

**From:** [WenOsch-postpro](#)  
**To:** [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Subject:** Additional Funding for CCC Public Libraries  
**Date:** Thursday, July 22, 2021 1:39:51 PM

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To: The Measure X Community Advisory Board

Because of the pivotal role our public libraries play in connecting individuals and communities, I am writing to urge you to support the request of the Contra Costa County librarian for additional funding so our libraries can offer the above-named services for extended hours.

Both Jane Austen and Jorge Luis Borges compared the library to Paradise. From a more earthly perspective, I would argue that a community's health can be judged by the vibrancy and adaptability of its library. My local public library, for example, served as a COVID-19 testing site this past year.

Libraries bind together and strengthen our communities.

- They offer free access to everyone and are one of the last great equalizers in our country.
- Community members on the wrong side of the digital divide rely on their libraries for Internet access.
- Public libraries serve the entire community, from toddler to senior citizen, and are a source of supplemental materials for our underfunded public schools.

And as if those weren't enough, libraries also make available space for lectures, classes, arts and crafts, performances, meetings, and a host of other activities that connect people of varied interests. Isn't that what community is about?

If we value it, we should fund it.

Sincerely,  
Wendy Oschmann  
Pinole

*Whatever the cost of our libraries, the price is cheap compared to that of an ignorant nation.*  
~Walter Cronkite

*Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries.*  
~Anne Herbert

*The health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries.*

~ Carl Sagan

*A public library is the most democratic thing in the world. What can be found there has undone dictators and tyrants.*

~ Doris Lessing

*Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future.*

~Ray Bradbury

*The truth is libraries are raucous clubhouses for free speech, controversy and community.*

~Paula Poundstone

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board:

On behalf of the El Cerrito City Council, I am writing to urge you to recommend allocating an appropriate proportion of Measure X funds to provide for an expanded county library budget. This allocation would directly support a countywide increase to 56 hours for **all** branches, facility upgrades (which are desperately needed in many of our county's libraries, particularly those located in impacted communities), staffing, collection development, and operational support.

The County Librarian's request is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X, especially the following key targets:

- Support crucial safety-net services
- Invest in early childhood services
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Fund other essential services

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many of the divides that increasingly define our region. During the yearlong+ closure, our county library staff demonstrated how vital their services are to our community members, particularly those who are under-resourced and overburdened. They handed out free lunches and produce, mobile hotspots, literacy materials, and craft kits; delivered books to homebound community members; conducted robust online programming; assisted patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, tutoring services, and accessing other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on. Libraries are truly the place where democracy shows the true extent of its promise and potential. Our investment in *them* reflects the degree of our investment in our egalitarian social and political aspirations.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls woefully short of the median for libraries statewide, and particularly that of other Bay Area county libraries. Our system receives funding equivalent to 1.5% of 1% of property tax for all properties (aside from those in the city of Richmond, which operates its own library system). This amount accounts for just .97% of the county's current budget. Currently, the cost of additional operational hours beyond the county-funded minimum threshold is borne by cities, as is facilities maintenance. While *some* of our county's cities and their libraries' respective friends' groups and foundations can pitch in substantively to fill in the opportunity and equity gaps produced by this scant level of support—in services, programming, open hours, facilities maintenance, etc.—many others simply cannot. This also applies to libraries in unincorporated areas, such as El Sobrante, Kensington (both within District 1), and Bay Point (located in District 5) that do not have a potential city base from which to draw. The resulting picture is wildly disparate. In other words, the current funding model and allocation reflects, contributes to, and even exacerbates our county's inequities. ***We can and we must do better.*** The significant revenue expected from the Measure X initiative (estimated at \$81M/year) has the potential to level the playing field and to infuse our library system's delivery of equitable services and contributions to impactful outcomes with real backbone.

Measure X is an unprecedented opportunity to address and ***redress*** some of the massive disparities—both their causes and effects—in our region's healthcare, education, housing, public safety, economic, and environmental sectors, among others. Libraries are one of the most vital spaces of civic involvement and education, literacy promotion, and intellectual freedom in a democratic state. And they have increasingly become part of the social safety net for many populations, especially our most vulnerable community members. There is no doubt that we need more vigorous and inclusive community services, and there is no doubt that this funding boost can help make that happen. I understand that the library's

ask is but one competing interest in ultimate allocation, but I hope you can see how capably it responds to the core imperatives of the Measure X specifications.

We have recently written to the Advisory Board to request that you recommend funding for the Community Crisis Initiative. We understand that you will be offering endorsements for a number of items—our request on behalf of the county library is not meant to be in opposition to the Community Crisis Initiative. We urge you to support *both* the Community Crisis Initiative and our County Librarian's initiative. Both of these allocations reflect the intention and integrity behind Measure X, and all of our community members will derive benefits from their enhanced support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,  
Paul Fadelli  
Mayor, City of El Cerrito

**From:** [Michael Fischer](#)  
**To:** [Alison McKee](#); [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Cc:** [Peter Wilson](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Measure X Funds for Increased Library Hours  
**Date:** Friday, July 16, 2021 12:10:05 AM

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Hi Alison and Walt —

I have written email tonight to my city council urging their support for our request for Measure X funds. I have also written to my ground of library community leaders asking for an all-hands-on-deck output of letters of support. I'm sending this to you should you think it is useful to share it with the other commissioners. I believe I promised I would do that tonight.

Michael

Michael A. Fischer (he him)  
[eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com](mailto:eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com)  
El Cerrito City Designated Library Commissioner  
Vice Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

Library Hours Provide Vital Access to Services for Our Most Needy

On July 16, 2021 at 00:05:40, Michael Fischer ([eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com](mailto:eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com)) wrote:

Friends —

See below which explains the possibility for a countywide increase in library hours of up to 56 hours funded by Measure X. The time is short — comments need to be made by July 27 to the Measure X Advisory Board. The email should be sent to [lisa.Driscoll@cao.cccounty.us](mailto:lisa.Driscoll@cao.cccounty.us). Please do so and request everyone in the county that you know to do so. My own view, which I ask that you not share, is that we might get some extra hours — either 46 or 52 but that 56 is unlikely. But it doesn't hurt to ask.

As you can see, I'm asking the city council to support this measure as well and, unless the Brown Act creates a problem, I'm expecting that they will do so. Therefore I don't think there is a need for letters to the city council. But the library community, and everyone else you know, need to flood the Advisory Board on this issue.

The arguments should stress the equity issue — on internet access, literacy, and learning. It is not possible for many working poor people to get to the library during the 40 or 46 hours that the library is open due to work conflicts. This is exacerbated by the current situation when even though the library is open 46 hours a week, it is still closed on both Sunday AND Monday.

I am preparing a draft letter for my request to the city council and will share it with you when it is done (no later than Tuesday). If you want to use that, and share it with your friends and acquaintances when you ask them to also write the Measure X Advisory Board, that is fine with me. Obviously I also have no objection to you putting your own words to paper. But I stress, and I hope you will stress to all those who you are urging to support this request, the deadline of July 27. This really is an all-hands-on-deck request.

I should, in the spirit of full disclosure, also note that should this request make the cut in terms of the Advisory Board's list of priorities to the Board of Supervisors, we will also have a similar drill sometime in October of this year.

Is this a viable possibility. Yes! I know the library administration has spent a good deal of staff time preparing their request (which I hope to have to share soon). They are overworked and don't generally tilt at windmills. So we need to back them up.

Michael A. Fischer (he him)

[eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com](mailto:eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com)

El Cerrito City Designated Library Commissioner

Vice Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

### Library Hours Provide Vital Access to Services for Our Most Needy

On July 15, 2021 at 23:40:31, Michael Fischer ([eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com](mailto:eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com)) wrote:

Dear Mayor Fadelli, Council Members, and City Manager  
Pinkos —

I am excited to share with you a matter which could be a significant game changer in regard to library issues in El Cerrito.

As you know, Measure X was passed by the voters at the November, 2020 election and the Board of Supervisors has created a Measure X Advisory Board. That Board is to make recommendations, in August, to the Supervisors, regarding allocation of the funding stream from that measure.

County Librarian Alison McKee will be appearing before the Advisory Board on July 28 to present a proposal by the County Library to utilize some of the Measure X funds to provide for an increase in county provided hours for library operation countywide of 56 hours a week, all at county expense. Not only would this relieve the city of the cost of providing hours in excess of 40 hours a week, it would provide a strong argument in support of a new library for El Cerrito since the library would be available to the public for 56 hours.

I just found out about this tonight at the Library Commission meeting. I intend to appear at the City Council meeting next Tuesday, in the public comment period, to ask the council to send a letter of support for the County Library's request to the Measure X Advisory Board. I will also ask the council, at a later date, to further support this request, should it still be viable and under consideration by the Board of Supervisors. I expect the later to be an item on a future consent agenda as a report by me as Library Commissioner.

The only City Council meeting before the July 28 deadline for submitting letters of support for the County Library's request is the July 20 City Council meeting. The agenda for that meeting

has already been released. I will, therefore, request that the council waive the agenda notice requirement under the urgency exception to the Brown Act in my public comment on Tuesday. I am presenting this information to you now so that you are not taken by surprise by this request.

I am also preparing a draft letter of support that I will submit, together with written comments, no later than 4 pm on Tuesday as further public comment, although I will attempt to do so earlier. The letter will stress equity and education issues which form the principal purposes behind Measure X. I will also appear in the general public comment period.

I would also request, should the council deem it appropriate, that a representative of the city appear before the Measure X Advisory Board on July 28. I also plan to do so.

I am sharing this email with the leadership of the El Cerrito library community so that they can be aware of the issue and, I hope, organize a campaign of support on this issue to the Measure X Advisory Board.

Please let me know if there is a problem with making this request. Should it for any reason not be possible, I instead ask that you, individually, support the proposal by the County Librarian before the Measure X Advisory Board.

Michael A. Fischer (he him)  
[eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com](mailto:eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com)  
El Cerrito City Designated Library Commissioner  
Vice Chair, Contra Costa County Library Commission

Library Hours Provide Vital Access to Services for Our Most Needy

July 22, 2021



E-TRANSMITTAL/ U.S. REGULAR MAIL

Ms. Mariana Moore, Chair  
Measure X Community Advisory Board  
County Administrator's Office (CAO)  
1025 Escobar Street, 4th Floor  
Martinez, CA 94553

**RE: MEASURE X FUNDING ALLOCATION SUPPORT FOR THE CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY BUDGET**

Dear Chair Moore and Members of the Measure X Community Advisory Board:

On behalf of the San Pablo City Council, I am writing to urge you to recommend allocating an appropriate proportion of Measure X funding to provide for an expanded Contra Costa County Library Budget. In San Pablo, our ongoing partnership with Contra Costa County Library Services has been vital in providing critical and much needed services in our community.

Any Measure X allocation would directly support a County-wide increase to **56 hours for all County Library** branches, facility upgrades (which are desperately needed in many of our county's libraries, particularly those located in impacted communities), staffing, collection development, and operational support.

The County Librarian's request is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X, especially the following key targets:

- Support crucial safety-net services
- Invest in early childhood services
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Fund other essential services

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many of the divides that increasingly define our region. During the year-long closure, our County Library staff demonstrated how vital their services are to our community members, particularly those who are under-resourced and overburdened. They handed out free lunches and produce, mobile hotspots, literacy materials, and craft kits; delivered books to homebound community members; conducted robust online programming; assisted patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, tutoring services, and accessing other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls significantly short of the median for libraries state-wide, and particularly that of other Bay Area County Libraries. Our County Library system receives funding equivalent to 1.5% of 1% of property tax for all properties (aside from those in the city of Richmond, which operates its own library system). This amount accounts for just 0.97% of the County's current operating GF budget.



Currently, the cost of additional operational hours beyond the County-funded minimum threshold is borne by local cities, like San Pablo, as well as facilities maintenance. While *some* of our County's cities and their libraries' have library support groups and foundations that contribute substantively to fill in the equity gaps produced by minimum level of support in services, programming, open hours, facilities maintenance, etc. There are many others who simply cannot. This also applies to County libraries in unincorporated areas, such as El Sobrante, Kensington (both within District 1), and Bay Point (located in District 5) that do not have a potential local City base from which to draw. The resulting picture is wildly disparate. In other words, the current funding model and allocation reflects, contributes to, and even exacerbates our county's inequities. ***We can and we must do better for our County's system of libraries.***

The significant revenue expected from the Measure X Sales Tax Measure (estimated at \$81M/year) has the potential to level the playing field and to infuse our County Library system's delivery of equitable services and contributions to impactful outcomes with real backbone. Measure X is an unprecedented opportunity to address and ***redress*** some of the massive disparities— both their causes and effects—in our region's healthcare, education, housing, public safety, economic, and environmental sectors, among others. Local libraries are one of the most vital spaces of civic involvement and education, literacy promotion, and intellectual freedom in a democratic state, and they have increasingly become part of the social safety net for many populations, especially our most vulnerable populations.

There is no doubt that we need more vigorous and inclusive community services, and there is no doubt that this funding boost can assist in this endeavor. I understand that the County Library's funding request is one competing interest among a number of other competing interests you are considering for overall Measure X funding allocation. However, I hope you can see how capably it responds to the core imperatives of the Measure X sales tax funding measure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Pabon-Alvarado, Mayor  
City of San Pablo

cc: County Supervisor John Gioia, First District ([John.Gioia@bos.cccounty.us](mailto:John.Gioia@bos.cccounty.us))  
Monica Nino, County CAO ([Monica.Nino@cao.cccounty.us](mailto:Monica.Nino@cao.cccounty.us))  
Lisa Driscoll, County Finance Director ([Lisa.Driscoll@cao.cccounty.us](mailto:Lisa.Driscoll@cao.cccounty.us))  
Allison McKee, Contra Costa County Librarian ([Alison.Mckee@library.cccounty.us](mailto:Alison.Mckee@library.cccounty.us))

San Pablo City Council  
City Manager  
City Attorney



July 23, 2021

Dear Measure X Advisory Board,

I am the new Moraga Library Commissioner and was excited to learn from our County Librarian that she will be speaking to you about a proposal. This proposal is to allocate some of the Measure X funds toward our county library branches and could be a significant game changer in regard to library hours and services in our county libraries.

As you make recommendations, in August, to the Supervisors, regarding allocation of the funding stream from Measure X please consider our libraries. A robust and available library benefits everyone in a community. With more funding, all of our branch libraries would benefit and would move toward equalizing services for every town and city in Contra Costa County.

Please consider supporting this proposal by Alison McKee, County Librarian, before your Board on July 28th.

Libraries provide vital access to services for everyone and is the backbone of a healthy community.

Sincerely,

**Sarah Morgan**

Moraga Library Commissioner & Teacher-Librarian

**From:** [Lorena Ellenberger](#)  
**To:** [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Subject:** Libraries are the best  
**Date:** Friday, July 23, 2021 8:37:03 AM

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Libraries are extremely important and should be considered high priority

Sent from my iPhone

To: Measure X Advisory Board

I am writing to support our county librarian's request for additional funding which will be used to increase the base number of hours our library can be open. The libraries in the county are not uniformly supported due to the various budget demands each city faces. Pinole is a full-service city with substantial monies allocated to both the city's police and fire departments along with various other needed services and staff. It has not been possible for us to pay for additional hours – yet the need is there. We have people in our city who rely on the library for essential services like computer access and wifi. We also have an exceptionally large community room where we host programs for all ages and needs. Additional hours would mean that we could meet even more of our citizens' request for services while having a safe space for reading and information gathering that can be used by even more people.

Libraries are one of the last civic community destinations – and the most egalitarian.

Please give our county librarian's request all due consideration.

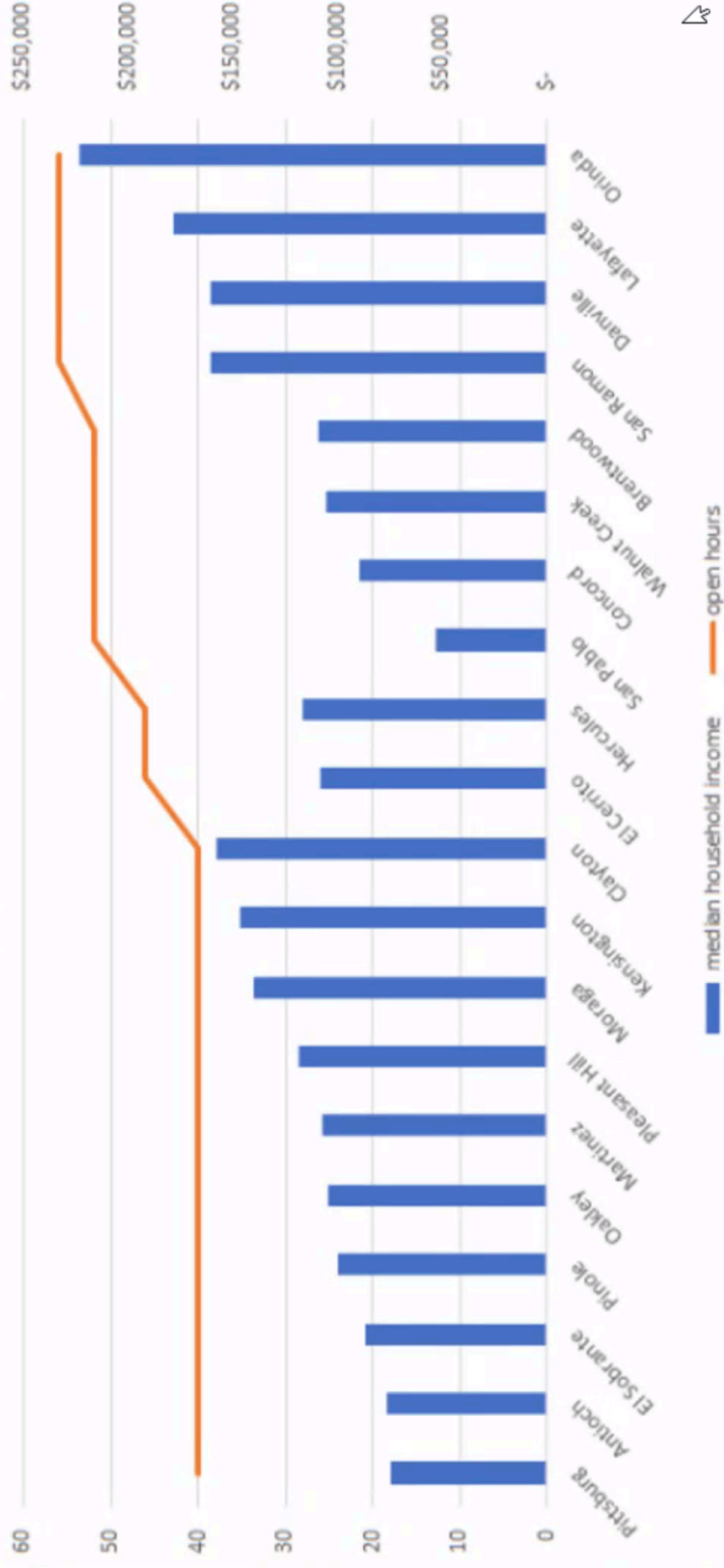
George Pursley, Contra Costa Library Commissioner for Pinole

Devin Murphy, City Councilperson, Pinole

Michael Ashburne, Pinole Progressive Alliance

Clover Catskill, Pinole Progressive Alliance

Hours and Median Income



Library	Funding per Person	No. of residents/servi ce area	No. of Libraries	Library budget
Contra Costa	\$32.89	1,042,344	26	\$35,714,141
Alameda	\$49.54	613,679	10	\$35,234,732
Solano	\$55.96	389,856	9	\$22,745,956
Napa	\$77.85	133,015	4	\$11,213,195
Marin	\$122.83	142,424	10	\$19,993,341



July 22, 2021

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board Members:

As a Councilmember for the City of El Cerrito, I am writing in support of Measure X funds that could provide for an expanded county library budget and directly support the increase in hours of operation, staffing and collection development. I believe this request easily follows the purposes of the key targets for Measure X in Contra Costa County by:

- supporting crucial safety-net services;
- investing in early childhood services;
- protecting vulnerable populations; and
- funding other essential services.

And, like the other recent recommendation made to the Advisory Board by the El Cerrito City Council to fund the Community Crisis Initiative, I believe also requesting assistance for our growing county library needs would help rectify local equity concerns in many cities, like El Cerrito, which may be experiencing difficult financial circumstances at this time.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls woefully short of the median for libraries statewide, and particularly that of other Bay Area County libraries. El Cerrito has stepped up to add some additional hours but at the cost of other services and needs, amid very contentious community debate.

Equitable funding from Measure X will help to provide additional service hours where they are most needed and help to close the equity gap where wealthier cities can rely on well-funded community donations to enhance their library programs.

Additional Measure X funds for El Cerrito would offset our local funds for other critical city needs while we plan to rebuild and create a modern library to meet the needs of El Cerrito and the surrounding communities. Should ongoing Measure X funds be established for county libraries, it would assist our efforts for a new library facility. In addition to possible state and federal funds, I believe an ongoing commitment for additional county funds could importantly assist in establishing a much improved and safer library experience for all our county residents.

Thank you for your consideration using Measure X funding for this worthy county cause.

Sincerely,

Lisa Motoyama  
Councilmember, City of El Cerrito

CC: El Cerrito Council Members, Michael Alan Fischer, Supervisor John Gioia, Contra Costa County Librarian



**From:** [Tommy Smith](#)  
**To:** [Lisa Driscoll](#)  
**Cc:** [Alison McKee](#); [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Subject:** Measure X funds for Equitable Library Access  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021 8:35:28 PM

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To the Members of the Measure X Citizen's Advisory Board,

I am writing in support of the proposal by County Librarian Alison McKee to allocate a proportion of Measure X funds for additional county-paid library hours.

This proposal aligns with the intent of Measure X in supporting safety-net services; early childhood education, and protecting vulnerable populations. Our libraries provide essential services in literacy for children and adults. Libraries are key in bridging the digital divide by providing free internet access. Libraries provide relief as cooling stations, increasingly necessary as we suffer the effects of climate change. Our Concord library even provides nutritional and wellness support for youth with free lunches and programs on diet and exercise.

The funding proposal will establish standardized and equitable library hours countywide, eliminating the disparities in access to this vital public institution that are exasperated by the current funding model. Equal hours will ensure equal access and increase the availability of the library's literacy programs, free digital access and other community services for all.

We urge your support for increased county funded library hours.

Sincerely yours,

Tommy Smith, Library Commissioner, City of Concord

Sent from my iPad



July 22, 2021

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board:

As a councilmember of the City of El Cerrito, I to urge you recommend allocating an appropriate proportion of Measure X funds to provide for additional Page 5 of 7 county-paid library hours. This request is consistent with four of the stated purposes of Measure X:

- Support crucial safety-net services
- Invest in early childhood services
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Fund other essential services

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed clearly to all the digital divide between rich and poor and the increasing important of internet access. This is one of the reasons that, even amid a significant city fiscal crisis, our council voted 4-1 to provide funding for additional library hours so that those without other means to access the interest could still do so.

Of course, our libraries also provide other important services such as promoting reading skills in young children and providing literacy education to adults. The libraries are a valuable resource of information about the pandemic. And libraries provide an important respite to those experiencing homelessness both from life on the street and the increasing ill effects of climate change.

The current system of minimal library hours provided by the county with the burden to provide adequate library hours falling on the cities results in those cities with higher household income often being able to afford this cost while other cities cannot. This is not equitable and is the very thing Measure X was designed to help alleviate.

The City of El Cerrito has recently written you requesting that you also recommend funding for the Community Crisis Initiative. I understand that you will be providing recommendations for funding several items and our request on library hours is not meant to be in opposition to the Community Crisis Initiative.

**City of El Cerrito**  
**Re: Measure X and Library Funding**  
**Page 2 of 2**

I urge you as the Measure X Community Advisory Board to support both the Community Crisis Initiative and increased county funded library hours. These items are just what Measure X was intended to support, especially since all members of our county and all communities will benefit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tessa Rudnick', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Tessa Rudnick  
Councilmember, City of El Cerrito

CC: El Cerrito Council Members, Michael Alan Fischer, Supervisor John Gioia,  
Contra Costa County Librarian

**From:** [Michael Cluster](#)  
**To:** [Lisa Driscoll](#)  
**Cc:** [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Subject:** measure X funds for library  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 20, 2021 2:05:41 PM

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Dear Lisa & Advisory Board,

Please allocate Measure X funds to expand library hours at all the branches of the county library to 56 hours. The library provides both educational materials as well as computer access to citizens of all ages and incomes, including those who may have no other access and hosts childrens programs and other community services.

Thank you,

Mike Cluster  
3593 Halifax Way  
Concord Ca 94520

**From:** [John Huh](#)  
**To:** [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Measure X letters are due to me by Friday morning, 7/23  
**Date:** Thursday, July 22, 2021 9:54:59 PM

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Dear Walter Beveridge,

I have sent a requesting letter to Antioch City Mayor Lamar Thorpe for his requesting letter to Measure X Community Advisory Board for allocating Measure X Fund for Library Hours yesterday. I believe he send in his letter by July 26,2021.

I am sending in my letter of request as follow;

Dear Measure X Community Advisory' Board

Ref; Use of Measure X Fund for Library Hours.

I, John M. Huh, Antioch City nominated Contra Costa County Library Commissioner, humbly request to Contra Costa County Measure X Advisory Board allocating an appropriate Proportion of Measure X Fund to provide for additional County Paid Library Hours. This requesting is consistent with four(4) of the (7) Measure X Purposes;

- \* Support Crucial Safety Net Services
- \* Invest in Early Childhood Services
- \* protect Vulnerable Populations
- \* Fund other Essentials Services.

The request for additional Library hours clearly falls within the above four items to be addressed by Measure X.

A significant part of current problem with the uneven distribution of Library opening hours from the lack of adequate funding for libraries. For example; Antioch Libraries are able to open 40hours/ week and Orinda Library is opening 56 hours/week. This problem has been with us for some time and results from the joint responsibility for libraries input County between the cities and county. Richer cities can afford better libraries opening

Whatever the justification for this arrangement in past, the Measure X money can fix it.

As the Contra Costa County Library Commission observed in 2016, in a population tilted Promoting Excellence in Library Service in Contra Costa County.

The Library's funding model— puts some community libraries at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to their peer libraries located within the county's wealthier community —

Our primary conclusions are that funding for the Library is not "adequate — and that inequalities in Library Services continue despite the expressed need for the Library to reach out to underserved populations.

The County Librarian's request, and we Commissioners request to the Measure X Advisory Board is an attempt to right this inequitable wrong.

I thank you, in advance, for your most favorable recommendation for County Libraries.

Very Sincerely Yours

Signed by  
John M. Huh, Antioch , Library Commissioner

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

On Wednesday, July 21, 2021, 11:02 AM, Walter Beveridge  
<[walter.beveridge@library.cccounty.us](mailto:walter.beveridge@library.cccounty.us)> wrote:

Good morning:

Any letters you are writing that will be included in Alison's packet to the MeasXAB need to be in my inbox by Friday morning at the latest in order to be included. That is the day Alison's packet is due to Lisa Driscoll.

FYI

Regards,

*Walter Beveridge*

Executive Secretary

Contra Costa County Library

777 Arnold Drive, #210

Martinez, CA 94553

(O) 925-608-7730 (C ) 925-818-0049



CITY OF CONCORD  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
1950 Parkside Drive  
Concord, California 94520-4805  
Telephone: (925) 671-3158  
FAX: (925) 798-0636



CITY COUNCIL  
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Dominic D. Aliano, Vice Mayor  
Edi E. Birsan  
Laura M. Hoffmeister  
Carlyn S. Obringer

Patti Barsotti, City Treasurer  
Valerie J. Barone, City Manager

July 20, 2021

Lisa Driscoll  
County Finance Director  
Contra Costa County  
1025 Escobar Street, 4th Floor  
Martinez, CA 94553

**RE: Measure X Funding for Increasing Library Hours**

Dear Ms. Driscoll,

The City of Concord would like to express our strong support for Measure X funding to go toward increasing equitable access to the library by raising hours for all libraries to 56 hours per week and hiring the necessary staff to support

Increased hours will create more convenient access for all Concord citizens, particularly underserved residents that depend on the Library for internet access, adult literacy and workforce development programs, all at county expense.

For these reasons, the City of Concord wholeheartedly supports funding from Measure X to increase hours for all libraries.

Sincerely,

Timothy McGallian  
Mayor  
City of Concord

cc: City Council  
Supervisor Karen Mitchoff  
Valerie Barone, City Manager  
Susanne Brown, City Attorney  
Joelle Fockler, City Clerk  
Niccolo De Luca, Townsend Public Affairs  
Walter Beveridge, County Library Executive Secretary

Presentation of Michael A. Fischer in support of County Librarian Alison McKee's request for Measure X Funds

[eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com](mailto:eclibrarycommissioner@gmail.com)

I am the El Cerrito Designated Library Commissioner for Contra Costa County. This email is written in my personal capacity and does not represent the view of the Contra Costa County Library Commission. This letter is written in support of County Librarian Alison McKee's request for the the Measure X Advisory Board to include increased library hours in its list of recommended funding proposals using Measure X funds.

I also write this as one of the unofficial leaders of the El Cerrito area library community which includes patrons of our branch library from El Cerrito and surrounding areas including both incorporated and unincorporated areas of Richmond. It is my duty to obsess about library issues including such things as library hours.

I note that the El Cerrito City Council, which appointed me, passed a motion in June authorizing support of Measure X funding to support the Contra Costa County Community Crisis Initiative. I do not believe that these two requests are in conflict. Indeed, they both are worthy of funding. The fact that the mayor and members of the

City Council support both requests indicates that they agree.

The County Librarian's request is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X. As the Advisory Board knows, the funding provided by that measure is to be used for the following:

- Keep Contra Costa's regional hospital open and staffed;
- Fund community health centers;
- Provide timely fire and emergency response;
- Support crucial safety-net services;
- Invest in early childhood services;
- Protect vulnerable populations; and
- Fund other essential services.

The request for additional library hours clearly falls within the last four items to be addressed by Measure X and which are underlined above.

The City of El Cerrito strongly believes that funding for robust library hours is a critically important equity issue. That's why they voted, last month, in the midst of a significant fiscal crisis, to provide city funding for library hours in addition to the county provided minimum hours. They took this action because under the present system that is the only way to have additional hours.

So, how are the hours a library is open an equity issue, providing crucial safety-net services to vulnerable populations and investing in early childhood services? Let's start by exploring the services our libraries offer and then examine the effect of library hours on these services.

## Important Library Services

### 1. Broadband Access and Usage

As United States Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer has noted on several occasions, broadband access to the internet today is what access to electricity was in the 1930s. It is essential for receiving many governmental services. We all remember earlier this year when the best way, indeed often the only real way, to get an appointment for a life-critical coronavirus vaccination was through internet access. This is only one of innumerable ways one needs the internet today. It is not a luxury. Broadband access to the internet has become a utility, a necessity to everyday life. David Lazarus, the business columnist for the Los Angeles Times has discussed this here: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2020-10-23/coronavirus-internet-is-a-utility>.

Indeed, the State Budget this year contains several billion dollars to provide improved internet access and the Federal Jobs Act is expected to provide significant funds as well. But the reality is that some of our residents will not be able to afford this even if it is available, and even if it is subsidized. The costs of the equipment and the monthly access charge can be significant. And for some, our libraries also provide the information needed to allow them to access the internet. Without the means to afford the equipment, or without the knowledge of how to connect, a fiber cable means nothing. Our libraries provide internet access through their wifi signals, through the public access computers that are in each library, and by means of offering assistance to those who need it to connect.

One of the biggest issues that the global coronavirus pandemic has shown is the digital divide. People, especially the economically disadvantaged and underserved populations, need the internet to access services and get information about jobs and training. These needs have been exacerbated by the pandemic but they existed before and will remain once the pandemic is over.

There is hard statistical evidence from the El Cerrito library that shows the need for this internet access. In

2018, the El Cerrito City Council voted to fund increased library hours from the 35 hours per week then provided by the county to 50 hours per week — about a 43% increase in the time the library was open. By contrast the internet usage on the library's public access computers increased over 100% at a time when countywide the internet usage remained flat. Increasing library hours resulted in a two for one increase in internet access. The obvious conclusion from this is that the new hours not only provided more time for traditionally underserved people to be able to access the internet, but it provided that at times that were more available to those users.

How serious is the lack of access to the internet? According to the none-too-good and probably significantly understated data available from the FCC, 28% of our fellow Contra Costans lack broadband access. And what does this cohort look like — they are overwhelmingly poor, people of color, and seniors.

## 2. Aid to People Experiencing Homelessness

Then 2020 Contra Costa Annual Point in Time Count (<https://cchealth.org/h3/coc/pdf/PIT-report-2020.pdf>) was taken on January 22, 2020 and showed that on that date there were 2,277 people experiencing homelessness in our county, 1,570 were unsheltered, and 707 were

sheltered. Seven percent were minors and 16% were seniors. This survey took place before the global coronavirus pandemic which surely has exacerbated the situation.

Those experiencing homelessness are significantly people of color: 23% are Latinx; 29% are Black; 8% are Native American.

How do libraries serve people experiencing homelessness. A library represents a place where a person can find out about training and jobs and apply for some of them; find out about shelters and other governmental services; and get all sorts of other assistance those of us privileged to have homes take for granted. Libraries also provide a respite, a place where a person can be free from the noise and disruption of life on the streets.

### 3. Education at all age levels

Libraries provide an important educational service. Story time provides an introduction to very young children to the wonder that is in books, creating in them a desire to read which is so essential to success in our society. The “read to a dog” program provides young readers with the confidence they need to become proficient readers. And “Project Second Chance” teaches literacy to adults

throughout the county, including a person who wants to be able to read and complete a job application and a grandparent who wants to be able to read to their grandchild.

A study issued in July of this year by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago examined the effect of public library investment (in this case involving capital improvements) on student achievement measured by test scores (<https://www.edworkingpapers.com/sites/default/files/ai21-386.pdf>). The study found that investments in libraries resulted in an increase in the students' reading scores while it had no effect on their math scores. This is consistent with the emphasis on reading and books that remains the heart of our libraries' mission.

Other programs the libraries offer include tutoring to students. Economically disadvantaged parents need these services which can be self-financed by those with greater resources.

#### 4. Climate change

Libraries also provide a respite to our most vulnerable population to effects of climate change. A poor person is, even if housed, less likely to have air filters and air conditioning. But many of our libraries do have them. So



when the weather is extremely hot, or when the air is smokey because of fires, a library represents a place when one can breathe cooler and cleaner air courtesy of the HVAC system of the library.

### How Our Libraries Are Funded

Our county library system, bluntly put, favors richer communities simply based on its organization. Whether this is the intention of the system is not the issue; this is the effect. It is not unique among library systems but it is the system on which we can have some effect. So we have to do whatever we can to work against this aspect of the system.

The structure of the library system is that of a joint enterprise between the county and nearly all its cities. (For historical reasons the City of Richmond has an independent library system.) Each city provides the building for a library and its maintenance. (In certain unincorporated areas the county provides the building.) The county provides the collection for that library branch, the administration and equipment, and enough personnel to have the library open 40 hours a week. If a cities wishes to, it can pay the county to keep the library open for additional hours. This works out to schedules like this:

- Under the 40 hour plan, a library will be closed Sunday and Monday and only open past 6 pm on Tuesday.
- Under the 46 hour plan, a library will be closed the same two days but open past 6 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- Under the 52 hour plan a library is only closed on Sunday and is open past 6 pm on Monday and Tuesday.
- Under the 56 hour plan a library is only closed on Sunday and is open past 6 pm on Monday through Thursday.

It should come as no surprise, as shown in the County Librarian's presentation, that the four cities which have their libraries open 56 hours a week are the four cities with the largest household income in the county. This is the antithesis of equity.

Comparing the per person expenditures on the library by the county versus our surrounding counties, based on the numbers in the County Librarian's report, shows Contra Costa clearly at the bottom of such spending. The following figures show the percentage above the Contra Costa County expenditure in these counties:

Alameda:	+ 51%
Solano:	+ 70%
Napa:	+137%
Marin	+273%

This is not the first time this inequity and disparity has been pointed out. In 2016, the Contra Costa County Library Commission noted, in a publication titled *Promoting Excellence in Library Service in Contra Costa County*: “[T]he Library’s funding model ... puts some community libraries at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to their peer libraries located within the county’s wealthier community. ....Our primary conclusions are that funding for the Library is not adequate ... and that **inequities in Library services** continue despite the expressed need for the Library to reach out to underserved populations.”

In 2016 the money to correct this hugely inequitable wrong arguably wasn’t available. But whatever the justification for this arrangement in the past, the existence of Measure X money to fix it makes the change imperative.

### Conclusion: What a Difference Hours Make

Libraries means different things to different people. They do serve a variety of needs. And the hours a library is open have different effects on different people.

As a Library Commissioner, I sometimes get asked whether we even need to have physical library buildings anymore. Perhaps this is true to a person:

- Who can afford to be and is often online from their home;
- Who owns a computer or tablet that serves as an electronic book reader;
- Who chooses not to participate in the rich variety of free programs each library offers its patrons (only a few of which have been mentioned here)

But to others — especially people of color, poor people, and seniors — the various services a library provides that are highlighted above are essential to their physical, emotional, and intellectual needs. To these people, (and they are the people who are most intended to be assisted by Measure X funds) libraries serve as what is sometimes called a “second responder” role: (<https://www.theatlantic.com/notes/2019/05/when-libraries-are-second-responders/590098/>)

The services to our most needy that are provided by our libraries all share one common aspect. They are only available to a patron when they can come to the library at a time the library is open. Like an umbrella, a library doesn't work for them when it is closed.

There is one additional advantage to the proposal by the County Librarian. It is truly a win-win proposal for all Contra Costans. To see this you only need to go visit one of our libraries. Libraries rank as one of the most popular functions of our government across the population.

People using our libraries are as diverse as our county. In the words of former California Poet Laureate Dana Gioia, libraries are the one place in a community where everyone feels safe and welcome. As shown above, they fill many needs of our most vulnerable. And Contra Costans deserve to have a robust access to them.

**From:** [Peter Wilson](#)  
**To:** [Garrett Evans](#)  
**Cc:** [zlefrak@aol.com](mailto:zlefrak@aol.com); [Alison McKee](#); [Michael Allan Fischer](#); [Walter Beveridge](#)  
**Subject:** Re: More on Measure X  
**Date:** Thursday, July 22, 2021 11:00:10 AM

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Many thanks Garrett.

Peter A. Wilson  
190 Pelican Loop  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
925-360-7170



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

On Thu, Jul 22, 2021 at 10:58 AM Garrett Evans <[GEvans@ci.pittsburg.ca.us](mailto:GEvans@ci.pittsburg.ca.us)> wrote:  
Thank you.

We will have the letter done today.

Garrett Evans  
City Manager

On Jul 22, 2021, at 10:25 AM, Peter Wilson <[peteralbertwilson@gmail.com](mailto:peteralbertwilson@gmail.com)> wrote:

**\*\*External Sender: Use caution before opening links or attachments\*\***

Good Morning Garrett,

This is just an additional thought. When the library is open, in addition to access to wi-fi, computers, books, magazines, newspapers and a wealth of educational programs, residents can pick up important application forms e.g. voter registration, low income housing as well as information about vocational and recreational opportunities. Only being open late (until 8 p.m.) only one day a week, and closed on Sunday and Monday, restricts access to people who work. That includes many students who must work full-time to help support their families and themselves. I know you are aware of this, but many aren't. It is an additional piece of information that you and the Council may wish to include in your letter. Zelda LsFrak-Bellici, Pittsburg's representative on the Library Commission, reminded me of this.

Have a good day,

Peter

Peter A. Wilson  
190 Pelican Loop  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
925-360-7170

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[www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)<[https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=link&utm\\_campaign=sig-email&utm\\_content=webmail&utm\\_term=link](https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm_medium=email&utm_source=link&utm_campaign=sig-email&utm_content=webmail&utm_term=link)>

On Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 5:34 PM Peter Wilson

<[peteralbertwilson@gmail.com](mailto:peteralbertwilson@gmail.com)<<mailto:peteralbertwilson@gmail.com>>> wrote:

Dear Mayor Craft, Pittsburg City Council members, and City Manager Garrett,

The request put forth by the County Librarian to augment County support for open hours at all of our libraries is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X. The funds provided by that measure, estimated to be at least \$88 million a year, are to be used for the following:

- Keep Contra Costa's regional hospital open and staffed;
- Fund community health centers;
- Provide timely fire and emergency response;
- Support crucial safety-net services;
- Invest in early childhood services;
- Protect vulnerable populations; and
- Fund other essential services.

The request for additional library hours clearly falls within the last four items to be addressed by Measure X which are underlined above.

I understand the Pittsburg Council has considered augmenting its library's County funded open hours in the past, but budgetary limitations prevented it from taking this much needed action. Recognizing the wealth-based inequities associated with access to this critical educational resource that exist across the County, the County Librarian, Alison McKee, has stepped forward with a Measure X proposal to address them.

As the information provided by County Librarian McKee shows, the existence of city funded library hours at the highest level basically tracks city household income. The four cities with the greatest number of city-funded library hours are those with the highest household income. (See Exhibit A attached.)

A significant part of the problem with the uneven distribution of library hours comes from the lack of adequate funding for libraries under the present system. This results in a per person expenditure in Contra Costa County that is substantially below that in neighboring counties. (See Exhibit B attached.)

This problem has been with us for some time and results from the joint responsibility for libraries in our county between the cities and the county. Richer cities can afford better libraries and libraries that are open more. Whatever the justification for this arrangement in the past, the existence of Measure X money to fix it makes the change imperative.

As the Contra Costa County Library Commission observed in 2016, in a publication titled Promoting Excellence in Library Service in Contra Costa County,

[T]he Library's funding model ... puts some community libraries at a distinct disadvantage in comparison to their peer libraries located within the county's wealthier community.... Our primary conclusions are that funding for the Library is not adequate ... and that inequities in Library services continue despite the expressed need for the Library to reach out to underserved populations."

Members of this Council have recognized, rightly, that the operation of our libraries should properly be a county rather than a city expense. Unfortunately, this view, which I share, runs into the reality that the cost of operational hours below an inadequate minimum are imposed on the cities. The County Librarian's request to the Measure X Advisory Board is an attempt to right this inequitable wrong. Our City Council should strongly support the request.

You will find below for your consideration a draft letter on behalf of the City to the Measure X Advisory Board. I stress the use of the term draft. Please edit it however the Council feels appropriate.

Whatever the City's final letter is, It should be sent to [lisa.driscoll@cao.cccounty.us](mailto:lisa.driscoll@cao.cccounty.us)<mailto:[lisa.driscoll@cao.cccounty.us](mailto:lisa.driscoll@cao.cccounty.us)> with a copy to the County Librarian: [alison.mckee@library.cccounty.us](mailto:alison.mckee@library.cccounty.us)<mailto:[alison.mckee@library.cccounty.us](mailto:alison.mckee@library.cccounty.us)> for inclusion in her packet of presentation materials.

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#### Draft Letter

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board:

On behalf of the City of Pittsburg Council, I am writing to urge you to recommend allocating an appropriate proportion of Measure X funds to provide for additional county-paid library hours.

This request is consistent with four of the stated purposes of Measure X:

- Support crucial safety-net services;
- Invest in early childhood services;
- Protect vulnerable populations; and
- Fund other essential services.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed clearly to all the digital divide between rich and poor and the increasing importance of internet access.

Our libraries also provide other important services such as promoting reading skills in young children and providing literacy education to adults. The libraries are a valuable resource of information about the pandemic. And libraries provide an important respite to those experiencing homelessness both from life on the street and the increasing ill effects of climate change.

The current system of minimal library hours provided by the county with the burden to provide adequate library hours falling on the cities results in those cities with higher household income often being able to afford this cost while other cities cannot. This is not equitable and is the very thing Measure X was designed to help alleviate.

It is far past time that we allow some libraries, generally those in less wealthy areas, to offer 40% fewer hours of service per week, close as residents leave work and need access, and remain closed two days a week.



Sincerely yours,

---

Please let me know if you have questions or desire additional information.

Cordially,

Peter A. Wilson  
190 Pelican Loop  
Pittsburg, CA 94565  
925-360-7170

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[www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)[https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=link&utm\\_campaign=sig-email&utm\\_content=webmail&utm\\_term=link](https://www.avast.com/sig-email?utm_medium=email&utm_source=link&utm_campaign=sig-email&utm_content=webmail&utm_term=link)>

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board:

On behalf of the Pinole City Council, I am writing to urge you to recommend allocating an appropriate proportion of Measure X funds to provide for an expanded county library budget. This allocation would directly support a countywide increase to 56 hours for **all** branches, facility upgrades (which are desperately needed in many of our county's libraries, particularly those located in impacted communities), staffing, collection development, and operational support.

The County Librarian's request is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X, especially the following key targets:

- Support crucial safety-net services
- Invest in early childhood services
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Fund other essential services

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many of the divides that increasingly define our region. During the yearlong+ closure, our county library staff demonstrated how vital their services are to our community members, particularly those who are under-resourced and overburdened. They handed out free lunches and produce, mobile hotspots, literacy materials, and craft kits; delivered books to homebound community members; conducted robust online programming; assisted patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, tutoring services, and accessing other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on. Libraries are truly the place where democracy shows the true extent of its promise and potential. Our investment in *them* reflects the degree of our investment in our egalitarian social and political aspirations.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls woefully short of the median for libraries statewide, and particularly that of other Bay Area county libraries. Our system receives funding equivalent to 1.5% of 1% of property tax for all properties (aside from those in the city of Richmond, which operates its own library system). This amount accounts for just .97% of the county's current budget. Currently, the cost of additional operational hours beyond the county-funded minimum threshold is borne by cities, as is facilities maintenance. While *some* of our county's cities and their libraries' respective friends' groups and foundations can pitch in substantively to fill in the opportunity and equity gaps produced by this scant level of support—in services, programming, open hours, facilities maintenance, etc.—many others simply cannot. This also applies to libraries in unincorporated areas, such as El Sobrante, Kensington (both within District 1), and Bay Point (located in District 5) that do not have a potential city base from which to draw. The resulting picture is wildly disparate. In other words, the current funding model and allocation reflects, contributes to, and even exacerbates our county's inequities. ***We can and we must do better.*** The significant revenue expected from the Measure X initiative (estimated at \$81M/year) has the potential to level the playing field and to infuse our library system's delivery of equitable services and contributions to impactful outcomes with real backbone.

Measure X is an unprecedented opportunity to address and ***redress*** some of the massive disparities—both their causes and effects—in our region's healthcare, education, housing, public safety, economic, and environmental sectors, among others. Libraries are one of the most vital spaces of civic involvement and education, literacy promotion, and intellectual freedom in a democratic state. And they have increasingly become part of the social safety net for many populations, especially our most vulnerable community members. There is no doubt that we need more vigorous and inclusive community services, and there is no doubt that this funding boost can help make that happen. I understand that the library's

ask is but one competing interest in ultimate allocation, but I hope you can see how capably it responds to the core imperatives of the Measure X specifications.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,  
Norma Martinez-Rubin  
Mayor, City of Pinole

Dear Representative DeSaulnier,

I am writing to ask for your support in bringing **S. 127, the Build America's Libraries Act** to fruition.

As Contra Costa County's District 1 Library Commissioner, I can tell you unequivocally that this bill would be a game changer for the libraries within my purview, for our countywide system, and for libraries and communities in need across the country.

Libraries have always been both the lifeblood and the lifeline of their communities. This statement reflects the long arc of their history as well as their vital role during the pandemic. Librarians provided so many critical services during this emergent time: handing out thousands of free meals, mobile hotspots, and craft kits; delivering books to homebound community members; assisting patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, and other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on. They are truly the place where democracy shows the true extent of its promise and potential.

Congress has the opportunity to allocate \$5 billion to assist the nation's libraries to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, advanced technology, environmental hazards, and accessibility. The Bay Area, Contra Costa County, and my district in particular exhibit stunning disparities in individual and community wealth and influence. Although our county allocates funds equally to each branch, some of them benefit from additional sources of support, e.g., their city government, "friends' groups," and local donors. These cities often have extraordinarily modern, well-equipped, and amply funded libraries. And yet, other libraries are sited in historically impacted and under-resourced communities with fewer funding levers, and still others reside in unincorporated areas (including 2 of the 5 libraries within my district) that have zero access to the same local municipal coffers. This tension—really a tragedy—between the "have's" and the "have not's" is palpable in our region (and beyond). It enacts a divisive social dynamic and corrosive psychological effect on our community members. We stand at a critical junction, where our nation's moral fabric can either be systematically mended or further rended. By prioritizing library infrastructure and bringing more resources to the places and people who need it most, you can help tip the scales in the right direction.

Within the five libraries in my district, there are two that are in dire need of repairs, renovation, expansion, and/or reconstruction. Both of these sites, one in El Cerrito and the other in the unincorporated area of Kensington, have significant infrastructure, accessibility, and design challenges that cannot be addressed via available funding streams, e.g., leaky roofs, faulty or non-existent HVAC systems, non-ADA-compliant bookshelves, lack of study and meeting rooms, etc. We are working in multiple ways at the systemic level to address these needs and inequities. But we need the bold and swift agenda that the Biden administration has the power to enact. And we need it now.

Please raise your voice to ensure that this moment is seized to its fullest potential and to bring our libraries, our librarians, and our community members a future endowed with equity, honor, and hope.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Rachel Rosekind, PhD, Contra Costa County Library District 1 Commissioner

20 July 2021

Ms. Mariana Moore, Chair, Measure X Community Advisory Board  
c/o Lisa Driscoll, Contra Costa County Finance Director

I am writing to endorse the Contra Costa County Librarian's appeal to the Measure X Community Advisory Board to allocate funding that will provide enhanced stability and equity to our county's residents. Support for the library system's initiative would signal a firm commitment to fulfilling the county's equity goals, across multiple sectors, and to prioritizing inclusion as a principle of community organization.

I applied for and was appointed as District 1 Library Commissioner by Supervisor Gioia due to my passion for prioritizing the needs of our underserved community members. Measure X provides an important opportunity to enact that mission.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls woefully short of the median for libraries statewide, and particularly that of other Bay Area county libraries. Our system receives funding equivalent to 1.5% of 1% of property tax for all properties (aside from those in the city of Richmond, which operates its own library system). This amount accounts for just .97% of the county's current budget. Currently, the cost of additional operational hours beyond the county-funded minimum threshold is borne by cities, as is facilities maintenance. While *some* of our county's cities and their libraries' respective friends' groups and foundations can pitch in substantively to fill in the opportunity and equity gaps produced by this scant level of support—in services, programming, open hours, facilities maintenance, etc.—many others simply cannot. This also applies to libraries in unincorporated areas, such as El Sobrante, Kensington (both within District 1), and Bay Point (located in District 5) that do not have a potential city funding base from which to draw. The resulting picture is wildly disparate. To illustrate this point, the four cities with the greatest number of city-funded library hours at present are those with the highest household income. During a recent county needs assessment, one community member put this blunt reality in stark perspective: *"Fix your system. The libraries in the different communities could not be a more blatant illustration of the divide between 'haves and have-nots' in this county. Poor kids see that what the county thinks they deserve are understaffed libraries and ratty books, libraries that are closed more than they're opened. Rich neighborhoods meanwhile get the best of the best. Is that what libraries are supposed to be about?"*

In other words, the current funding model and allocation reflects, contributes to, and even exacerbates our county's inequities. ***We can and we must do better.***

The existing state of our county's library funding does not serve all community members, and it certainly does not serve them all equally. The significant revenue expected from the Measure X initiative has the potential to level the playing field for our various branches and to infuse our library system's delivery of equitable services and contributions to impactful outcomes with real backbone. It would directly support facility upgrades (which are desperately needed in many of the libraries located in impacted communities), staffing, collection development, and operational support. Specifically, the measure could enact the following: funding for across-the-board 56 hour open hours at ***all*** branches, improved facilities, increased collections, additional services, more outreach opportunities, safe spaces for teens to congregate after school, and better wraparound support for families and residents, particularly in underserved communities.

We are undoubtedly experiencing a widening gap between the have's and the have-not's, particularly in the Bay Area. County Librarian McKee's Measure X proposal can ameliorate some of the impacts of that trend. There are so many forces that are beyond the control of local municipalities. ***This is not one of them.*** Measure X provides a direct portal to greater equity and excellent services for ***all*** of our county's residents. The measure is not directly tied to nor a result of our state's unprecedented 2021 budget surplus, but it is certainly part of the larger picture: an opportunity to address and ***redress*** some of the massive disparities—both their causes and effects—in our region's healthcare, education, housing, public safety, economic, and environmental sectors, among others.

In November 2020, Contra Costa County voters passed Measure X to fund essential services including the regional hospital, community health centers, emergency response, safety-net services, early childhood services, and other community services. The County Librarian's request is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X, especially the following key targets:

- Support crucial safety-net services
- Invest in early childhood services
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Fund other essential services

Our public libraries are the institutions where ideals like equal and free access acquire animus and meaning and where a region's diversity can be truly reflected and enacted. They are one of the most vital spaces of civic involvement and intellectual freedom in a democratic state. But they have increasingly become part of the social safety net for many populations, especially our most vulnerable community members. There is no doubt that we need more vigorous and inclusive community services, and there is no doubt that this funding boost can help make that happen. Measure X funds are explicitly targeted to address these prevailing social issues.

Please endorse our County Librarian's request for Measure X allocation. Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,



Rachel Rosekind, PhD  
Contra Costa County Library District 1 Commissioner

Cc: Supervisor John Gioia

Dear Senator Feinstein,

I am writing to thank Senator Feinstein for co-sponsoring **S. 127, the Build America's Libraries Act**.

As Contra Costa County's District 1 Library Commissioner, I can tell you unequivocally that this bill would be a game changer for the libraries within my purview, for our countywide system, and for libraries and communities in need across the country.

Libraries have always been both the lifeblood and the lifeline of their communities. This statement reflects the long arc of their history as well as their vital role during the pandemic. Librarians provided so many critical services during this emergent time: handing out thousands of free meals, mobile hotspots, and craft kits; delivering books to homebound community members; assisting patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, and other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on. They are truly the place where democracy shows the true extent of its promise and potential.

Congress has the opportunity to allocate \$5 billion to assist the nation's libraries to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, advanced technology, environmental hazards, and accessibility. The Bay Area, Contra Costa County, and my district in particular exhibit stunning disparities in individual and community wealth and influence. Although our county allocates funds equally to each branch, some of them benefit from additional sources of support, e.g., their city government, "friends' groups," and local donors. These cities often have extraordinarily modern, well-equipped, and amply funded libraries. And yet, other libraries are sited in historically impacted and under-resourced communities with fewer funding levers, and still others reside in unincorporated areas (including 2 of the 5 libraries within my district) that have zero access to the same local municipal coffers. This tension—really a tragedy—between the "have's" and the "have not's" is palpable in our region (and beyond). It enacts a divisive social dynamic and corrosive psychological effect on our community members. We stand at a critical junction, where our nation's moral fabric can either be systematically mended or further rended. By prioritizing library infrastructure and bringing more resources to the places and people who need it most, you can help tip the scales in the right direction.

Within the five libraries in my district, there are two that are in dire need of repairs, renovation, expansion, and/or reconstruction. Both of these sites, one in El Cerrito and the other in the unincorporated area of Kensington, have significant infrastructure, accessibility, and design challenges that cannot be addressed via available funding streams, e.g., leaky roofs, faulty or non-existent HVAC systems, non-ADA-compliant bookshelves, lack of study and meeting rooms, etc. We are working in multiple ways at the systemic level to address these needs and inequities. But we need the bold and swift agenda that the Biden administration has the power to enact. And we need it now.

Please raise your voice to ensure that this moment is seized to its fullest potential and to bring our libraries, our librarians, and our community members a future endowed with equity, honor, and hope.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Rachel Rosekind, PhD, Contra Costa County Library District 1 Commissioner

Dear Senator Padilla,

I am writing to thank Senator Padilla for co-sponsoring **S. 127, the Build America's Libraries Act**.

As Contra Costa County's District 1 Library Commissioner, I can tell you unequivocally that this bill would be a game changer for the libraries within my purview, for our countywide system, and for libraries and communities in need across the country.

Libraries have always been both the lifeblood and the lifeline of their communities. This statement reflects the long arc of their history as well as their vital role during the pandemic. Librarians provided so many critical services during this emergent time: handing out thousands of free meals, mobile hotspots, and craft kits; delivering books to homebound community members; assisting patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, and other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on. They are truly the place where democracy shows the true extent of its promise and potential.

Congress has the opportunity to allocate \$5 billion to assist the nation's libraries to address challenges such as natural disasters, COVID-19, advanced technology, environmental hazards, and accessibility. The Bay Area, Contra Costa County, and my district in particular exhibit stunning disparities in individual and community wealth and influence. Although our county allocates funds equally to each branch, some of them benefit from additional sources of support, e.g., their city government, "friends' groups," and local donors. These cities often have extraordinarily modern, well-equipped, and amply funded libraries. And yet, other libraries are sited in historically impacted and under-resourced communities with fewer funding levers, and still others reside in unincorporated areas (including 2 of the 5 libraries within my district) that have zero access to the same local municipal coffers. This tension—really a tragedy—between the "have's" and the "have not's" is palpable in our region (and beyond). It enacts a divisive social dynamic and corrosive psychological effect on our community members. We stand at a critical junction, where our nation's moral fabric can either be systematically mended or further rended. By prioritizing library infrastructure and bringing more resources to the places and people who need it most, you can help tip the scales in the right direction.

Within the five libraries in my district, there are two that are in dire need of repairs, renovation, expansion, and/or reconstruction. Both of these sites, one in El Cerrito and the other in the unincorporated area of Kensington, have significant infrastructure, accessibility, and design challenges that cannot be addressed via available funding streams, e.g., leaky roofs, faulty or non-existent HVAC systems, non-ADA-compliant bookshelves, lack of study and meeting rooms, etc. We are working in multiple ways at the systemic level to address these needs and inequities. But we need the bold and swift agenda that the Biden administration has the power to enact. And we need it now.

Please raise your voice to ensure that this moment is seized to its fullest potential and to bring our libraries, our librarians, and our community members a future endowed with equity, honor, and hope.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Rachel Rosekind, PhD, Contra Costa County Library District 1 Commissioner



Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board:

On behalf of the San Pablo City Council, I am writing to urge you to recommend allocating an appropriate proportion of Measure X funds to provide for an expanded county library budget. This allocation would directly support a countywide increase to 56 hours for **all** branches, facility upgrades (which are desperately needed in many of our county's libraries, particularly those located in impacted communities), staffing, collection development, and operational support.

The County Librarian's request is fully consistent with the purposes of Measure X, especially the following key targets:

- Support crucial safety-net services
- Invest in early childhood services
- Protect vulnerable populations
- Fund other essential services

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many of the divides that increasingly define our region. During the yearlong+ closure, our county library staff demonstrated how vital their services are to our community members, particularly those who are under-resourced and overburdened. They handed out free lunches and produce, mobile hotspots, literacy materials, and craft kits; delivered books to homebound community members; conducted robust online programming; assisted patrons with unemployment, EBT benefits, tutoring services, and accessing other crucial safety net services—the list goes on and on. Libraries are truly the place where democracy shows the true extent of its promise and potential. Our investment in *them* reflects the degree of our investment in our egalitarian social and political aspirations.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls woefully short of the median for libraries statewide, and particularly that of other Bay Area county libraries. Our system receives funding equivalent to 1.5% of 1% of property tax for all properties (aside from those in the city of Richmond, which operates its own library system). This amount accounts for just .97% of the county's current budget. Currently, the cost of additional operational hours beyond the county-funded minimum threshold is borne by cities, as is facilities maintenance. While *some* of our county's cities and their libraries' respective friends' groups and foundations can pitch in substantively to fill in the opportunity and equity gaps produced by this scant level of support—in services, programming, open hours, facilities maintenance, etc.—many others simply cannot. This also applies to libraries in unincorporated areas, such as El Sobrante, Kensington (both within District 1), and Bay Point (located in District 5) that do not have a potential city base from which to draw. The resulting picture is wildly disparate. In other words, the current funding model and allocation reflects, contributes to, and even exacerbates our county's inequities. ***We can and we must do better.*** The significant revenue expected from the Measure X initiative (estimated at \$81M/year) has the potential to level the playing field and to infuse our library system's delivery of equitable services and contributions to impactful outcomes with real backbone.

Measure X is an unprecedented opportunity to address and ***redress*** some of the massive disparities—both their causes and effects—in our region's healthcare, education, housing, public safety, economic, and environmental sectors, among others. Libraries are one of the most vital spaces of civic involvement and education, literacy promotion, and intellectual freedom in a democratic state. And they have increasingly become part of the social safety net for many populations, especially our most vulnerable community members. There is no doubt that we need more vigorous and inclusive community services, and there is no doubt that this funding boost can help make that happen. I understand that the library's

ask is but one competing interest in ultimate allocation, but I hope you can see how capably it responds to the core imperatives of the Measure X specifications.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,  
Elizabeth Pabon-Alvarado  
Mayor, City of San Pablo