

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL NO. 663

91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATORS KLARICH, GIBBONS AND LOUDON.

Pre-filed December 1, 2001, and 1,000 copies ordered printed.

TERRY L. SPIELER, Secretary.

3152S.03I

AN ACT

To repeal sections 137.115 and 138.060, RSMo, relating to the assessment and levy of property taxes, and to enact in lieu thereof four new sections relating to the same subject, with a referendum clause and an effective date for a certain section.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Sections 137.115 and 138.060, RSMo, are repealed and four new sections enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as sections 137.102, 137.115, 138.060 and 138.435, to read as follows:

137.102. 1. This section shall be known and may be cited as "The Missouri Homestead Preservation Act".

2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the assessed value of residential property, excluding any value added by new construction or improvements, owned by any person who is under the age of sixty-five years and using the property as a homestead, or owned by any person who is sixty-five years of age or older who has resided on such property for a period of less than five years, shall not increase during any two-year reassessment period by more than the consumer price index or five percent, whichever is less.

3. The assessed value of residential property, excluding any value

EXPLANATION--Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in this bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

added by new construction or improvements, owned by any person who is sixty-five years of age or older and who has used that property as a homestead for a period of five years or longer shall not increase during the period of time that person resides on that property after attaining the age of sixty-five years. Any homestead property taken or condemned through judicial proceeding by the United States, or by any political subdivision of the state of Missouri shall exempt the owner of said homestead property under this subsection from the five-year residency eligibility requirement. Age and years of residence for purposes of this section shall be determined as of January first of each odd-numbered year; provided, however, that such information shall be provided by affidavit of the owner of homestead property by such date to the county assessor.

137.115. 1. All other laws to the contrary notwithstanding, the assessor or the assessor's deputies in all counties of this state including the city of St. Louis shall annually make a list of all real and tangible personal property taxable in the assessor's city, county, town or district. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3 of this section, the assessor shall annually assess all personal property at thirty-three and one-third percent of its true value in money as of January first of each calendar year. The assessor shall annually assess all real property, including any new construction and improvements to real property, and possessory interests in real property at the percent of its true value in money set in subsection 5 of this section. The assessor shall annually assess all real property in the following manner: new assessed values shall be determined as of January first of each odd-numbered year and shall be entered in the assessor's books; those same assessed values shall apply in the following even-numbered year, except for new construction and property improvements which shall be valued as though they had been completed as of January first of the preceding odd-numbered year. The assessor may call at the office, place of doing business, or residence of each person required by this chapter to list property, and require the person to make a correct statement of all taxable real property in the county owned by the person, or under his or her care, charge or management, and all taxable tangible personal property owned by the person or under his or her care, charge or management, taxable in the county. On or before January first of each even-numbered year, the assessor shall prepare and submit a two-year assessment maintenance plan to the county governing body and the state tax

commission for their respective approval or modification. The county governing body shall approve and forward such plan or its alternative to the plan to the state tax commission by February first. If the county governing body fails to forward the plan or its alternative to the plan to the state tax commission by February first, the assessor's plan shall be considered approved by the county governing body. If the state tax commission fails to approve a plan and if the state tax commission and the assessor and the governing body of the county involved are unable to resolve the differences, in order to receive state cost-share funds outlined in section 137.750, the county or the assessor shall petition the administrative hearing commission, by May first, to decide all matters in dispute regarding the assessment maintenance plan. Upon agreement of the parties, the matter may be stayed while the parties proceed with mediation or arbitration upon terms agreed to by the parties. The final decision of the administrative hearing commission shall be subject to judicial review in the circuit court of the county involved. In the event a valuation of subclass (1) real property within any county of the first classification with a charter form of government, or within a city not within a county, is made by a computer, computer-assisted method or a computer program, the burden of proof, supported by clear, convincing and cogent evidence to sustain such valuation, shall be on the assessor at any hearing or appeal. In any such county, unless the assessor proves otherwise, there shall be a presumption that the assessment was made by a computer, computer-assisted method or a computer program. Such evidence shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

(1) The findings of the assessor based on an appraisal of the property by generally accepted appraisal techniques; and

(2) The purchase prices from sales of at least three comparable properties and the address or location thereof. As used in this paragraph, the word "comparable" means that:

(a) Such sale was closed at a date relevant to the property valuation; and

(b) Such properties are not more than one mile from the site of the disputed property, except where no similar properties exist within one mile of the disputed property, the nearest comparable property shall be used. Such property shall be within five hundred square feet in size of the disputed property, and resemble the disputed property in age, floor plan, number of rooms, and other relevant characteristics.

2. Assessors in each county of this state and the city of St. Louis may send personal property assessment forms through the mail.

3. The following items of personal property shall each constitute separate subclasses of tangible personal property and shall be assessed and valued for the purposes of taxation at the following percents of their true value in money:

(1) Grain and other agricultural crops in an unmanufactured condition, one-half of one percent;

(2) Livestock, twelve percent;

(3) Farm machinery, twelve percent;

(4) Motor vehicles which are eligible for registration as and are registered as historic motor vehicles pursuant to section 301.131, RSMo, and aircraft which are at least twenty-five years old and which are used solely for noncommercial purposes and are operated less than fifty hours per year or aircraft that are home built from a kit, five percent;

(5) Poultry, twelve percent; and

(6) Tools and equipment used for pollution control and tools and equipment used in retooling for the purpose of introducing new product lines or used for making improvements to existing products by any company which is located in a state enterprise zone and which is identified by any standard industrial classification number cited in subdivision (6) of section 135.200, RSMo, twenty-five percent.

4. The person listing the property shall enter a true and correct statement of the property, in a printed blank prepared for that purpose. The statement, after being filled out, shall be signed and either affirmed or sworn to as provided in section 137.155. The list shall then be delivered to the assessor.

5. All subclasses of real property, as such subclasses are established in section 4(b) of article X of the Missouri Constitution and defined in section 137.016, shall be assessed at the following percentages of true value:

(1) For real property in subclass (1), nineteen percent;

(2) For real property in subclass (2), twelve percent; and

(3) For real property in subclass (3), thirty-two percent.

6. Manufactured homes, as defined in section 700.010, RSMo, which are actually used as dwelling units shall be assessed at the same percentage of true value as residential real property for the purpose of taxation. The percentage of assessment of true value for such manufactured homes shall be the same as for

residential real property. If the county collector cannot identify or find the manufactured home when attempting to attach the manufactured home for payment of taxes owed by the manufactured home owner, the county collector may request the county commission to have the manufactured home removed from the tax books, and such request shall be granted within thirty days after the request is made; however, the removal from the tax books does not remove the tax lien on the manufactured home if it is later identified or found. A manufactured home located in a manufactured home rental park, rental community or on real estate not owned by the manufactured home owner shall be considered personal property. A manufactured home located on real estate owned by the manufactured home owner may be considered real property.

7. Each manufactured home assessed shall be considered a parcel for the purpose of reimbursement pursuant to section 137.750, unless the manufactured home has been converted to real property in compliance with section 700.111, RSMo, and assessed as a realty improvement to the existing real estate parcel.

8. Any amount of tax due and owing based on the assessment of a manufactured home shall be included on the personal property tax statement of the manufactured home owner unless the manufactured home has been converted to real property in compliance with section 700.111, RSMo, in which case the amount of tax due and owing on the assessment of the manufactured home as a realty improvement to the existing real estate parcel shall be included on the real property tax statement of the real estate owner.

9. The assessor of each county and each city not within a county shall use the trade-in value published in the October issue of the National Automobile Dealers' Association Official Used Car Guide, or its successor publication, as the recommended guide of information for determining the true value of motor vehicles described in such publication. In the absence of a listing for a particular motor vehicle in such publication, the assessor shall use such information or publications which in the assessor's judgment will fairly estimate the true value in money of the motor vehicle.

10. If the assessor increases the assessed valuation of any parcel of subclass (1) real property by more than [~~seventeen~~] **five** percent since the last assessment, excluding increases due to new construction or improvements, then the assessor shall conduct a physical inspection of such property.

11. If a physical inspection is required, pursuant to subsection 10

of this section, the assessor shall notify the property owner of that fact in writing and shall provide the owner clear written notice of the owner's rights relating to the physical inspection. If a physical inspection is required, the property owner may request that an interior inspection be performed during the physical inspection. The owner shall have no less than thirty days to notify the assessor of a request for an interior physical inspection.

12. A physical inspection, as required by subsection 10 of this section, shall include, but not be limited to, an on-site personal observation and review of all exterior portions of the land and any buildings and improvements to which the inspector has or may reasonably and lawfully gain external access, and shall include an observation and review of the interior of any buildings or improvements on the property upon the timely request of the owner pursuant to subsection 11 of this section. Mere observation of the property via a "drive-by inspection" or the like shall not be considered sufficient to constitute a physical inspection as required by this section.

138.060. 1. The county board of equalization shall, in a summary way, determine all appeals from the valuation of property made by the assessor, and shall correct and adjust the assessment accordingly. There shall be no presumption that the assessor's valuation is correct. **The assessor shall have the burden to prove that the assessor's valuation accurately reflects the true market value of the subject property. In the event a physical inspection of the subject property is required by subsection 10 of section 137.115, RSMo, the assessor shall have the burden to establish the manner in which the physical inspection was performed and shall have the burden to prove that the physical inspection was performed in accordance with section 137.115, RSMo. In the event the assessor fails to provide sufficient evidence to establish that the physical inspection was performed in accordance with section 137.115, RSMo, the property owner shall prevail on the appeal as a matter of law.** At any hearing before the state tax commission or a court of competent jurisdiction of an appeal of assessment from a first class charter county or a city not within a county, the assessor shall not advocate nor present evidence advocating a valuation higher than that value finally determined by the assessor or the value determined by the board of equalization, whichever is higher, for that assessment period.

2. The county clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and orders of the board, and the assessor shall correct all erroneous assessments, and the clerk shall adjust the tax book according to the orders of such board and the orders of the state tax commission, except that in adding or deducting such percent to each tract or parcel of real estate as required by such board or state tax commission, he shall add or deduct in each case any fractional sum of less than fifty cents, so that the value of any separate tract shall contain no fractions of a dollar.

138.435. For assessments of property located within a county of the first classification with a charter form of government and with more than one million inhabitants, in the event the property owner prevails on an appeal of the assessment of property before a local board of equalization or before the state tax commission or before any court of competent jurisdiction, the property owner shall be awarded a just and reasonable amount for appraisal costs, attorney fees and expenses, and court costs associated with the appeal. For purposes of this section, the property owner shall be considered to have prevailed in the event such an appeal results in a final decision reducing the appraised value of the property to an amount less than the assessed valuation amount determined by the assessor from which the property owner appealed. The board, commission or court awarding such costs, fees and expenses shall consider the reasonableness of the costs, fees and expenses within the context of the particular case.

Section B. This act is hereby submitted to the qualified voters of this state for approval or rejection at a special election which is hereby ordered and which shall be held and conducted on the first Tuesday in November, 2002, pursuant to the laws and constitutional provisions of this state applicable to general elections and the submission of referendum measures by initiative petitions, and this act shall become effective when approved by a majority of the votes cast thereon at such election and not otherwise.

Section C. The enactment of section 137.102, upon passage of this act by the voters of this state, shall become effective January 1, 2003, and shall apply to all taxable years beginning after December 31, 2002.

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