



South Adams County Fire Department
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Dear City Council,

SACFD has decided to go to the voters this November to stabilize our RAR (Residential Assessment Rate) at 7.14%. If we can succeed this will NOT raise any taxes for Commerce City residents, it will stabilize the ongoing RAR issue that has affected our budget and many other Special Districts for years. If we fail the RAR is set to go down to 5.88% for 2021, which in turn our Fire District will take a 3 million dollar hit to our budget over the next two years. Additionally, there is a possibility of it ratcheting down even more during the next assessment year in 2023. There has been speculation that in 2023 it could drop in the 4th percentile range, which would be a devastating hit to our Fire District budget and many others around the State.

History:

The Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) and Gallagher Amendment have conflicts with each other. The interaction of TABOR and Gallagher has resulted in a system in which provisions in both amendments are not working as intended and is adversely affecting many local Special Districts including ours. Chief Tom Demint, President of the Colorado State Fire Chiefs, noted "This is the next step in CSFC's long effort to address the negative fiscal synergy between Gallagher and TABOR." CSFC is equally proud that the interrogatories from all Fire Agencies, Legislators, Colorado Professional Firefighters, Special District Association of Colorado, Colorado Counties, Colorado Association of School Boards, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce and, of course, by the CSFC are all in support of individual Special Districts stabilizing their RAR's.

Colorado's local governments must be able to provide essential services, and TABOR has hurt the ability of local entities to "float" their residential tax rates upward under Gallagher's ratio without a public vote. The two amendments TABOR and GALLAGHER create an "irreconcilable conflict in Colorado's Constitution" in the way they affect calculations of property taxes. Most all of the fire service in Colorado relies on the property tax, and right now we are getting crushed. Superimposing the TABOR system on the system the Gallagher Amendment created has caused the system to collapse and the effects have become so severe that they have started to cripple the ability of local Fire Districts to provide essential services.

With recent challenges due to COVID, severe fires across the State, SACFD calls increasing, and Commerce City current and future growth it is crucial we stabilize our RAR to sustain SACFD's future and keep providing excellent service to our citizens. We very much appreciate Council considering the potential adoption of a resolution in support of the SACFD ballot question. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Kevin Vincel, Fire Chief