

CITY OF HAWTHORNE



4455 West 126th Street • Hawthorne, California 90250-4482

January 10, 2018

South Bay Cities Council of Governments
20285 S. Western Avenue, Suite 100
Torrance, CA 90501

I am writing to express my concern with the proposed SBCCOG membership dues increase and calculation methodology, and the impact on the City of Hawthorne. Though we appreciate the work the COG does in the region, we find it difficult to justify an increase as large as this to our Council and residents. In light of the years of budget shortfalls our City has faced, we are in no position to increase expenditures for anything but most essential services. Hawthorne has had to initiate employee lay-offs, furloughs, benefit reductions and much more just to make ends meet in the last decade. Despite progress in stabilizing our budget, we still struggle to achieve a balanced budget and to position ourselves for growth and prosperity in the face of an uncertain economic future. We are committed to minimizing new expenditures and maintaining strict financial prudence.

In addition, the new calculation methodology seems to penalize some of the poorest communities in the South Bay while reducing fees for some of the wealthier cities. This does not seem to reflect the true economic realities of the region and highlights disparities in the COG member services. After decades of a harmonious and mutually-beneficial relationship, we would not want to be forced to withdraw from the COG for any reason but, in light of our own recent situation and the economic climate all cities in California face, there is no matter more vital and sensitive than our shrinking budgets. Because of this we implore you to reconsider this dues calculation and develop a structure that is more equitable for all cities (perhaps based on square mile area) and sensitive to our more pressing economic needs. We look forward to a resolution that will preserve the currently beneficial relationship between the COG and its member cities, especially the City of Hawthorne.

Sincerely,

Olivia J. Valentine
Councilmember