

Letter to the Editor

MOFD not wasting Orinda taxes

Steve Cohn makes unfounded criticism of the directors on the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board (MOFD) who are elected from districts in Orinda.

He writes “they are failing us massively” (The Orinda News, June 2026). Cohn also said, “MOFD is supposed to use this money [from Orinda taxpayers], all of this money, to provide service to Orinda.”

In fact, nothing in the MOFD governing documents requires revenue from Orinda to be spent in Orinda. His argument was investigated, considered and unanimously rejected years ago by the MOFD board. It is inconsistent with the notion of a single district serving two cities. Trying to measure the cost of service to each city separately would be impossible, and an expensive

accounting nightmare.

Cohn’s revenue analysis, including the discussion on the link he provides (and on the link within that link), mixes apples and oranges; he mixes the ad valorem tax method (which uses the same rate for both cities) with cost per household (a parcel tax, not ad valorem tax approach which is not used).

His expense analysis fails to prove that Orinda is unfairly paying Moraga’s share. He ignores that 1) fires start and spread without regard to political boundaries; 2) MOFD does not control the location of fires; 3) three of the five firehouses are in Orinda, arguably providing Orinda with 60% of the service; and 4) Orinda has higher risk and higher property values, and in “fairness” should pay more.

– Nick Waranoff | Orinda