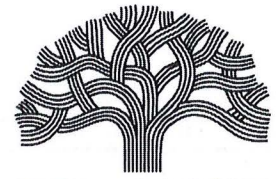


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CITY OF OAKLAND

CITY HALL ■ 1 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA, 2nd Floor ■ OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

Office of the Honorable Lynette Gibson McElhaney
COUNCILMEMBER ~ DISTRICT 3

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Date: Thursday, March 24, 2016

To: Members of the City Council
Dan Kalb
Abel Guillén
Vice Mayor Annie Campbell Washington
Noel Gallo
Desley Brooks
President Pro Tempore Larry Reid
Rebecca Kaplan

Cc: LaTonda Simmons, City Clerk
Barbara Parker, City Attorney

From: Council President Lynette Gibson McElhaney

Re: Establishing a City Policy Publicizing Low Income Tax Refunds

Dear Members of the City Council:

I urge that you join me in establishing a policy to widely publicize Oakland's existing laws that provide refunds for parcel taxes paid by low income home owners. As many of our long tenured home owners struggle to hold on to their property – and their place in an ever shrinking middle class – the City of Oakland must do its part to make sure our policies do not do additional harm.

Thousands of Oaklanders currently own a home and live at or near the poverty line. They are eligible for refunds of taxes created by Measure Z, Measure O, and the Landscape and Lighting Assessment District. However, each year only approximately one hundred and fifty homeowners apply for their refund.

We can do better to make sure that homeowners at least know about these refunds and can easily find the forms and information needed to apply for them. At the very least, the City should post the eligibility requirements and application forms on the website which do not appear to be currently available online.

The Oakland Unified School District recently went through the same process and this policy also seeks for the City to coordinate with OUSD to reduce the administrative burden on our systems and to the homeowners as much as possible.

Please join me in ensuring that thousands of low income homeowners in Oakland are better able to stay in their homes.



16 MAR 24 PM 3:37

Approved as to Form and Legality


City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT LYNETTE GIBSON MCELHANEY

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A CITY COUNCIL POLICY TO WIDELY PUBLICIZE THE AVAILABILITY OF LOW INCOME TAX REFUNDS TO THE PUBLIC.

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland has previously adopted exemptions to property taxes for low income property owners in order to maintain an equitable tax system that does not unduly burden those least able to afford additional taxes; and

WHEREAS, Measure Z as approved by voters in 2014 established that property owners who occupy their own single family home, whose combined family income qualifies as very low income under federal guidelines and who apply for an exemption shall receive an exemption from the parcel tax; and

WHEREAS, the landscape and lighting assessment district first authorized in Oakland in 1989 includes an exemption for low income property owners; and

WHEREAS, Measure O as approved by voters in 1994 includes an exemption for low income property owners; and

WHEREAS, the 2014 American Community Survey estimates that just over 6,500 housing units are owned by households that earn less than \$25,000 annually and also that the almost 2000 households both own homes and earn below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, very few low income property owners have taken advantage of the available exemption as evidenced by city records showing that only 186 owners received the exemption in FY2012/13, 165 in FY2013/14 and 166 in 2014/15 which approximately less than a 10% of eligible households; and

WHEREAS, the City Council wishes to adopt a policy to provide information on the City's website to notify the public of low income tax exemptions and explain on how to apply for the exemption; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the City of Oakland hereby finds and determines that the foregoing recitals are true and correct and declares it shall be the policy of the City to provide

notice to property owners by mail of voter approved low income tax exemptions at the time such tax is initially levied; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, it shall be the policy of the City to widely publicize the availability and method of claiming low income tax exemptions by posting such information on the City's website and at City facilities such as senior centers, libraries and other public facilities as needed to adequately publicize the exemption; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, it shall be the policy of the City to mitigate the costs of such noticing and information distribution activities to the extent possible through coordination with the County of Alameda, the Oakland Unified School District, and other local government agencies; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROOKS, CAMPBELL-WASHINGTON, GALLO, GUILLÉN, KALB, KAPLAN, REID AND PRESIDENT GIBSON MCELHANEY

NOES -

ABSENT -

ABSTENTION -

ATTEST: _____

LATONDA SIMMONS
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California