



SEN. GEORGE RUNNER (RET.)

MEMBER
STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION
CALIFORNIA'S TAX BOARD

March 3, 2016

Honorable Das Williams, Chair
Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: ASSEMBLY BILL (OBERNOLTE) – SRA: FIRE PREVENTION FEES ▪ SPONSOR ▪

Dear Assemblymember Williams,

I am pleased to sponsor Assembly Bill 1642, which increases the amount of time allowed for payment of the Fire Prevention Fee from 30 days to 60 days from the date of assessment.

Created by the Legislature and Governor as part of the 2011 Budget, the Fire Prevention Fee charges property owners \$152.33 for each habitable structure located in a State Responsibility Area (SRA), with a \$35 reduction in the fee if the structure is located within the boundaries of a local fire protection district.

More than 700,000 Californians receive an annual bill, with just over half of them located in the rural areas of my district. Over the years, constituents have complained that many factors distinctive to rural living prevent them from receiving their bill in a timely manner to meet the 30-day deadline. For example, rural taxpayers may receive their mail through a post office box that is not located at their homes. The 30-day deadline attaches to the date printed on their bill, not the mailing date. If these taxpayers check mail only once per week at a location several miles from home, they have 23 days to understand the bill and make payment by the deadline; that timeframe is insufficient to protect their rights and encourage compliance.

The goal of AB 1642 is to increase compliance. The BOE enjoys a high compliance rate with respect to traditional tax and fee payers, most of whom are business owners. However, the Fire Prevention Fee is not paid by fee payers acquainted with the BOE. While most BOE-

administered tax and fee programs require payment 30 days from the date on the bill, this is a unique fee that touches homeowners unfamiliar with the BOE or its policies. Indeed, this fee is more similar to property tax bills, which are sent to both individuals and businesses, and which allow more than 30 days to pay.

All in all, I strongly believe that increasing the payment due date will ensure greater compliance with the law by giving all owners of habitable structures in an SRA more time to receive and pay their bills. It will also give taxpayers more time to appeal their bills. For these reasons, I am pleased to sponsor AB 1642 and ask for your support when it is heard before your committee on March 14.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G. Runner', written over a light blue horizontal line.

GEORGE RUNNER
1st District

cc: Assemblyman Obernolte
Eric Swanson, Assembly Republican Consultant