

## REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE HH

Fortunately, our State doesn't allow special taxes to last forever. Governments *must* get voter RE-authorization. We get to say NO if our money isn't well spent.

**Berkeley used to pay for basic services from its general fund without "special taxes".** Council now demands extra taxes to pay for these services, so that it can divert the general fund to non-essentials.

By a simple majority vote, Council could maintain Measure HH services by de-funding wasteful City expenditures that would never pass muster at the ballot box. Council is shouting fear to herd you into voting for these extra taxes. Don't believe them.

Proponents of HH say a "No" vote will cause the loss of "tens of millions of dollars" and force "dramatic reductions in City services". This is misleading. **HH provides for about \$25,000,000 annually, a small fraction of the City's \$345,000,000 budget.**

**Our basic taxes are more than enough to pay for basic services.** Our City's budget has increased by \$121,000,000 or over 60%, in the last 10 years. At the same time, residents' incomes have barely kept up with inflation.

A young family buying a typical Berkeley home faces a tax bill of more than \$10,000 annually plus a 1.5% transfer tax. We're losing middle income and working families and freezing out young families.

Voting NO on this measure would save the average struggling taxpayer approximately \$900 annually.

**Join neighbors voting "No" on Measure HH. Our basic taxes should pay for our basic services.**

s/Marie Bowman

individually and on behalf of, President, Berkeley Alliance of Neighborhood Associations (BANA), individually and on behalf of, Steering Committee Chair, Berkeleyan's Against Soaring Taxes (BASTA!), Former Chair and Commissioner, City of Berkeley Housing Advisory Commission (HAC)

s/David Krasnor

individually and on behalf of, Co-Treasurer, Tyler King NA, Vice-President, CNA, Former Delegate Alameda Central Labor Council, Parent 2 Children BUSD K-12

s/Gregory Harper

individually and on behalf of, Neighbors of Staton Street Block Captain and Former Chair & Commissioner, Housing Advisory Commission (HAC)

s/Robert C. Baum

individually and on behalf of, Co-Block Captain, Blake and California Streets Neighborhood Association (BCNA)

s/James Kilpatrick

individually and on behalf of, President, Berkeley Property Owners Association (BPOA)

## ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE HH

State law requires property taxes to be ratified periodically by the voters.

This should not be a rubber stamp process.

*The City has vast discretionary General Fund revenues to pay for essential services:*

**County Tax \$39 million**

**Sales Tax \$14.7 million**

**Transfer Tax \$12.5 million**

**Utility Users Tax (cable, phone, cell, electricity) \$14.6 million**

**Interest Income \$4.8 million**

**Transient Occupancy Tax \$3.8 million**

**Franchise Fees \$1.8 million**

**And the list goes on.....Totaling \$141,000,000 annually!**

**GANN "initiatives" are a re-authorization of previously approved "special" taxes, having automatic annual increases. These taxes include essential services, once funded by our General Fund:**

**STREET LIGHTING**

**LANDSCAPE**

**PARK MAINTENANCE**

**REFUSE COLLECTION**

**LIBRARY**

**PARAMEDIC SUPPLEMENT**

**PHYSICALLY DISABLED SUPPLEMENT**

**CLEAN STORM WATER**

**A portion of these funds, is more than enough to fund the GANN initiatives, saving the average struggling taxpayer approximately \$900 annually.**

**Over the past 25 years, City population has remained about 100,000 but staffing has increased 31%. Annual average City employee compensation is \$159,000, so these 393 FTE cost us an extra \$62,500,000 annually.**

*Yes, we approved these taxes in the past, but we were deceived.* We thought we could get improved streets, parks, EMT and other services. Instead, what the City did, **was for every penny we added as additional taxes, the City took away City funding.** SO the amount of funding for these essential services has not increased. **This is why, although we are paying for more taxes, we don't receive better services.** Council has used our regular tax dollars to pay for pet projects, and then asked us to pay for essential services.

**Do you feel better served by our City? If not, let's help the City to reform by voting NO. It's time to tell the City to prioritize essential services, and to live within it's means.**

s/Marie Bowman

individually and on behalf of, President, Berkeley Alliance of Neighborhood Associations (BANA), individually and on behalf of, Steering-Committee Chair, Berkeleyan's Against Soaring Taxes (BASTA!), Former Chair, City of Berkeley Housing Advisory Commission (HAC)