

To the Editor, July 28, 2006.

I was sadly bewildered by your Newspaper's long opinion on "Measure D" on July 28, 2006.. My wife and I fought and got an overpass built at Highways 101 and 154 North of Buellton, six years ago to date. Without "Measure D" and SBCAG many more fatalities would have incurred at the outdated cross-over. Ask us, we lost our 20 year old son there, 11 years ago, a parent's worst nightmare. So just enter the rethoric of stewardship into your opinion and onmit lives saved. This is my short answer to your "Long Opinion".

Robert and Mary Fermin
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert Fermin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name and address.

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SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



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OUR OPINION

The News-Press opposes this sales tax increase. We urge county residents to vote no and send a message that the county and cities must live within their means. We doubt government officials in the years ahead will spend the money on what they promise voters today.

Vote no on this new 'Measure D' tax hike

Editor's note: Following is an editorial that ran on April 18.

In terms of credibility, county transportation officials don't have a lot of it.

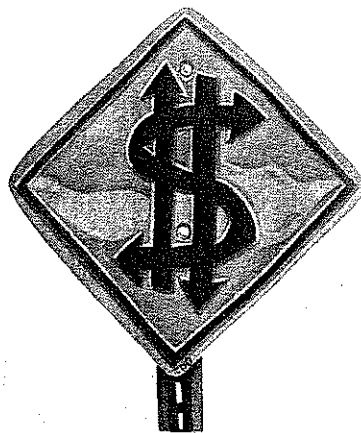
Critics point out that Measure D money — a half-percent countywide sales tax that will expire in April 2010 — didn't pay for certain road projects as promised to voters in the late 1980s when the measure was on the ballot.

Can county voters expect

the South Coast and Ventura County ever become reality with the SBCAG board controlled by North County elected officials?

You may have heard about the "consensus" reached to support the "lane and train" option to ease Highway 101 congestion. The SBCAG board — made up of the five county supervisors and representatives of the eight cities — agreed to a "101 in Motion" plan that envisions widening the 101 to three lanes and establishing com-

Can county voters expect the same if they approve a new sales tax for road and transit projects? Will there be real public oversight of new expenditures, with a citizen watchdog panel with true power to act if the county or cities mispend this tax money?



The board and staff of Santa Barbara County Association of Governments, or SBCAG, want to put a so-called renewal or extension of the Measure D tax on the November ballot. Don't be fooled by the parsing of words.

This is a new tax. Measure D is set to expire. It will be up to voters to decide if they want to impose another tax on themselves and visitors to our county.

Also, don't be fooled into believing that what SBCAG is proposing is just a continuation of the status quo. What's on the table is a hike in taxes. The plan appears to put a three-quarter-cent sales tax — not a half-percent tax — before county voters. Officials may call it Measure A.

The News-Press opposes this tax increase. We urge county residents to vote no and send a message that the county and cities must live within their means.

We also doubt that government officials in the years ahead actually will spend the money on what they're promising voters today to get the required two-thirds majority necessary to impose the tax.

Will, for example, commuter rail service between

lanes and establishing commuter rail service. But doubts about SBCAG's sincerity began to surface last fall just after the board supposedly reached consensus.

Is the train and lane option a package deal? Lompoc Mayor Dick DeWees in October brought up board actions from two years earlier when making it clear he thought widening the 101 will take first priority. This, even though setting up a rail service would be much cheaper than widening and could be done much quicker.

For other doubts, look no further than a SBCAG meeting this month when Santa Maria City Council member Marty Mariscal suggested establishing a timetable for rail service to be up and running and, if not met, officials could release Measure A dollars earmarked for rail to other projects.

Wouldn't this just encourage SBCAG officials to drag their feet on rail in light of the apparent bias of certain North County leaders against this commuter service?

Also, why has there been no suggestion of a similar timetable for the 101 expansion, with SBCAG also releasing that money to other road or transit programs if the entire widening project isn't in place and starting by a certain year?

Vote against this tax increase in November. And vote against all this game-playing.