

How To Protest Your Property Taxes

Homeowners are amazed to learn they can obtain a copy of the appraisal district's evidence at a nominal cost. This is referred to as a House Bill 201 package, and is the only information many homeowners use to successfully reduce their property taxes.

Obtaining a House Bill 201 package when appealing your property taxes can greatly increase your chances for a successful appeal. House Bill 201 is the term used by property tax consultants to describe provision 41.461 of the Texas Property Tax Code. This section reads as follows:

"at least 14 days before hearing on a protest, the chief appraiser shall: ... inform the property owner that the owner or the agent of the owner may inspect and may obtain a copy of the data, schedules, formulas, and all other information the chief appraiser plans to introduce at the hearing to establish any matter at issue."

At the same time you send your notice of appeal to the ARB, send a House Bill 201 request to the chief appraiser at the appraisal district. (Just send a short letter asking for the information they will be using at the hearing.)

Reasons to utilize House Bill 201 to obtain information the appraisal district will use at the hearing include:

1. It is an effective way to obtain information regarding both market value and unequal appraisal for your property tax appeal,
2. You will receive the appraisal district's information regarding the size, condition and other qualitative and quantitative data for your house,
3. The information can be obtained for a nominal cost,
4. It is helpful to know what information your adversary will be able to use at the hearing,
5. Making the request limits what information the appraisal district can present at the hearing. If you do not request their information prior to the hearing, they can use any information available to them at the hearing. However, if you request the appraisal district information using a House Bill 201 request, they may only use information previously provided to you,
6. If they do not provide you information on market value or unequal appraisal in the House Bill 201 request, you win by default at the ARB hearing, and
7. In many cases, the appraisal district House Bill 201 information supports a lower value.

Contact the appraisal district for more information:

Grimes County: <http://www.grimescad.org/>

Harris County: <http://www.hcad.org/>

Montgomery County: <http://www.mcad-tx.org/>

Waller County: <http://www.waller-cad.org/>