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Join local taxpayer advocates in voting YES on Prop 6.

by Andrea Seastrand

Remember the theory that government is supposed to be for the people and by the people and not for itself? Somehow this is a lesson that San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) still hasn't learned and their recent actions taken to [formally oppose Proposition 6](#), the gas tax repeal initiative, is the latest example.

It's not the first time SLOCOG has used its position as a governmental organization to influence a ballot proposition. Back in 2016, SLOCOG spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of [taxpayer money](#) in a failed attempt to convince county voters to approve Measure J, a half cent sales tax increase to pay for transportation projects. The Central Coast Taxpayers Association filed a complaint with the FPPC alleging misuse of public dollars to influence an election which is illegal under state law. That investigation is still ongoing.

I wrote last year about the self-serving nature of [government](#) to perpetually want to grow itself exemplified by SLOCOG's role in Measure J being a clear example. It's no surprise we are seeing the same tired story play out with SLOCOG voting to take an oppose position on the gas and car tax repeal. Of course the decision to oppose was recommended by unelected staff members at SLOCOG and the [analysis](#) provided to Board Members did not present a objective case of the pros and cons of Proposition 6. Instead it only focused on dire threats to local projects that would be threatened if the repeal is successful.

While SLOCOG continues to work with others who benefit from higher government spending like the [League of California Cities, Governor Brown and construction unions](#) to beat back the repeal initiative, there is a strong local grassroots support campaign coming together on behalf of the forgotten voice of taxpayers. Joining the Central Coast Taxpayers Association are [13 local organizations](#) and growing. Be prepared to see a lot of Yes on Prop 6 signs around the region because there are many people motivated to send a message to SLOCOG and Sacramento that they won't foot the bill just because California has failed to made transportation funding a priority.

According to the Yes on Prop 6 campaign, the gas and car tax increases are costing the [average family \\$780 a year](#). Ironically the taxpayer-funded "Paid for by SB 1" signs dotting highways across the state also cost [\\$700 each](#). So much

for the government staying neutral on ballot measures. We have this type of electioneering before with SLOCOG's "informational" mailers that were really intended to promote Measure J. Wasting public dollars on SB 1 signs to try and sell the benefits of the gas tax is the ultimate insult to taxpayers.

For people outside of the political establishment, it's easy to understand why Prop 6 has a real chance of passing. When compared to other states by the Reason Foundation, California's highway system [ranks](#) 45th on cost-effectiveness and overall performance.

With families already being asked to pay more for everything from housing to energy to childcare, paying higher gas and car taxes can be an incredible burden. Before taxpayers are asked to pay more, they are right to demand that existing funds be spent more efficiently. [AB 496](#), a bill cosponsored by our local Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham, would have dedicated billions more to transportation without raising taxes. It was never even given a vote.

When the campaign to pass Proposition 13 started in the 1970s, much of the political establishment in Sacramento [opposed it](#). Yet when voters had a chance to weigh in, Proposition 13 passed with over 62% of voters in support.

SLOCOG and Democrats running Sacramento are dangerously tone deaf and have badly underestimated voters' legitimate frustrations if they think the public will perpetually accept footing the bill for higher taxes. The local Yes on Prop 6 campaign is gaining strength for a reason. Government can be self-serving even to the point where it gets involved in an election, but fortunately we still live in a Republic where citizens have final say on these types of decision. Voters should see through SLOCOG's smoke and join local taxpayer advocates in voting YES on Prop 6.

Conservative columnist Andrea Seastrand is a former representative for the 22nd Congressional District, a longtime grass-roots activist and current president of the Central Coast Taxpayers Association. Her column runs in The Tribune every other Sunday, in rotation with liberal columnist Tom Fulks.