

Opinion: Storm water bill would evade taxpayer protections

By Geoff McIntosh, San Francisco Chronicle

If Senate Bill 231 (Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys) becomes law, property owners would be saddled with thousands of dollars in additional, annual property taxes. What's worse is that this bill would allow these tax increases to be implemented without a vote of the people.

Political sleight of hand? Yes, and here's how.

SB231 redefines the word "sewer" to include storm water and storm drains, thereby allowing local governments to evade Proposition 218 taxpayer protections. That 1996 initiative requires that all new property-related taxes and most fees proposed by a local government or agency be approved by two-thirds of voters. If SB231 is enacted, local governments can assess property owners to fund storm water infrastructure projects without voter approval.

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