

Supes may look at TOT allocations to plug budget gaps

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Calaveras County fire districts have been put on notice that their share of what is called the Transient Occupancy Tax, or TOT for short, could be in jeopardy.

TOT is a 12 percent levied on rooms in hotels, motels, or other lodging occupied for 30 days or less in unincorporated areas of the county.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors has divided portions of the tax revenue among the fire districts, the sheriff's office, roads department, Calaveras Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce.

While the county's 2025-26 recommended budget keeps the proportional distribution of TOT funds the same, supervisors voiced concern things could change between now and September when the county budget is finalized.

The county is uncertain of what funds it will eventually receive from the state and federal governments as those levels hammer out their fiscal plans.

District 4 Supervisor Amanda Folendorf at the June 24 board meeting questioned the existing distribution of funds. The sheriff's office and the fire districts are estimated to each receive \$662,500 in TOT funds during the next fiscal year.

The county departments have already made cuts, she said, while the fire districts are independent of the county.

"This does not say that we may change our vote in September," said District 5 Supervisor Benjamin Stopper. "We do have to make those hard choices.

"We don't know what's going to happen in the future and everyone needs to understand that," warned District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli.

San Andreas Fire Chief Don Young spoke in favor of keeping the funding reliable for the fire districts. He said most of the districts rely on younger firefighters, who work without benefits, and retention remains an issue.