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NEWS

# Taxpayers' group seeks resignations of half of sanitation district's board

Kathleen Wilson

Ventura County Star

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A government watchdog group has called for the resignations of most board members of the Ventura Regional Sanitation District, claiming the public agency is failing financially because of poor board oversight.

The district that runs the Toland Road Landfill and provides water and sewage services has been running at a loss for years, but board members have dipped into dwindling cash reserves instead of cutting costs or increasing rates, the Ventura County Taxpayers Association said in a statement issued last week.

Association President David Grau, who read the statement Thursday at a remotely conducted district board meeting in Ventura, said the district is going broke.

Rather than acknowledge that, the board opted to "kick the can down the road" and adopted a budget for the current fiscal year with another \$5.5 million in losses, he said.

Jim Friedman, chairman of the board, said he was not going to resign and that the taxpayer group's statement running almost four pages was full of inaccuracies.

"This is so outrageous. I don't even know what to make of it," the Ventura councilman said, adding that the board has cut costs and increased rates contrary to Grau's assertions.

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