

Sacto boycott suggested

By Cory Golden | Enterprise staff writer | February 02, 2011 08:20

<http://www.davisenterprise.com/story.php?id=101.3>

Reacting to 'a stick in the eye,' members of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors said Tuesday they are ready to look at all options available to them in response to Sacramento's recently approved 'crash tax.'

The Sacramento City Council voted 5-4 last week to impose a \$495 fee on nonresidents for routine accident response.

Supervisor Mike McGowan called for a boycott of Sacramento, calling crash taxes 'bad' policy, the politics of the decision 'plain dumb' and the message it sends to his constituents 'offensive.'

'Ever since I was elected to public office in 1987 (I have been trying) to develop ... cross-jurisdictional cooperation, collaboration and friendship,' he said. 'With this single act they stick us in the eye and say, 'You know, all that was B.S. When we were looking down our noses at you, way before, and saying West Sac was only good for warehouses and truck stops, (we) still mean it, that's still (our) attitude.'

'Shame on me,' added McGowan, 'for thinking somehow your spots have changed.'

The tax ignores the fact that West Sacramento residents work and shop daily across the river, and it raises questions of liability for Yolo County workers and officials attending meetings or doing business in the capital, he said.

The supervisors agreed to fire off a letter asking that the Sacramento council reconsider.

Other options that may be open to Yolo leaders include:

- * Imposing a crash tax of their own on people from outside of Yolo involved in accidents here;
- * Supporting a state Senate bill that would ban future crash taxes;
- * Opposing the tax in court now or when a county employee or official faces paying the tax after an accident; and/or
- * Taking county business done with Sacramento companies elsewhere.

Both McGowan and Supervisor Jim Provenza expressed some reservations about a retaliatory crash tax.

'I'm not a fan of that, but I think it deserves a conversation,' McGowan said.

Provenza said such taxes are a thinly veiled revenue generation device more than a way to cover emergency services. Before long, he warned, ambulances may turn up at every accident scene, needed or not, as a way to make money for the city.

'It really goes over the line in what is a legitimate way to raise revenue,' Provenza said.

Each of the supervisors should urge that the regional boards on which they sit move their meetings outside of Sacramento's city limits, McGowan said.

Supervisor Matt Rexroad called the tax 'outrageous,' noting that the city of Sacramento not long ago opposed a regional tax revenue-sharing plan precisely because the city provided services to visitors.

'The idea of charging only people from outside jurisdictions and not your own residents, I think it's just wrong,' Rexroad said. 'Mike called it 'bush-league' yesterday on the radio, and I think he's exactly right.'