



Snohomish County Council

NEWS RELEASE

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Council Moves to Protect Taxpayer Rights 60-day property tax appeal clause made permanent

A county code amendment first adopted by the Snohomish County Council in 2002, doubling the period of time to appeal property tax assessments from 30 days to 60 days, is now permanent. The original action – one of the first taken by the council after a change in leadership – included an expiration date of March 29, 2005. The action approved Wednesday, March 23rd at a County Council hearing removed the “sunset” provision.

“Three years ago we introduced this as a way to give taxpayers a voice in the system, extending the length of time that they had to protest their property assessment, and placed a sunset clause on it to re-evaluate its need,” stated temporary Chair Councilman Sax. “The feedback we received both inside government and from our constituents was that this extension of time was valuable and needed to be made permanent.”

The vote on the emergency ordinance required to make it effective immediately and in time for an extension on this year’s valuations, was important to Councilmember Gary Nelson, the ordinance’s original sponsor. Though he was out of town on vacation, Nelson participated in the discussion and vote by phone.

“This change in the County Code makes Snohomish County more taxpayer friendly”, said Councilmember Gary Nelson. Initially, the code change was sponsored by Council Chair Nelson in 1998, but was voted down due to concerns by the previous Council that the extra appeal time may have hidden costs to the County Assessor’s Office.

Councilman Dave Gossett added, “Providing the longer appeal period protects the rights of taxpayers while also making government more efficient. I strongly support this ordinance.”

The emergency ordinance creating the permanent time extension effects operations of the Board of Equalization, the board responsible for reviewing tax assessment appeals. It is comprised of five citizen members appointed by the Snohomish County Council.

When a property owner receives a notice of home value change or other assessment notification, which may be sent to a mortgage company or other lending institution rather than the property owner, there is now twice as much time for the owner to file an appeal with the Board of Equalization.

Taxpayers who wish to file an appeal must file two (2) copies of completed petition forms to the Board. Separate petitions need to be submitted for each parcel. Petitions must be received by the Board on or before July 1 of the assessment year, or within sixty (60) calendar days after the date of the value change notice, whichever date is later.

Petition forms are available from the Board by calling 425-388-3407 or 388-3859. Forms may also be downloaded from the Snohomish County website. There is no charge for filing an appeal.

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