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Sheila de la Guerra General Public Comment

**From:** Teri Guillies <tguillies@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 12, 2024 4:59 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Letter to Board of Supervisors  
**Attachments:** SB Board of Supervisors Prop 19 Letter.pdf

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Hello,  
Thank you in advance for reading the attached letter.  
Sincerely,  
Teri Dorin-Guillies

To The Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors

February 12, 2024

I'm following up on our appeal that was approved on January 25, 2024.

We had an unnecessarily protracted experience fighting for our prop 19 benefit. Optimistic me genuinely anticipated having this resolved in January 2023, but the whole endeavor took a full year longer.

A not so brief history from my notes:

After prop 19 passed in 2021 I phoned the Santa Barbara Assessor's Office and was assured that we would qualify for prop 19.

We received our certificate of occupancy for our newly built Summerland home on December 7, 2022, closed escrow on our Thousand Oaks home of 30 years on Dec 21, 2022 and I mailed our prop 19 application that day. I waited almost a month before calling the Assessor's Office on January 18, 2023 and spoke with Leah. She said they had not yet submitted the request to Ventura County, that their office was very busy, had lots of applications, and I should check back in 6 months. She confirmed that when we were approved for the prop 19 transfer that the taxes we paid would be prorated back to the date of our application.

I called in June and was told they hadn't received any paperwork from Ventura County, but they would send a 2nd request. I asked if I could help... Maybe if I called or emailed Ventura County? I did both and Santa Barbara received the necessary documents from Ventura County the next business day.

We then received our first denial letter from Santa Barbara stating that prop 19 was not in our best interest. I called for clarification, and spoke with the appraiser. He asked if we had an appraisal. We did not. He offered to come right over.

He said the denial was because of the market value difference between our Thousand Oaks home which sold for \$2,350,000 and his \$3,500,000 valuation of our new home in Summerland. He said based on these figures we'd pay more in property taxes under Prop 19 than without it. He was at our home for over 2 hours that day. Standing on our front porch as he prepared to leave, he commented that the sale price of the larger, white house across the street was what really hurt our position because that house was 3,200 sq ft and our house was 3,600. I showed him our stamped set of plans: our home is 2,608 sq ft, just shy of the maximum buildable amount for our lot. He apologized and said his appraisal of \$3,500,000 was based on his miscalculated square footage. He needed to confirm that our home was 2,608 sq ft and said that difference in size would make a big difference in value. He'd be in touch.

So what came next? Another denial letter, this time saying we didn't qualify for prop 19 because we were not a rebuild. I phoned the Assessor's Office and spoke with the same appraiser and was now told prop 19 did not apply to our particular situation. He said we were in that unfortunate small percentage of people that prop 19 just didn't work for. This denial was in spite of blue prints and permits ... all the information at the disposal of the Assessor's Office, plus a two hour visit on site. So I sent photos showing story poles, demo and the many phases of construction: from 30' deep caissons to the roof and everything in between. Based on those photos the

Assessor's Office changed their position and determined that we were in fact a new build, and therefore qualified for prop 19. Whew!

What next? The Assessor's Office market value for our 2,608 sq ft home was now \$2,900,000. We thought a realistic market value was \$2,400,000 (or ideally for us would be \$2,350,000). Back to debating market value. The appraiser again asked if we had an appraisal. We did not. We asked for an appeal hearing asap, and that was scheduled for January 25, 2024.

I was confident we could make a strong case for \$2,400,000, maybe even \$2,350,000. We're in Summerland, not the pricier enclaves of Montecito and Santa Barbara. Prices are very subjective and presently the nearby homes for sale are not selling. The SB appraiser again asked if we had gotten an appraisal. We had not, but after seeing his spreadsheets and pages of calculations and speaking with our CPA (who said this is ridiculous, you need an attorney!) we hired an independent appraiser and he came up with what he said was a very defensible value of \$2,500,000. I should have asked him if he could see supporting \$2,350,000 - \$2,400,000 but I didn't.

I sent the appraisal to the Assessor's Office and said I still think \$2,350,000 - \$2,400,000 would be realistic, not out of line. Certainly in our favor. Without an actual buyer, market values are a range ... not so fixed. Naturally as the property owner in this situation we would rather be at the lowest end of the price range.

I asked the SB appraiser if the Assessor's Office would negotiate lower? He replied No, and said if I tried to present this to the Board of Supervisors they could come back at an even higher valuation. He said I'd be taking a chance not accepting the \$2,500,000. So we settled at \$2,500,000. I was tired of fighting this system. The appraiser said "Congratulations. You won." It should never have been a contest.

Prop 19 was created, and passed by the voters of California, to help people.

What should have been a relatively simple formality of paperwork was turned into a ridiculous, year long, confounding struggle. This makes me wonder if other property owners have either given up or unnecessarily hired attorneys in the face of multiple unwarranted denials.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope future Santa Barbara homeowners that choose to move here with the added benefit of prop 19 have a more welcoming and supportive experience.

Sincerely,  
Teri Dorin-Guillies