Public Comment #45
BOS Rcvd. 6-9-25

From: EDCEA President <edceapres@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 9, 2025 2:33 PM
To: BOS-District I; BOS-District II; BOS-District III; BOS-District IV; BOS-District V; BOS-Clerk of the Board
Cc: HR-Labor Relations Unit; Tina Acree; Helen Keith; SLT Director; Bhome Saylor; BRYAN VYVERBERG; DARLEEN AIELLO; K Sowles
Subject: Public Comment for Item #25-0948 for 6/10/25
Attachments: Ltr to BOS-2025 RIF.pdf

Good afternoon,

Please find attached a letter from EDCEA, AFSCME/Local 1 for tomorrow's budget discussion to be attached to Item #25-0948. I hope our concerns about the handling of RIF's for filled positions and the addition of new positions being added are heard and taken into consideration.

Sincerely,

Jen Rimoldi
President, EDCEA Local 1
Office phone 530-626-2569
Cell phone 530-317-8763

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El Dorado County Employees' Assn., Local #1
Cameron Park Community Services District Employees' Assn., Local #1
El Dorado Hills Community Services District Employees' Assn., Local #1
Georgetown Divide Public Utilities District Employees' Assn., Local #1

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June 9, 2025

Dear Members of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the El Dorado County Employees Association (EDCEA), AFSCME/Local 1, I am writing to urge you to delay any action to eliminate filled positions or create new positions until the Final Budget is adopted in September.

Last week, the Union proposed a responsible and measured alternative to the Chief Administrative Office and Human Resources:

- Proceed with the deletion of vacant positions;
- Continue with overfill/underfill position reconciliations as necessary;
- Postpone the RIF of any filled positions and the addition of new positions until at least September, once actual revenues and operational needs are known.

This is not an unreasonable ask, it is prudent governance. The County has seen it time and time again: what appears to be a dire budget in June improves by the time final numbers are in. To rush to eliminate workers now, before the dust has settled, is premature and harmful.

This process has been flawed from the outset. When the Union asked at our last mediation session how many layoffs were expected, we were told none. Now we are staring down the reality of filled positions being cut. No department-wide workload analysis has been completed to determine how the work will be reassigned or what services will be affected. When we requested one, we were told no such assessment exists.

The Union has consistently requested information to understand the impact on services. Instead, we were told to "read the budget." We did. And here's what we found:

- The budget proposes cutting positions and funding, but it does not clearly identify corresponding program or service eliminations. This suggests that the County plans to shift that workload onto remaining employees, many of whom are already doing the work of two or three people due to ongoing vacancies and low retention.

These decisions are not just numbers, they are lives. The five filled positions proposed for elimination cost $483,707 annually. The seven new positions being added cost $696,962. The cost of deleting the vacant positions alone saves $2.57 million. So why move forward now with cutting real people—people who rely on this income to survive, when there is a fiscally and ethically responsible alternative?

Let the initial cuts play out. Let departments adjust. Let the community feel the actual impact of those reductions. Then, and only then, make a fully informed decision in September about whether further reductions are needed.

This is about more than budget, it's about values. This process has violated employee rights, sidestepped required bargaining, and created chaos for the workforce. Decisions with this level of consequence should never be rushed or delegated to department heads without a comprehensive, county-wide analysis.

The imbalance in these proposed cuts is impossible to ignore. Based on the County's own data, nearly 80% of the proposed position reductions affect rank-and-file bargaining units represented by EDCEA Local 1 (GE, SU, PL), the workers who keep offices running, services accessible, and programs operating. Only 21% come from all other bargaining units combined.

That's not shared sacrifice. That's structural imbalance. And when you pair that with the addition of new positions and the absence of any formal workload analysis, it becomes clear this plan is not about sustainability, it's about shifting the burden onto the lowest-paid and most overworked staff.

We are asking you to lead.

- Delay any RIFs of filled positions until the Final Budget is adopted in September.
- Do not authorize the addition of new positions while filled roles are being eliminated.
- Direct each impacted department to perform a workload and service impact analysis before any further cuts are considered.

These actions affect real people, real services, and the long-term health of the County. They must not be rushed through under the cover of "vacancy management" or departmental discretion. We are committed to continuing good faith bargaining and standing up for the public services our members provide. But we cannot, and will not, accept a rushed, opaque process that sacrifices transparency, equity, and basic decency in the name of short-term convenience.

Respectfully,

Jen Rimoldi
President, EDCEA
AFSCME/Local 1

From: Lee Tannenbaum <lee.tannenbaum@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 9, 2025 3:09 PM
To: BOS-Clerk of the Board
Cc: BOS-District I; BOS-District II; BOS-District III; BOS-District IV; BOS-District V
Subject: Agenda Item 25-0948 – FY 2025–26 Recommended Budget
Attachments: FY25 Budget Public Comment.pdf

Dear Clerk of the Board,

Please attach these comments to the agenda item listed above. Thanks so much.

lee

Lee Tannenbaum
President, El Dorado County Taxpayers Association
650.515.2484

To: El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
Cc: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item 25-0948 – FY 2025–26 Recommended Budget

Dear Honorable Supervisors,

On behalf of the El Dorado County Taxpayers Association, I respectfully submit the following comments into the public record regarding Agenda Item 25-0948, the FY 2025–26 Recommended Budget. This analysis reflects our concern for long-term fiscal responsibility, government transparency, and the efficient stewardship of public funds.

I. Structural Concerns in the Budget

1. Declining Tax Revenues Require Real Adjustments
   El Dorado County's General Fund tax revenues—particularly in Property Tax, Sales Tax, and Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)—are all projected to decline or stagnate for FY 2025–26. The budget shows an overall General Fund revenue decline of $36.6 million, and yet there is no corresponding structural adjustment to expenditures. The shortfall appears to be papered over by reserve draws, which is neither sustainable nor responsible.
2. Near-Elimination of General Fund Reserves
   Despite a total County budget exceeding $1 billion, the proposal calls for reducing General Fund reserves and designations from $13.4 million to $1.3 million—a more than 90% decrease. These reserves are vital to cushion against wildfires, economic downturns, and litigation costs. Depleting them during a time of rising liabilities is fiscally reckless and invites future instability.
3. Unchecked Growth in Personnel Costs
   Salaries and Benefits have increased by $10.9 million over the prior year and now total $315.4 million. This increase comes even as revenues fall and programmatic cuts loom. Without clear accountability metrics or operational reform, personnel growth risks crowding out core services and infrastructure investment.

II. Program-Specific Waste and Reform Opportunities

1. Take-Home Vehicle Program – Poorly Justified, Expensive
   Over 100 vehicles remain assigned as take-home units, many justified by vague or unverified “24-hour response” duties. While reductions have been made in Facilities, most other departments—including Sheriff and District Attorney—show minimal change. Fuel, depreciation, maintenance, and lost opportunity costs all add up. The County’s failure to reevaluate or rejustify the vast majority of these vehicles signals waste and entitlement rather than necessity.

III. Policy Recommendations for Fiscal Stewardship

1. Cap and Justify Personnel Growth
   We urge the Board to freeze non-essential hiring, and salary increases unless

supported by objective performance data or attrition-based offsets. Conducting a third-party salary and staffing audit should be a prerequisite for future expansions.

2. Additionally, we recommend an immediate review of El Dorado County Charter Section 504 and all personnel currently attached to its provisions. The purpose of Section 504 is to ensure equity for deputy sheriffs—not to serve as a vehicle for backdoor raises to high-level non-safety administrators. Compaction may be a political talking point, but it is not a valid fiscal excuse for granting unsustainable salary increases during a budget deficit. Every position attached to 504 should be reexamined for legal justification, fiscal necessity, and potential detachment.
3. Restore and Protect General Fund Reserves
   Adopt a formal policy requiring that reserves maintain a floor of at least 10% of General Fund expenditures. Budgeting with zero reserves during a declining revenue year signals mismanagement.
4. Audit Take-Home Vehicle Assignments
   Institute a policy requiring annual justification of every take-home vehicle based on actual call-out frequency and cost-effectiveness. Any unverified or underutilized vehicles should be recalled or reassigned for shared department use.
5. Conduct a Zero-Based Review of Non-Mandated Programs
   All discretionary General Fund allocations should be evaluated on a zero-based budgeting model. Programs not tied to legally mandated services (such as roads, law enforcement, public health, and fire) should justify their funding from the ground up or be sunset.

IV. Retirement, Pensions, and Benefit Cost Growth

1. Rising Pension Obligations Without Offsets
   The FY 2025–26 budget includes substantial ongoing contributions to CalPERS for both miscellaneous and safety employees. Retirement costs alone total $46.8 million, a 14.8% share of total Salaries and Benefits. This reflects an increase of $1.9 million over the prior year. With a Net Pension Liability of $446 million, the County continues to carry a heavy long-term burden with no new strategies to reduce it.
2. Employee Benefits Nearly Equal to Take-Home Pay
   Health, dental, vision, and other benefits total over $47 million, or 15% of total compensation. These expenses, combined with salaries and retirement costs, bring total compensation to approximately $314.8 million—over 30% of the County's entire $1 billion budget. Many other counties have implemented co-pay structures, contribution sharing, or coverage tiering to manage growth. El Dorado County has not.
3. Total Compensation Outpaces Budget Growth
   With compensation growing faster than revenues or population, it is essential to begin aligning labor costs with fiscal realities. We encourage the Board to initiate:
   - Strategic renegotiation with bargaining units;
   - Tiered models for pension and benefit contributions;
   - Alternative staffing models through outsourcing or automation where feasible.

V. Comparative Analysis: Placer County vs. El Dorado County

1. Budget Scale
   - Placer County's FY 2025–26 Budget totals $1.367 billion, including $1.186 billion in operating funds and $181 million in capital—slightly above El Dorado's proposed $1 billion.
2. Population Served
   - Placer County serves approximately 404,739 residents (2020 Census), more than double El Dorado's 191,185.
   - Yet El Dorado is funding a budget that approaches Placer's in size, despite serving less than half the population.
3. County land size
   - Placer County is slightly smaller in square miles than EDC, approximately 15% smaller.
4. Staffing Levels
   - Placer employs about 2,400 full-time county staff.
   - El Dorado's recommended budget supports 2,018 FTE allocations with fewer residents—implying higher per-capita staffing that warrants efficiency review.
5. Reserves and Financial Strategy
   - Placer sets aside $21.8 million in General Fund reserves and another $24.3 million in other fund reserves for FY 2025–26.
   - El Dorado proposes drawing reserves down from $13.4 million to $1.3 million—less than 1% of its General Fund—even while matching or exceeding Placer's budget on a per-resident basis.

Conclusion

With revenues declining, reserves nearly eliminated, and personnel obligations consuming over a third of the total budget, the FY 2025–26 proposal lacks the structural discipline required for long-term fiscal health. The use of temporary fixes over permanent reform delays, rather than avoids, difficult decisions.

We urge the Board to confront these challenges directly—to scale compensation growth, rebuild reserves, and reevaluate discretionary expenses. Doing so would honor the County's obligation to its taxpayers and protect essential services from future disruption.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Tannenbaum
President, El Dorado County Taxpayers Association
Shingle Springs, CA