

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



**FOR THE  
WINTERS FIRE  
PROTECTION DISTRICT**

## Why Did You Receive This Ballot?

You are a property owner served by the Winters Fire Protection District (“Winters 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.

## Winters Fire Protection District

Winters Fire Protection District was originally formed in 1930 and provides fire protection, fire prevention and emergency response services to the unincorporated areas surrounding the City of Winters in southeast Yolo County. The Fire District covers approximately 93 square miles and serves a population of 1,500.

Winters Fire responds to over 200 service calls per year in the Fire District, including structure fires, brush fires, vegetation fires, vehicle fires, traffic collisions, search and rescues, hazardous materials incidents and emergency medical calls. In addition, Winters Fire provides fire prevention, community education, emergency preparedness and other services relating to the protection of lives and property. The Fire District is governed by a five-member Board of Fire Commissioners appointed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. The Fire District contracts with the City of Winters Fire Department (“the City,” or “Fire Department”) for fire services, staffing, equipment and apparatus.



## **Why Is A Funding Measure Needed?**

Winters Fire is funded through a small portion of local property taxes. The cost of providing fire protection and emergency response services continues to rise each year due to more emergency calls, increased firefighter training requirements, a growing wildfire risk to the community and substantial increases in operational costs, including fuel, utilities and equipment over the last 30 years. The Fire District's current revenue is not adequate to continue providing services at what is considered a safe level for the community.

Competitive wages in neighboring agencies, including Cal Fire, have made it increasingly difficult for the Fire Department to retain volunteer firefighters. The Fire Department has lost many volunteer firefighters trained with Fire Department funding and resources to neighboring agencies with attractive compensation packages. 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, making it harder for volunteers to be available to respond to emergencies in the Fire District during work hours. A new funding source will help with increased firefighter staffing and retention, as well as equipment and apparatus replacement.

Maintaining adequate firefighter staffing levels is essential for enhancing safety and protecting property within the Fire District. Sufficient staffing reduces the need for firefighters to work alone or in dangerous situations. Additional funding means the Fire Department would have the ability to retain and hire more firefighters and to put out a fire quickly. Quicker response times and more effective fire suppression due to adequate staffing mean less time for a fire to spread and potentially trap or endanger people. Responding quicker to emergencies with adequate staffing levels, could lower your Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating which could lower insurance rates.

**Llame al Distrito de Bomberos al número (530) 795-4131 para recibir este Aviso y Boleta traducido en español para hacer una propuesta de evaluación para los Servicios de Protección contra Incendios y Respuesta a Emergencias.**

## **Why Is A Funding Measure Needed? (Continued)**

Despite working on a limited budget, the Fire District's current revenue is not adequate to continue providing services at a level that is safe for the community and costs will still continue to increase over time. A new assessment would provide funding for additional firefighter staffing, training and improved maintenance and replacement of equipment and apparatus, including wildland fire equipment essential for fighting wildland fires.

Insurance companies evaluate a fire department's ability to respond with adequate equipment and resources, impacting insurance premiums. The Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) developed by ISO, assesses fire protection effectiveness based on factors including the availability of water, the number of responding firefighters, and the equipment carried on fire apparatus. In high fire hazard areas, availability of wildland fire equipment is a key consideration. Rapid response times to fire and other emergencies, with essential equipment, apparatus and safe staffing levels, are vital to saving lives and property, especially during periods of concurrent emergencies.

## **How Was The Assessment Determined?**

The total annual costs of the proposed additional firefighter staffing, apparatus and equipment replacements as needed 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 City of Winters Fire Department Station, 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694 and on the District's website (<https://www.wintersfire.org/274/Winters-Fire-Protection-District>).

### ***What Would This Measure Provide?***

The Fire District has identified the following areas that require additional funding to maintain and improve services. The increased funding would be used to:

### ***Ensure Rapid Response Times To 9-1-1 Emergencies***

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.

### ***Additional Firefighter Staffing and Training***

This measure would support hiring an additional full-time firefighter to help provide adequate coverage to the community. Sufficient staffing reduces the need for firefighters to work alone or in dangerous situations. Additional funding means the Fire Department would have the ability to retain and hire more firefighters and to put out a fire quickly, reducing the risk of a fire spreading and endangering lives and property.

### ***Provide Updated Equipment For Our Firefighters***

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, including wildland equipment and personal protective gear every firefighter needs.

### ***Protect Your Property From The Increasing Threat Of Wildfires***

Part of our community's greatest threat is wildfires. Our community needs to increase its preparedness to protect the wildland urban interface through increased response readiness and implementing preventive measures.

## How Much Is the Proposed Assessment?

The proposed assessment for your property or properties for 2025-26 is printed on the Official Ballot, which is included with this notice and information guide. The typical base annual assessment for single-family homes is proposed to be \$146.07. The proposed base assessment for other residential property types is calculated based on the number of dwelling units and parcel size. Multi-family dwellings have a proposed base assessment of \$45.22 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 \$2.76 per acre and range land and open space would be assessed \$1.81 per acre. 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. For example, if a property is less than five minutes from the fire station and in a Very High Fire Hazard Zone, the assessment would be adjusted by a factor of 1.20, and the assessment for a single family home would be \$175.28 (\$146.07 x 1.20 X 1.00). The Fire Hazard Zone and Travel Time Factors for all categories are in the tables below.

Travel Time	Travel Time Factor
<5	1.00
5 to 10	0.91
11-15	0.87
16-20	0.84
20+	0.82

Fire Hazard Zone	Fire Hazard Zone Factor
Very High	1.20
High	1.12
Moderate	1.10
None	1.00

The total estimated amount assessed to the entire area subject to this assessment would be approximately \$160,000 for 2025-26. For more information refer to the Engineer's Report which is available for review at the City of Winters Fire Department, 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694 and on the City's website (<https://www.wintersfire.org/274/Winters-Fire-Protection-District>)

## Public Accountability Standards

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

## **Will This Assessment Increase in the Future?**

The assessment will be continued annually in future years until the District Board of Commissioners determines that the assessment is no longer necessary. 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 3% per year. **The District will not increase the assessment rate for at least 5 years,** commencing no earlier than fiscal year 2031-32. The actual assessment rate will not be raised automatically. The updated proposed budget and assessment rate 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 Winters Fire Protection District, 700 Main Street, Winters CA 95694. You may also hand deliver it at the public hearing (see below for the time 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 17, 2025. The meeting will begin at 4:00 pm. If you lose your ballot, require a replacement ballot, or want to change your vote before the close of the public hearing, call Winters Fire at (530) 795-4131 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 2025-26 and may be continued in future years unless and until ended by the District Board.

## **Public Hearing**

A public hearing will be held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at 4:00 pm at the Winters Fire Protection District, 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694. 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.

## **Written Objections**

You may find more information about the proposed assessment here <https://www.wintersfire.org/274/Winters-Fire-Protection-District>. If you wish to object to this assessment on the grounds that you allege it does not comply with the California Constitution please submit a written objection to Winters Fire Protection District, 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694, which must be received by July 12, 2025. Do not include your objection with your ballot. The objection must specify the grounds on which you are alleging noncompliance with the California Constitution (Article XIII D, Sec. 4), and include an address where we can respond to your concern(s) in writing. Timely written objections will be presented to the District Board for consideration prior to the close of the public hearing on July 17, 2025. If you fail to submit a timely objection in writing, your right to challenge the assessment in a legal proceeding will be barred.

## **Winters Fire Protection District Governance and Transparency**

Regular meetings of the Winters Fire Protection District Board are held quarterly at 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694. The public is encouraged to attend. Agendas are available on our website at <https://www.cityofwinters.org/AgendaCenter/Winters-Fire-Protection-District-Board-M-15>. Please contact the Fire District at (530) 795-4131 if you need any additional information.

## **Additional Information**

For additional information concerning Winters Fire Department services, the proposed assessment, or this ballot, please contact Chief Jack Snyder at Winters Fire Department, 700 Main Street, Winters, CA 95694 or (530) 795-4131.