

SCRIPT:

On behalf of [YOUR AFFILIATION], I am calling to express our opposition to the proposal to retroactively shift property taxes from five Bay Area counties, including Santa Clara where I am a resident. This proposal would inappropriately provide the Department of Finance with the authority to penalize our counties for failure to abide by not-yet-written guidelines from the Department regarding the ERAF calculations. The proposal is unfairly punitive and improper, especially given the significant fiscal challenges facing our counties, and we urge you to reject it.

The proposed actions would result in considerable financial consequences to the affected counties, as well as our cities. Our counties are already experiencing reduced sales tax and transient occupancy tax revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More lost revenue would further harm the already precarious financial situations of our counties and likely lead to deeper cuts in core county services.

The proposed changes will likely result in our county losing an important source of discretionary revenue used to provide many General Fund supported programs. This could significantly impact our social services, immigration, childcare, healthcare, mental health, and other safety net programs desperately needed by our disadvantaged communities, especially during this pandemic.

I recognize that there can be disagreements about how various complicated statutes relate to each other. But the proposed actions would unilaterally and retroactively reallocate local property taxes and unfairly penalize our counties for actions that have already been audited and found to be proper.

I am calling to urge you to reject the proposal and allow the Controller, counties, and school officials to continue to work on the development of guidance that would ensure the appropriate allocation of property taxes going forward.

These funds are crucial to Santa Clara County maintaining its safety net moving forward.

Thank you.