

## Complaint Description

Lethalwit (Tue, 12 Nov 2019 at 11:26 AM)

According to the PDCs website, public agencies may not expend taxpayer equipment and resources on communications if those communications have the effect of aiding an election. That is, even if factual, if the selection of facts has the effect of aiding an election, that is prohibited. This taxpayer funded mailer from the North County EMS meets this threshold. Examples:

Stated: "Call volumes have increased 37% since 2013"

Unstated: The majority of those calls are for medical assistance, fulfilled by the aid car, which is the cheapest piece of equipment to operation.

Stated: "The one-percent increase is not keeping up with inflation, which is 3.2 percent for our area."

Unstated: The area also had a corresponding increase in new property ownership, adding new tax paying property owners to the overall budget.

Stated: "The fire levy rates fall as property value rises to limit the fire department to roughly the same amount of revenue per year..."

Unstated: The fire department budget has increased.

Therefore, by its selection of facts, North County Fire EMS has constructed a positive narrative which supports the levy, conveniently leaving out other facts running counter to that narrative.

## What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

At this time of writing the North County Fire EMS is passing. It's certainly a possibility this levy would not have passed without this mailer. Therefore, property owners are now paying an extra levy.

## List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found.

Mailers attached. Note these come straight from the North County Fire EMS, a taxpayer funded agency.

## List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them.

Fire chief John Cermak, 425-789-8036, [jcermak@northcountyfireems.com](mailto:jcermak@northcountyfireems.com)

## Complaint Certification:

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.



PRSR STD  
ECRWSS  
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**NORTH COUNTY FIRE/EMS**

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[www.northcountyfireems.com](http://www.northcountyfireems.com)

 NCFireEMS

 @NCountyFireEMS

Local  
Postal Customer

**Questions about the  
fire levy lid lift?**

# We have answers.



## **What's on my ballot?**

North County Regional Fire Authority (known as North County Fire & EMS) is asking voters to return the fire levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. This is called a fire levy "lid lift."

## **Why is my fire department asking for this?**

Call volumes have increased 37% since 2013. More calls mean added costs for personnel, apparatus, fuel, equipment, maintenance, and medical supplies.

## **How much will it cost? How long will it last?**

The fire levy has fallen to \$1.36/\$1,000. The 14-cent lid lift would last for six years and cost the owner of a \$350,000 home an additional \$4.08 per month (\$49 per year).

## **Have we approved \$1.50/\$1,000 before?**

Yes, voters originally approved a fire levy of \$1.50/\$1,000 in 2008.

## **Why did the fire levy rate decrease?**

The fire levy rate falls as property values rise to limit the fire department to roughly the same amount of revenue per year plus a one percent increase allowed by law. The one percent increase is not keeping up with inflation, which is 3.2 percent for our area.

## **What will you do with the revenue?**

We recently completed a Strategic Plan that outlines how we will respond to higher call volumes. Funding would be used to hire up to six additional emergency personnel, improve training, and purchase supporting apparatus and equipment.

## **Where can I find more information?**

More information can be found on our website at [www.northcountyfireems.com](http://www.northcountyfireems.com). Visit with us during the Board of Fire Commissioners' meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at Station 99 (8117 267th Street NW, Stanwood, WA 98292). Fire Chief John Cermak is also available to answer questions at (425) 789-8036 or [jcermak@northcountyfireems.com](mailto:jcermak@northcountyfireems.com).

**Thank you for considering our request!**