

Attachment 1

The Campaign for Sensible Transportation — No on J

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“No on Measure J” Questions “Public Information” Program

Opponents of Measure J, the Highway 1 widening sales tax ballot measure, are raising serious legal and ethical issues with regard to a Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) plan to spend \$58,500 in taxpayer money on mailers and handouts aimed at “educating the public” about Measure J. If passed, Measure J would raise the County sales tax by one-half cent for the next 30 years, primarily to widen Highway One from Santa Cruz to “Aptos”.

Opponents claim that California law establishes specific guidelines with regard to the expenditure of public funds by a public agency distributing information relative to ballot measures. Such material must:

- Make a fair and objective presentation of the facts,
- Disclose all consequences, good and bad, of the proposal, and
- Avoid any express advocacy (e.g. yes or no) in the style, tenor, and timing of the material.

Failure to follow these guidelines, by distributing material designed primarily for the purpose of influencing voters to support Measure J, rather than to provide objective information, may constitute improper campaign expenditures, Measure J opponents maintain.

It is also not clear why the eleven pages of information provided in the County Clerk’s voter pamphlet (containing the full text of the ballot measure, including the Ordinance and the Expenditure Plan, an impartial analysis by the County Counsel, a fiscal impact statement by the County Auditor-Controller, and the arguments and rebuttals by proponents and opponents of the measure) is not sufficient to inform the public about the measure.

In order to insure that the RTC follows the law, “No on Measure J” is demanding:

- Public review at a meeting of the Commission of all materials to be mailed or disseminated to the public,
- That the material include information on all consequences, good and bad, of the measure,
- The materials should not be targeted to registered voters. This would be an obvious attempt to directly affect the outcome of the ballot measure.

Participating Organizations: Fishhook Neighbors ❖ Santa Cruz Friends Meeting ❖ Sierra Club ❖ National Bicycle Greenway
Aptos Neighbors Board of Directors ❖ The Coalition for the Environment and Jewish Life ❖ Mission Pedestrian ❖ People Power

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- Materials should not be mailed to voters less than 29 days before the election. This is when voters will receive their ballot pamphlet, and are most susceptible to "advocacy."

Bruce Van Allen, a member of the Campaign for Sensible Transportation (CFST) says "These are public funds, which means all the residents of this county paid into them, including the people opposed to widening the highway. If the Commission does not follow our recommendations for fairness, it opens itself up for legal action by people that don't want to see their money spent advocating for a tax measure that they do not support." "A campaign advocating the approval of Measure J should be done by members of the public, and not by a public agency, such as the RTC, using public funds", adds co-member Peter Scott.

For more information contact Bruce Van Allen at 429-1688 or Peter Scott at 423-0796.

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