



Officers

J. Kelly Duncan
Chairman

Mark A. Mayer
Vice Chairman

Hardy B. Fowler
Secretary

Ludovico Feoli
Treasurer

Past Chairman

Sterling Scott Willis

President & CEO

Janet R. Howard

Board Members

Herschel L. Abbott, Jr.

Toya Barnes-Teamer

Nicolas G. Bazan

Daryl G. Byrd

J. Storey Charbonnet

Edgar L. Chase III

Joseph S. Exnicios

James P. Favrot

Vaughan Fitzpatrick

Julie Livaudais George

Joseph I. Giarrusso III

Richard A. Goins

Norma Grace

Glenn W. Hayes

John C. Hope, III

David A. Kerstein

Shelby P. LaSalle, Jr.

Kelly Legier

Carla L. Major

Ann Thorpe Thompson

Denise Thornton

Madeline D. West

Robert J. Whann, IV

Brent Wood

Alan J. Yacoubian

Luis Zervigon

Honorary Board

Harry J. Blumenthal, Jr.

Louis M. Freeman

Richard W. Freeman, Jr.

Ronald J. French

David Guidry

Paul M. Haygood

Hans B. Jonassen

Diana M. Lewis

Anne M. Milling

R. King Milling

George H. Porter III

Lynes R. Sloss

BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH

938 Lafayette St., Suite 200

New Orleans, LA 70113

Phone 504-525-4152

Fax 504-525-4153

www.bgr.org

BGR News Release

For Immediate Release – September 30, 2013

Contact: Janet R. Howard, *President*
(504) 525-4152, ext. 107

BGR Reviews S&WB Reform Proposal, Other Propositions on October Ballot

The Bureau of Governmental Research today releases *On the Ballot: October 19, 2013*. This report explains, analyzes and takes positions on three tax propositions on the ballot in Jefferson Parish and two proposed charter amendments in New Orleans, one of which would reform the Sewerage & Water Board.

Property Tax Renewal: Jefferson Parish Public School System

Voters in Jefferson Parish will decide whether to renew for 10 years a property tax of 7 mills for the public school system. The tax, which expires at the end of 2014, generates about \$23.2 million a year for general operating and maintenance expenses.

BGR Position: *FOR*.

The tax is a long-established and important component of the school system's funding. A failure to renew the tax would add to the system's budgetary challenges and would risk reducing the quality of education the system provides.

Property Tax Renewal: Jefferson Parish Consolidated Waterworks District No. 1

Jefferson Parish is asking voters in Consolidated Waterworks District No. 1 to continue a 3.54-mill property tax for water service for the next 10 years. The tax is dedicated to acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining and operating waterworks facilities.

BGR Position: *FOR*.

The tax is a long-standing component of the funding for the water system in Jefferson Parish and eliminating it would cause serious problems. If the tax is not renewed, the parish will lose the sole recurring source of funding

for capital improvements for its water system. Key projects will have to be put on hold, threatening the sustainability of the system. While BGR supports the millage renewal, it notes that property taxes are not the fairest way to fund the water system and urges the parish to consider shifting over time to a heavier reliance on user fees.

Property Tax Renewal: Jefferson Parish Consolidated Sewerage District No. 1

Jefferson Parish is asking voters in Consolidated Sewerage District No. 1 to continue a 3.58-mill property tax for sewerage service for 10 years. The tax is dedicated to acquiring, constructing, improving, maintaining and operating sewerage works and facilities.

BGR Position: ***FOR***.

The tax is a long-standing component of the funding for the sewerage system in Jefferson Parish and eliminating it would cause serious problems. If the millage is not renewed, the parish will lose critical funding for the daily operations and maintenance of the sewerage system. It will also lose the opportunity to pursue low-interest loans for capital projects. Significant service cuts will occur, and key projects will be put on hold, threatening the sustainability of the system. While BGR supports the millage renewal, it notes that property taxes are not the fairest way to fund the sewerage system and urges the parish to consider shifting over time to a heavier reliance on user fees.

New Orleans Charter Amendment: Sewerage & Water Board Governance

The proposition would amend the Home Rule Charter of the City of New Orleans to alter the composition of the Sewerage & Water Board (S&WB). It would reduce the board size from 13 to 11 members by removing the three City Council members and adding a citizen member.

If voters approve the proposition, a corresponding change to state law would take effect. In addition, approval would trigger several other changes to state law to revamp the agency's governance. The changes would, among other things, create a nominating process for potential board members, reduce members' terms, impose term limits, require relevant experience and set other qualifications for board members.

BGR Position: ***FOR***.

Since 2011, BGR has pushed for meaningful governance reform at the Sewerage & Water Board. It firmly believes the agency needs a well-qualified, high-functioning board in order to improve service and tackle multi-billion-dollar infrastructure challenges. The charter amendment, and the companion legislation that would take effect if it passes, present a critical opportunity for New Orleanians to reduce political influence on the S&WB's board, establish a process for vetting future board members and make the board more accountable. It would bring the S&WB more in line with best practices in governance for public water utilities.

New Orleans Charter Amendment: Eliminating New Orleans Examiner Boards

Voters in New Orleans will decide whether to amend the city charter to abolish three dormant

boards: the Board of Electrical Examiners, the Board of Examiners of Operating Engineers and the Board of Mechanical Examiners.

BGR Position: ***FOR***.

The boards have been defunct for years, and there is no foreseeable reason why it would be desirable to reinstate them.

* * * *

BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policy-making and the effective use of public resources in the Greater New Orleans area. For more information call 504-525-4152 or visit BGR's website, www.bgr.org.

- ### -