



SNOHOMISH REGIONAL FIRE & RESCUE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fire Levy Lid Lift on Ballot for Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue

Monroe, Wash. – Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue (SRFR) is asking voters to return its fire levy to \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value during the November 2 General Election. Higher call volumes and inflationary costs are driving this request.

Call volumes have increased 10.58% compared to the same time last year. More calls mean additional costs, and those costs are higher due to inflation, which is currently 5.1% for the area. The last time the fire district passed a fire levy lid lift was in 2017, and inflation has risen 13% since then.

“Were trying to get ahead of this,” said Fire Chief Kevin O’Brien. “We’ve cut costs by \$1.5 million, but there’s nowhere else to go unless we want to impact fire and life safety programs more, and eventually service levels.”

Many community members believe that higher property values mean the fire district is receiving a windfall of more fire levy revenue. In reality, the fire district is limited to a 1% revenue increase per year that is shared by all properties and actually lowers the fire levy rate.

For example, voters last approved a fire levy of \$1.50 per \$1,000 in 2017. As property values increased, the levy has dropped to \$1.27 per \$1,000 to limit the fire district to roughly the same amount of revenue per year. The fire district does receive revenue from new homes that are added to the property tax rolls, but that funding is used to provide service to those areas.

Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue has a history of paying for most of its capital items (stations, apparatus and equipment) out of its fire levy. A portion of the lid lift will be used for those costs, too.

The \$0.23 per \$1,000 lid lift would cost the owner of a \$500,000 home an additional \$9.58 per month. (A property’s assessed value is lower than its market value.) If the lid lift is approved, SRFR would use the funding to maintain staffing levels, restore firefighter training and fire and life safety prevention programs, replace aging fire engines and ambulances; and, fund fire station projects in the district.

More information on the fire levy lid lift can be found on the agency’s website at www.srfr.org. Fire Chief Kevin O’Brien also is available to answer questions at kevin.obrien@srfr.org or (360) 794-7666.

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In 2019, voters approved a merger between Lake Stevens Fire and Snohomish County Fire District 7. Today, Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue serves 175,000 residents in the cities of Lake Stevens, Monroe, and unincorporated southeast Snohomish County. SRFR responds to an average of 17,000 emergency calls a year with highly-trained personnel and state-of-the-art rescue programs. It operates under a balanced budget and has passed all its independent audits by the state. More information about SRFR can be found at www.srfr.org.

