

Info on Prop 310: A 0.1% Sales Tax for Fire District Funding

AZ Proposition 310 would enact a temporary 0.1% sales tax to help fund fire districts, including the Hidden Valley Fire District. The first link below provides details and arguments for and against the measure. The second link is an NBC news article about the national shortage of paramedics, which actually predates the pandemic. Finally, I included an email below from the AZ Fire District Association. Hopefully, this info will help our residents decide how to vote on the measure.

Fortunately, we live within 15 minutes of three Rural Metro stations, so our situation is not as dire as other, more rural areas of Arizona. Nonetheless, staffing has been an issue around here as well.

[https://ballotpedia.org/Arizona_Proposition_310,_Sales_Tax_for_Fire_District_Funding_Measure_\(2022\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Arizona_Proposition_310,_Sales_Tax_for_Fire_District_Funding_Measure_(2022))

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/ems-services-warn-crippling-labor-shortage-undermining-911-system-rcna2677>



Message from Patrick Moore, Arizona Fire District Association President:

Greetings to all of our Fire District peers and friends. I want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support of the AFDA. It is an honor and privilege to serve as your President.

A significant legislative effort is currently underway with our legislative team partners, the Professional Firefighters of Arizona and the Arizona Fire Chief's Association. The collaborative work has resulted in Proposition 310's placement on the November ballot.

Now comes the hard work of sharing the information with our voters. Mail ballots will be distributed in approximately 30 days (October 12th), so time is critical.

A short recap of Proposition 310:

- Collaborative effort from the PFFA, AFCA, and the AFDA
- Temporary 1/10 of 1 cent sales tax.... Simply stated Prop 310 will cost 1 penny for each \$10 spent.
- All Fire Districts in Arizona will receive a pro-rata share of Prop 310 tax.

Information regarding Prop 310 is available on the Vote Yes on Prop 310 website, Facebook, and Instagram pages. I have included several talking points that our team believe will help in our efforts to pass this critically important legislation.

PROPOSITION 310 TALKING POINTS

- Arizona's 144 fire districts are in crisis. Located mostly in rural Arizona and along the major roadways connecting Phoenix, Tucson, Kingman, Flagstaff and Yuma, fire districts routinely are strapped for funding, and short of firefighters, paramedics, equipment, and training.
- While urban fire departments frequently respond to 911 emergency calls in six or seven minutes, fire districts' response times routinely can exceed 30 minutes. Not only does that create serious risk for the 1.5 million Arizonans who live in fire districts, it also impacts the residents and visitors who travel our state's interstates and rural roadways on day trips, sightseeing tours, and vacations.
- Over the last five years, nearly 2,000 people have died in vehicle crashes on Arizona's rural roads. Another 30,000 have been injured. Over the same time, fire districts have helped fight wildfires that have claimed more than 2.2 million acres in our state.
- Those are crisis numbers. This is a crisis situation. In response, Arizona's fire fighters have crafted a solution – Proposition 310, the Arizona Fire District Safety Act.
- Fires across the state are becoming more challenging for our heroes to fight because the intensity of fires is growing.
- As we see on the local news, fires are becoming more frequent. This is all happening while firefighters are working with fewer resources.

- Fire Districts provide a significant portion of Arizona State's wildland firefighting personnel and equipment. The loss of firefighting personnel and budgetary constraints results in a reduced ability to provide wildland firefighting resources to assist with Arizona's wildfires.
- Proposition 310 will provide additional firefighters, improve emergency response capabilities, and critical firefighting and medical equipment and supplies.
- This temporary tenth-of-a-penny increase in the state's sales tax will generate approximately \$150 million annually for the state's fire districts. These increased resources will take the pressure off our fire fighters and paramedics; and help ensure they have the equipment and training they need to provide fire, emergency and medical services to residents and travelers.
- If you spend \$10 on lunch, Prop 310 will cost you a penny. If you spend \$100 on dinner for four at a fancy restaurant, it will cost you a dime - In return, the next time you take a day trip from the Valley to the White Mountains, or drive to spend a weekend in San Diego, Vegas or Rocky Point, the fire districts you pass through will be far better prepared should you and your loved ones need help.
- Fire Districts are funded almost exclusively by property taxes. Additional funding restrictions include a 5% property valuation increase limit for taxation purposes, a levy limit increase restriction and a tax rate cap.
- Unlike cities or municipalities, Fire Districts do not receive funding from Highway User Fund (HURF), Transaction Privilege Tax/Sales Tax (State or Local), Vehicle License Tax (VLT) or Income Tax.
- In 2020, 32.1 million people visited Arizona. The cost burden for providing emergency rescue and medical services to Arizona tourists falls to the property owners. Prop 310 will shift a portion of the financial burden to Arizona visitors.
- Current fire district revenue limitations result in an inability to keep up with increased emergency call demand and inflation:
 - Fire and EMS response times that are longer than reasonable and outside of industry standards for many fire districts.

- Daily firefighter and paramedic staffing reduced in many communities, due to lack of funding.
- Fire stations closed or only partially staffed due to lack of funding.
- To date, the property values in many fire districts have not recovered to pre-housing crisis levels, and when combined with Prop 117 requirements, have left many fire districts with reduced operating capacity. Examples of firefighter staffing reductions over the past decade due to property tax limitations resulting in reduced revenues:

Bullhead City Fire District (Mohave County) – total firefighter staffing reduced 23%
Summit Fire District (Coconino County) – total firefighter staffing reduced 20%
Sun City Fire District (Maricopa County) – total firefighter staffing reduced 19%
Daisy Mountain Fire District (Maricopa & Yavapai Counties)– total firefighter staffing reduced 15%

PROPOSITION 310 ACTION / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fire District resources (funding/money, on-duty personnel's time) can not be used to promote Proposition 310. The Fire Chief/Management can provide facts about Proposition 310 such as how the money will be allocated, how the money would be used, current fire district challenges. Work with your Fire Board and Labor groups as they can ask residents to vote for Prop 310.
- Be open, honest and sincere. It is important to tell your fire districts story. Talk about the challenges you have had such as: increasingly longer response times, poor outcomes due to a lack of personnel or funding, older or obsolete equipment, inability to provide critical training to your personnel, increasing call volumes, etc.

Thank you all for your continued participation and support in this effort. In the interim, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your area representative, member of the executive board, or myself. Stay safe.

Patrick Moore
AFDA President

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