

Special account, not a tax increase to pay for Washoe County tax refund

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Washoe County commissioners will not tax vehicle owners more to pay court-ordered tax refunds for Incline Village homeowners – a decision that risks the county not having enough cash if it should be hit with a big lawsuit or some other calamity.

The commission agreed Tuesday night not to act on a proposed ordinance to raise the vehicle registration tax by 1 percentage point.

“There’s a sort of axiom that you don’t raise taxes during a recession,” Commissioner David Humke said. “This is a broad-based tax paid by everyone who owns a motor vehicle in Washoe County.

“It’s just an onerous tax.”

County Manager Katy Simon cautioned against taking \$7 million from the county’s risk management fund without a plan to repay the money.

“There is a risk of depleting those reserve funds and not replenishing them,” she said. “I know you are aware of that.”

The risk management fund pays for county liabilities, such as trip-and-fall accidents, lawsuits and medical expenses for retired public safety workers with heart and lung illnesses.

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