



State Board of Equalization

News Release

Vice Chair Michelle Steel

3rd District – Orange County

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Executive Director
www.boe.ca.gov

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BOE Working with CAL FIRE on Fire Prevention Fee Billing Schedule

Orange County – Michelle Steel, Vice Chair of the California State Board of Equalization (BOE), announced today that the agency has been contacted by CAL FIRE with a request to postpone fire prevention fee billings for Fiscal Year 2012-13.

Ms. Steel said, "Although we do not know why Cal Fire made this decision, this suspension of fire tax billings is good for all involved because it will give Cal Fire more time to ensure that billings are accurate – avoiding the mistakes that plagued the first round – and also give homeowners some breathing room." She added, "However, the only ultimate solution for taxpayers here is for the Legislature, or the courts, to repeal this complicated and unconstitutional tax."

Steel, who has consistently opposed the fire prevention fee, added that the BOE is working closely with CAL FIRE to develop an appropriate billing schedule. As more information becomes available, BOE will update its [fire prevention fee media resources page](#).

The fire prevention fee funds are administered by CAL FIRE. Current state law requires the BOE to bill the owners of habitable structures located within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), and collect the fees.

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Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006 and re-elected in 2010, Michelle Steel serves as *Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate*. In December 2007, Steel discovered the Board of Equalization had delayed the return of millions of dollars in security deposits owed to California businesses. Procedures were changed due to Steel's decisive leadership. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses. To date, over \$100 million in security deposits have been returned to taxpayers.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53.7 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit www.taxes.ca.gov.

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