

**OFFICIAL NOTICE AND BALLOT
INFORMATION GUIDE
FOR THE PROPOSED
FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE SERVICES ASSESSMENT**



**FOR THE ESPARTO FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT**

Why Did You Receive This Ballot?

You are a property owner served by the Esparto Fire Protection District ("Esparto Fire" or the "Fire District"). You are being asked to vote on a proposed funding measure to ensure continued and improved fire protection and emergency response services in your area. Your ballot is your opportunity to participate in deciding whether local funding should be approved for continued and improved fire protection, fire suppression, and emergency response services. Your vote on this matter is crucial because only returned ballots will be counted.

Esparto Fire Protection District

Esparto Fire was originally formed in 1931 and provides fire protection, fire prevention and emergency response services to the communities of Esparto and Capay, and the surrounding unincorporated areas. Esparto Fire covers approximately 80 square miles and serves a population of 4,500.

Esparto Fire responds to nearly 600 service calls per year, including structure fires, brush fires, vegetation fires, vehicle fires, traffic collisions, search and rescues, hazardous materials incidents and emergency medical calls. In addition, Esparto Fire provides fire prevention, community education, emergency preparedness and other services relating to the protection of lives and property. Esparto Fire is governed by a local five-member Board of Fire Commissioners that are appointed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors.



Why Is A Funding Measure Needed?

Esparto Fire is funded through a small portion of local property taxes, miscellaneous fees, direct and indirect funds from Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, and a static special assessment that has remained unchanged since 1997. This existing assessment does not include a cost-of-living index adjustment mechanism. Due to the lack of a cost-of-living adjustment on the existing assessment and rising expenses, the Fire District's current revenue is not adequate to continue providing services at what is considered a safe level for the community.

Esparto Fire is primarily staffed with volunteer firefighters supplemented with only one paid firefighter 12 hours per day. Unfortunately, the number of volunteers available to respond to calls has decreased in recent years due to increased training demands, while call volumes have increased. In addition, social and economic changes in recent years have resulted in more people commuting to work outside the Fire District area, making it harder for volunteers to be available to respond to emergencies in the Fire District during typical work hours. Staffing is becoming inadequate and unsafe.

To enter a burning structure, State safety standards generally require four (4) firefighters at the scene, with two (2) firefighters entering the structure and two (2) remaining outside for support - known as the "2 in, 2 out rule". Additional funding means Esparto Fire would have the ability to retain and hire more firefighters to meet the required standards and to put out a fire quickly. With a typical residential fire doubling in size every minute, adequate staffing would provide our local firefighters with a strengthened layer of protection for our community, your family, and your property.

To meet the "2 in, 2 out" standard, the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) recommendation is four (4) personnel per apparatus in a community of this size and risk. The Fire District cannot meet the NFPA recommendation due to budget constraints. The next best option to align with industry standards and respond adequately to calls is to staff all apparatus with three (3) personnel. The proposed assessment is intended to provide funding for additional full-time-staffing and training. The costs for the proposed staffing increases would support advancement toward the implementation of "3 on an initial response." With a new funding source, the Fire District would hire additional full-time positions to provide adequate coverage to the community.

Yolo County's Commitment To Fire District Funding

Although the Esparto Fire District is a dependent Special District and the County of Yolo is not obligated to provide it with any funding, on April 18, 2023 the Yolo County Board of Supervisors voted to approve a Fire Sustainability Funding Proposal to provide matching funds to local Fire Districts that need more revenue, if they pass a new benefit assessment. If this ballot measure passes, Yolo County will provide \$205,006 in matching funds annually to Esparto Fire on an ongoing basis. Due to the generous Yolo County funding, the proposed rate shown on your ballot has been lowered dramatically from the initial proposed rates.

How Was The Assessment Determined?

The total annual costs of the proposed additional firefighter staffing, apparatus and equipment replacements as needed, maintenance and improvements to the Fire Station to better support 24 hour staffing, and other services to be funded by the assessment would be allocated to each property based on the estimated special benefit received. The method of benefit allocation is based on the relative special benefit to a property in relation to a single-family home, the type of property, and its size. The total proposed assessment amount for your property is shown on the enclosed ballot. If you own multiple properties, your ballot will show the total proposed assessment amount for each one.

The types of special benefits would primarily include increased safety and protection of real properties. An Engineer's Report describing the proposed improvements, method and basis upon which the amount of the proposed assessment was calculated, special benefits, budget, and the proposed assessment for each parcel is available for review at the Esparto Fire Protection District, 16960 Yolo Avenue, Esparto CA 95627 and on the District's website (<https://www.espartofire.org/>).

What Would This Measure Provide?

The increased funding to Esparto Fire would be used to:

Ensure Rapid Response Times To 9-1-1 Emergencies

Funding from this measure would help Esparto Fire maintain and improve rapid response times. Specifically, State safety standards require that when firefighters use self-contained breathing apparatus, a minimum of 2 firefighters work as a team inside the impacted structure. A minimum of 2 firefighters must be on standby as support outside the structure to provide aid or perform a rescue. Essentially, the "2 in, 2 out rule" protects our firefighters but requires sufficient staffing levels. Funding from this measure would increase staffing within the Fire District, allowing firefighters to arrive and assemble on scene faster, effectively reducing the impact of the emergency.

Hire Full Time Firefighters

With additional funding the Fire District would hire additional full time firefighters to respond to all emergencies. The Fire District would maintain a 2 person engine, 24/7, 365 days a year responding to emergencies at time of dispatch.

Provide Updated Firefighting Equipment For Our Community

This measure would support improved maintenance, repair, upgrade, and/or replacement of outdated fire apparatus and equipment that are not up to current safety standards. Additionally, funds would maintain and improve the community Fire Station to support 24-hour staffing.

Protect Your Property From The Increasing Threat Of Wildfires

Part of our community's greatest threat is wildfires. The Fire District needs to increase its preparedness to protect properties in the wildland urban interface.

How Much Is the Proposed Assessment?

The proposed assessment for your property or properties for 2023-24 is printed on the Official Ballot, which includes this notice and information guide. The typical base annual assessment for single-family homes is proposed to be \$141.35. (The annual assessment amount a property is proposed to pay would be that property's base rate adjusted by factors like relative fire risk and travel time.) The proposed base assessment for other residential property types is calculated based on these factors and the number of dwelling units and parcel size. Multi-family dwellings have a proposed base assessment of \$58.65 per unit. Agricultural, commercial, industrial, and other properties are assessed according to their parcel size and type. For example, agricultural property would be assessed at \$3.59 per acre of property size. The total estimated amount assessed to the entire area subject to this assessment would be approximately \$397,421 for 2023-24, the total assessment including future planned development would be approximately \$431,085. For more information refer to the Engineer's Report which is available for review at the Esparto Fire Protection District, 16960 Yolo Avenue, Esparto CA 95627 and on the District's website (<https://www.espartofire.org/>).

Will This Assessment Increase in the Future?

The assessment will be continued in future years as long as the District Board of Commissioners approves an annual resolution to continue this assessment. In future years after 2023-24, the maximum allowed assessment rate will only be adjusted for inflation by an amount equal to the change in the Northern California (San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward) Consumer Price Index, but not to exceed 5% per year. The actual assessment rate will not be raised automatically. The annual adjustment, engineers' report, and budget will be reviewed and approved annually by the District Board at a public meeting. These controls and adjustments will protect the public by keeping assessment revenues in line with the cost of providing fire protection and emergency response services and ensuring inflation adjustments align with community expectations.



Method of Voting

To complete the enclosed official ballot, mark the oval next to either Yes or No, sign the ballot, fold it in half and place it in the provided postage-paid return envelope, and mail it to Esparto Fire Protection District, PO Box 366, Esparto CA 95627. You may also hand deliver it at the public hearing (see page 7 for the times and location). Only official ballots which are signed and marked with the property owner's support or opposition will be counted. Ballots must be received prior to the end of the public input portion of the Public Hearing scheduled on Thursday, July 13, 2023. The meeting will begin at 6:00 pm. If you lose your ballot, require a replacement ballot, or want to change your vote before the close of the public hearing, call Esparto Fire at (530) 787-3300 for another ballot. See the enclosed ballot for additional instructions. Ballots are weighted by the proposed assessment amount and will be tabulated accordingly. The assessment will not be imposed if, upon the conclusion of the public hearing, weighted ballots submitted in opposition to the assessment exceed the weighted ballots submitted in favor of the assessment. If the ballot measure passes, the assessment may be levied for the fiscal year 2023-24 and may be continued in future years unless and until ended by the Board.

Public Hearing

A public hearing will be held on Thursday, July 13, 2023, at 6:00 pm at the Esparto Fire Protection District located at, 16960 Yolo Avenue, Esparto CA 95627. The public is encouraged to attend. Ballots will not be tabulated before the close of the public input portion of the public hearing, but ballots will be public records during and after tabulation. A ballot may be submitted, changed or withdrawn by the person who submitted it before the conclusion of the public input portion of the public hearing. Tabulation of the returned ballots will commence after the close of the public input portion of the public hearing. The results of the tabulation are expected to be announced at the Board meeting that day.

Public Accountability Standards

The funds from this assessment can only be used to provide fire protection and emergency response services within the Esparto Fire Protection District boundaries.

Esparto Fire Protection District Governance and Transparency

Regular meetings of the Esparto Fire Protection District Board of Commissioners are held at 6:00 pm on the second Thursday of every month at 16960 Yolo Avenue, Esparto CA 95627. The public is encouraged to attend. Agendas are available on our website at <https://www.espartofire.org/>. Please contact the Fire District at (530) 787-3300 if you need any additional information.

Additional Information

For additional information concerning Esparto Fire Protection District services, the proposed assessment, or this ballot, please contact Chief Curtis Lawrence at:

Esparto Fire Protection District
16960 Yolo Avenue
Esparto, CA 95627
(530) 787-3300