

Jeffrey Prang  
Special Assistant  
Executive Office - Office of Assessor  
Phone (213) 974-3101  
[jprang@assessor.lacounty.gov](mailto:jprang@assessor.lacounty.gov)

## **MISLEADING PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION MAILERS AGAIN OFFERING LOWER ASSESSMENTS - AT A HIGH PRICE**

The Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor reminds homeowners to be on the lookout for scam mailers from private companies offering to file assessment reduction claims for a hefty fee - a decline-in-value review done for free by the Office of the Assessor and usually without any request or appeal from the owner.

As the tax collector mails out bills this month, so, too, are private companies sending out their often-times official-looking offers to implement a review procedure for fees of \$150 or more. This pays the company to file a simple one-page form available at no cost on our website at <http://assessor.lacounty.gov> or by calling any of our offices. The website also provides information about decline-in-value reviews.

Many property owners assume these letters come from the county because the firms use names resembling government agencies and include parcel identification numbers. The envelopes will often look official and only in small fine print do the letters sometimes mention they are not from the Assessor.

Because of real estate market conditions, the department has undertaken a proactive decline-in-value survey this year which resulted in lower assessments and tax savings on thousands of homes and condominiums.

These companies are legal, but sophisticated scams, often using inaccurate data to 'estimate' potential tax savings, some even violate laws requiring disclaimers that the letters are not from government agencies and the requested payment is not an official fee.