

STATE OF NEW YORK

7515--A

Cal. No. 88

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

June 2, 2023

Introduced by Sens. STEWART-COUSINS, HELMING, JACKSON, MAY -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules -- recommitted to the Committee on Local Government in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- reported favorably from said committee, ordered to first and second report, ordered to a third reading, passed by Senate and delivered to the Assembly, recalled, vote reconsidered, restored to third reading, amended and ordered reprinted, retaining its place in the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the real property tax law, in relation to enacting the "climate change property tax relief act"

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "climate change property tax relief act".

3 § 2. The real property tax law is amended by adding a new section
4 467-n to read as follows:

5 § 467-n. Assessment relief for disasters. 1. Definitions. For the
6 purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following
7 meanings:

8 (a) "Eligible municipality" shall mean a county, city, town or
9 village, school district, or special district, other than a city with a
10 population of one million or more, who has passed a local law or resol-
11 ution pursuant to subdivision two of this section to adopt the
12 provisions of this section.

13 (b) "Eligible property" shall mean residential real property with
14 three or fewer dwelling units that is owner occupied prior to the date
15 upon which damage is caused by a major disaster, local disaster, or
16 both; provided however, that irrespective of whether the property
17 remains owner occupied, it is not transferred to a new owner prior to
18 relief being granted pursuant to this section.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (c) "Damages" shall mean the reduction in assessed value of an eligi-
2 ble property resulting from a major disaster, local disaster, or both.

3 (d) "Local disaster" shall mean, the occurrence or imminent, impending
4 or urgent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life
5 or property resulting from any natural or man-made causes, including,
6 but not limited to, fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, high
7 water, landslide, mudslide, wind, storm, wave action, volcanic activity,
8 epidemic, disease outbreak, air contamination, terrorism, cyber event,
9 blight, drought, infestation, explosion, radiological accident, nuclear,
10 chemical, biological, or bacteriological release, water contamination,
11 bridge failure or bridge collapse, occurring in an area or region that
12 is not proclaimed by the governor of New York or president of the United
13 States to be in a state of emergency.

14 (e) "Major disaster" shall mean the occurrence or imminent, impending
15 or urgent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life
16 or property resulting from any natural or man-made causes, including,
17 but not limited to, fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, tornado, high
18 water, landslide, mudslide, wind, storm, wave action, volcanic activity,
19 epidemic, disease outbreak, air contamination, terrorism, cyber event,
20 blight, drought, infestation, explosion, radiological accident, nuclear,
21 chemical, biological, or bacteriological release, water contamination,
22 bridge failure or bridge collapse, occurring in an area or region subse-
23 quently proclaimed by the governor of New York or president of the
24 United States to be in a state of emergency.

25 (f) "Maximum benefit ceiling" shall mean the maximum abatement from
26 real property taxes in dollars an eligible property may receive pursuant
27 to this section.

28 (g) "Minimum damage floor" shall mean the reduction in total assessed
29 value of an eligible property, in a dollar amount or a percentage of the
30 total assessed value lost, resulting from a major disaster, local disas-
31 ter, or both below which, an eligible property may not receive an abate-
32 ment pursuant to this section; provided however, that the percentage
33 loss in total assessed value on improvements on such eligible property
34 for this purpose shall be determined by the assessor in the manner
35 provided by this section, subject to review by the board of assessment
36 review, or in special assessing units, such local equivalent as is
37 applicable; and provided further, that an eligible municipality may
38 provide for an exception to the minimum damage floor in the event that
39 the disaster rendered the improvements on the residential real property
40 uninhabitable as determined by the local building inspector.

41 2. Local option. (a) An eligible municipality may exercise the
42 provisions of this section if, after a public hearing, its governing
43 body shall pass a local law or, in the case of a school district, a
44 resolution adopting the provisions of this section. Such local law or
45 resolution may provide for a tax abatement for real property that has
46 sustained damages from a major disaster, a local disaster, or both.

47 (b) Such local law or resolution shall include, but not be limited to:

48 (i) an expiration date after which applications received pursuant to
49 this section shall be invalid. If no expiration date is specified, the
50 abatement established in this section shall remain in effect until
51 repealed;

52 (ii) a specification of the number of days after the occurrence of a
53 major disaster, local disaster, or both after which applications
54 received pursuant to this section are invalid;

55 (iii) the date by which if a local disaster, major disaster, or both
56 occurred prior to, applications received pursuant to this section are

1 invalid, provided however, that such date may be prior to the effective
2 date of such local law or resolution, and provided further, that such
3 date shall not be prior to January first, two thousand twenty; and

4 (iv) a specification of a minimum damage floor and a maximum benefit
5 ceiling.

6 3. Assessment relief for victims of a local or major disaster in an
7 eligible municipality. (a) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the
8 contrary, where an eligible property that has sustained damages is
9 located within an eligible municipality, an abatement of real property
10 taxes shall be granted equal to the damages to such eligible property,
11 subject to the following:

12 (i) the local assessor shall determine the amount of damages;

13 (ii) any abatement from real property taxes may not exceed the maximum
14 benefit ceiling, if applicable;

15 (iii) the damages to an eligible property shall exceed the minimum
16 damage floor, if applicable; and

17 (iv) if the abatement granted pursuant to this section exceeds the
18 amount of real property taxes owed on an eligible property, the excess
19 abatement shall carry over to the next tax year, until the cumulative
20 sum of abated real property taxes equals the damages to such eligible
21 property, or five years have passed from when the abatement was granted,
22 whichever occurs first.

23 (b) To receive an abatement from real property taxes pursuant to this
24 section, the owner shall submit an application to the local assessor, on
25 a form prescribed by the commissioner, prior to the deadline established
26 pursuant to subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (b) of subdivision two of
27 this section. Such application shall include any supporting documenta-
28 tion and photographs, including any and all documentation outlined in
29 paragraph (c) of this subdivision, and shall describe in reasonable
30 detail the damage caused to and the condition of the property following
31 a major disaster, local disaster, or both.

32 (c) A homeowner may provide evidence of damage to the local assessor
33 as part of the application with the following, provided that the local
34 assessor may take the necessary steps to confirm the validity of such
35 documentation:

36 (i) assessment or reassessment by the eligible county or municipality;

37 (ii) private appraisal;

38 (iii) documentation provided by such homeowner's insurance company;

39 (iv) documentation provided by a public adjuster as defined in section
40 twenty-one hundred eight of the insurance law, if a homeowner does not
41 maintain a homeowner's insurance policy;

42 (v) loss verification reports and other records produced by the small
43 business administration office of disaster assistance or federal emer-
44 gency management agency;

45 (vi) photographic and visual documentation;

46 (vii) affidavits and other sworn statements; and

47 (viii) other government records and reports.

48 (d) The local assessor shall take the necessary steps to determine the
49 damages to the applicable eligible property. An owner of eligible prop-
50 erty may contest the amount of damages determined by the local assessor
51 to the board of assessment review, or in special assessing units, such
52 local equivalent as is applicable as outlined in paragraph (f) of this
53 subdivision; provided further, that a homeowner may contest the determi-
54 nation of the board of assessment review or such local equivalent pursu-
55 ant to article seven of this chapter.

1 (e) Abatements shall only be granted pursuant to this section for
2 eligible properties damaged by a major disaster, local disaster, or both
3 if the owner of such eligible property has not contributed to such
4 damage through an intentional act.

5 (f) If satisfied that the applicant is entitled to an abatement pursu-
6 ant to this section, the local assessor shall approve the application
7 and apply such abatement as herein provided commencing with the assess-
8 ment roll prepared on the basis of the taxable status date immediately
9 following the date the application was submitted. The abatement granted
10 pursuant to this section shall be entered by the local assessor on the
11 applicable assessment, with the amount of the abatement shown in a sepa-
12 rate column.

13 4. Selective reassessment. Thereafter, any increase in assessed value
14 attributable to the improvements made to real property impacted by a
15 major disaster, a local disaster, or both shall not constitute a selec-
16 tive reassessment.

17 § 3. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdi-
18 vision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of
19 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,
20 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in
21 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section
22 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-
23 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of
24 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such
25 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

26 § 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall be deemed to
27 have been in full force and effect on and after January 1, 2020;
28 provided however, that abatements provided pursuant to this act shall
29 be limited to damages caused by major disasters, local disasters, or
30 both, which occurred on and after January 1, 2020.