

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**Assessor Phil Ting and Treasurer José Cisneros denounce property tax
reassessment scams**

San Francisco homeowners report receiving letter seeking payment of \$179 for facilitating property tax reassessment; service can be requested free of charge from Assessor's Office

SAN FRANCISCO — Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting and Treasurer José Cisneros today denounced unscrupulous property tax reassessment services that charge San Francisco taxpayers \$179 for a service that is available for free.

“We’ve received reports from dozens of taxpayers who have received a letter from companies offering to facilitate the property tax reassessment for \$179,” announced Ting. “This is unnecessary and deceptive. Taxpayers can fill out a simple, one-page application for a review of their property in my office, free of charge, starting on April 15. There is no need to pay for this service.”

“These companies are ripping off San Franciscans,” commented Cisneros. “The letters are full of fear-mongering—one company suggests taxpayers will pay a \$30 late fee, in addition to the base charge, if they don’t request the service by a certain date. San Franciscans deserve to know the truth on this matter.”

Appealing assessed value is a taxpayer’s right in California. Last year the Assessor’s Office received approximately 2,400 requests for an informal review. Of those reviewed to date, about half were granted a reduction. The appeal application is one page and requests basic information. Taxpayers are encouraged to provide information about comparable sales along with the application, but are not required to do so.

“The bottom line is property values have gone down across the state and a number of private companies are seeing an opportunity to make money by getting assessed values lowered,” said Ting. “We urge them to file a request for informal review with our office instead.” Taxpayers may also file a formal appeal for review of assessed value with the Assessment Appeals Board. For more information about this process, visit the Assessment Appeals Board website at www.sfgov.org/assessment.

Many of the solicitations received by San Francisco homeowners may be illegal. “We’re referring this information to the District Attorney for review,” commented Ting. California Business and Professions Code Section 17537.9 states that it is illegal for any person to make any “untrue or misleading statement in connection with the offering or performance of an assessment appeal application filing service.” The law also specifies certain disclosure terms that are required to be written in boldface type on the solicitation.

Anyone receiving a suspicious solicitation should contact the San Francisco District Attorney's Office, Consumer Mediation Unit, at (415) 551-9595. You may also send in a copy of the notice you receive to the District Attorney’s Office c/o Consumer Mediation Unit at 732 Brannan Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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