

# Supreme Court ruling gives Incline Village tax-dispute statewide implications

By Brian Duggan, Reno Gazette-Journal

The Nevada Supreme Court is requiring the State Board of Equalization to stage public hearings over creating a uniform way for all Nevada counties to assess property values.

The action is the result of a unanimous court decision on Friday in favor of Incline Village property taxpayers, collectively known as the Village League to Save Incline Assets.

In July, the property owners won a separate legal case against Washoe County, resulting in \$40 million in property tax refunds to about 8,700 property owners in the North Lake Tahoe community.

The justices agreed the county had used unconstitutional property assessment methods about a decade ago.

This latest decision stems from Incline Village residents who live in Washoe County paying more in property taxes than other Lake Tahoe residents who have similar homes near Lake Tahoe, but live in adjacent Douglas County. Washoe County officials, in turn, say it's possible the Douglas County residents don't pay enough.

David Creekman, Washoe County's chief deputy district attorney, said the Supreme Court decision placed no blame on the county or the assessor.

Instead, the justices said it is the state that is not performing its duties under Nevada law, namely ensuring Nevada's 17 county assessors are valuing properties using

similar standards.

“Once again the Supreme Court has recognized the state of Nevada and the world of property valuations have not performed their duties,” Creekman said Monday.

In their decision, the justices wrote the Board of Equalization, “has not held a public hearing during which taxpayers could air their grievances with the equalization process, nor has it affirmatively acted to equalize property values.”

Without those hearings, the justices said the Incline Village residents were denied an ability to protest the assessment methods of Washoe County and Douglas County.

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