

Please vote NO on Measure H.

Santa Barbara County enjoys a well deserved reputation for its incredibly diverse and beautiful environment, its educational and cultural achievements and a strong and prosperous industrial and agricultural base. This blend has provided a healthy and successful balance that is a reflection of California itself. Splitting Santa Barbara County will damage not only our reputation but also cause great economic harm to the two smaller counties that would result.

In recent years, differing opinions led to the possibility of losing the benefits of having a united county. As a result of these differences, a petition was successfully circulated to study the formation of a new county. Many of these concerns have since been addressed through our existing government structure, just as current and future differences of opinion will continue to be addressed and worked through.

The State-mandated Commission appointed to study the proposed split determined that for each of the next ten years, the new "Mission County" will suffer from a \$30,000,000 annual revenue shortfall. Even a one percent sales tax increase in the new county would raise only \$24,000,000, an amount that will not compensate this deficit. This financial gap would require that county services be significantly curtailed.

Additional expenses not included in the Commission report are start-up and transition costs for each county. The cost of government will rise dramatically as each county establishes duplicate sets of elected and appointed officials, including Supervisors, Assessor, Auditor-Controller, County Counsel, District Attorney and Sheriff, Fire Chief, Public Works, Roads, Planning, Health, Probation, Public Defender and many others.

Also, costs associated with new county facilities will be significant. The Commission estimated 174,000 square feet of office space needed in Mission County to accommodate the new operations as well as the state and federally required public officials and programs. A required jail in Mission County is projected to cost over \$100,000,000. With a lack of funding, Mission County residents will receive immediate cuts in vital services including public safety. Substantial increases in fees and taxes will follow.

The remaining Santa Barbara County will essentially have to lay off half of the current 4,200 employees. The remaining Santa Barbara County in the transition to a smaller county would experience service disruptions, reverse economies of scale and elimination of some services that can only be provided by a larger jurisdiction.

The reduced populations of each county will result in a diminished ability to compete for much needed funding from federal and state governments for local needs and priorities.

A united Santa Barbara County has a history and experience that demonstrates there is power and success from our working together. A split would bring many unresolved problems with arbitration and law suits the only means of solution. A split would also mean enormous confusion, unnecessary expense and hardship for years to come. The county split proposal is a bad deal for all residents of our county.

We strongly urge you to vote NO on Measure H.