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AIRPORT AUTHORITY BOARD APPROVES RESOLUTION SUPPORTING YES! FOR A BETTER SAN DIEGO INITIATIVE

The Board of Directors of the San Diego Regional Airport Authority voted unanimously yesterday to support the Yes! For a Better San Diego initiative, which aims to increase San Diego's hotel tax on visitors to generate funding to address San Diego's most critical issues.

Citing the important nexus between the San Diego Convention Center, San Diego International Airport and the regional economy, the board joined a growing and unprecedented coalition of San Diegans voting Yes! For a Better San Diego in March 2020.

Airport Authority Board Chairwoman April Boling said at the hearing that because of its ideal location, San Diego is able to pick and choose the most lucrative conventions — but that they can't always accommodate them because of the center's relatively small size. This makes San Diego miss out on millions in hotel and sales tax revenues generated by attendees.

“It's a foolish position for us to be in as a region to not have a convention center that is there ready, willing and able to help us finance all the things we need, because all that money that comes in helps us fund police, fire, libraries, parks, etc.,” Boling said at the hearing. “It's this whole cycle, and we're missing out because we don't have a properly sized convention center.”

In supporting the measure, Boling said “It will benefit the airport, but more importantly, we are a partner in the region, and we all need to work together to figure out how to make things happen.”

Yes! For a Better San Diego addresses the City's most critical needs of homelessness, street repair and job creation through an increase to the hotel tax, which is paid by visitors

Important to the Airport Authority board is the fact that a modernized and expanded convention center equates to more opportunities for its more than 9,000 employees to support their families in San Diego.

More and larger conventions bring additional travelers through San Diego International Airport, which serves more than 24 million passengers and contributes \$12 billion dollars to San Diego's economy each year.

Baggage handlers, machinists, ticket agents, food service workers and more rely on a thriving tourism economy for their livelihoods.

Yes! For a Better San Diego's wide-ranging benefits to the city have earned it support from an unprecedented coalition of San Diego community and business leaders — hospitality industry executives and workers, homeless service providers, elected officials from both sides of the aisle, construction workers and public safety officers.

The measure includes strict accountability and transparency measures to ensure the money raised will be spent only to fund these critical needs, with mandatory audits and oversight built in — and violations subject to criminal prosecution.

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