	57	135
1003	454	580	262	181	443
1004	49	59	12	35	47
1005	260	361	188	54	242
1006	291	364	163	121	284
2001	17	20	6	8	14
2002	457	609	287	158	445
2003	523	671	313	190	503
2005	444	626	265	160	425
3001	501	636	250	232	482
3002	106	124	65	41	106
3003	377	481	213	156	369
3004	612	787	340	260	600
3005	55	61	27	27	54
3006	179	253	93	77	170
4001	437	574	268	161	429
4002	529	704	275	235	510
4003	368	493	196	165	361
4004	258	348	127	120	247
5001	411	526	252	150	402
5002	508	651	316	182	498
5003	117	149	72	41	113
5004	529	673	330	193	523
5005	434	570	241	184	425
Countywide - Total			4,840	3,258	8,098
Cumulative					