



For Immediate Release
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BASTA Praises Plans to Reimburse Overcharged Property Taxes Says Move “Positive Step” by City Administrators Calls on De La Torre, Calderon to Help Homeowners

An audit by State Controller John Chiang has revealed that Bell residents were overcharged \$2.9 in property taxes last year. An amount that was illegal under California state law. Today, interim City Manager Pedro Carrillo announced that the City of Bell would fully reimburse the overcharges. However it seems, under state law, the reimbursements would be sent to an educational fund and not directly to Bell property owners.

“Finally we are starting to see some positive moves from Bell administrators. However, Bell homeowners could use some immediate tax relief,” said BASTA representative Ali Saleh. Saleh continued, “BASTA is asking our elected officials Assemblymember Hector De La Torre and State Senator Ron Calderon to come up with a quick legislative solution and ensure these overcharges go back to Bell homeowners.”

Earlier this week, the release of City of Bell documents revealed that seven Bell administrators were making more than \$5-million in total compensation. At the same time, Bell residents are paying the second highest tax rates in Los Angeles County and are burdened with nearly \$150 million in bond indebtedness.

To rectify these salary abuses, BASTA has called for the immediate resignation of Director of Administrative Services Lourdes Garcia, The Director of General Services Eric Eggena, The Director of Community of Community Services Annette Peretz, and the City of Bell Business Development Coordinator Ricardo Gonzalez.

“It seems clear now that Robert Rizzo and his henchmen were running a elaborate Ponzi scheme leveraging city equity to pay for their outrageous salaries. We look forward to Attorney General Attorney Brown’s indictments of guilty parties. In the meantime “Resign, Recall and Report,” added BASTA spokesperson Cristina Garcia.

Garcia was referring to BASTA demands for the resignation or recall of council members Hernandez, Artiga, Jacobo and Maribal. Additionally, BASTA has issued a series of demands for the release of documents from the interim city manager and city attorney. The release of the property tax documents and the legality of the structure of those taxes is the fulfillment of one of those demands.

BASTA is a coalition of concerned Bell residents and the Bell Police Officers Association dedicated to restoring ethical and honest government to the City of Bell.