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Orinda Council Supports Protecting Local Taxes

By Andrea A. Firth

At the last City Council meeting, Orinda City Council members voted unanimously to support a resolution to protect local revenues from tax grabs by the State. The resolution supports a measure to be placed on the November ballot that, if passed, would close tax loopholes and prevent the State from borrowing or otherwise redirecting local government taxes and transportation and public transit funds. A coalition led by the League of California Cities and others is working to collect one million signatures to guarantee the measure a spot on the November ballot.

"There has been a history of the State trying to grab local property tax monies and public safety and transit revenue," states Eric Figueroa, Public Affairs Manager for the League of California Cities. Figueroa cites several examples of the State tapping into local resources during 2009 including the borrowing of \$2 billion in local tax funds, the redirecting of \$1.7 billion in redevelopment monies, and the shifting of \$710 million away from local transit authorities. Accessing the local revenues from the State gas tax (Proposition 42 funds) were also threatened, he adds.

The goal of the proposed measure is to prohibit the State from taking, borrowing or redirecting local taxpayer funds dedicated to public safety, emergency response and other local services along with protecting dedicated transportation and public transit funds. "It will protect these local revenues constitutionally," says Figueroa adding, "It provides assurance that local revenues stay local, providing certainty and protecting important essential services." More information about the local taxpayer, public safety and transportation act of 2010 can be found at www.savelocalservices.com.

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