

April 26, 2016 Special Election

King County

Official Local Voters' Pamphlet

as requested by Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority



Contact us

Phone	206-296-VOTE (8683) 1-800-325-6165 TTY Relay: 711
Email	elections@kingcounty.gov
Online	kingcounty.gov/elections
Mail or in-person	919 SW Grady Way Renton, WA 98057
Voter Registration Annex	King County Administration Building 500 4th Ave., Room 440 Seattle, WA 98104

To obtain this pamphlet in an alternate format please contact King County Elections.



King County
Elections

Proposition No. 1 Continuation of Benefit Charge

Shall the Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority be authorized to continue voter-authorized benefit charges each year for six years, not to exceed an amount equal to sixty percent of its operating budget, and be prohibited from imposing an additional property tax under RCW 52.26.140(1)(c)?

Yes

No

The complete text of this measure is available at the Elections Office or online at kingcounty.gov/elections.

Statement in favor

Voting Yes on Ballot Proposition #1 will be a vote to ensure continued sustainable funding for the Kent Regional Fire Authority. *This is not a new tax or benefit charge.* It simply reauthorizes the current funding system for the next six years as required by law. It is a fair, efficient and equitable way to provide sustainable fire and emergency medical services. This funding system works for us now and will continue for the next six years.

Your Regional Fire Authority was created in 2010 to equalize property taxes and make up the difference with a Benefit Charge that is absolutely fair to all users based on the size, use and risk of their building. Businesses were part of the planning process to create the KRFA and even though they pay a higher rate they understand that it makes sense.

Saving lives, homes and businesses is not something to take for granted. We trust that our fire department will be there when seconds count. Now it is our chance to be there for them. Please vote Yes for continued funding and support of the very service that might save *Your* life, home or business one day!

Submitted by:
Jeff Wagner, Sam Sullivan, and Toni Troutner
jptwagner@comcast.net

Rebuttal of statement against

The Fire Benefit Charge is fair to all taxpayers including Seniors who are eligible for discounts. Your governing board is very sensitive to any taxes or charges as they apply to them as well. Your KRFA is transparent in its fiscal operations. As stewards of your tax dollars they take that responsibility very seriously to ensure that what they collect is justified to provide the service that you expect. Vote Yes on Proposition #1.

Explanatory statement

The Kent Fire Department Regional Fire Authority "Kent RFA" is responsible for providing fire protection and emergency medical services in your community. For the last six years, the Kent RFA has funded these services primarily through a combination of property taxes and voter approved benefit charges.

Under state law, voters must renew the use of benefit charge every 6 years. A benefit charge is not a property tax. The benefit charge is a user fee designed to allocate the cost of the services provided by the Kent RFA in reasonable proportion to the measurable benefit a property receives. The benefit charge is based on an industry accepted formula that takes into consideration fire flows, the square footage of structures, the type of structures and various risk factors.

The Kent RFA Governance Board has determined that a benefit charge provides a stable, reliable and cost effective method for financing the operations of the Kent RFA and for maintaining satisfactory levels of service.

Under state law, regional fire authorities which collect benefit charges have reduced taxing authority. Benefit charges can constitute no more than 60 percent of a fire authority's annual operating budget and the fire authority's maximum property tax rate is reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.00 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

If approved, Proposition 1 would continue the current funding methods utilized by the Kent RFA to provide emergency medical and fire protection services for the next 6 years.

For questions about this measure, contact:
Kimberly Matej
Government Relations Manager
253-856-4469
kmatej@kentfirerfa.org

Statement in opposition

Vote No Prop 1- Facts You Need to Know:

The Fire Benefit Charge (FBC) hurts Seniors and Affordable Housing.

Your home, hobby garage/barn is charged the same FBC rate as a brand new home. Records show over the last 6 years, Kent Regional Fire [Taxing] Authority (RFA) has cost Kent taxpayers \$87 Million more than if the City of Kent had continued to provide fire service. Covington homeowners' fire costs are up 35% over the old District 37. That's a combined wealth transfer of \$91 Million from taxpayer's pockets to the Kent RFA. The RFA manipulated the FBC to increase their budget 24%, most of which went to their 6 figure salaries/benefits. RFA misled Kent and Covington taxpayers. The RFA promised lower costs through economy of scale implying homeowners would pay less, businesses would pay more.

The FBC is worse than an adjustable rate mortgage, designed by lobbyists as a wealth transfer machine to circumvent tax limits of I-747.

RFA is now under scrutiny by the State Auditor's Office for FBC discrepancies, investigation pending.

A No vote will substantially reduce your tax bill, return taxpayers to a predictable fixed tax rate.

Remember Pine Tree Park! Be brave, vote No FBC.

Rebuttal of statement in favor

Only 4% of RFA calls are fire. 77% are aid calls. The Police/Sheriff officers often arrive first, ahead of fire.

It's time to re-evaluate the ridiculous, obsolete and wasteful practice of responding to aid calls with fire trucks.

Other fire departments already use cost efficient Quick Response Vehicles for aid calls.

The RFA could buy 25 QRVs for the cost of 1 fire truck.

The RFA governing board has approved all excessive wasteful RFA spending.

Submitted by:
Eric Bernard, Karen Bernard, and Leroy Stevenson
http://nofirebenefitchargescheme.typepad.com/no_fire_benefit_charge_sc/

Registering to vote

Requirements

To register to vote in Washington, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States
- A legal resident of Washington state
- At least 18 years old by election day
- Not under the authority of the Department of Corrections

How to register

- Register online with the Secretary of State, vote.wa.gov
- Download a registration form from the King County Elections website.
- Register in person at the King County Elections office or at the King County Voter Registration Annex.

Registration deadlines

While you may register to vote at any time, there are registration deadlines before each election. The deadlines for the April 26, 2016 special election:

- **March 28** – Deadline to register to vote or update voter registration information.
- **April 18** – In-person registration deadline for people not currently registered in Washington. Register in person at the Elections office in Renton or at the Voter Registration Annex in Seattle.

Keep your voter registration current

Update your registration if you have moved or changed your name, or if your signature has changed. Simply submit a new registration form to update your information.



Why are there measures on my ballot that are not in my pamphlet?

For a special election, districts are not required to participate in a voters' pamphlet. Pamphlets are only printed if a district that is participating in the election requests it from King County Elections.

For this election, Kent School District No. 415 did not request to participate in the voters' pamphlet.

