

September 28, 2018

To Whom it May Concern,

The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors have sunk to a new low of sleaziness with the misguided FP-5 expansion fee. I am offended by the excise tax of \$157 per year per parcel and I am even more offended by the way this has been orchestrated. The letters were sent out in what appears to be a junk mail envelope causing many recipients to throw the letters in the trash. Then we have this alleged means to protest where the protest letters are not voluntarily provided and people without a computer or internet access are left out and unable to protest. The county should be ashamed of themselves for perpetrating this scam on the citizens.

It is obvious that my Supervisor, James Ramos, feels that it is more advantageous to cozy up to the Firemen's labor Union than it is to represent his constituent's needs and opinions.

Having followed the workings of the San Bernardino County government the last 15 years, some things have become very apparent to me.

San Bernardino County is two very different places. We have the low lands of Yucaipa, Highland, Redlands, Ontario and the City of San Bernardino. Our elected representatives reside there.

Then we have the mountain and desert communities of Big Bear, Lake Arrowhead, Victorville, Apple Valley, Barstow, Needles, Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley and Twentynine Palms. Supervisor Lovingood is the only Supervisor that resides in one of these areas.

The residents of the low lands and the desert really have nothing in common. The lowlander's can't understand why anyone would want to live in the desert and the desert dwellers can't understand why anyone would want to live in the city congestion.

San Bernardino County is the largest county in the lower 48 states and the rural areas of the county have no representation. Proof of that – this latest FP-5 sham being perpetrated on the citizens. My elected representative, Mr. James Ramos, did not consult with his constituents about this.

According to the website, TransparentCalifornia.com, Fire Chief Mark Hartwig had compensation package of \$362,249.19 in 2017. Not quite as high as San Bernardino County Sheriff John McMahon, the highest-paid elected official in the State of California with a compensation package of \$503,975.01 in 2017.

On the TransparentCalifornia.com website I counted 980 San Bernardino County employees with compensation packages in excess of \$200,000 per year. Average citizens cannot feel much sympathy for people who make more money in one year than they make in five or six years.

For those of you who are not aware. The Firemen have a good ole boy network set up to pad their pensions and the way it works is that a Fireman's pension is based on the last couple years of his wages before retirement, so when a Fireman is approaching retirement age he magically gets to work massive overtime so his income for the few years previous to their retirement are drastically inflated and the person ends up with a pension in excess of \$100,000 per year.

Before any tax increases are requested, the pensions and compensation packages of the firemen need to be renegotiated.

Firemen are paid to sleep. The firehouses have weight rooms plus kitchens. I have been in line behind firemen at the grocery store and can tell you that they eat better than I do.

It is just plain wrong to expect the low-income residents of the desert, many who live below the poverty level, to pay for the extravagant benefits and wages for firemen and other county employees.

I suggest that an across-the-board 10% reduction in all firemen wage packages be implemented.

Why is our representatives' and politicians' answer to every problem, "Raise Taxes and Fees?" Why is cutting the budget and reducing expenses never considered? Your constituents tighten their belts and reduce expenses to balance their budgets. Why is the county incapable of doing this ?

According to the statistics only 20% of the fire department calls are fire-related with the remaining 80% of calls for medical response. So in actuality our Firemen are Emergency Medical Technicians. Has the possibility of contracting out a large portion of the fire department responsibilities to a private ambulance vendor ever been explored? For some reason private industry always seems to be able to accomplish more with less money than a government agency.

I also suspect that monies from the FP-5 fire tax will be diverted to help pay for the tremendous multi-million dollar lawsuits now pending against the county.

Last year the citizens of the Morongo Basin suffered too many tax/fee increases:

1. 20 cents a gallon on gasoline; that is \$240 per year for me.
2. An increase of 50% on DMV fees; that was \$90 for me.
3. Where we shop, in the Town of Yucca Valley the sales tax there went up 1/2%

Now the proposed \$157 per year per parcel tax will cost me an additional \$1,413 per year . And on top of this the Fire Chief tells us that after this multi-million dollar inflow into the Fire Department budget, our services will be deteriorating and the fire station by my home on Yucca Mesa will be closed down causing my home owners insurance to be increased, costing me even more money.

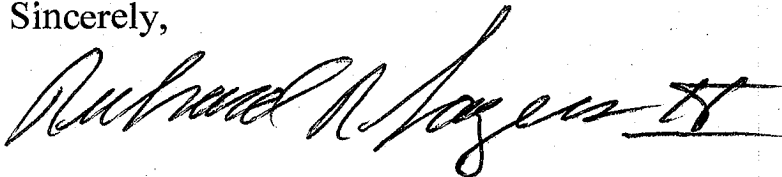
Now the Morongo Unified School District wants to add an additional \$50 per \$100,000 of property value to our taxes. Which will cost me another several hundred additional dollars per year.

Will there never be an end to the constant gouging of the taxpayers? People are leaving California in droves to Arizona, Nevada and other states that are more affordable to escape this perpetual rip-off.

The United States seceded from England because of taxation without representation and that is exactly what is happening here. We, the citizens have elected officials that do not care about our desires or opinions.

In the 1980's there was a movement for the desert and mountain areas to secede from San Bernardino County and become Mojave County, which was on the ballot in 1988. I believe it is time to re-visit Mojave County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard R. Sayers II", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard R Sayers II
Property Owner/Tax Payer

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