

This non-partisan report was prepared by volunteer members of the League of Women Voters of Lane County.

Measure 20-385

Fern Ridge Library Levy

Official Title: Renewal Five-Year Local Option Levy for General Library Operations

Question: Shall Fern Ridge Library continue to levy \$0.35 per \$1000 assessed value for general operations for five years beginning 2027/28. This measure renews current local option taxes.

Referral: This measure is referred to voters by the Fern Ridge Library District.

Financial Impact

This measure renews the current local option levy of \$0.35 per \$1,000 assessed value to support the Fern Ridge Library District. There is no increase in tax rate. A homeowner with a property assessed at \$236,000 would continue to pay \$82.60 per year for library services. The levy will collect between approximately \$484,000 and \$545,000 per year for five years for library operations.

NOTE: Assessed value (AV) is the value used to calculate property tax. It is shown on the property tax statement. It is NOT the same as real market value (RMV), which is the market price of the home.

Probable Result Of A “Yes” Vote

If measure 20-385 passes, the library would operate at current levels for the entirety of the 5-year period of the levy (through June 30, 2031). Taxes will remain the same.

Probable Result Of A “No” Vote

If the measure fails, the library will lose approximately 40% of its current funding. There will be reductions in programs, collections, staffing, and open hours. Taxes for the District will decrease.

Background

The Fern Ridge Library District includes approximately 181 square miles located west of Fern Ridge Reservoir, along Highway 126, Territorial Road, Scheffler Road, Warthen Road, Knight Road, Poodle Creek Road, Vaughn Road, Penn Road, Nelson Mountain Road and Siuslaw Road. Included in the district are the City of Veneta, and the communities of Elmira, Noti and Walton. Funding for the Fern Ridge Library comes from property taxes that provide permanent support of the library at \$0.384 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, an amount that covers about 60% of the library’s budget.. Additional support for the library comes from a levy that must be approved by the voters periodically, generally every five years. In May 2017 voters approved a local option levy of \$0.35 per \$1,000 assessed value to support the Fern Ridge Library District general operations. That levy was renewed in 2022 at the same rate.

Proposal

The measure again requests that voters approve the local option levy at the same rate that was first approved in 2017. The levy provides funding for staff, library materials, and programs and services for patrons.

Without continuation of the revenue from this levy, the district will have to reduce its budget by an estimated \$484,000 dollars per year, resulting in cuts in programs, collections, staffing, and open hours.

Supporters Say

- The library staff have been good stewards of our tax dollars. They are continuing to design library expenditures without asking for additional tax dollars, even though costs have increased for all organizations.
- There is great benefit in having a library available for our rural community, and its benefit to the Fern Ridge School district is huge.

Opponents Say:

- Even though the ballot measure won't increase taxes, people, especially those on fixed incomes are finding it harder to make ends meet.

Editors' Notes:

Fern Ridge Library notice: <https://www.fernridgelibrary.org/budget-levy-information>

"We have a permanent tax base of \$0.3824 per \$1000 of assessed property value. This amount only covers 60% of the budget needed to pay for the level of service currently provided. The remainder of our funds comes from the local-option levy. Our current levy is for \$0.35, so this measure does not propose an increase current tax."