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Commissioners' Statement on Property Tax Relief

Teller County property owners will receive their Notices of Valuation from the Teller County Assessor in the mail this week, and the numbers will be jarring for all of us. Residential valuations have spiked significantly, which will result in markedly higher property tax assessments in 2024 unless the local government takes action to enact temporary property tax relief. Your county commissioners have been aware of the impending valuation spike and its impact on our residents, especially those on fixed incomes and those that recently entered into home ownership for the first time.

In response to that, your commissioners met with newly-elected State Senator Mark Baisley last Fall to author Senate Bill 23-108, a bill that clarifies the authority of all local taxing authorities in the county to temporarily lower mill levy rates or give tax credits as tax relief. That bill was sailing through both houses, without opposition, before being stalled on the house floor last week. We suspect the inaction on SB23-108 is because the governor wishes to incorporate our bill into his yet-to-be-introduced property tax bill in the final eight days of the legislative session. We believe SB23-108 is the only tool needed for local governments to provide tax relief during this temporary spike in real estate values.

We would have preferred that the governor and Dem-controlled legislature had joined us last fall and addressed this issue with us early, not at the eleventh hour of this session. Rushed legislation is always lousy legislation. The governor is preparing a one-size-fits-all bill that none of us are allowed to see with only 8 days remaining in the session. That said, your commissioners are dedicated to reducing or refunding unneeded property tax under our authority and will encourage all our taxing districts to do the same.

Unfortunately, we have to wait until the end of the legislative session to find out if SB23-108 will be passed or if a larger bill will incorporate SB23-108 into it. We anticipate that the legislature will slam their bill through in 4 days with limited discussion and debate, which never results in good legislation. If the governor incorporates our bill into his, that's fine, but we hope that the rest of the bill doesn't tie our hands or exclude certain property owners from that relief.

In the meantime, we ask that all Teller County property owners email House Speaker Julie McCluskie and House Majority Leader Monica Duran and politely ask that they bring SB23-108 to the floor for a vote this week. Their email addresses are Julie.Mccluskie.house@coleg.gov and monica.duran.house@coleg.gov.

Erik Stone, Chair

Robert Campbell, Vice-Chair

Dan Williams, Commissioner