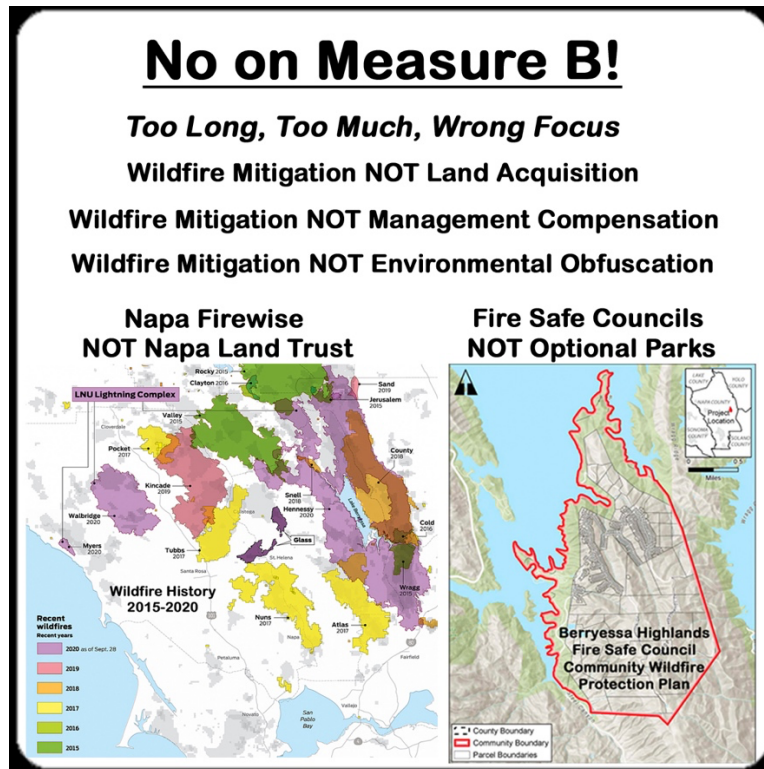


No On Measure B Factsheet



The Lake Berryessa News Opposes Napa County Measure B

It is a bit of a quandary to oppose something you've strongly supported for a decade, but Napa County's proposed Measure B sales tax provides such a dilemma. I've read and underlined the measure's text. It appears that the language of the measure was designed to confuse the reader.

There has always been the political tension involved with appealing to urban voters versus rural voters in many elections. Living in a rural section of Napa's District 3 which combined St. Helena with Lake Berryessa, I learned that our rural area could approve a ballot proposal by more than 80%, but St. Helena residents only had to oppose it by 60% to override us.

I sense the same thing is happening with Measure B. The Lake Berryessa News has long supported the development of Napa Firewise and contributed to the creation of Fire Safe Councils. Berryessa Highlands volunteers created one of the first Fire Safe Councils in Napa County. These volunteers also wrote one of the best wildfire protection plans:

Berryessa Highlands Firesafe Council Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Christopher Thompson, Chairman of the Board, Napa Communities Firewise Foundation

Joe Sponseller, Co-Lead, Berryessa Highlands Fire Safe Council

Evan Kilkus, Co-Lead, Berryessa Highlands Fire Safe Council

https://napafirewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/BHFSC_CWPP_Final_2026-signed.pdf

The Lake Berryessa News has long supported the development of Napa Firewise and contributed to the creation of Fire Safe Councils. I've hosted land clearing specialists camping in eight person tents in my front yard while they cleared the hills on Steele Canyon Road. During the last tragic wildfire that destroyed so many homes in the Berryessa Highlands, flames surrounded my house, but, thanks to Evan's foresight, our multi-headed indoor/outdoor sprinkler system protected us. Two huge CalFire bulldozers were dropped off at my

house to roll downhill to help contain the recent Steele Fire. To put it in perspective, the Measure B tax expires when I turn 100! But...

The Lake Berryessa News Opposes Measure B

Too Long, Too Much, Wrong Focus

Wildfire Mitigation NOT Land Acquisition

Wildfire Mitigation NOT Management Compensation

Wildfire Mitigation NOT Environmental Obfuscation

Napa Firewise NOT Napa Land Trust

Fire Safe Councils NOT Optional Parks

This sales tax is projected to generate approximately \$23 million annually. Over its 18-year lifespan (from April 2027 to March 2045), it is expected to bring in a total of roughly \$414 million. The proposal establishes a countywide half-cent (0.5%) sales tax with annual funding to supposedly be split evenly between two main purposes: wildfire prevention and preparedness grants, and Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District for land preservation and watershed protection.

This split has the wrong focus. Wildfire prevention should be paramount, regional parks and more open space should be secondary. In reality, this sales tax unfairly conflates two goals that are politically and practically distinct. Even proponents familiar with the size and complexity of the wildfire mitigation projects completed so far are not convinced that Napa Communities Firewise Foundation can organize and manage that level of annual revenue.

The Lake Berryessa Chamber of Commerce Opposes Measure B

This sales tax does not recognize the importance of the Lake Berryessa Revitalization Program and the value of the Lake Berryessa region to Napa County. It appears to place open space and parks above the real fire protection of rural residents. It's written in a way that conflates the actual, practical fire protection needs of the large population of vulnerable residents with the optional recreational wants of a much smaller group. A need is something essential for survival and basic functioning, while a want is a desire that improves your quality of life but is not required to live.

History has shown that fire protection needs are expensive and important, while parks and open spaces are secondary. This, and any future sales tax, should be specific to wildfire mitigation. It appears that this proposal was consciously written to use wildfire concerns to siphon tax money to park and open space advocates.

Napa County Taxpayers Association Opposes Measure B

Here we go again. Another election cycle and another proposition for an additional sales tax increase. Vote "No" due to cumulative tax burdens on residents. Combining the Regional Park and Open Space District with a Wildfire Preparedness agency funding request is an attempt to gain passage of a new tax that had been previously defeated by voters as standalone propositions. Each of these agencies has separate and independent boards of directors. This blurs accountability.

On the heels of the City of Napa's approval of a 1% sales tax increase and the current proposed American Canyon 1% sales tax increase, and adding the Measure B tax has the effect of increasing the sales tax burden for some Napa residents to 9.25%. This would be a 19% increase over our old 7.25% rate. We have all heard the political rhetoric about affordability, let's do something about it. Vote No on Measure B.

Napa County Farm Bureau Declines to Support Measure B

Like the measure itself, the Napa County Farm Bureau is split between supporting additional and ongoing revenue for needed fire mitigation and prevention services, and opposition to an overly broad tax that has the potential of putting pressure on Napa agriculture. The Farm Bureau cannot oppose the measure because of the proven value of fire prevention, yet cannot support the measure without a better track record of open space agencies working in collaboration with agriculture. Because of this, the Napa County Farm Bureau will remain neutral in the campaign.

Lake Berryessa News Reader Opposes Measure B

I just cannot stomach approving a sales tax to benefit the Napa Land Trust and the Regional Parks and Open Space District (RPOSD) under the guise of fire protection. The whole thing just reeks of a scam. Giving RPOSD and Land Trust land acquisition the same priority as fire protection is obviously wrong; a blatant effort to manipulate voters into approving a lower priority item they would not otherwise approve.

In addition, the new tax is supposedly justified because fire protection is such a high priority. Well, our elected representatives' job number one is to spend our tax dollars wisely, i.e., on items of highest priority to the taxpayers. If fire protection is such a high priority item, then the BOS should already be spending our tax dollars on that rather than on other lower priority items. If they spend our money on lower priority items, they are not doing the job for which they were elected. Lower priority items should be bumped to the bottom of the list and if there is not enough money left for them, then the voters should be asked if they want to impose an additional tax to fund those lower priority items.

I think the Regional Parks and Recreation Department (RPOSD), the Napa Land Trust, and the Board of Supervisors must all be thanking their lucky stars for getting to hitch a ride on the fire prevention bandwagon, giving them the best shot yet at getting the sales tax increase they have wanted for so long. It's too bad the Firewise people feel they can't get enough votes without allying themselves with the Land Trust, which has a long history of forbidding and frustrating fire prevention efforts on the land it controls.

George Bacich

Words Have Real Meanings, Applehood and Mother Pie Statements Don't

Conflation is the act of mixing two or more separate things, ideas, or texts into a single whole, often by mistake. Conflating being busy with being productive. Conflation is the merging of two or more sets of information, texts, ideas, or opinions into one, often in error. Conflation is defined as 'fusing or blending', but is often used colloquially as 'being equal to' – treating two similar but disparate concepts as the same. An example is conflating watershed protection with wildfire mitigation.

"Water"sheds are not "wet" except during the rainy season! Dry watersheds do nothing for wildfire mitigation.

A watershed is an area of land that channels rainfall, snowmelt, and runoff into a common water body such as a stream, river, lake, or ocean. A healthy or restored watershed can actively mitigate wildfire severity, but typically no wildfires occur during a California rainy season. A degraded or burned watershed can severely support or worsen the spread and aftermath of fires during the California dry season.

Watershed "protection" IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy. Buying or "protecting" Napa County watersheds as a wildfire mitigation strategy is a waste of money.

Applehood and Mother Pie Statements

The phrase "motherhood and apple pie" is an idiom that describes ideas, values, or goals that are so universally considered good and wholesome that no one can reasonably question or oppose them. A variation of the motherhood and apple pie statement is often used to gain undeserved emotional support for a controversial proposal such as Napa County's Measure B sales tax. The proponents of this sales tax are using what I consider false emotionally-colored words, or "Applehood and Mother Pie" statements. Actual examples of are listed below. (Emphasis added)

"Half of the revenue would go to Napa County for competitive grants supporting wildfire prevention projects such as hazardous fuel reduction, firebreaks and fire-safe evacuation routes. The other half would go to the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District for *projects involving open-space preservation, watershed protection, wildfire resilience, parks and trails.*"

"The Measure B expenditure plan includes *creating and operating parks, building trails, "protecting" key agricultural lands, "preserving" important watersheds, "protecting" oak woodlands and forests, "protecting" wildlife corridors and removing invasive species.*"

"The money would be kept in Napa County and dedicated to wildfire preparedness, *watershed protection and open-space preservation.*"

"Watershed protection and the lands surrounding our reservoirs is particularly *important because those natural areas are connected to the quality and reliability of Napa County's drinking water.*"

"As recent events have demonstrated, Napa County faces increasingly severe wildfire seasons and drought conditions that threaten our lives, homes, agriculture and communities". Meanwhile, the organizations that mitigate these risks and *protect our open spaces and drinking water* need stable, long-term funding. Without reliable sources, wildfire prevention and response efforts risk falling short just as the need is greatest."

"Lakes and water sources must be *protected from "pollution, overuse and wildfire damage*". Without stronger wildfire protections to reduce the risk in our area, insurance companies will cancel more policies or charge significantly more for fire insurance."

"The sales tax could provide funds *to acquire land near cities where the public could take children or walk their dogs after work* without having to travel far to reach open space or a park. Lands near cities are more expensive than more remote properties."

Conclusions

The famous quote is, "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with bullshit," attributed to comedian W.C. Fields. Some Measure B proponents seem to have embraced that strategy in their recent public comments and YouTube videos.

Open space "preservation" IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.

More parks and trails IS Not a wildfire prevention strategy.

Removing invasive species IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.

Pure, reliable drinking water IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Taking children to the park IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Walking dogs IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.
Appeasing insurance companies IS NOT a wildfire prevention strategy.

Defensible space IS a wildfire prevention strategy!

Defensible space is a managed buffer zone of cleared vegetation and reduced combustible materials created around a structure to slow wildfires and protect property.

According to guidelines from agencies like CAL FIRE, defensible space is typically divided into three distinct zones extending up to 100 feet or more from a home:

Zone 0 (0 to 5 feet from the structure / Immediate Zone): Focuses on intense fuel reduction and ember defense. Use non-combustible materials like gravel, pavers, or concrete directly next to the house. Remove all dead leaves, pine needles, debris, and flammable plants (such as junipers or bark mulch) from the roof, gutters, and base of the walls.

Zone 1 (5 to 30 feet from the structure / Lean, Clean, and Green): Focuses on removing ladder fuels and creating separation. Clear all dead plants, grass, and weeds. Prune tree branches so they are at least 10 feet away from chimneys and keep tree crowns spaced 10 feet apart. Prune lower tree branches up to 6 feet from the ground.

Zone 2 (30 to 100 feet from the structure / Reduced Fuel Zone): Focuses on fuel reduction. Keep grass mowed to a maximum of 4 inches. Maintain horizontal and vertical spacing between shrubs and trees to prevent fire from carrying rapidly across the ground or leaping into the canopy.

Wildfire Fighting Equipment: Needs Not Wants!

Community-based wildfire response relies on specialized personal gear, manual clearing tools, and portable water systems for early defense before professional crews arrive.

Local community fire engines & water pumper trucks.
Local community radio communications equipment
Large water storage tanks for community protection
Smaller individual water storage tanks for localized property protection
Portable extinguishers
Generators
Bulldozers
Firefighting aircraft
Drones
and more...

How much land is still open to any development in Napa County?

Is the Napa Land Trust Obsolete?

Is the Napa Land Trust obsolete? The latest real estate analyses show that there are only between 76 and 88 parcels of undeveloped land for sale in Napa County. Per public research, only a tiny fraction of Napa County is open for general development, as roughly 82% of the land is permanently preserved or protected by strict agriculture zoning.

Development is heavily concentrated into incorporated cities (Napa, St. Helena, Calistoga, Yountville, American Canyon) and a few designated industrial areas like the Airport Industrial Park. Thanks to the landmark Napa County Agricultural Preserve (established in 1968) and the Land Trust of Napa County, over 96,000 acres (about 18%) of the county are permanently protected. Approximately 75% of the unincorporated county is zoned for agriculture, allowing only for very low-density residential uses (typically 40- to 160-acre minimums) to limit urban sprawl.

The principal hub for unincorporated commercial and industrial growth is the Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan area near the Napa County Airport, which comprises about 2,945 acres. Municipalities direct new development toward "infill" projects (such as the South Oxbow housing site in the City of Napa) rather than expanding outwards into open space. While there are still privately owned vacant parcels and empty lots listed on the open market (ranging from 0.25-acre plots to larger, rural ranch properties), their development potential is highly restricted by county building codes and water allocation limits.

Measure B: Strategy of the Political Boondoggle

The famous quote is, "If you can't dazzle them with brilliance, baffle them with bullshit," attributed to comedian W.C. Fields. Measure B proponents appear to have taken up that strategy in their written and video propaganda, some of which is published above.

A political boondoggle is a wasteful and unnecessary government project funded by taxpayers, usually kept alive only because of political motivations or favoritism. Politicians often back these multi-million or billion-dollar projects to look busy, please special interest groups, or secure votes in their home districts, despite the project providing little to no public value.

When wildfire protection is a critical priority, buying land that is already protected and can't be developed is a boondoggle.