

MOSQUITO, VECTOR AND DISEASE CONTROL BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Revised June 3, 2019)

In May of 2019, property owners within the proposed Vector Control Program (“VCP”) service area (see attached map) in the City of Long Beach will receive a ballot by mail that will allow them to decide if year-round mosquito, vector control and disease prevention services using environmentally sound methods should be provided. The area served by the Health Department’s Vector Control Program encompasses approximately 60% of the city and does not include areas currently served by Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District and Compton Creek Mosquito Abatement District.

If approved, this measure would fund year-round disease surveillance and the control of disease outbreaks associated with mosquitoes and other insects, including but not limited to West Nile virus, Zika, encephalitis and canine heartworm. In addition, it would provide the Vector Control Program the ability to identify and control new, emerging disease threats such as Dengue fever and Chikungunya.

1. What is the City of Long Beach Health Department’s Mosquito, Vector and Disease Control Benefit Assessment?

The Mosquito, Vector and Disease Control Measure is a mailed ballot measure for property owners that, if approved, would provide dedicated funding for year-round mosquito, rat and other vector surveillance and control, and vector-borne disease testing and prevention services to the areas of the city identified on the attached map.

2. What types of services will be funded?

- Control of mosquitoes using environmentally sound methods.
- Surveillance of rodents, fleas, Africanized honey bees and invasive mosquito species, and the prevention of diseases these vectors may transmit.
- Monitoring of and response to emerging and endemic public health issues such as West Nile Virus, Zika, hantavirus, typhus, plague and other emerging diseases.

3. How is this service different than pest control?

- Public Health Vector Control provides a core public health function, by controlling vector borne diseases in the *community*. The Long Beach Vector Control Program controls insects and animals that transmit disease and cause harm to people in both private and public areas. This requires coordination with other public health agencies and stakeholders. Public Health Vector Control requires a specific State license to administer. Pest control is generally limited to the property where it is being conducted.

4. Summary of proposed services:

- **Mosquito Control** - inspection and control of mosquitoes in residential and commercial areas year-round using environmentally sound methods.
 - Monitoring of mosquito breeding sources and identification and control of new breeding sources.
 - Control of mosquito larvae before they emerge and begin biting people and animals.

- **Control of Emerging Invasive Species** - Monitoring for emergence of invasive mosquito species that can carry life-threatening diseases, such as Zika, Dengue, and Chikungunya. such as *Aedes aegypti* (Yellow Fever Mosquito) and *Aedes albopictus* (Asian Tiger mosquito).
- **Disease Surveillance, Testing and Prevention** - Proactive surveillance for diseases that can be carried by mosquitoes and other vectors to routinely identify the presence, location, types and quantities of mosquitoes and the diseases they can carry. Local testing and monitoring for diseases transmitted by mosquitoes, such as West Nile virus (WNV), St. Louis encephalitis (SLE), western equine encephalitis (WEE), malaria, Zika virus and Dengue fever.
- **Protection of Public Health with Emergency Response** - Response to new mosquito-borne diseases to prevent human disease transmission. If diseases are discovered, the Program would take immediate action to help prevent a disease outbreak as part of a comprehensive Long Beach Health Department response. This response includes working with the department's Public Health Laboratory, Epidemiology staff, Health Officer and Public Health Emergency Management team.
- **West Nile Virus Disease Prevention** - Year-round testing for West Nile virus and other diseases carried by mosquitoes such as St. Louis Encephalitis, Chikungunya, Zika and Dengue. Disease prevention and control services in locations where disease is found.
- **Surveillance of Rodents, Fleas and Other Vectors** - Surveillance and testing of rodents, fleas, Africanized Honey Bees and other vectors and the diseases they carry such as plague, hantavirus and rickettsiosis.
- **Response to Service Requests** - Response to property owners' and residents' requests for mosquito and vector control services in the area of their property. Mosquito-eating fish provided to the public free of charge.
- **Community Education** - Information to the local community about protecting themselves and their pets from diseases carried by mosquitoes and other vectors and how to prevent mosquito breeding.

5. Why did I receive a ballot?

The ballot you received is your opportunity to vote on the proposed mosquito, vector and disease control services from the City of Long Beach Health Department's VCP. Please review the notice included with your ballot for more information on this measure.

6. Why was this measure proposed?

Currently, the Long Beach Health Department's vector control services are funded by a small portion of the Health Department's Realignment Fund, which comes from State Vehicle License Fees and sales taxes. This fund varies significantly each year, depending on economic factors and competing public health priorities that emerge every year. New public health issues are allocated Realignment Funds as they occur, which results in inconsistent and often diminishing funding for other programs, such as the Mosquito, Vector and Disease Control Program.

In recent years the need for mosquito, vector and disease control services has increased and new mosquito species have appeared locally, resulting in associated emerging mosquito-borne diseases. Additionally, as the local climate has become more variable, the need for vector control services has become yearlong, and the costs associated with controlling West Nile virus and other new vectors and diseases has

increased. A new dedicated and reliable funding source, consistent with the funding mechanism used by other vector agencies throughout the U.S. is proposed. This new source of revenue would not be allowed to be diverted for non-vector control purposes.

7. What will happen if the measure is not approved by property owners?

If the proposed assessment is not approved, the level of mosquito, vector and disease control services in the VCP Service Area will not be enhanced or have a dedicated funding source. Under the current budget structure, there is no specificity for funding the VCP. This means the VCP funding is impacted by other competing public health needs that are emerging and demanding resources. This baseline funding is also subject to economic downturns. The current funding structure is diminishing while the demand to address emerging vectors and diseases is increasing. Absent additional funding from the benefit assessment, a new reduced level of service would be the new “baseline” level of service and would include a lower level of surveillance, testing, monitoring and control of mosquitoes, resulting in higher mosquito populations and the potential for increased risk of vector borne diseases in the community.

8. Will any of this money go to the City, County or State to be used for other purposes?

No. All money collected by the Long Beach Health Department’s Mosquito, Vector and Disease Control Program from this proposed Mosquito, Vector and Disease Control Assessment is legally mandated to be used for local mosquito, vector and disease control within the VCP Service Area.

9. How would assessment funds be spent? What are the public accountability and fiscal controls?

All the assessment funds raised would be spent on mosquito, vector and disease control within the VCP Service Area. Public accountability and fiscal controls include the following:

- Budget for the services proposed each year will be overseen by several City entities: The Bureau of Environmental Health, the Department of Health and Human Services and the City Council.
- Annual independent audits.
- Annual public hearings at City Council meetings.

10. Is there a public hearing on the assessment? When will results of the ballot proceeding be known?

A public hearing will take place on Tuesday, July 2, 2019, at the Long Beach City Council meeting in the City Council Chambers (333 W. Ocean Blvd.). Members of the public may attend the public hearing.

Tabulation of the returned ballots will commence after the close of the public hearing. Results of the tabulation are expected to be announced at the City Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 16, 2019. The public may attend this meeting.

11. How can I return my ballot?

You may return your ballot in one of the following ways:

- Mail it to the address shown in the enclosed, postage-paid return envelope so it is received on or before July 2, 2019.

- Deliver it in person to the City Clerk, the tabulator (333 W. Ocean Blvd.) by 5 p.m. on July 2, 2019.
- Deliver it in person to the City Clerk at the City Council public hearing, which is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 2, 2019, in Council chambers (333 W. Ocean Blvd.) .

12. What is the deadline for returning my ballot?

To be counted, ballots must be received before the close of the public testimony portion of the public hearing, which is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 2, 2019. This deadline applies regardless of whether the ballot is mailed or hand-delivered at the public hearing.

13. What level of support is required to pass the measure?

If it is determined by the City Clerk that the assessment ballots submitted in opposition to the proposed assessments do not exceed the assessment ballots submitted in favor of the assessments (weighted by the proportional financial obligation of the property for which ballots are submitted), then the City Clerk will consider the measure passed.

14. I own several properties. Why did I receive only one ballot?

Ballots can list up to 14 parcel numbers. Property owners who own more than one piece of property with the same mailing address within the VCP Service Area will receive one ballot with up to 14 of their properties listed on the ballot, as well as the proposed assessment for each property. When property owners cast their ballot, they are casting for all properties listed on the ballot.

15. How much is this assessment?

The proposed assessment for your property for fiscal year 2019-20 is printed on the Official Ballot included with the notice and information item. The rate for most single-family homes would be \$8.21 per year. Other residential property types would be assessed according to the number of dwelling units and parcel size. Commercial, industrial and agricultural properties would be assessed according to their parcel size and property type. The proposed assessment would raise approximately \$753,474 for fiscal year 2019-20.

16. Can the amount of the assessment be adjusted for inflation in future years?

If approved in this ballot proceeding, the assessment can be continued annually based on a majority vote by the City Council. In future years after 2019-20, the assessment can only be adjusted for inflation by an amount equal to the change in the Consumer Price Index (U.S. Dept. of Labor - All Urban Consumers – Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim area), not to exceed 3% per year. Any change in the CPI in excess of 3% shall be cumulatively reserved as the “Unused CPI” and shall be used to increase the maximum authorized assessment rate in years in which the CPI is less than 3%.

17. How long will the assessment last?

The assessment, which is initially proposed for the fiscal year 2019-20, may be continued on an annual basis with a majority vote of the City of Long Beach City Council. Before the assessment can be continued in any future year, the VCP must first prepare a budget and plans for upcoming fiscal year. Then the City Council must hold a noticed public hearing on continuing the assessment and the budget for the assessment before the assessment can be authorized for the upcoming year.

For additional information concerning the general public health, the proposed mosquito, vector and disease control services, the proposed assessment, the ballot proceeding or for a copy of the engineer's report, property owners can contact the City of Long Beach Health Department's Mosquito, Vector and Disease Control Program at [\(562\) 570-4129](tel:5625704129).

The above statements are for informational purposes to describe the practical effects of the proposed assessment district. This informational FAQ does not advocate a yes or no vote on the proposed assessment district.

