

VOTE NO · 2026 VCTA VOTER GUIDE

Oxnard Measure E: Measure O Sales-Tax Extension, No Sunset

“No rate increase” is not the same as “no tax” — Oxnard voters only

By the Ventura County Taxpayers Association · September 2026

The Ventura County Taxpayers Association recommends a No vote on Oxnard Measure E. An indefinite extension of Oxnard’s half-cent Measure O sales tax locks in about \$20 million a year with no sunset and no requirement that the City improve outcomes from two decades of Measure O spending. Taxpayers should demand performance metrics, independent audits, and a sunset — not a permanent general-fund pipeline.

Start with the original deal. On November 4, 2008, Oxnard voters approved Measure O, Ordinance No. 2779, by about 65 percent. The ballot question was explicit: raise the sales tax by one-half cent “for twenty years only,” with citizen oversight and independent financial audits, to protect, maintain, and enhance police, fire, emergency response, street paving, youth and anti-gang programs, parks, stormwater, senior services, and other general services. The sunset is March 31, 2029. That date was not decoration. It was why a majority could fairly treat the tax as temporary.

Measure O is a general tax. Under Proposition 218 (California Constitution, article XIIC), a general tax needs only a simple majority; a special tax, earmarked by law for a stated purpose, needs two-thirds. The 2008 campaign listed services. The ordinance did not legally wall the money off from the general fund. Revenue has ranged from roughly \$9 million in the early years to more than \$20 million recently. The City has a Measure O Citizen Oversight Committee and mails an annual report. Those are process. They are not a requirement that streets, response times, or homelessness outcomes improve before the tax is extended.

Oxnard voters already tried to attach performance to this tax. In 2020 they passed Measure N, the “Keeping the Promise for Oxnard Streets Act,” which would have sunsetted Measure O early unless pavement-condition targets were met, or allowed an extension if they were. That is the right instinct: continuation should be earned. Measure E goes the opposite direction. On June 16, 2026, the City Council adopted Resolution 16,071 and an uncodified ordinance that repeals Part 4 of Ordinance 2779 — the twenty-year sunset — so the half-cent continues “until ended by voters.” Councilman Starr voted no. The rate does not go up. The obligation never ends unless a future electorate organizes a repeal. That is a new tax in duration, sold as a continuation in rate.

The 2026 ballot title leads with “Public Safety, Financial Stability Measure (No Tax Rate Increase).” VCTA’s line is the one we have used all year: “No rate increase” is not the same as “no tax.” A sales tax is paid by every Oxnard household and by people who shop there. Once it is permanent, today’s \$20 million becomes tomorrow’s baseline, and the next council will be back asking for more because the last increment was absorbed. The City has even described a “weaning” schedule to move ongoing Measure O operations onto the general fund before 2029.

If that work is real, the sunset is affordable. If it is not, the answer is a shorter extension with metrics — not a repeal of the clock.

Oxnard City Treasurer Phillip Molina is among the opponents listed on the county's official measure notice, along with John Barrick, Lizanne Nañez, Noemi Corpuz, and Moving Oxnard Forward. Local officials who handle the cash are allowed to say this is the wrong tool. VCTA is a non-partisan 501(c)(4). We do not endorse candidates. We look at the wallet. A two-thirds special tax tied to a project list, or a five- or ten-year general-tax sunset with published outcome tests, would be a different conversation. Measure E is neither. Vote No. Oxnard voters only.

Sources

City of Oxnard Resolution No. 16,071 (June 16, 2026) and uncoded ordinance repealing Part 4 of Ordinance No. 2779.

Ballotpedia, City of Oxnard Sales Tax Increase, Measure O (November 2008) (65.1% yes; "twenty years only").

City of Oxnard, Measure O page (March 2029 sunset; Citizen Oversight Committee; annual household report).

Ventura County Clerk-Recorder, 2026 measures notice (Measure E question; opponents including Treasurer Phillip Molina).

California Constitution, article XIIC (Proposition 218: general tax majority / special tax two-thirds).

Oxnard Measure N (November 2020), Keeping the Promise for Oxnard Streets Act (PCI-tied sunset/extension of Measure O).

City of Oxnard OpenGov Measure O narrative (weaning ongoing operations onto the General Fund before 2029).