

**DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE
100 NORTH SENATE AVENUE
IGC-N, ROOM N1058
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE REVIEW OF)
PROPOSED LANGUAGE AND ESTIMATED)
RATE CERTIFICATION FOR A BALLOT) No. 18-001-REF
QUESTION REGARDING HANCOCK COUNTY)**

**FINDINGS AND FINAL DETERMINATION ON PROPOSED QUESTION SUBMITTED
JANUARY 23, 2018**

1. Hancock County (“County”) proposes to issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance the 2018 Safety and Security Project which includes the construction, renovation, and expansion of the County Criminal Justice Center Complex facilities and the repair of the County Courthouse roof, which is estimated to cost not more than \$55,000,000 and is estimated to increase the property tax rate for debt service by a maximum of \$0.1436 per \$100 of assessed valuation.
2. Under Indiana law, the voters in the area served by the County will vote in a referendum to approve or deny borrowing for the project and raise property taxes to support it.
3. Indiana law governs the format and wording of the ballot question for the referendum. Indiana Code 6-1.1-20-3.6(c).
4. Under Indiana law, “the **following question shall** be submitted to the eligible voters at the election”:

“Shall _____ (insert the name of the political subdivision) issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance _____ (insert a brief description of the controlled project), which is estimated to cost not more than _____ (insert the total cost of the project) and is estimated to increase the property tax rate for debt service by _____ (insert increase in tax rate as determined by the department of local government finance)?”

Indiana Code 6-1.1-20-3.6(c) (emphasis added).

5. The ballot question then must contain three parts:
 - a brief description of the project;
 - the estimated total project cost; and
 - the estimated tax rate increase for the project.

6. The law requires the Department of Local Government Finance ("Department") to determine the estimate of the tax rate increase.
7. The law also requires the Department to either approve the ballot language or recommend that it be modified to ensure that the description of the controlled project is accurate and not biased.
8. On January 23, 2018, the Department received an e-mail from the County Election Board containing the County's proposed question.
9. The Board requested that the Department review this proposed question:

"Shall Hancock County issue bonds or enter into a lease to finance the 2018 Safety and Security Project, which includes the construction, renovation, and expansion of county Criminal Justice Center Complex facilities and the repair of the courthouse roof, which is estimated to cost not more than \$55,000,000 and is estimated to increase the property tax rate for debt service by a maximum of \$0.1436 per \$100 of assessed valuation?"

Determination of Tax Rate Increase

10. The Department estimates the tax rate increase in reliance on the County's proposed debt from the project, assessed valuation of the property in the area served by the County, an amortization schedule submitted by the County, and estimated miscellaneous revenues. Based on this information, the Department certifies a rate of \$0.1436 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Accuracy and Bias

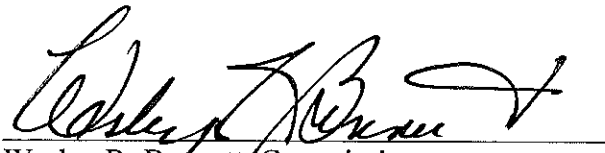
11. The Department must review the language of the public question to evaluate whether the description of the controlled project is accurate and is not biased against either a vote in favor of or a vote against the controlled project. The Department concludes that the description of the controlled project is not inaccurate and not biased against either a vote in favor of or a vote against the controlled project.

Final Determination

WHEREFORE, based on the above findings and applicable law, the Department finds that the proposed language is in compliance with 6-1.1-20-3.6(c) and approves the language as proposed. The Department certifies a rate of \$0.1436 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

Dated this 25th day of January, 2018.

STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE



Wesley R. Bennett, Commissioner
Department of Local Government Finance