Local Ballot Measure: Z

Arguments and rebuttals are the opinions of the authors. We print them exactly as submitted.

Argument Against Measure Z

Background:

- In 1927 the citizens of Pacific Grove voted to adopt a charter that included as one of its provisions a seven-member city council.

- In 2022 a council elected under that same provision proposed by means of a ballot measure that the charter be amended to reduce the size of the council from 6 to 4 and for no good reason. Pacific Grove voted against this change (measure O) in 2022.

- The present Council refuses to accept the 2022 ballot decision and the majority vote of the citizens of Pacific Grove.

- Meanwhile Pacific Grove is expected to increase its voter base by as much as 20% in the coming years with its housing initiatives. Why should we decrease Council's representation now?

The proposed amendment runs counter to our community's commitment to expanding representative democracy, diversity, equity, and opportunities for public service and citizen participation.

Having a seven-member council has so far resulted in:

- More opportunities for citizens to serve
- Broader and more diverse representation
- More voices weighing in on important decisions
- Wider sharing of Council duties
- Increased regional agency participation

The people of Pacific Grove have benefited from having a seven-member council for 97 years. The proposed charter amendment is unjustified.

Please vote NO.

Respectfully,

/s/ Chaps Poduri, Councilmember

/s/ Joseph Anthony Amelio, Councilmember

/s/ Tina Rau, Candidate for City Council

Rebuttal To Argument Against Measure Z

The argument against Measure Z completely ignores the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) demand letters sent to the City that demand we transition to district-based elections. The first demand letter, received by the City on August 25, 2022, was most recently discussed by the City Council at their March 6, 2024, meeting. A second demand letter was received two days later.

Here are some facts to consider:

- The 2022 ballot measure to reduce council size (Measure O) lost by only 13 votes.
- Measure O voters didn't have time to consider the consequences of the CVRA demand letter, which Council first discussed on October 19, 2022, nearly two weeks after voters received their ballots.
- No city has ever prevailed in litigating against the California Voting Rights Act, although many have spent millions trying.
- Transitioning to a five-person council would mean four voting districts (the mayor would still be elected at-large). A smaller council means larger voting districts, which means voters get more choice.
- Staying with a seven-person council would mean six small voting districts. This likely means only one candidate (maybe none) will stand to represent a given district.
- Increased zoning density in a few areas does not mean a 20% population increase.
- A five-person council is sufficient for a city up to 50,000 residents.
- A seven-person council will always be an anomaly for a city of our size: 15,125 residents currently.

Far from being "unjustified," **Measure Z is the responsible path forward.** It's time to look forward, not back.

Please vote YES.

/s/ Sharon K. Miller, Resident

/s/ Tama H. Olver, Resident

/s/ Francois Melese, Resident

/s/ Thom Akeman, Resident