

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009

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SENATE BILL 1431

Short Title: Increase Property Tax Appeals Efficiency. (Local)

Sponsors: Senator Graham.

Referred to: Finance.

May 26, 2010

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF PROPERTY TAX APPEALS IN  
3 MECKLENBURG COUNTY.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 509 of the 1981 Session Laws is repealed.

6 **SECTION 2.** Section 3 of this act applies only to Mecklenburg County.

7 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 105-322 reads as rewritten:

8 "**§ 105-322. County board of equalization and review.**

9 (a) Personnel. – Except as otherwise provided herein, the board of equalization and  
10 review of each county shall be composed of the members of the board of county  
11 commissioners.

12 Upon the adoption of a resolution so providing, the board of commissioners is authorized to  
13 appoint a special board of equalization and review to carry out the duties imposed under this  
14 section. The resolution shall provide for the membership, qualifications, separation into panels,  
15 terms of office and the filling of vacancies on the board. The board of commissioners shall also  
16 designate the clerk to and chairman of the special board. The resolution may also authorize a  
17 taxpayer to appeal a decision of the special board with respect to the listing or appraisal of his  
18 property or the property of others to the board of county commissioners. The resolution shall be  
19 adopted not later than the first Monday in March of the year for which it is to be effective and  
20 shall continue in effect until revised or rescinded. It shall be entered in the minutes of the  
21 meeting of the board of commissioners and a copy thereof shall be forwarded to the  
22 Department of Revenue within 15 days after its adoption.

23 ~~Nothing in this subsection (a) shall be construed as repealing any law creating a special~~  
24 ~~board of equalization and review or creating any board charged with the duties of a board of~~  
25 ~~equalization and review in any county.~~

26 (b) Compensation. – The board of county commissioners shall fix the compensation and  
27 allowances to be paid members of the board of equalization and review for their services and  
28 expenses.

29 (c) Oath. – Each member of the board of equalization and review shall take the oath  
30 required by Article VI, § 7 of the North Carolina Constitution with the following phrase added  
31 to it: "that I will not allow my actions as a member of the board of equalization and review to  
32 be influenced by personal or political friendships or obligations,". The oath must be filed with  
33 the clerk of the board of county commissioners.

34 (d) Clerk and Minutes. – ~~The assessor shall serve as clerk to the board of equalization~~  
35 ~~and review,~~ review shall be present at all meetings, shall maintain accurate minutes of the  
36 actions of the board, and shall give to the board such information as ~~he the clerk~~ may have or  
37 can obtain with respect to the listing and valuation of taxable property in the county.



1 (e) Time of Meeting. – Each year the board of equalization and review shall hold its  
2 first meeting not earlier than the first Monday in April and not later than the first Monday in  
3 May. In years in which a county does not conduct a real property revaluation, the board shall  
4 complete its duties on or before the third Monday following its first meeting unless, in its  
5 opinion, a longer period of time is necessary or expedient to a proper execution of its  
6 responsibilities. Except as provided in subdivision (g)(5) of this section, the board may not sit  
7 later than July 1 except to hear and determine requests made under the provisions of  
8 subdivision (g)(2), below, when such requests are made within the time prescribed by law. In  
9 the year in which a county conducts a real property revaluation, the board shall complete its  
10 duties on or before December 1, except that it may sit after that date to hear and determine  
11 requests made under the provisions of subdivision (g)(2), below, when such requests are made  
12 within the time prescribed by law. From the time of its first meeting until its adjournment, the  
13 board shall meet at such times as it deems reasonably necessary to perform its statutory duties  
14 and to receive requests and hear the appeals of taxpayers under the provisions of subdivision  
15 (g)(2), below.

16 (f) Notice of Meetings and Adjournment. – A notice of the date, hours, place, and  
17 purpose of the first meeting of the board of equalization and review shall be published at least  
18 three times in some newspaper having general circulation in the county, the first publication to  
19 be at least 10 days prior to the first meeting. The notice shall also state the dates and hours on  
20 which the board ~~will meet following its first meeting and the date on which it expects to~~  
21 adjourn; it shall also carry a statement that in the event of earlier or later adjournment, notice to  
22 that effect will be published in the same newspaper. Should a notice be required on account of  
23 earlier adjournment, it shall be published at least once in the newspaper in which the first notice  
24 was published, such publication to be at least five days prior to the date fixed for adjournment.  
25 Should a notice be required on account of later adjournment, it shall be published at least once  
26 in the newspaper in which the first notice was published, such publication to be prior to the date  
27 first announced for adjournment.

28 (g) Powers and Duties. – The board of equalization and review has the following  
29 powers and duties:

- 30 (1) Duty to Review Tax Lists. – The board shall examine and review the tax  
31 lists of the county for the current year to the end that all taxable property  
32 shall be listed on the abstracts and tax records of the county and appraised  
33 according to the standard required by G.S. 105-283, and the board shall  
34 correct the abstracts and tax records to conform to the provisions of this  
35 Subchapter. In carrying out its responsibilities under this subdivision (g)(1),  
36 the board, on its own motion or on sufficient cause shown by any person,  
37 shall:
- 38 a. List, appraise, and assess any taxable real or personal property that  
39 has been omitted from the tax lists.
  - 40 b. Correct all errors in the names of persons and in the description of  
41 properties subject to taxation.
  - 42 c. Increase or reduce the appraised value of any property that, in the  
43 board's opinion, has been listed and appraised at a figure that is  
44 below or above the appraisal required by G.S. 105-283; however, the  
45 board shall not change the appraised value of any real property from  
46 that at which it was appraised for the preceding year except in  
47 accordance with the terms of G.S. 105-286 and 105-287.
  - 48 d. Cause to be done whatever else is necessary to make the lists and tax  
49 records comply with the provisions of this Subchapter.

- 1 e. Embody actions taken under the provisions of subdivisions (g)(1)a  
2 through (g)(1)d, above, in appropriate orders and have the orders  
3 entered in the minutes of the board.
- 4 f. Give written notice to the taxpayer at the taxpayer's last known  
5 address in the event the board, by appropriate order, increases the  
6 appraisal of any property or lists for taxation any property omitted  
7 from the tax lists under the provisions of this subdivision (g)(1).
- 8 (2) Duty to Hear Taxpayer Appeals. – On request, the board of equalization and  
9 review shall hear any taxpayer who owns or controls property taxable in the  
10 county with respect to the listing or appraisal of the taxpayer's property or  
11 the property of others.
- 12 a. A request for a hearing under this subdivision (g)(2) shall be made in  
13 writing to or by personal appearance before the board prior to its  
14 adjournment. However, if the taxpayer requests review of a decision  
15 made by the board under the provisions of subdivision (g)(1), above,  
16 notice of which was mailed fewer than 15 days prior to the board's  
17 adjournment, the request for a hearing thereon may be made within  
18 15 days after the notice of the board's decision was mailed.
- 19 b. Taxpayers may file separate or joint requests for hearings under the  
20 provisions of this subdivision (g)(2) at their election.
- 21 c. At a hearing under provisions of this subdivision (g)(2), the board, in  
22 addition to the powers it may exercise under the provisions of  
23 subdivision (g)(3), below, shall hear any evidence offered by the  
24 appellant, the assessor, and other county officials that is pertinent to  
25 the decision of the appeal. Upon the request of an appellant, the  
26 board shall subpoena witnesses or documents if there is a reasonable  
27 basis for believing that the witnesses have or the documents contain  
28 information pertinent to the decision of the appeal.
- 29 d. On the basis of its decision after any hearing conducted under this  
30 subdivision (g)(2), the board shall adopt and have entered in its  
31 minutes an order reducing, increasing, or confirming the appraisal  
32 appealed or listing or removing from the tax lists the property whose  
33 omission or listing has been appealed. The board shall notify the  
34 appellant by mail as to the action taken on the taxpayer's appeal not  
35 later than 30 days after the board's adjournment.
- 36 (3) Powers in Carrying Out Duties. – In the performance of its duties under  
37 subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(2), above, the board of equalization and review  
38 may exercise the following powers:
- 39 a. It may appoint committees composed of its own members or other  
40 persons to assist it in making investigations necessary to its work. It  
41 may also employ expert appraisers in its discretion. The expense of  
42 the employment of committees or appraisers shall be borne by the  
43 county. The board may, in its discretion, require the taxpayer to  
44 reimburse the county for the cost of any appraisal by experts  
45 demanded by the taxpayer if the appraisal does not result in material  
46 reduction of the valuation of the property appraised and if the  
47 appraisal is not subsequently reduced materially by the board or by  
48 the Department of Revenue.
- 49 b. The board, in its discretion, may examine any witnesses and  
50 documents. It may place any witnesses under oath administered by  
51 any member of the board. It may subpoena witnesses or documents

1 on its own motion, and it must do so when a request is made under  
2 the provisions of subdivision (g)(2)c, above.

3 A subpoena issued by the board shall be signed by the chair of  
4 the board, directed to the witness or to the person having custody of  
5 the document, and served by an officer authorized to serve  
6 subpoenas. Any person who willfully fails to appear or to produce  
7 documents in response to a subpoena or to testify when appearing in  
8 response to a subpoena shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

9 (4) Power to Submit Reports. – Upon the completion of its other duties, the  
10 board may submit to the Department of Revenue a report outlining the  
11 quality of the reappraisal, any problems it encountered in the reappraisal  
12 process, the number of appeals submitted to the board and to the Property  
13 Tax Commission, the success rate of the appeals submitted, and the name of  
14 the firm that conducted the reappraisal. A copy of the report should be sent  
15 by the board to the firm that conducted the reappraisal.

16 (5) ~~Duty to Change Abstracts and Records~~ After Adjournment. – Following  
17 adjournment upon completion of its duties under subdivisions (g)(1) and  
18 (g)(2) of this subsection, the board may continue to meet to carry out the  
19 following duties:

20 a. To hear and decide all appeals relating to discovered property under  
21 G.S. 105-312(d) and (k).

22 b. To hear and decide all appeals relating to the appraisal, situs, and  
23 taxability of classified motor vehicles under G.S. 105-330.2(b).

24 c. To hear and decide all appeals relating to audits conducted under  
25 G.S. 105-296(j) and relating to audits conducted under  
26 G.S. 105-296(j) and (l) of property classified at present-use value and  
27 property exempted or excluded from taxation.

28 d. To hear and decide all appeals relating to personal property under  
29 G.S. 105-317.1(c).

30 e. To appraise or reappraise property when the assessor reports to the  
31 board that, since adjournment, facts have come to the assessor's  
32 attention that render it advisable to raise or lower the appraisal of  
33 some particular property of a given taxpayer in the then current  
34 calendar year, subject to the following limitations:

35 1. No change of appraisal may occur due to events or  
36 circumstances that have taken place or arisen since the day as  
37 of which property is to be listed.

38 2. A change of appraisal resulting from the property being listed  
39 at a substantial understatement of value, quantity, or other  
40 measurement shall be governed by the provisions of  
41 G.S. 105-312.

42 3. No change of appraisal may occur that will adversely affect  
43 the interests of any taxpayer unless the taxpayer is given  
44 written notice thereof and an opportunity to be heard before  
45 the appraisal or reappraisal shall become final."

46 **SECTION 4.** Section 1 of this act becomes effective only upon the adoption of a  
47 resolution by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners under Section 3 of this act.  
48 The remainder of this act is effective when it becomes law.