

Ballot Measure 26-206

Title: Continuation of Five-Year Local Option Levy for General Operating Purposes

Question: Shall Sauvie Island RFPD #30J continue a \$0.3500 per \$1,000 of assessed value for five years for operating purposes beginning 2020-2021? This measure renews current local option taxes.

Financial Impact: This measure would continue the current 5-year local levy to support the Sauvie Island Fire District. The tax would stay at the current rate of 35 cents for each \$1,000 of the assessed value of a property. For a property assessed at \$250,000, taxes would be \$87.50 per year for each of the next five years. The taxes collected for all Sauvie Island would total about \$50,000 in the first year and gradually increase to about \$55,000 in 2024/25.

Probable Results of a “Yes” Vote: If this measure passes, the District would be allowed to continue to provide fire and rescue services to Sauvie Island. The current tax rate would not change.

Probable Results of a “No” Vote: If this measure fails the District might have insufficient funds to carry out its basic function of maintaining vehicles and equipment and training personnel.

Background: Established in the 1980s, the Sauvie Island Fire District is staffed by a full-time chief and part-time administrative assistant, and by trained and certified volunteer firefighters and emergency medical service personnel. It serves all of Sauvie Island, which is located in both Multnomah and Columbia counties. The island itself is situated east of Highway 30, between Portland and Scappoose, and is home to residences, farms, houseboats and 12,000 acres of wildlife preserve overseen by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The population is over 1,000.

The District itself consists of a main station and two satellite stations; its equipment consists of three engines, two tenders or tankers to carry water to locations without hydrants and a brush truck for fighting off-road wildfires. Voters have approved a series of local option levies, the last of which was approved in November 2014 for \$ 0.35 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Summary: The 2019 levy renews current local option taxes and would provide the funding for the Sauvie Island Fire District to continue its mission.

The District anticipates that it will use funds for physical and medical testing for all firefighters; required testing of equipment; inspecting, servicing, and replacing vehicles and other equipment; and continued volunteer training and certification. The tax is estimated to bring in \$49,819.00 in 2020/2021, \$50,940.00 in 2021/2022, \$52,086.00 in 2022/2023, \$53,258.00 in 2023/2024 and \$54,456.00 in 2024/2025.

Supporters say:

- Prices for equipment, electricity and fuel are continuing to climb and thus the basic costs of maintaining the Fire Department are increasing.
- The revenue from the levy will be used to provide required medical testing and training for the firefighters and testing of equipment.
- The Sauvie Island Volunteer Firefighter’s Association has concluded that the levy is necessary to provide the same level of service as the department now provides and to keep the department strong and viable.

Opponents say: There is no organized opposition to this measure