

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

394



SUBMITTAL DATE:
March 5, 2015

FROM: Department of Environmental Health

SUBJECT: Approve continued implementation of the Professional Service Agreement with SCI Consulting Group to prepare the Engineering Report for Vector Control Funding Measure. District 1-5; [\$29,500 total; 100% department operating budget].

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Allow implementation of phase 2 of the Agreement between the County of Riverside and the SCI Consulting Group to conduct the Engineering Report for Vector Control Funding Measure of all current unincorporated service areas.

BACKGROUND:

Summary

On October 1, 2013 agenda item 3.8, the Board approved the issuance of an RFP for Consulting Services to conduct a Feasibility Study, Public Opinion Survey, Engineering, Balloting, and Administration for Vector Control Funding Measure. Prop 218 guidelines require a simple majority vote of the property owners that is weighted by the proposed assessment amount.

(continued on page 2)

Steve Van Stockum
Director, Department of
Environmental Health

SVS:KJ

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost:	POLICY/CONSENT (per Exec. Office)
COST	\$ 29,500	\$ 0	\$ 29,500	\$ 0	Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NET COUNTY COST	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	

SOURCE OF FUNDS: 100% Department Operating Budget	Budget Adjustment: No.
	For Fiscal Year: 14/15

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE

BY:
Steven C. Horn

County Executive Office Signature

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FORM APPROVED COUNTY COUNSEL 3/13/15
DATE
BY: GREGORY P. PRIAMOS

Departmental Concurrence

- A-30
- 4/5 Vote
- Positions Added
- Change Order

Prev. Agn. Ref.: 11/24/2014 3-37 | District: 1-5 | Agenda Number:

3-22

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FORM 11: Approve continued implementation of the Professional Service Agreement with SCI Consulting Group to prepare the Engineering Report for Vector Control Funding Measure. District 1-5; [\$29,500 total; 100% department operating budget].

DATE: March 5, 2015

PAGE: Page 2 of 2

BACKGROUND:

Summary (continued)

The RFP was released on February 11, 2014 and sent to sixty nine potential vendors and closed on March 13, 2014 with only one bid received from SCI Consulting Group. A Best And Final Offer was received on May 1, 2014. On June 17, 2014 agenda item 3-24, the Board requested further information prior to consideration. Further discussions followed with the Northwest and Coachella Valley Mosquito & Vector Control districts. Letter of support received from Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District (CVMVCD) on July 9, 2014. Letter of support for phase 1 received from Northwest Mosquito and Vector Control District (NWMVCD) on November 20, 2014. On November 24, 2014 agenda item 3-37, the Board approved the Professional Service Agreement between the County of Riverside and the SCI Consulting Group to conduct phase 1 for Public Opinion Survey and Research Services. The results of the survey indicate the level of support for the proposed special assessment is within the lower limit of acceptability for a successful measure. The survey projects (with a 95% level of certainty) that between 51.3% and 56.5% of property owners will likely vote in favor of the proposed assessment to fund mosquito and vector control programs in the service area, and strongly recommends that a comprehensive outreach effort and evaluation of the service area would be needed for a successful balloting in the near term.

At this time, the Department of Environmental Health is seeking approval to move forward with phase 2 to allow SCI Consulting Group to prepare the Engineering Report for Vector Control Funding Measure. If approved, the Department will return to the Board on May 19, 2015 to approve the Engineering Report and 2 Resolutions ordering the mailing of ballots along with Prop 218 procedures.

Impact on Citizens and Businesses

This process will allow parcel owners within the unincorporated areas currently served by the County Department of Environmental Health to vote on maintained and enhanced vector control services with a very moderate annual benefit assessment. Should this initiative fail, then the County program may be eliminated.

SUPPLEMENTAL:

Additional Fiscal Information

Funding for Phase 2 to be paid in FY 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Contract History and Price Reasonableness

According to County Purchasing, SCI Consulting Group was the only responsive and responsible bidder and considered reasonable based on knowledge and experience.



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM

**OPINION RESEARCH AND SURVEY
OF PROPERTY OWNERS**

MARCH 10, 2015

PREPARED FOR:

**COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

PREPARED BY:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Opinion Research and Survey was prepared by SCI Consulting Group under contract with the County of Riverside Vector Control Program.

The work was accomplished under the general direction of the following persons:

- Steve Van Stockum, Director
- Keith Jones, Deputy Director
- Dorothy Ellis-Merki, Program Chief

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This report presents the findings of a scientific survey of property owners and voters within the County of Riverside Vector Control Program (Program) conducted by SCI Consulting Group (SCI). The Program currently receives a limited portion of discretionary funds from the County. This limited funding is not stable and the Program's future operation is in jeopardy. The Program is interested in replacing that funding source with a benefit assessment that would help continue the existing vector control services presently provided.

The primary purposes of the study were to:

- Evaluate the support, desires, and priorities of property owners within the Program with respect to the proposed mosquito, vector and disease control services.
- Measure the relative level of support and priorities of property owners and voters overall in the area by type of property owner and voter.
- Measure the level of financial support for the proposed mosquito, vector and disease control services.

The surveys were sent out with an informational page that provided an overview of the Program's mosquito, vector and disease control services. There were two versions of the survey, each presenting one of two annual rates of assessment, \$11.79 and \$7.14, and proportional rates based on property use, size and other characteristics for other types of properties. The total proposed amounts for each unique owner were independently calculated and individually printed on each survey.

After a brief overview of the methodology employed in the survey, this report presents a summary of the key survey findings. The survey utilized a mailed survey approach because SCI has found this survey technique to more closely, and accurately, model actual ballot results for a property owner mailed ballot proceeding.

METHODOLOGY

The County of Riverside Vector Control Program is a service of the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health that provides mosquito and disease control services to approximately 4,800 square miles of urban and rural areas in Riverside county, including contracted services within the Cities of Banning, Beaumont, Hemet, Menifee, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, San Jacinto, Temecula and Wildomar.

California regulations (CCR, Title 17, sec 1276) mandate vector control services. These services have been provided for County residents since 1972. The Board of Supervisors adopted the powers of the vector control district in 1998.

Historically, the Mosquito and Vector Control Program had been funded primarily by the Riverside County General Fund. However, as a result of continued budget cuts, the Program no longer receives General Fund revenue. The Program is currently funded by fees from cities under contract for Program services as well as a limited portion of discretionary funds from the county. Due to the instability of these discretionary funds, a local funding source is required to continue financing the existing mosquito, vector and disease control services provided by the Program.

In addition to continuing its present services, the Program is also interested in the possibility of restoring services to past levels when the Program was fully funded. Following are some of the proposed services:

- Continue to treat mosquito populations with environmentally sound products wherever mosquito larvae and/or pupae and favorable breeding conditions are found.
- Continue rapid response to service requests concerning mosquitoes, and other vectors.
- Conduct environmentally sound adult mosquito and rodent control when necessary to protect public health.
- Continue surveillance and testing of mosquitoes and other vectors, and the diseases they carry.
- Continue the mosquitofish program which provides free mosquitofish that eat mosquito larvae for backyard ponds and other water features to property owners.
- Continue free identification of insects and other vectors.
- Continue testing of ground squirrels, ticks, fleas and rodents for plague, lyme disease, and hantavirus.

This survey was designed to gather property owner input for a proposed annual assessment to continue funding the services currently provided (\$7.14, tested on survey version 1), as well as a proposed annual assessment to restore full funding of services (\$11.79, tested on survey version 2).

The survey was designed to simulate the property owner ballot measure response pool and data collection method of the actual assessment approval procedures as closely as possible. In this way, the survey results will be predictive in evaluating the support an assessment measure would likely receive in the actual mailed-ballot election.

It should be noted that a benefit assessment is the only local funding alternative that gives a vote to all property owners who are being asked to support mosquito, vector and disease control services. This type of local funding mechanism is discussed in further detail in the following section.

SAMPLE

SCI created a stratified sample pool that included most of the qualified property owners in the Program. The sample was designed to draw from the property owners eligible to participate in the mailed ballot proceeding for this funding mechanism, and in proportion to their representation of property ownership throughout the area.

Next, two sub-samples were created from this pool. Each sub-sample was designed to test different levels of support at two annual assessment levels (\$7.14 and \$11.79 per single family dwelling) corresponding to two different levels of service. All sub-samples for this research project were created using a randomized, stratified approach designed to replicate the profile of property ownership within the Program.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The surveys were designed as a mail-based survey to replicate the mailed-ballot proceeding that would be used if the Program moves forward with a benefit assessment measure. On January 30, 2015, about 10,500 surveys were mailed to unique property owners within the Program. The survey mailings included general information about the mosquito, vector and disease control services, and a questionnaire with an enclosed postage-paid return envelope. This data collection method closely mirrors the mailed-ballot proceeding, and has proven to be highly reliable for predicting the results from an actual benefit assessment ballot measure.

Survey recipients were also given the option to respond to the survey online, where a translation of the questionnaire in Spanish was also available.

To date, over 1,375 surveys have been received from the property owners, representing a response rate of 13.0%. This response rate is generally consistent with SCI's experience from other similar survey projects, and is significantly higher than the typical response rate of approximately 5% for a telephone survey.

ACCURACY

The statistical margin of error for the results presented in this report is about 2.6%. This margin of error means that there is a 95% certainty that the actual levels of support in the area are $\pm 2.6\%$ from the results presented in this report.

BENEFIT ASSESSMENT FUNDING OVERVIEW

BENEFIT ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

As noted, the funding mechanism being considered in this study is a benefit assessment. Benefit assessments are a common local funding alternative for mosquito, vector and disease control services, and such assessments have been approved in many other areas in California. Benefit assessments are levies on real property that are based on the "special benefit" each property receives from the mosquito, vector and disease control services to be funded by the assessments. Such assessments for the mosquito, vector and disease control services have a long history of use in California.

The application of special benefit generally means that the amount of proposed assessment will not be uniform for all properties. Properties that are deemed to receive greater benefit (larger properties and properties with higher numbers of dwelling units) will typically have relatively higher assessments.

The benefit assessment is different from other revenue vehicles in its makeup, design, and voter participation. In short, there are charges levied upon parcels of real property to pay for benefits the parcels receive from local improvements and services. The charge is derived from the "special benefit", or a particular and distinct benefit over and above general benefits conferred on real property located in the Program or to the public at large. All property owners who would pay the proposed assessments are eligible to vote. Furthermore, the method of voting is through a mailed ballot procedure by which every property owner receives a ballot indicating the total amount of the proposed assessment for their property. The property owners who cast their ballots are voting based on the total dollar amount of their proposed assessment. Therefore, the results are determined by a weighting of total proposed assessments of the returned ballots. In order for the benefit assessment to pass, a majority of the weighted amount of the proposed assessments of the returned ballots is needed.

In other words, the weighting of assessment ballots is the equivalent of one vote per dollar of proposed assessment. If the proposed assessment is \$10 per home and \$5.00 per quarter acre for business properties, an owner of a single home could cast a ballot that is worth \$10 in weighted votes and the owner of a ¼ acre business could cast a ballot that is worth half as much, or \$5.00 in weighted votes.

COMPARISON OF BENEFIT ASSESSMENT WITH SPECIAL TAX

The primary local funding alternatives for the proposed services are a special tax (parcel tax) or a benefit assessment. A parcel tax is decided by registered voters in the proposed service areas, typically in a one-day election, and it requires 66.7% voter support. As noted, a benefit assessment is decided by all property owners in the proposed service areas, including business owners, apartment owners, and agricultural property owners, and it requires a weighted majority support from property owners.

In an election to approve a parcel tax, only registered voters are eligible to vote. This includes tenants who will not pay the proposed tax, and excludes property owners such as business owners, apartment owners and others who will have to pay the tax. Because non-owner voters have a significant say in parcel tax elections and many other property owners who would pay the taxes are excluded from the voting, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association ("HJTA"), via Proposition 13, established a two-thirds (super-majority) requirement for parcel tax elections.

Conversely, all property owners being asked to support an assessment, including the owners of businesses, apartments and agricultural property, can vote on benefit assessments, and these property owners have a "say" that is proportional to their proposed assessment. Therefore, because all property owners who own property within the proposed service areas can vote, and each owner's vote is proportional to how much they are being asked to pay, the HJTA established a weighted majority threshold for these mailed ballot measures (via Proposition 218).

Figure 1 on the next page provides a further comparison of parcel taxes and benefit assessments:

FIGURE 1 – COMPARISON OF PARCEL TAXES AND BENEFIT ASSESSMENTS

	<i>Parcel Tax</i>	<i>Benefit Assessment</i>
Who Votes?	Registered Voters	Property Owners
Who Created Requirements?	Jarvis Taxpayers	Jarvis Taxpayers
Election Venue	Polling Booth	Mail Ballot
Election Period	1 Day	45 Days
Does Everyone Who Will Pay Get a Vote?	No	Yes
Are Votes Proportional to How Much You Will Pay?	No	Yes
Tax/Assessment Amounts Based on Benefit?	No	Yes
Threshold of Vote Required for Success	Super Majority	Weighted Majority
Common For Mosquito and Vector Control Agencies?	Yes	Yes

SURVEY RESULTS ADJUSTED TO PROJECT WEIGHTED BALLOT OUTCOME

This survey was specifically designed to predict the outcome of a benefit assessment mailed-ballot proceeding, including the relatively higher weighted ballots for the owners of larger business and investment properties and the likely participation rates for various types of property owners. Unless otherwise noted, the level of support presented in this study is the projected actual weighted ballot result for the overall measure, including ballots from the owners of residential property, businesses, apartments, investment property and other properties.

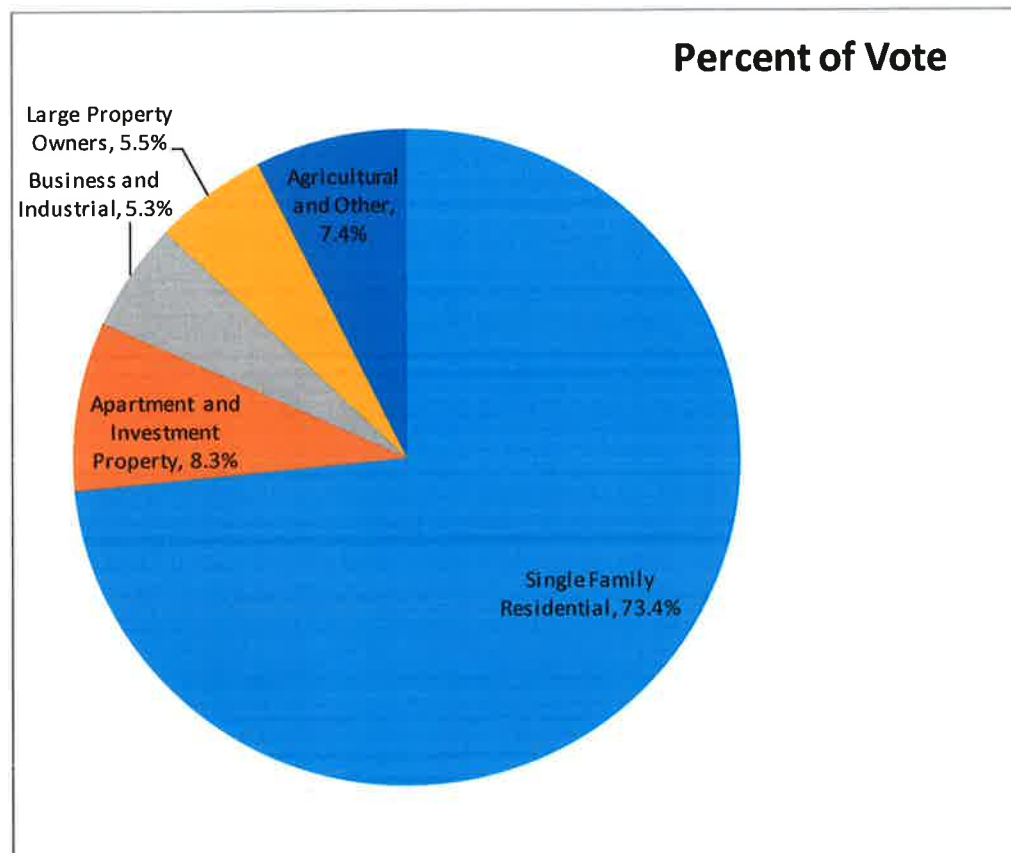
SURVEY FINDINGS

Before discussing the survey/ballot findings, it is helpful to review the types of property in the Program and “weighted” votes.

TYPES OF PROPERTY AND WEIGHTED VOTES THEY HOLD

The following Figure presents the percentage of overall weighted “votes” for each type of property surveyed. As shown, in the Program, single family residential owners represent approximately 73.4% of the overall weighted vote; apartments and investment properties represent approximately 8.3%; business and industrial properties represent 5.3%; large property owners represent 5.5%; and agricultural and other properties (which are primarily rangeland and vacant parcels) represent 7.4%.

FIGURE 2 – WEIGHTED ASSESSMENT BY PROPERTY TYPE



Note: Weighting of assessments and “votes” is based on likely assessment methodology based on experience by SCI.

SURVEY VERSIONS - FIRST SURVEY QUESTION

After the potential assessment rates and potential weighted votes were calculated for each property, the survey questionnaire and informational sheets were finalized and mailed. The survey documents were mailed to a stratified sample of property owners within the Program boundaries. In the survey, property owners were first asked whether they would support or oppose a proposal to pay an annual property assessment for mosquito and disease control services.

The first survey question on the proposed local funding measure for mosquito and disease control services was as follows:

Version 1 – Question #1 (First Survey Question for continuing services, \$7.14 rate)

In order to:

- *Continue to provide year-round monitoring and control of invasive mosquitoes and the diseases they carry; and*
- *Continue to conduct surveillance of rodents, flies, ticks, and fleas; and*
- *Continue monitoring and respond to public health issues such as West Nile virus, plague and other emerging diseases*

would you support a yearly assessment on your property(s) in the amount of _____?*

**(Note the specific amount of proposed assessment for all of the properties owned by each surveyed owner was printed on each survey in the area underlined)*

Version 2 – Question #1 (First Survey Question for improving services, \$11.79 rate)

In order to:

- *Continue and enhance year-round monitoring and control of invasive mosquitoes and the diseases they carry; and*
- *Continue and enhance surveillance of rodents, flies, ticks, and fleas; and*
- *Continue and enhance monitoring and response to public health issues such as West Nile virus, plague and other emerging diseases*

would you support a yearly assessment on your property(s) in the amount of _____?*

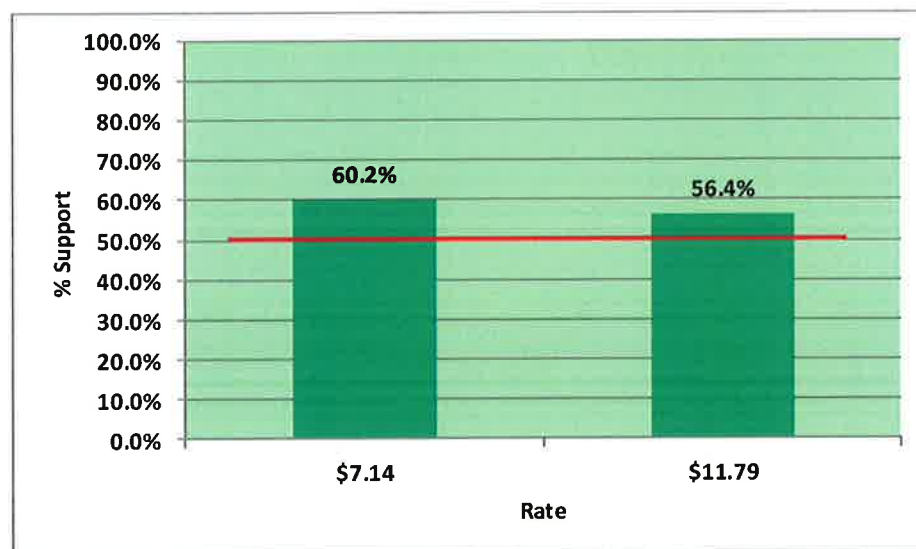
**(Note the specific amount of proposed assessment for all of the properties owned by each surveyed owner was printed on each survey in the area underlined)*

SUPPORT BY RATE, FROM SINGLE FAMILY HOMEOWNERS ONLY

Figure 3 below summarizes the level of support from single-family homeowners only combined across the two proposed annual assessment rates tested (\$7.14 and \$11.79) for the proposed mosquito and disease control services measure. It is important to note that the percentage of support displayed in these tables does not include other property owners, such as business, vacant and apartment owners. (The analysis for single-family homeowners only is presented as an important datum to evaluate levels of support versus other measures, areas, etc.)

As shown in this figure, support from single family homeowners in the Program overall was 60.2% at the proposed rate of \$7.14 per year, and dropped to 56.4% at the proposed rate of \$11.79.

FIGURE 3 – OVERALL SUPPORT BY RATE, SINGLE FAMILY HOMEOWNERS ONLY



Figures 4 and 5 below present further detail about the degree of support or opposition from single family owners in the Program.

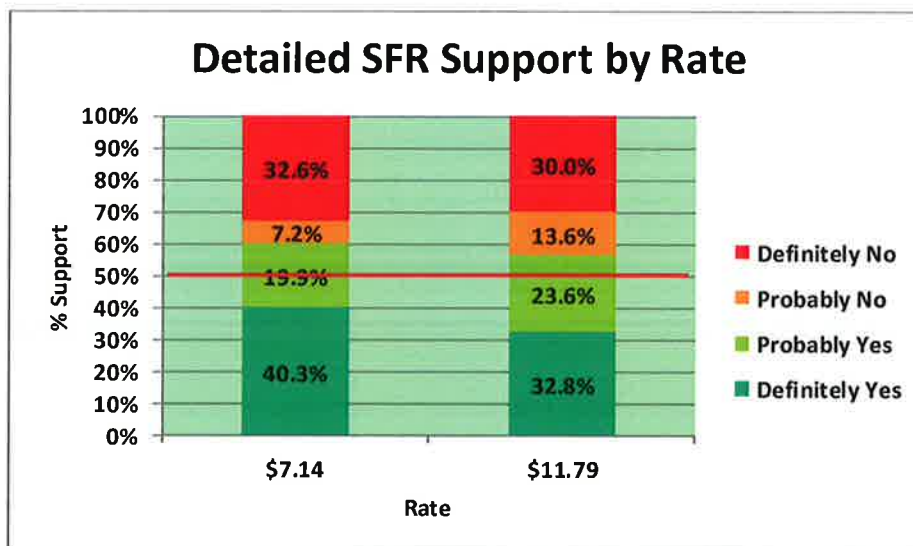
These figures show that many of the property owners are in the “Probably Yes” category, which may indicate that property owners could be influenced by a community outreach campaign. A moderate percentage of negative respondents were in the “probably no” category. Unfortunately, SCI has found that most often these respondents will vote no on the actual ballot measure regardless of any further information presented to them.

A significant percentage of respondents were somewhat undecided, so additional information and outreach to more fully inform residents and property owners about the need for continued funding for mosquito and disease control services should serve to improve support over time.

FIGURE 4 – SUPPORT BY RATE, SINGLE FAMILY HOMEOWNERS ONLY

Rate	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	Definitely No
\$7.14	40.3%	19.9%	7.2%	32.6%
\$11.79	32.8%	23.6%	13.6%	30.0%

FIGURE 5 – DETAILED SUPPORT BY RATE, SINGLE FAMILY HOMEOWNERS ONLY



OVERALL WEIGHTED SUPPORT BY OWNER TYPE

Figure 6 summarizes the survey findings for all property owners, and the overall projected support for the two proposed alternate survey rates combined. As shown, the overall projected weighted level of support is projected to be 52.3%, and support from single family home owners is at 58.1%.

FIGURE 6 – WEIGHTED ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT BY OWNER TYPE

Property Type	Percent of Vote	Weighted Support
Single Family Residential	73.4%	58.1%
Apartment and Investment Property	8.3%	37.0%
Business and Industrial	5.3%	24.4%
Large Property Owners	5.5%	23.8%
Agricultural and Other	7.4%	52.8%
Total	100.0%	52.3%

OVERALL SUPPORT

As noted, two rates were tested for this project in the amounts of \$7.14 and \$11.79. Figure 7 below shows the overall level of projected weighted support for each rate tested. This chart shows that the overall level of support for the \$7.14 rate is at 53.9%, and the overall level of support for the \$11.79 rate is at 51.1%. The higher rate shows an inadequate level of support, while the lower rate shows a borderline level of support above the required ballot threshold of 50% plus 1, accounting for the margin of error.

FIGURE 7 – OVERALL SUPPORT BY PROPOSED RATE

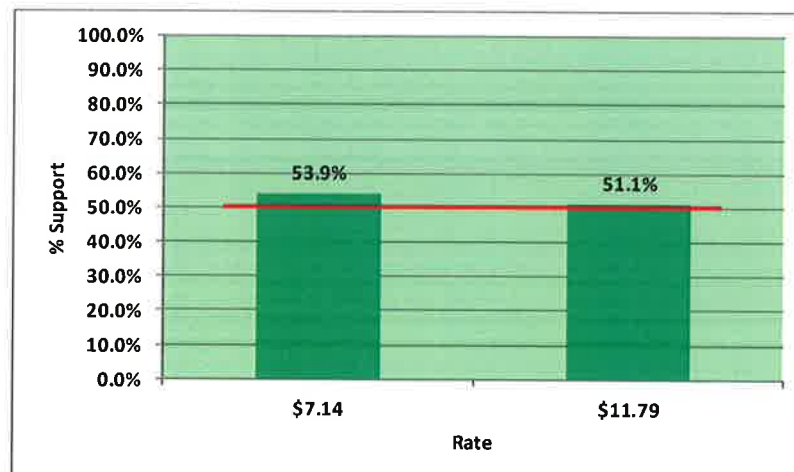


Figure 8 presents an analysis of levels of support from property owners by age groupings. This data demonstrates that the proposed mosquito, vector and disease control services garner higher support from younger and senior groups, and that the lower rate is better supported by most age groups.

FIGURE 8 – SUPPORT BY AGE

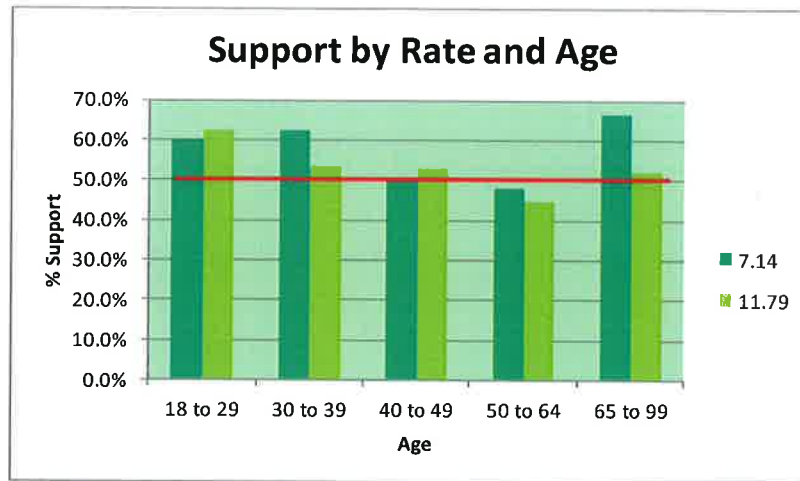


Figure 9 presents an analysis of levels of support from property owners by years in residence and rate. The chart shows varied levels of support, from moderate to below 50% for the proposed mosquito, vector and disease control services from most groups, with the highest support from new property owners who have lived in their residence for less than 5 years. The lower rate is better supported by most groups.

FIGURE 9 – SUPPORT BY YEARS IN RESIDENCE

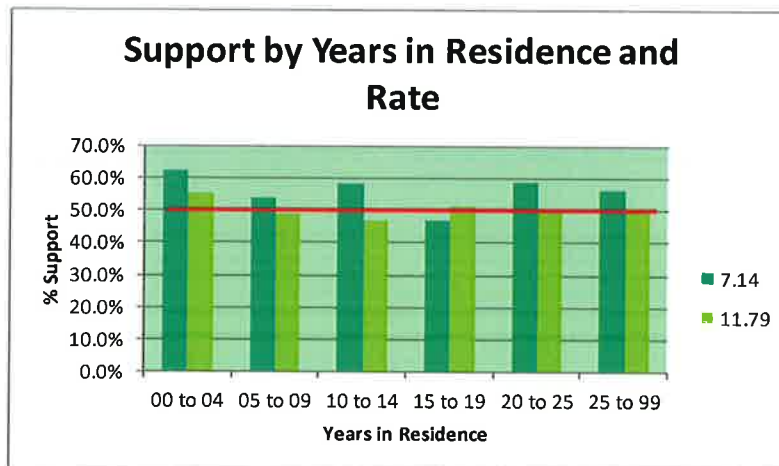
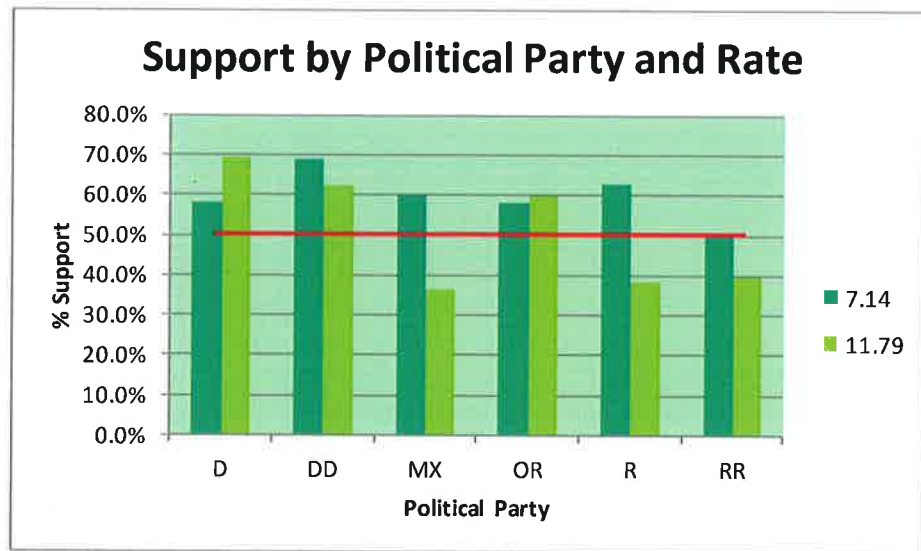


Figure 10 presents the analysis of levels of support by political party affiliation for property owners that are registered to vote. This data shows that support is very partisan by political party, with mostly higher support for the lower rate.

FIGURE 10 – SUPPORT BY HOUSEHOLD PARTY AFFILIATION



Source: Riverside County Registrar of Voters

Note:
 D = One Democrat in residence
 DD = Two Democrats in residence
 MX = One Democrat and one Republican in residence
 OR = Neither Democrat nor Republican in residence (e.g. Green, Reform, Independent)
 R = One Republican in residence
 RR = Two Republicans in residence

SERVICE PRIORITIES

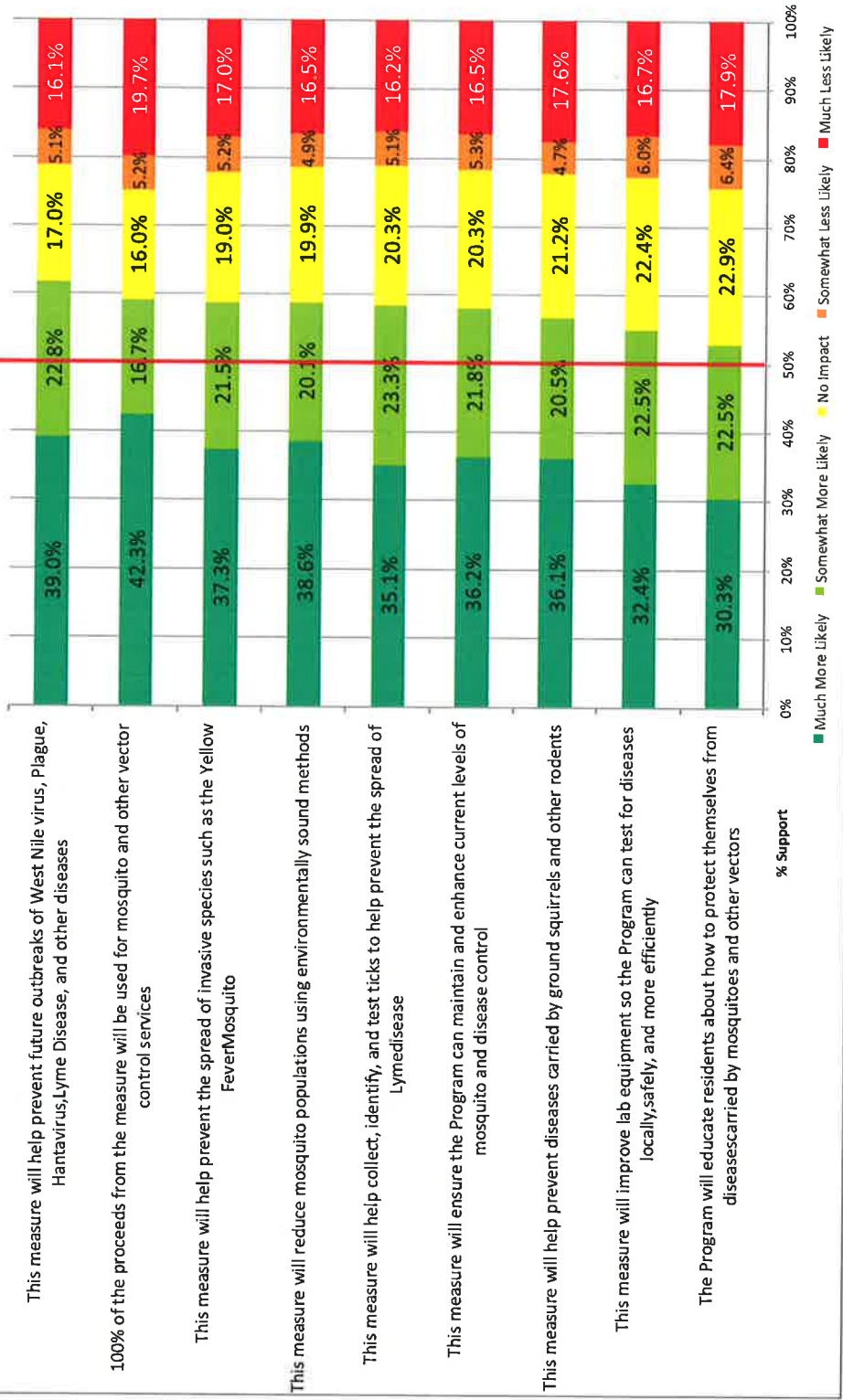
After indicating their degree of support for the measure, property owners were presented with a list of mosquito, vector and disease control services, and were asked to indicate their degree of support for each service. These questions were asked even of those owners who indicated that they intended to vote against the measure. This ensures that the mosquito, vector and disease control service priority ratings reflect the overall community priorities, not just the interests of those who intend to vote for the measure. As the figure on the following page illustrates, the top priorities and features, garnering close to 60% favorable responses or better, were:

- Help prevent future outbreaks of West Nile virus, Plague, Hantavirus, and other diseases
- None of the proceeds from this measure could be taken by the State or County, and can only be used directly for mosquito and vector control services

These project priorities provide important insight to the community. The top priorities relate to reducing the risk of mosquito and vector borne diseases. Fiscal responsibility is also a great concern in the community; survey respondents indicated that they want assurances that the funding will be used solely by the Program for mosquito and vector control services. The results for all the projects, issues and arguments are summarized in Figure 11.

FIGURE 11 – PROPERTY OWNER PRIORITIES

Detailed Support by Projects and Issues for All Respondents



OTHER FINDINGS

The survey included a section for respondents to indicate their other opinions and feedback regarding the proposed funding measures. Following is a summary of the comment categories. Figure 12 shows the comment categories received from respondents in favor of the proposed measure. Figure 13 lists the comment categories received from respondents who were against the proposed measure.

FIGURE 12 – COMMENTS RECEIVED IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSED MEASURE

Respondents In Favor of an Assessment	
# of Comments	Comment Topic
71	General Support, Questions, and Other Concerns
28	Disease Control / Public Health
21	Mosquito Control and Services
15	Rate/Financial
6	Green Pools
5	Environment
1	Mosquito Fish
3	Comments about the Survey Itself
150	Total Comments In Favor*

FIGURE 13 – COMMENTS RECEIVED AGAINST THE PROPOSED MEASURE

Respondents NOT In Favor of an Assessment	
# of Comments	Comment Topic
136	No New Taxes / Financial issue
38	Distrust of Government
27	No Need for Services
15	Stay within Budget
35	Find Funds From Other Agency / General Fund
23	Do not See / Receive Services
6	Detail About Past Budget Cuts
18	General Concerns
9	Fairness of Assessment
4	Environmental Concerns
2	Comments about the Survey Itself
313	Total Comments Not In Favor*

*Some comments may appear in multiple categories where respondents commented on more than one topic

RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey found marginal support for an annual assessment to fund services at the proposed rate and corresponding service level of \$7.14. Support was less strong at the proposed rate and corresponding service level of \$11.79.

The survey respondent pool closely parallels the likely universe of property owners who will vote in the mailed-ballot proceeding, and the survey results presented in the Report have been adjusted to account for the projected ballot participation and ballot weighting aspects of a benefit assessment ballot proceeding. Therefore, the overall results presented in this survey should be reflective of the actual weighted ballot outcome from a benefit assessment ballot proceeding, assuming the measure does not receive organized opposition.

SCI makes the following recommendations on whether to move forward with a benefit assessment ballot proceeding to fund the proposed services, at or below both of the proposed assessment rates per year:

MOSQUITO, VECTOR AND DISEASE CONTROL SERVICES ARE DESIRED

The survey findings indicate a desire for mosquito, vector and disease control services, but only borderline willingness to pay for these services, even with the risk of new invasive species, such as *Aedes aegypti*, and the diseases these may carry.

RATE RECOMMENDATIONS

The higher service level and corresponding rate of \$11.79 is not recommended.

However, the service level and corresponding rate of \$7.14 requires further discussion.

a.) Consider Appropriate Service Area excluding East County

As part of further analysis of the survey results, SCI examined support for the proposed assessment and continued mosquito and vector control services by region. Support for the proposed assessment in the western portion of Riverside County is slightly higher than in the eastern portion of the County. The survey results indicate a 54.8% level of support in western Riverside County – only a 0.9% increase in support, but within the very critical range.

b.) Consider Timing and Economic Conditions – Re-test in 2 to 4 years

Experience has shown us that support for quality-of-life services such as mosquito and vector control is significantly affected by larger economic issues and conditions, home

values, etc. Economic conditions and home values should improve over the next several years and support for these services would likely increase as well.

c.) Implement a Comprehensive Community Outreach Program

INFORMATIONAL OUTREACH

If the Program decides to proceed with a funding measure in the near term, it is critical that efforts be taken to inform all property owners, including single family homeowners, and the business, agriculture and apartment owner communities, about the types of services that would be provided and how these services would be provided. To ensure a successful funding measure, the following outreach will be required:

ADDRESS THE KEY ISSUES AND FORM A CONSISTENT MESSAGE

The Program will need to address the key issues raised in the survey and form several concise messages to present to the public during the coming months of informational outreach. These messages should be designed to further inform the public on the proposed services. It is most important to focus on the basic message that the proposed services would fund the regular and ongoing control of mosquitoes using environmentally safe approaches. In addition, the proposed public health services would allow the Program to regularly test for and help suppress the emergence of new invasive species and prevent life-threatening diseases carried by insects such as West Nile Virus.

ESTABLISH STRONG FISCAL CONTROLS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This measure must include strong fiscal controls and accountability provisions. Property owners must be educated to understand that all revenues will be spent within the Program for mosquito control services, budgets will be audited annually, government processes will be transparent and incorporate citizen input, etc.

EXPLAIN THAT ALL FUNDS RAISED WILL BE USED LOCALLY

The Program should include in all messaging a statement that all of the funds raised by this assessment will be used for services and projects in the Program, and that none of the money raised can be appropriated by the County or the State.

ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Providing service using environmentally safe approaches is a concern among some property owners. The Program will need to clearly explain how its services are provided in an environmentally safe manner. If property owners demonstrate resistance to the measure based on environmental concerns, the Program could consider forming an

independent Citizens' Oversight Committee to ensure that any new mosquito control services are provided in a manner that best protects the environment.

CRITICAL OUTREACH STRATEGIES

USE MEDIA AS CONDUIT

A strong media outreach campaign will be required. Work with local media, particularly local weekly newspapers and local newsletters, to raise community awareness of the proposed services, and the need for continued mosquito and vector control by providing information about services and threats to public health. Use Social media and local social networking services (e.g. "nextdoor.com" type services) as well as local e-mail lists.

ENGAGE COMMUNITY AND LOCAL GROUPS

Identify and engage local Home Owner's Associations, the farm bureau and other local groups. Give presentations and Q and A to these groups.

INVOLVE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Identify important community leaders and enlist them to assist with the planning and outreach efforts.

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Community Stakeholders are those who may benefit most significantly from the improved services to control mosquitoes. These stakeholders could include seniors, property owners near large sources of mosquitoes, and people and organizations in the public health field. Large property owners should also be engaged and informed of the valuable services the proposed measure would provide.

INFORM THE BUSINESS, APARTMENT AND AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND ENLIST SUPPORT

While the survey found modest support from the owners of businesses, apartments and agricultural property, SCI's experience has shown that providing sufficient information and establishing dialogue with the owners of these types of property can translate into higher levels of understanding and even support for the funding measure. These property owners typically require more detailed information in order to make an informed decision on this issue. SCI's experience has shown that with additional information and personal contact, such owners will likely support the proposed assessment for mosquito and disease control services. These owners typically recognize that their property and the local economy benefit from being free from high levels of mosquitoes.