

File a Formal Complaint - John S Niles

[1-206-781-4475](#) reported 2 days ago (Tue, 18 Oct at 11:35 AM) via Portal Meta

The question for voters in the November 8 central Puget Sound election for the \$54 billion Regional Proposition One program is voter acceptance or voter rejection of the ST3 tax measure. "The Sound Transit 3 Mass Transit Guide: Voter Information" (file attached) is a complete description of the ballot measure in question, per RCW 81.104.140(8) and RCW 81.104.100 (2) (d). I wish to emphasize in this complaint that there is language in the latter code language – "shall address, but is not limited to the following issues" – that provides Sound Transit with discretion on what to include in the Guide beyond a list of stated requirements.

A close reading of the Guide (attached) distributed to all tax district households reveals that it amounts to a full description of the result of passage of Proposition One, which is the case for a YES vote. I assert that this makes the document a tax-funded advocacy piece for a YES vote to raise the tax rate collected by Sound Transit, with no understanding provided to voters of what happens to the activity of the Sound Transit and the underway construction of high capacity transit if the ST3 tax measure fails to pass.

Some of the things described for ST3 will happen whether ST3 passes or doesn't. This failure to distinguish the consequences for each of the two sides of the issue while bearing down exclusively on the benefits of the agency's preferred choice of a tax hike amounts to illegally "assisting a campaign for ...the promotion of ... [a] ballot proposition" under the terms of RCW Section 42.17A.555. In this case, passage of the ballot proposition funds Sound Transit itself.

For this agency to meet a minimal standard for neutrality, the Guide must also include a description of the result of a NO vote on Proposition One. For example, existing Sound Move and ST2 funding allows Sound Transit to carry on activities with benefits that overlap the described benefits of ST3. A word search of the pdf of this mailer (attached) reveals words "ST2" and "Sound Move" juxtaposed and mentioned just five times in small type, with no revelation that these funding sources continue if ST3 is rejected.

For fairness and compliance with the law, the Guide document should include a complete description of the existing authorized tax collections and expenditures over the next decade authorized by Sound Move and ST2 that will carry on to finish 50 miles of light rail even if ST3 is rejected by voters. Without such language, the attached guide is a tax-funded advertisement for a tax proposition on the November 8 ballot.

1 Attachment

PDF [ST3-Mass-Tra...](#)
(1000 KB)