

**BEFORE THE TAX COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO**

In the Matter of the Protest of )  
 )  
[REDACTED], ) DOCKET NO. 20699  
 )  
 ) DECISION  
Petitioner. )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

This case arises from a timely protest of a State Tax Commission staff decision adjusting the property tax reduction benefit for 2007. This matter was submitted for a decision based on the documents in the file. The State Tax Commission has reviewed the file and makes its decision based on its contents.

All property within the jurisdiction of this state is subject to property tax. A property tax reduction benefit is available to certain qualifying individuals. The benefit is in the form of a payment of the applicant’s property tax on the dwelling he/she owns and occupies. The payment is funded by state sales tax. The amount of property tax reduction depends on income--the greater the income, the smaller the benefit.

[Redacted] submitted an application for a property tax reduction benefit on April 15, 2007. The [Redacted] County Assessor’s office sent that application together with other applications to the Tax Commission for review and processing.

The staff reviewed the petitioner’s application and compared the 2006 income reported in her application with records available to the Tax Commission. The staff found the petitioner had filed an individual income tax return reporting 2006 federal adjusted gross income (FAGI) of \$5,271. No amount was claimed for FAGI in the petitioner’s application.

Because the additional income increased the petitioner’s 2006 income for the purpose of the property tax reduction benefit, the staff sent the petitioner a letter advising her of the intent to

change the amount of the benefit shown in the application she submitted. The petitioner appealed, and her file was transferred to the Legal/Tax Policy Division for administrative review.

Income for property tax reduction benefit purposes is defined in Idaho Code § 63-701 as income received in the calendar year immediately preceding the year in which a claim is filed. The calculation of income starts with federal adjusted gross income and, thereafter, makes certain additions and deductions.

Idaho Code § 63-701(5) describes income as:

(5) **"Income" means the sum of federal adjusted gross income as defined in the Internal Revenue Code,** as defined in section 63-3004, Idaho Code, and to the extent not already included in federal adjusted gross income:

- (a) Alimony;
- (b) Support money;
- (c) Nontaxable strike benefits;
- (d) The nontaxable amount of any individual retirement account, pension or annuity, (including railroad retirement benefits, all payments received under the federal social security act except the social security death benefit as specified in this subsection, state unemployment insurance laws, and veterans disability pensions and compensation, excluding any return of principal paid by the recipient of an annuity and excluding rollovers as provided in section 402 or 403 of the Internal Revenue Code);
- (e) Nontaxable interest received from the federal government or any of its instrumentalities or a state government or any of its instrumentalities;
- (f) Worker's compensation; and
- (g) The gross amount of loss of earnings insurance.

It does not include gifts from nongovernmental sources or inheritances. To the extent not reimbursed, the cost of medical care as defined in section 213(d) of the Internal Revenue Code, incurred or paid by the claimant and, if married, the claimant's spouse, may be deducted from income. To the extent not reimbursed, personal funeral expenses, including prepaid funeral expenses and premiums on funeral insurance, of the claimant and claimant's spouse only, may be deducted from income up to an annual maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per claim. "Income" does not include veterans disability pensions received by a person described in subsection (1)(e) who is a claimant or a claimant's spouse if the disability pension is received pursuant to a service-

connected disability of a degree of forty percent (40%) or more. "Income" does not include dependency and indemnity compensation or death benefits paid to a person described in subsection (1) of this section by the United States department of veterans affairs and arising from a service-connected death or disability. "Income" does not include lump sum death benefits made by the social security administration pursuant to 42 U.S.C. section 402(i). Documentation of medical expenses may be required by the county assessor, board of equalization and state tax commission in such form as the county assessor, board of equalization or state tax commission shall determine. "Income" shall be that received in the calendar year immediately preceding the year in which a claim is filed. Where a claimant and/or the claimant's spouse does not file a federal tax return, the claimant's and/or the claimant's spouse's federal adjusted gross income, for purposes of this section, shall be an income equivalent to federal adjusted gross income had the claimant and/or the claimant's spouse filed a federal tax return, as determined by the county assessor. The county assessor, board of equalization or state tax commission may require documentation of income in such form as each shall determine, including, but not limited to: copies of federal or state tax returns and any attachments thereto; and income reporting forms such as the W2 and 1099. (Emphasis added.)

In the petitioner's application, she reported social security of \$15,994 reduced by \$2,351 of medical expenses. Idaho Code § 63-701(5) is clear. The petitioner's FAGI must be added to that income to determine the benefit amount. The petitioner's total net income for the purpose of the property tax reduction benefit is \$18,914. The petitioner qualifies to receive a property tax reduction benefit of an amount not to exceed \$760.

The State Tax Commission is aware there is some potential this decision could cause a hardship to the applicant for property tax reduction in certain circumstances. The proper jurisdiction to handle such hardship situations falls with the county commissioners pursuant to Idaho Code § 63-711.

WHEREFORE, the Intent to Change Property Tax Reduction Benefit letter dated October 9, 2007, is APPROVED, AFFIRMED, and MADE FINAL.

An explanation of the petitioner's right to appeal this decision is enclosed.

DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.

IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION

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COMMISSIONER

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007, a copy of the within and foregoing DECISION was served by sending the same by United States mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to:

[REDACTED]

Receipt No.