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Jackson County to limit 2025 residential property assessment increases to 15% as state fails to provide lawful, workable path forward

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr. and County Assessor Gail McCann Beatty announced today that residential property assessment increases in 2025 will be limited to no more than 15%. The decision, made after consultation with legal counsel and leading experts, reflects the only responsible course of action left as the State Tax Commission (STC) continues to shift rules, issue contradictory mandates and leaves local governments exposed to legal and financial harm.

While the County continues to seek guidance from the STC, it is taking this step based on the STC's own statement that, in the absence of completed physical exterior inspections, this is what a county is expected to do, despite the conflicting information previously provided by the STC.

“While others point fingers or promise what they know can't be delivered, we're making the hard choice to protect property owners, preserve public services and ensure that our assessment process can continue under the most difficult of circumstances,” said **Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr.**

The move comes on the heels of contradictory rulings from a state court judge, who found that the STC's retroactive 2023 order was both unenforceable and lawful, a paradox that has further destabilized the reassessment process statewide. The STC has appealed one portion of that ruling, and Jackson County is weighing its legal options carefully.

When the Rules Change, Property Owners Lose

Jackson County has worked in good faith to comply with state law, even as the STC continues to issue inconsistent and shifting directives.

“One day, we’re told inspections must happen after January 1. The next, they say we can start before. We’ve asked, repeatedly, what counts as a ‘physical inspection.’ We’ve received no answers,” said **Assessor Gail McCann Beatty**.

By law, any property facing an increase of more than 15% must receive a physical exterior inspection. In addition, state and county rules allow property owners to request an interior inspection, something the STC now says must happen at the same time as the physical exterior inspection.

The problem? Assessors don’t determine whether a property will exceed the 15% threshold until after the assessor has gone to the property, affirmed the physical characteristics, the property’s condition and external influences that may impact value. That means the STC is effectively demanding two physical exterior inspections and an interior inspection, all after January 1, for hundreds of thousands of parcels. It’s not just unworkable, it’s a logistical and legal contradiction.

“With more than 300,000 parcels, who do we inspect? Who do we leave out?” said McCann Beatty. “And how is it fair that those we manage to reach may end up with higher taxes than those we physically couldn’t? Why should either group be penalized?”

Assessors from across Missouri have echoed these concerns as they have been ordered by the STC to, in some cases, double the market value on residential parcels. But the STC has refused to provide meaningful guidance, leaving local governments caught in a no-win scenario.

The Real Risk: Retroactive and Political Reassessment

The STC's decision to void already-paid assessments has stunned professionals nationwide. As *The Beacon* reported, Mike Ardis of the International Association of Assessing Officers said he had [never seen a case where a state attempted to undo an entire county's reassessment after the fact \[thebeaconnews.org\]](https://thebeaconnews.org).

"As I told the STC last year, this is unprecedented," said McCann Beatty. "And now we're being forced to make policy on unstable legal ground with property owners stuck in the middle."

County officials warn that the precedent being set could allow the state to reach backward into any county's tax roll, forcing adjustments years after property owners have already paid their bills.

False Hope, Real Harm

Meanwhile, some state legislators and local officials are offering "easy" answers and performative votes, knowing full well that attempts to "roll back" taxes already used for schools, roads and emergency services would collapse in court or trigger widespread tax shifts.

"The truth is simple: the money from 2023 and 2024 is gone. It was spent to keep teachers in classrooms, keep fire trucks running, and keep services moving," said White. "What's left now is to fix the system, not pretend we can go back in time."

County officials warned that capping assessments now may sound like relief but will ultimately result in major tax burden shifts and higher increases down the line, especially for property owners in working-class neighborhoods.

"Artificially suppressing property values does not fix the system. It simply delays the consequences," said McCann Beatty. "This shifts the burden to others and sets us up for even larger increases in 2027. That's not fair, equitable or sustainable."

Next Steps

- County officials will continue evaluating recent legislative proposals and litigation outcomes and will provide additional information as developments emerge.
- Impact notices will be sent by the statutory deadline of June 15.
- **No press conference or media availability is scheduled at this time.**

The Public Deserves Better

Jackson County is under no illusion that this is a perfect solution. It is not. But in a landscape defined by legal contradictions, shifting interpretations and operational impossibilities, this is the most responsible and legally sound path available. The County continues to call on the Missouri General Assembly and the State Tax Commission to move beyond conflict and confusion and finally deliver the structural reforms this process demands.

“We need modern tools, not contradictory mandates. We need clarity, not political pressure. And we need a system that works,” said McCann Beatty. “Because right now, we’re all being set up to fail.”

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