

From the Monterey Bay Aquarium:

A Pacific Grove city tax on admissions, including nonprofit events?

The City of Pacific Grove is considering new revenue sources to address an increasing budget deficit, largely driven by growing pension obligations. One option the Pacific Grove City Council has supported early on is a tax on “Admission to Places of Entertainment and Amusement” or in short, an “admissions tax”. The City will be conducting a city-wide poll to test voters’ appetite for this tax, with the intent of placing it on the June 2016 ballot. While the non-profit Aquarium and its paid admissions are clearly the the Council’s focus, if enacted, the new tax must by law also include all nonprofit organizations in Pacific Grove that hold events that are ticketed for admission. For example, in October alone, this could likely include a Pacific Grove tax on the tickets to the Poetry Reading by Tom Killion by the Friends of the Library, the Music of John Denver event at the Performing Arts Center, the St. Angela’s Preschool Food & Wine Fundraiser and the Monster Dash Fundraiser for PTA. The Monterey Bay Aquarium has stated its strong opposition to taxing the Aquarium specifically and nonprofits generally, and has conducted legal analysis that indicates such a tax would be in contradiction with the California Constitution and state laws related to tax exemption for nonprofit organizations. For more information, please contact Barbara Meister, Public Affairs Director at the Monterey Bay Aquarium at bmeister@mbayaq.org.