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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

22 March 23, 2021

CELIA ZAVALA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

March 23, 2021

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

ADJUSTMENTS TO EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' PENSION REFORM ACT DEFINED BENEFIT PLANS ALL DISTRICTS (3-VOTES)

SUBJECT

Recommendation to approve adjustments to the employee retirement contribution rates for the Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association (LACERA) defined benefit plans established pursuant to the Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA). The recommended changes are effective July 1, 2021, and are applicable only to represented and non-represented employees who are members of General Member Plan G or Safety Member Plan C.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:

1. Approve the employee contribution rate changes effective July 1, 2021, for all represented and non-represented employees who are members of General Member Plan G or Safety Member Plan C (Attachment A).
2. Instruct the Auditor-Controller to make the system changes necessary to implement this recommendation.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL) requires that an actuarial valuation of the retirement system be conducted at least once every three years. This law further requires that on the basis of such valuation, a recommendation is to be made to the Board of Supervisors (Board) at least 45 days prior to the beginning of the succeeding fiscal year to change employer and/or member

contributions rates, as may be necessary, to properly fund the retirement system. Although a triennial review is required by law, the plan actuary (Milliman) conducts an annual review pursuant to LACERA's Board of Investments' Retirement Funding Policy to measure the plan's funding progress and to recommend any contribution rate changes.

The purpose of this recommendation is to set the employee contribution rates only for the defined benefit plans established pursuant to PEPRA - General Member Plan G and Safety Member Plan C. The recommended rates are applicable to and are the same for represented and non-represented members of these plans. Also, the recommended rates are at a level that represents a 50 percent share of the plans' benefit costs based upon the June 30, 2020, LACERA actuarial valuation report prepared by Milliman. This report was subsequently approved by LACERA's Board of Investments on December 9, 2020.

Employee Contribution Rate Change Schedule

The employee contribution rates for PEPRA plans (General Member Plan G and Safety Member Plan C) must be changed annually if indicated by the annual actuarial valuation to ensure that the employee contribution rates are maintained at a level that represents a 50 percent share of the plans' benefit costs.

In contrast, the employee contribution rates for the non-PEPRA plans (General Member Plans A, B, C, and D and Safety Member Plans A and B) are adjusted on a triennial basis, if warranted, based upon the Investigation of Experience study (experience study) that the plan actuary conducts in conjunction with the annual valuation. The experience study reviews the reasonableness of the economic and non-economic actuarial assumptions used to derive the employee and employer contribution rates. Specifically, it compares the actual experience to what was predicted to happen using these actuarial assumptions. The actuary then determines whether any changes to the underlying assumptions or methodology are warranted to better project the retirement benefit plan's liabilities and asset growth. If changes are made, the non-PEPRA employee contribution rates are adjusted accordingly.

The last adjustment to these non-PEPRA plans was made effective July 1, 2020, based upon the June 30, 2019 valuation. Since there was no experience study conducted in conjunction with the June 30, 2020 valuation, Milliman did not recommend any changes to the employee contribution rates for the non-PEPRA plans at this time. If rate changes are recommended following the next scheduled experience study and valuation period ending June 30, 2022, we will return to the Board with revised employee contribution rates for these non-PEPRA plans, effective July 1, 2023.

General Member Plan G and Safety Member Plan C

As described in rate change letters from previous years, PEPRA revised retirement contribution and benefits formulas and required the County to implement several significant changes with respect to contribution rates. One of the most significant changes mandated by PEPRA was the requirement that all new members of a California public retirement system as of January 1, 2013, must pay at least 50 percent of the normal cost of funding the retirement benefit. Normal cost is defined as the percentage of payroll for each fiscal year that must be contributed to the retirement fund to pay for the promised benefit as determined by the retirement plan actuary. To comply with these funding requirements, two new PEPRA-defined benefit plans (General Member Plan G and Safety Member Plan C) were established and the non-contributory General Member Plan E was closed to new members, effective November 27, 2012.

Aside from the 50/50 cost sharing feature, these plans differ from the legacy LACERA defined benefit plans in that the employee contribution rates are the same for all participants regardless of entry age. This flat rate feature has significant advantages over the entry age-based rates including ease of administration and lower probability of calculation errors. Additionally, based upon a LACERA survey of other California public retirement plans, most are using flat rates versus entry age-based rates.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The retirement benefit and funding changes provided for in these recommendations are directly responsive to the Countywide Strategic Plan Goal III.3 of Realizing Tomorrow's Government Today by pursuing operational effectiveness, fiscal responsibility and accountability by ensuring sufficient funding of the County's retirement system and providing a means to more easily administer the subject plans.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

Since these recommendations are limited to changing the employee portion of the retirement contribution rates for PEPRA-defined benefit plans, there is no increase in net County cost.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

On December 30, 2020, the Coalition of County Unions and Service Employees International Union, Local 721, were advised of the new employee rates that are effective July 1, 2021 for these PEPRA plans. The recommended rates are detailed in Attachment A.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

None.

The Honorable Board of Supervisors

3/23/2021

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fesia A. Davenport", with a stylized, flowing script.

FESIA A. DAVENPORT

Chief Executive Officer

FAD:JMN:MM:TP

SRM:LR:mlj

Enclosures

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller
Human Resources
Los Angeles County Employees Retirement
Association
Coalition of County Unions
Service Employees International Union
Local 721

**EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION RATES FOR PEPRA RETIREMENT PLANS
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021**

Retirement Plan	New Recommended Rate <i>(same for all entry ages)</i>	Current Rates Effective 7/1/2020
General Members – Retirement Plan G	9.10%	9.11%
Safety Members – Retirement Plan C	14.42%	14.54%