

Residents of Incline Village to fight to keep county tax appeals board concessions

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Incline Village residents will be fighting the Washoe County assessor before a state appeals board in two weeks to keep concessions made by the county tax appeals board.

The Aug. 16-17 state Board of Equalization hearing in Carson City involves 950 property owners and assessments for the tax year that started July 1. Residents in February won a rollback to 2002-03 levels from the county board.

Assessor Josh Wilson appealed the decision. He said the state board could add 25 percent.

In December, the Nevada Supreme Court rolled back tax values for 17 property owners to 2002-03, the year before the county did a mass reappraisal. The 17 have been paid \$67,109 in tax rebates and \$12,395 in interest.

In current lawsuits, the question is whether the rolled-back property values should apply to all 9,000 county property owners at the lake, which could total up to \$70 million over five years.

"It's staggering," Maryanne Ingemanson, leader of the Village League to Save Incline Assets, said of the impact of the court ruling.

In the December ruling on the Bakst case, the Supreme Court invalidated four criteria the county assessor used regarding Lake Tahoe

views, beaches, old home sales and torn-down buildings. The court said the rules were not approved by the state and violated the state Constitution's requirement for uniform and equal taxation. The criteria were used when Incline Village and Crystal Bay were reappraised for the 2003-04 tax year.

The state board has not issued an order for that case, necessary before the county treasurer can issue refund checks.

For the 2006-07 tax roll, the state board in late June voted to roll back values to 2002-03 for 320 Incline taxpayers and added a factor of 10 percent for increased land values since then.

Treasurer Bill Berrum said a rough estimate for the 320 taxpayers shows that refund could cost the county \$680,000.

But that may not be the end. When the county board ruled in favor of the 320 taxpayers in 2006, it made a second decision to give the same break to the remaining 8,700 Incline and Crystal Bay property owners, if the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Bakst.

County officials said that would mean \$12.5 million less revenue a year.

Appeals by the Incline group for 2004-05 values are pending before the high court and for 2005-06 in district court.

In 2008-09, Incline Village and Crystal Bay property is to be reassessed.

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