November 3, 2026 Election

PROS AND CONS

BALLOT MEASURE L

Ballot Measure L: Should the City of Alameda incur bonded indebtedness of $300 million to finance the cost of certain categories of capital improvement projects in the city?

Measure L is a bond measure that was placed on the ballot by the city council.

If passed, the city would issue and sell general obligation bonds in the amount of $300 million at a maximum interest rate of 12% per annum to help fund capital improvement projects, not operations or salaries. The property tax to service the bond's principal and interest would be based upon assessed, not market, value of taxable real property in the city at an anticipated amount of $49 per $100,000 per year while the bond is outstanding. The tax levy will be in effect for at least 30 years. The city council will establish and appoint members to an oversight committee for the bonds, which shall have responsibility for reviewing and reporting on the city council's expenditure of the proceeds of the bonds.

Measure L seeks to finance the cost of capital improvement projects in five categories: preventing flooding and combatting sea-level rise; preparing for earthquakes and emergencies; maintaining rapid response to fires, accidents, and medical emergencies; repairing potholes and keeping streets safe and accessible; and keeping pollution out of the Bay. The measure lists potential projects within those categories that may be undertaken. The bond will pay for about $300 million of the $800 million in identified infrastructure challenges in those categories. It will be a city council policy choice on how the money will be allocated.

Requires approval by 2/3 of the voters in the city voting on the measure.

Supporters say …

- The bond funds will be used for capital improvement projects to address important infrastructure needs in Alameda. It will also qualify Alameda for millions in matching funds that would otherwise go to other communities.
- Alameda is experiencing sea-level rise and severe storms, leading to flooded streets, homes and businesses. Fire stations, storm sewers, streets and other critical infrastructure are decades old and do not meet current earthquake standards. The infrastructure projects will be undertaken to address these problems. No bond proceeds may be used for salaries or pensions.
- An independent citizens' oversight committee and annual audits will protect against misuse of bond funds.

Opponents say …

- The raised revenue will be inadequate to address all the projects listed, and the measure fails to delineate what projects will be prioritized. Thus, projects to be funded will be decided by the city council, not the electorate.
- There is no guarantee when or where the money will be spent or whether it will be equitably allocated across all project categories or neighborhoods. While it lists possible projects, the funds can also be spent on projects within those categories that are not listed, or overweighted to one project type or area of the city and underweighted to others.
- The list of projects is too broad and lacks focus, as it combines routine street and sidewalk maintenance, which does not belong in an infrastructure bond, with special one-time climate adaptation infrastructure projects, fire station replacement and upgrades, and building a new vehicle fleet servicing facility, for example.