

## **County Fails Desert Communities!**

### **Supervisors Vote 3-2 for Parcel Tax**

In the October 16 hearing held only 30 days after the notices of a proposed new \$157.26 fire tax mailed out to property owners, three County Supervisors voted against us: Ramos, Gonzales and Hagman.

**W**e thank our neighbors who found out about this new tax in time to attend a public meeting and listen to Fire Chief Mark Hartwig try to explain how we will be included in a Fire Protection Zone expansion that spreads to County borders. No added service, only added property taxes. Why? To make up for shortfalls in County Fire budgets, with increases of up to 3% for inflation built in.

We thank our neighbors who aided those who never received the notice, or did not recognize the notice for what it was, or could not download and print the protest form – many, including HVCC members, printed copies for them. Some even mailed them, and some carried the forms to the hearing so they could be there on time to be counted.

We thank our neighbors who went to that hearing in San Bernardino or in the teleconference centers in Hesperia or Joshua Tree – none of which is an easy trip from the Homestead Valley – for waiting so long time to express our anger and distress over this added tax burden on people in communities the 2010 Census called “severely disadvantaged.”

We knew that only the count of the protest forms matters to this tax scheme, but thanks anyway.

**F**ortunately for us all, legal actions have launched. County reliance on legal precedents for expansion of districts, annexation and taxing may not be the shields their legal counsels advised.

Points of illegality and unconstitutionality have been raised concerning the methods and purposes of this parcel tax plan.

No parcel tax is fair. Add the brief time for taxpayer protest, the many stumbling blocks hindering timely protest, and we have a process rigged against us, approved by Supervisors who will not feel the wrath of voting taxpayers.

### **County HV Action Plan No Benefit**

HVCC protests the replacement of our Homestead Valley Community Plan with an “Action Plan.”

In 2007: “The primary purpose of the Homestead Valley Community Plan is to guide the future use and development of land within the Homestead Valley Community Plan area in a manner that preserves the character and independent identity of the community.”

In 2018: The County’s Draft action plan does not meet State requirements for adoption in a County General Plan. Suggested actions for locals’ implementation do not qualify as effective updating of our 2007 Plan.

We need substantial policy statements to maintain legal standing under the California Environmental Quality Act.

**W**e need a freestanding statement of HVCC goals, with force for adherence by County planners.

Planning consultants and other urban planners do not know the people and facilities remaining to represent the values of the Homestead Valley or any of the unincorporated communities in the desert of San Bernardino County. If they did, we would not see language such as in Focus Statement A5 that we should be advocating for design guidelines including preventing industrial and solar developments.

HVCC has done that for years, since LADWP’s Green Path North. Most solar and wind projects did not get built, but what is now Lone Valley Solar in Lucerne Valley did. This project alone should have held up a floodlight on the devastating effects of cut-and-run industrial solar in the desert. This project alone should have caused County to slam the door on continuing renewable energy applications.

HVCC maintains that policies we adopted in 2007 must be included word-for-word as directives for community development, updated with rejection of large-scale industrial renewable energy projects within or affecting either the residential areas in the plan or the scenic corridor of Hwy 247.