

House Bill No. 701

An act relating to notices of proposed property taxes; amending s. 200.069, F.S.; revising the form of the notice of proposed property taxes to include additional information relating to past and proposed millage rates and ad valorem taxes and assessment reductions and exemptions; defining a term; amending ss. 192.0105 and 200.065, F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 200.069, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

200.069 Notice of proposed property taxes and non-ad valorem assessments.—Pursuant to s. 200.065(2)(b), the property appraiser, in the name of the taxing authorities and local governing boards levying non-ad valorem assessments within his or her jurisdiction and at the expense of the county, shall prepare and deliver by first-class mail to each taxpayer to be listed on the current year's assessment roll a notice of proposed property taxes, which notice shall contain the elements and use the format provided in the following form. Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 195.022, no county officer shall use a form other than that provided herein. The Department of Revenue may adjust the spacing and placement on the form of the elements listed in this section as it considers necessary based on changes in conditions necessitated by various taxing authorities. If the elements are in the order listed, the placement of the listed columns may be varied at the discretion and expense of the property appraiser, and the property appraiser may use printing technology and devices to complete the form, the spacing, and the placement of the information in the columns. A county officer may use a form other than that provided by the department for purposes of this part, but only if his or her office pays the related expenses and he or she obtains prior written permission from the executive director of the department; however, a county officer may not use a form the substantive content of which is at variance with the form prescribed by the department. The county officer may continue to use such an approved form until the law that specifies the form is amended or repealed or until the officer receives written disapproval from the executive director.

(1) The first page of the notice shall read:

NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAXES
DO NOT PAY—THIS IS NOT A BILL

The taxing authorities which levy property taxes against your property will soon hold PUBLIC HEARINGS to adopt budgets and tax rates for the next year.

The purpose of these PUBLIC HEARINGS is to receive opinions from the general public and to answer questions on the proposed tax change and budget PRIOR TO TAKING FINAL ACTION.

Each taxing authority may AMEND OR ALTER its proposals at the hearing.

(2)(a) The notice shall include a brief legal description of the property, the name and mailing address of the owner of record, and the tax further ~~contain~~ information applicable to the specific parcel in question. The information shall be in columnar form. There shall be seven ~~five~~ column headings which shall read: “Taxing Authority,” “Your Property Taxes Last Year,” “Last Year’s Adjusted Tax Rate (Millage),” “Your Taxes This Year IF NO Budget Change Is Adopted,” “Tax Rate This Year IF PROPOSED Budget Is Adopted (Millage),” “Your Taxes This Year IF PROPOSED Budget Change Is Adopted Made,” “A Public Hearing on the Proposed Taxes and Budget Will Be Held:”, and “Your Taxes This Year IF NO Budget Change is Made.”

(b) As used in this section, the term “last year’s adjusted tax rate” means the rolled-back rate calculated pursuant to s. 200.065(1).

(3) There shall be under each column heading an entry for the county; the school district levy required pursuant to s. 1011.60(6); other operating school levies; the municipality or municipal service taxing unit or units in which the parcel lies, if any; the water management district levying pursuant to s. 373.503; the independent special districts in which the parcel lies, if any; and for all voted levies for debt service applicable to the parcel, if any.

(4) For each entry listed in subsection (3), there shall appear on the notice the following:

(a) In the first column, a brief, commonly used name for the taxing authority or its governing body. The entry in the first column for the levy required pursuant to s. 1011.60(6) shall be “By State Law.” The entry for other operating school district levies shall be “By Local Board.” Both school levy entries shall be indented and preceded by the notation “Public Schools:”. For each voted levy for debt service, the entry shall be “Voter Approved Debt Payments.”

(b) In the second column, the gross amount of ad valorem taxes levied against the parcel in the previous year. If the parcel did not exist in the previous year, the second column shall be blank.

(c) ~~In the third column, last year’s adjusted tax rate the gross amount of ad valorem taxes proposed to be levied in the current year, which amount shall be based on the proposed millage rates provided to the property appraiser pursuant to s. 200.065(2)(b) or, in the case of voted levies for debt service, the tax millage rate previously authorized by referendum, and the taxable value of the parcel as shown on the current year’s assessment roll.~~

(d) ~~In the fourth column, the gross amount of ad valorem taxes which will apply to the parcel in the current year if each taxing authority levies last year’s adjusted tax rate or, in the case of voted levies for debt service, the amount previously authorized by referendum date, the time, and a brief description of the location of the public hearing required pursuant to s. 200.065(2)(e).~~

(e) ~~In the fifth column, the tax rate that each taxing authority must levy against the parcel to fund the proposed budget gross amount of ad valorem taxes which would apply to the parcel in the current year if each taxing authority were to levy the rolled-back rate computed pursuant to s. 200.065(1) or, in the case of voted levies for debt service, the tax rate amount previously authorized by referendum.~~

(f) In the sixth column, the gross amount of ad valorem taxes that must levied in the current year if the proposed budget is adopted.

~~(g) In the seventh column, the date, the time, and a brief description of the location of the public hearing required pursuant to s. 200.065(2)(c). For special assessments collected utilizing the ad valorem method pursuant to s. 197.363, the previous year's assessment amount shall be added to the ad valorem taxes shown in the second and fifth columns, and the amount proposed to be imposed for the current year shall be added to the ad valorem taxes shown in the third column.~~

~~(5) The amounts shown on each line preceding each entry for voted levies for debt service shall include the sum of all ad valorem levies of the applicable unit of local government for operating purposes, including those of dependent special districts (except for municipal service taxing units, which shall be listed on the line for municipalities), and all nonvoted or nondebt service special assessments imposed by the applicable unit of local government to be collected utilizing the ad valorem method.~~

~~(5)(6) Following the entries for each taxing authority, a final entry shall show: in the first column, the words "Total Property Taxes;" and in the second, fourth ~~third~~, and sixth ~~fifth~~ columns, the sum of the entries for each of the individual taxing authorities. The second, fourth ~~third~~, and sixth ~~fifth~~ columns shall, immediately below said entries, be labeled Column 1, Column 2, and Column 3, respectively. Below these labels shall appear, in boldfaced type, the statement: SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR EXPLANATION.~~

~~(6)(a)(7) The second page of the notice shall state the parcel's market value and for each taxing authority that levies an ad valorem tax against the parcel:~~

1. The assessed value, value of exemptions, and taxable value for the previous year and the current year.

2. Each assessment reduction and exemption applicable to the property, including the value of the assessment reduction or exemption and tax levies to which they apply.

~~(b) The reverse side of the second page shall contain definitions and explanations for the values included on the front side. The notice shall further show a brief legal description of the property and the name and mailing address of the owner of record.~~

~~(8) The notice shall further read:~~

	Market Value	Assessed Value	Exemp- tions	Taxable Value
Your Property Value Last Year	\$	\$	\$	\$
Your Property Value This Year	\$	\$	\$	\$

(7) The following statement shall appear after the values listed on the front of the second page:

If you feel that the market value of your property is inaccurate or does not reflect fair market value, or if you are entitled to an exemption or classification that is not reflected above, contact your county property appraiser at ...(phone number)... or ...(location)...

If the property appraiser’s office is unable to resolve the matter as to market value, classification, or an exemption, you may file a petition for adjustment with the Value Adjustment Board. Petition forms are available from the county property appraiser and must be filed ON OR BEFORE ...(date)...

(8)(9) The reverse side of the first page of the form shall read:

EXPLANATION

*COLUMN 1—“YOUR PROPERTY TAXES LAST YEAR”

This column shows the taxes that applied last year to your property. These amounts were based on budgets adopted last year and your property’s previous taxable value.

*COLUMN 2—“YOUR TAXES IF NO BUDGET CHANGE IS ADOPTED”

This column shows what your taxes will be this year IF EACH TAXING AUTHORITY DOES NOT CHANGE ITS PROPERTY TAX LEVY. These amounts are based on last year’s budgets and your current assessment PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGE IS MADE”

~~This column shows what your taxes will be this year under the BUDGET ACTUALLY PROPOSED by each local taxing authority. The proposal is NOT final and may be amended at the public hearings shown on the front side of this notice.~~

*COLUMN 3—“YOUR TAXES IF PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGE IS ADOPTED”

This column shows what your taxes will be this year under the BUDGET ACTUALLY PROPOSED by each local taxing authority. The proposal is NOT final and may be amended at the public hearings shown on the front side of this notice NO BUDGET CHANGE IS MADE”

~~This column shows what your taxes will be this year IF EACH TAXING AUTHORITY DOES NOT INCREASE ITS PROPERTY TAX LEVY. These amounts are based on last year's budgets and your current assessment. The difference between columns 2 and 3 is the tax change proposed by each local taxing authority and is NOT the result of higher assessments.~~

~~ASSESSED VALUE means:~~

~~For homestead property: value as limited by the State Constitution;~~

~~For agricultural and similarly assessed property: classified use value;~~

~~For all other property: market value.~~

*Note: Amounts shown on this form do NOT reflect early payment discounts you may have received or may be eligible to receive. (Discounts are a maximum of 4 percent of the amounts shown on this form.)

~~(9)(10)~~ The bottom portion of the notice shall further read in bold, conspicuous print:

“Your final tax bill may contain non-ad valorem assessments which may not be reflected on this notice such as assessments for roads, fire, garbage, lighting, drainage, water, sewer, or other governmental services and facilities which may be levied by your county, city, or any special district.”

~~(10)(11)(a)~~ If requested by the local governing board levying non-ad valorem assessments and agreed to by the property appraiser, the notice specified in this section may contain a notice of proposed or adopted non-ad valorem assessments. If so agreed, the notice shall be titled:

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAXES
AND PROPOSED OR ADOPTED
NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENTS
DO NOT PAY—THIS IS NOT A BILL**

There must be a clear partition between the notice of proposed property taxes and the notice of proposed or adopted non-ad valorem assessments. The partition must be a bold, horizontal line approximately 1/8-inch thick. By rule, the department shall provide a format for the form of the notice of proposed or adopted non-ad valorem assessments which meets the following minimum requirements:

1. There must be subheading for columns listing the levying local governing board, with corresponding assessment rates expressed in dollars and cents per unit of assessment, and the associated assessment amount.

2. The purpose of each assessment must also be listed in the column listing the levying local governing board if the purpose is not clearly indicated by the name of the board.

3. Each non-ad valorem assessment for each levying local governing board must be listed separately.

4. If a county has too many municipal service benefit units or assessments to be listed separately, it shall combine them by function.

5. A brief statement outlining the responsibility of the tax collector and each levying local governing board as to any non-ad valorem assessment must be provided on the form, accompanied by directions as to which office to contact for particular questions or problems.

(b) If the notice includes all adopted non-ad valorem assessments, the provisions contained in subsection (10) shall not be placed on the notice.

Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 192.0105, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

192.0105 Taxpayer rights.—There is created a Florida Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights for property taxes and assessments to guarantee that the rights, privacy, and property of the taxpayers of this state are adequately safeguarded and protected during tax levy, assessment, collection, and enforcement processes administered under the revenue laws of this state. The Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights compiles, in one document, brief but comprehensive statements that summarize the rights and obligations of the property appraisers, tax collectors, clerks of the court, local governing boards, the Department of Revenue, and taxpayers. Additional rights afforded to payors of taxes and assessments imposed under the revenue laws of this state are provided in s. 213.015. The rights afforded taxpayers to assure that their privacy and property are safeguarded and protected during tax levy, assessment, and collection are available only insofar as they are implemented in other parts of the Florida Statutes or rules of the Department of Revenue. The rights so guaranteed to state taxpayers in the Florida Statutes and the departmental rules include:

(1) THE RIGHT TO KNOW.—

(c) The right to advertised notice of the amount by which the tentatively adopted millage rate results in taxes that exceed the previous year’s taxes (see s. 200.065(2)(d) and (3)). The right to notification by first-class mail of a comparison of the amount of the taxes to be levied from the proposed millage rate under the tentative budget change, compared to the previous year’s taxes, and also compared to the taxes that would be levied if no budget change is made (see ss. 200.065(2)(b) and 200.069(2), (3), (4), and (8) ss. 200.065(2)(b) and 200.069(2), (3), (4), and (9)).

Section 3. Subsection (11) of section 200.065, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

200.065 Method of fixing millage.—

(11) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2)(b) and s. 200.069(4)(f) s. 200.069(4)(e) to the contrary, the proposed millage rates provided to the property appraiser by the taxing authority, except for millage rates adopted by referendum, for rates authorized by s. 1011.71, and for rates required by law to be in a specified millage amount, shall be adjusted in the event that a review notice is issued pursuant to s.

193.1142(4) and the taxable value on the approved roll is at variance with the taxable value certified pursuant to subsection (1). The adjustment shall be made by the property appraiser, who shall notify the taxing authorities affected by the adjustment within 5 days of the date the roll is approved pursuant to s. 193.1142(4). The adjustment shall be such as to provide for no change in the dollar amount of taxes levied from that initially proposed by the taxing authority.

Section 4. This act shall take effect January 1, 2010.

Approved by the Governor June 11, 2009.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 11, 2009.