



Notice of Public Hearing & Proposed Fire Protection Services Assessment

Why did you receive this ballot?

You are a record property owner to be served by the Scotia Community Services District (SCSD) and are being asked to vote on a proposed funding measure to establish and maintain fire protection services for the community of Scotia.

The enclosed ballot is your opportunity to participate in deciding whether local funding will be approved for establishing fire protection, fire prevention, and emergency response services by the SCSD. Your vote is important because only returned ballots will be counted.

Who is the Scotia Community Services District?

Scotia was built in the 1880s and has been maintained since then as a true company town located in the heart of California redwood country. Today Scotia is owned and operated by the Town of Scotia Company, LLC (TOS) which owns and leases out all residences and most businesses. However, the Town of Scotia is in the process of subdividing the properties and selling them into private ownership. To facilitate this transition to private ownership, the SCSD was formed to provide the town with essential services including fire protection.

Why is a funding measure needed?

The Scotia Volunteer Fire Department has served the community of Scotia since 1908 and provides fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services. The Scotia Volunteer Fire Department has been privately funded by TOS and is in the process of being transferred to the SCSD, to be funded by the community.

The SCSD is proposing to establish a long-term community-based revenue source (benefit assessment) for the express purpose of funding the ongoing operation and maintenance of fire protection services, equipment and facilities for the benefit of the community, and endeavors to improve fire and life safety that directly affect the properties and quality of life for residents, tenants, employees and owners of properties within the SCSD.

The future of the Scotia Volunteer Fire Department would be at risk if a consistent source of funding cannot be established through the SCSD. Any funds collected from the benefit assessment shall be expended **only** for fire protection and emergency response services provided by the SCSD. Any unexpended funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried over for the same use in the next fiscal year.

What would this measure provide?

The proposed assessment will provide a stable revenue source to fund the ongoing operations, maintenance, renovation, and potential debt service of the SCSD fire protection facilities that provide special benefits to properties within the SCSD. The continued operations and maintenance of fire protection services will allow distinct ownership of separate lots.

A more detailed description of the proposed improvements, budget and assessment can be found in the Engineer's Report, which is available for public inspection at the SCSD office. According to Community Services District law, assessments may only be levied to recover the actual cost of providing services. The District will conduct annual financial audits to ensure that revenues are expended as authorized.

What are the benefits to the community?

The District's proposed assessments will fund improvements, projects, and expenditures for fire protection services that specially benefit properties within the District, which may include:

- Fire station operation, maintenance and expansion.
- Firefighter staffing and training.
- Equipment and apparatus maintenance and replacement.
- Administration responsible for supervision, budgets, policy, and human resources.

- Enhanced fire and life safety within the community.

How much is the proposed assessment?

The proposed assessment amount to be levied against your parcel is printed in the accompanying Official Assessment Ballot. Proposed fire protection services assessments were calculated on the following basis:

\$147 per Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU) per year (\$12.25 per month) x Apportioned EBU's = Total Annual Cost

The proposed assessment uses a weighted method of apportionment, known as an Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU) methodology, which uses a single-family home as the basic unit of assessment. The average structural area for residential properties in the District is represented by one EBU, which is calculated as 1,500 square feet (ft²). The EBU methodology for assigning proportionality of benefit assessments was chosen because a majority of structures located within the District are of similar wood frame construction and all installed within a similar time period. Other land uses are converted to a weighted EBU based on an assessment formula that equates the property's specific characteristics associated with density factors to compare the proportional benefit of each property as compared to a single-family home. Further details may be found in the Engineer's Report.

The total amount of fire protection assessments proposed to be collected from identified parcels within the SCSD for fiscal year 2016-2017 is \$208,380. If approved, the first annual assessment will appear on your 2016/2017 property tax bills, should the infrastructure be transferred to the SCSD by the assessment tax roll deadline. The proposed assessments will be levied for fiscal year 2016-17 and continued every year thereafter.

Will this assessment increase in the future?

The District's proposed assessments are established with an annual 1.5% escalation factor to account for cost of living increases for an initial five-year period. The proposed assessments may also be increased to an amount not to exceed 3% based on the consumer price index (CPI) if approved by the SCSD. This will allow the SCSD to budget for inflation.

Additionally, proposed changes to assessments may also occur based on "pass through" costs, which include the purchase of uncontrolled, mandatory services (such as, utility costs). Further details and explanations may be found in the Engineer's Report.

Any new or increased fire protection services assessments above the allowed CPI increase would require another Proposition 218 proceeding and property owner approval.

If I have questions, concerns, or want to return my ballot in person, where can I go?

On **Thursday, June 16, 2016, at 5:30 p.m.**, the Board of Directors of the SCSD will hold a **noticed public hearing** on the proposed assessment at the SCSD Office, located at 122 Main Street in Scotia.

At the hearing, the Board will consider all oral and written testimony (and written objections and protests) regarding the proposed assessments. The enclosed assessment ballot for fire protection services may be returned to the SCSD at the public hearing prior to the end of public comment period, or may be mailed or hand delivered to the SCSD prior to the public hearing.

In tabulating the ballots, the ballots will be weighted according to the proportional financial obligation of the affected property (i.e. the total amount of the assessment, as shown under "parcel information" on the ballot). Upon the conclusion of the public hearing, the Board will not impose the assessment if ballots submitted in opposition to the assessment exceed the ballots submitted in favor of the assessment (majority protest).

If you have questions about this notice or the proposed assessment, please contact SCSD at **(707) 506-3030** Mondays and Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. or at **infoscotiacs@gmail.com**. Completed Assessment Ballots, as well as written comments and protests for the Board's consideration at the hearing, can be delivered to the SCSD Office or mailed to P.O. Box 104, Scotia, CA 95565.