



BENICIA CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE  
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June 17, 2019

Mayor Elizabeth Patterson,  
Vice Mayor Christina Strawbridge,  
Council Members Tom Campbell, Lionel Largaespada, & Steve Young  
CITY OF BENICIA  
250 East L Street  
Benicia, CA 94510

Dear Mayor Patterson, Vice Mayor Strawbridge, and Councilmember's Campbell,  
Largaespada & Young:

RE: UPDATED MASTER FEE SCHEDULE FOR 2019-20 INCREASES

Board of Directors

*Jeff Laugen,  
Chair of the Board*

*Chris Ferrucci,  
Vice Chair*

*Monica Vargas,  
Vice Chair of Finance*

*Todd Bigelow,  
Past Chair*

*Bill Cawley, III*

*Joe Diaz,*

*Jeremiah Gill*

*Steve McClure*

*Lisa McVeigh*

*Joseph Miesch*

*Jose Rosa*

*Leslie Sullivan*

*Michael Trahan*

*Bob Triglia*

*Deborah Wojtala*

*Stephanie Christiansen,  
President & CEO*

We request that you **vote to deny the adoption of the Proposed Updated Master Fee Schedule For 2019-20**. As you are aware, many of these fees were increased significantly just two years ago and by CPI increases the following year. Frankly, we were surprised and caught off guard to learn that a request to considerably raise these fees more than the allowable annual CPI increase is before you once again. While we very much appreciate the efforts of the City staff, Chamber members, other business owners, and residents **have had very little time to review the proposed increased fees, ask questions and analyze the impact** to their businesses and/or plans for home improvements. Because some projects require multiple permits/fees, we are concerned that the total cost of future projects has not been analyzed and communicated to the citizens and business owners of Benicia.

Upon review of the 40-page "Proposed Master Fee Schedule" which includes approximately 52 new fees and numerous recommended increases, it becomes very apparent that the majority of the fee increases will be borne by the business community. These businesses represent the largest source of revenue to the City of Benicia's general fund, in addition to supporting numerous nonprofit organizations and schools. We are concerned that these ongoing dramatic increases will cause businesses and homeowners to delay or abandon plans that would otherwise generate much-needed income for the city.

As city leaders, we have often heard you say that there is a great need for "Economic Development" including attraction, recruitment and retention of business in order to bring much needed revenues to Benicia. Unfortunately, these proposed increases, along with discussion of additional fees and taxes just around the corner, sends a loud and clear message to the contrary. As representatives of business, we feel it is not good in the long run for the financial health of Benicia, especially in today's highly competitive market for business attraction. Respectfully, we ask that you take a close look at the impacts of your decisions on our businesses and Economic Development activities moving forward throughout our entire city.

Again, until we have adequate time to digest, discuss, educate, and determine the impacts on business and our community, we thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our request to deny the adoption of the Proposed Updated Master Fee Schedule For 2019-20.

Sincerely,

Jeff Laugen  
Chairman of the Board