



# Pima County Fire Chiefs Association

*A regional partnership collaborating to lead  
Pima County's emergency services*

October 5, 2022

Dear Pima County Residents,

The Pima County Fire Chiefs Association (PCFCA) is a regional partnership of fire chiefs throughout incorporated and unincorporated Pima County, Arizona's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest county. Our primary goal is to collaborate to develop and support consistency of emergency service deployment and delivery throughout Pima County.

Engaging our community to provide information on important matters affecting the delivery of these critical services is essential to meeting our goal. As a result, PCFCA would like to provide you with background information on Proposition 310 and discuss how this ballot initiative could not only impact you, but all Arizonans and visitors to our great state.

Fire districts exist throughout Arizona, predominantly in the more rural or suburban areas, and provide lifesaving services to those not covered by municipal fire departments. While municipal fire departments frequently respond to emergency calls in six or seven minutes, rural fire districts' response times can routinely exceed 30 minutes. Not only does that create serious risk for the 1.5 million Arizonans who live in fire districts, but it also impacts the residents and visitors who travel our state's interstates and rural roadways on day trips, sightseeing tours, and vacations.

Fire districts receive their funding from property taxes, which have been heavily restricted through various legislative initiatives, including a 5% property valuation increase limit for taxation purposes, a levy limit increase restriction, an annual commercial property assessment rate reduction, and a tax rate cap. Further burdening fire districts is the fact that, unlike cities or municipalities, fire districts do not receive funding from Highway User Fund (HURF), Transaction Privilege Tax/Sales Tax (State or Local), Vehicle License Tax (VLT), or Income Tax. And despite being a governmental entity, fire districts are also required to pay many of these same taxes themselves.

Most districts in rural Arizona, including those operating throughout Pima County and along the major roadways connecting Nogales, Tucson, Phoenix, Kingman, Flagstaff, and Yuma, have raised concerns for years regarding the various limits placed on revenue growth within their districts. Unfortunately, these limitations preclude many districts, especially the smaller ones, from maintaining adequate fire and emergency medical service delivery at levels necessary to protect life and property and keep firefighters safe.

Revenue restrictions and the growing inability to meet the emergency needs of our communities are not isolated just to the smaller districts. Even the largest districts are impacted as they are called upon daily to provide much needed support to smaller districts in the form of basic training, essential materials and supplies, and emergency medical and firefighting response outside of their own jurisdictions. This results in decreased availability for emergencies occurring within their own communities, and to those who are funding the entirety of these services.

As emergency services are being provided regionally, the funding to do so is generated at the local level, through the local property taxpayer. Consider this: 32.1 million people visited the state of Arizona in 2020. The cost of emergency rescue and medical service response to these visitors was paid entirely by our state's property owners. Proposition 310 was initiated by Arizona's firefighters and a bipartisan group of state legislators to help balance the increased funding needs between all who use these critical services.

This small temporary increase in the state's sales tax, just one-tenth of a cent on each dollar spent, will generate approximately \$150 million dollars annually for the state's fire districts. What this means is that the next time you spend ten dollars on lunch at a restaurant, this measure will cost you a penny. In return, the next time you take a trip to Southeast Arizona, Northern Arizona, San Diego, Las Vegas, or Rocky Point, the numerous fire districts you pass through along the way will be far better prepared and have a timelier response to your, your loved ones, or another traveler's emergency when it occurs.

In summary, Arizona's fire districts simply need more support to continue serving our communities, families, and businesses. Proposition 310 is a commonsense and inexpensive solution to balance this growing financial burden, and to provide critical resources necessary to take the pressure off our firefighters and paramedics, and help ensure they have the equipment, training, apparatus, and the necessary staffing levels they need to provide fire, emergency, and medical service to all residents and travelers alike.

We hope that you find this information useful as you make your decision on how to vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K." followed by a stylized flourish.

Norman K. "Brad" Bradley III  
Chairman, Pima County Fire Chiefs Association