

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pacific Grove City Charter Amendment Qualifies for the Ballot

Amendment would permanently require voter approval of City Council compensation and benefits

PACIFIC GROVE, CA (Sept. 24, 2026) – Transparent Pacific Grove’s initiative petition to amend the Pacific Grove City Charter has been certified.

On September 22, 2026, the Monterey County Registrar of Voters completed a full check of the petition and verified 1,725 valid signatures, comfortably exceeding the 1,582 required for qualification.

The initiative, titled the [*Initiative Charter Amendment for Accountability, Oversight, and Transparency*](#), would require voter approval at a general municipal election to set compensation or provide City-paid benefits for the Mayor and City Councilmembers. Before placing either type of measure on the ballot, the City Council would have to obtain and publicly release a fiscal impact report.

The petition’s preamble (per [Elections Code § 9260](#)) requests that the proposed amendment be submitted to voters at the next statewide general, statewide primary, or **regularly scheduled municipal election**. There was not enough time after qualification to place the amendment on the November 2026 ballot. Transparent Pacific Grove has requested placement on the November 2028 ballot, the next regularly scheduled municipal election; the City has not yet formally ordered that election for the amendment.

“This effort was always about establishing a permanent safeguard,” said initiative proponent Luke Coletti. “The City Council should not have the final say over its own compensation and benefits. The voters should.”

The initiative grew out of the 2025 controversy over Ordinance 25-007, which would have immediately increased pay for the Mayor and City Councilmembers. A [referendum](#) against the ordinance qualified in August 2025, and the City Council repealed it the following month. In February 2026, Mayor Nick Smith and the Council placed an even higher pay increase on a costly primary **(special) election** ballot as [Measure C](#). Pacific

Grove voters rejected the measure, 56% to 44%. The charter amendment would establish a lasting voter-approval requirement for future decisions on compensation and City-paid benefits.

“This petition qualified because Pacific Grove residents put in an extraordinary amount of work gathering signatures and thousands of voters were willing to sign,” Coletti said. “Their work gives voters the opportunity to put these safeguards permanently into our City Charter.”

The complete proposed amendment and additional information are available at transparentpg.org/initiative/.

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City Charter Amendment Petition

City Charter
~ Article 11 – The Mayor ~



WHO SHOULD DECIDE CITY COUNCIL PAY AND
BENEFITS – **THE COUNCIL** or **THE VOTERS?**

– The Amendment Moves Approval Authority Into the Hands of Voters –

See Reverse Side

To Let Voters Decide – *Permanently*

MONTEREY COUNTY ELECTIONS

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Gina Martinez
Registrar of Voters

Jessica Cedillo
Assistant Registrar of Voters



Certificate of Signature Verification

WHEREAS, the City of Pacific Grove Ballot Initiative Charter Amendment Requiring Voter Approval of Mayor and Councilmember Compensation and Benefits petition was transferred by the City Clerk of the City of Pacific Grove to the County of Monterey, Elections Department for signature verification on August 17, 2026;

WHEREAS, the petition consists of 88 sections and 2,120 signatures;

WHEREAS, each section contains signatures purporting to be the signatures of qualified Electors of this county; that attached to each petition at the time it was filed was an affidavit purporting to be the affidavit of the persons who solicited the signatures, and containing the dates between which the purported qualified electors signed the petition; that the affiant stated his or her own qualifications, that he or she had solicited the signatures upon that section, that all of the signatures were made in his or her presence, and that to the best of his or her knowledge and belief each signature to that section was the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Elections Code §§ 9266, 9114 & 9115, the City Elections Official may request a random sampling review of 3% or 500 petition signatures, whichever number is greater, or a *full-check* review of the petition signatures;

WHEREAS, of the 2,120 signatures submitted, per the City Clerk, Elections conducted a review of the petition following the *full-check* methodology by examining the records of registration of this County, current and in effect at the respected purported dates of such signing, to determine what number of qualified electors signed the petition;

WHEREAS, Elections Code § 9255 provides that the minimum number of signatures required for a charter amendment proposed by petition is not less than 15%, or 1,582 valid signatures, of the voters in the City, according to the last report of registration by the County Elections Official to the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 2187, and there are 10,549 registered voters in the City of Pacific Grove as of the report of registration at the time of filing;

WHEREAS, of the 2,120 signatures submitted in the raw count, 2,120 signatures were verified; 1,725 signatures were deemed valid; and 395 signatures were found not sufficient;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the number of valid signatures on said petition exceeds 15% of the registered voters in the City of Pacific Grove.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this 22nd day of September, 2026.

Gina Martinez
Registrar of Voters
County of Monterey

