

# Lawyers want to add 8,700 parties to Incline tax case

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The Nevada State Board of Equalization on Wednesday postponed hearing arguments on Incline Village residents' request for rolling back property values to 2002 after the homeowners and Washoe County lawyers agreed that 8,700 more owners should have been parties in the 2006 case.

The board also continued to hear appeals from Sparks property owner Juanita Cox and other taxpayers seeking a roll back of their property values if the board rules in favor of Incline Village and Crystal Bay homeowners and sets values at the 2002-03 level.

At stake in the Incline/Crystal case are \$11 million to \$13 million in property tax refunds that could be paid to the 8,700 property owners for the 2006-07 tax year by the county, school district, Incline fire district and the state.

Lowering the property values also could result in possible tax refunds in the following tax year, county officials said.

Suellen Fulstone, a lawyer for Incline homeowners, and David Creekman, Washoe County deputy district attorney, told the board the 8,700 homeowners should be added to the case.

"I know she might fall out of her chair, but I agree with what Fulstone is saying," Creekman said.

In March 2006, the county Board of Equalization heard appeals and lowered values for 300 homes at the lake. The county equalization board listed only itself and the assessor as parties in the case, which was appealed to the state by Washoe Assessor Josh Wilson.

The equalization board has no lawyer. Creekman said his office provides only limited representation for board hearings. So that left no one to argue the other side.

Fulstone, a lawyer for Village League to Save Incline Assets, said the record should have included as evidence the cases of 300 Incline Village residents who won appeals that year. The state board agreed to continue the case until hearing from the Nevada Supreme Court on those points. Fulstone filed a emergency pleading Monday before the high court.

County Finance Director John Sherman estimated if the tax refunds ordered were \$13 million, the county's share would be \$5.5 million, the school district's \$4.5 million and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District \$2 million.

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