

Sample Email to Commissioners

To: BCC-AllCommissioners@pbcgov.org
Subject: Please don't raise our taxes

Commissioners,

As you begin your consideration of the FY2012 county budget, please recognize that many in the community have very little room in their own budgets for a tax increase. With the net rate increase of over 25% in the last two years alone, the county is placing great stress on those with homestead property.

The Taxpayer Action Board (TAB), has made a proposal this year that asks you to maintain the millage at 4.75, take more cuts from PBSO than from the county departments, move to place a county "Smart Cap" charter amendment on the ballot in 2012, and take action to retire the excessive county debt and sell off underutilized property.

Their rationale is based on the bottoming out of valuation decline, the significant savings savings from FRS reform, and the fact that PBSO has grown from 46% to 59% of the county-wide ad-valorem budget in just 8 years. Enough is enough. Furthermore, some form of "smart cap" is necessary to provide guidance if we are fortunate enough to return to a period of rising real estate values, and we have noted from the newspapers that our debt now exceeds \$1600 per county resident – too much.

I support the TAB proposal and hope that you do too.

Thank You,
XXX

Sample 3 Minute Public Comment

Good evening commissioners, for the record, my name is XXX and I live in YYY.

Over the last 2 years we have seen our county-wide tax rates increase by over 25%, in the midst of a serious recession and with county unemployment in double digits.

This year we hope you will pass the budget as submitted and not raise our taxes again.

I support the TAB proposal this year, to keep the millage at 4.75, take more cuts from PBSO than from the county departments, move to place a county "Smart Cap" charter amendment on the ballot in 2012, and take action to retire the excessive county debt and sell off underutilized property.

It is appropriate to ask more of the Sheriff, as PBSO has grown from 46% of the county budget in 2003 to 59% last year, mostly in salary and benefit costs. While law enforcement is a critical function of government, you should not let it crowd out all the other things that are needed.

You got a significant break from Tallahassee this year with FRS reform and will save a lot of money. You also are seeing a bottoming-out of declining property values. Both of these things should allow you to tighten your belt in other areas and live with the taxes you will collect at the current rates.

Please don't raise our taxes.

Thank You.