SENATE BILL No. 399

DIGEST OF INTRODUCED BILL

Citations Affected: IC 6-1.1.

Synopsis: Property tax matters. Provides that a county assessor or township assessor (if any) may request the department of local government finance (department) to perform a state conducted assessment of a particular commercial building or structure used for retail purposes. Specifies the procedures for the state conducted assessment. Provides that the true tax value of commercial real property used for retail purposes that is occupied by the original owner or by a tenant for which the improvement was built shall be determined by the cost approach for the first 10 years of occupancy of the property, less normal depreciation and normal obsolescence under the rules and guidelines of the department of local government finance. Provides that the taxpayer and the assessing official are required to participate in mandatory mediation of an appeal of an assessment of the commercial real property, instead of the preliminary informal meeting process under current law. Requires the county property tax assessment board of appeals (county board) to designate one member of the county board to serve as the mediator for the mediation conference, and specifies certain procedures that apply. Provides that, if a mandatory mediation conference is not held due to the failure of a party or the party's representative to appear, the county board's determination of the assessment may not be appealed to the Indiana board of tax review. Provides that a taxpayer shall (not may) enter into a written agreement with a redevelopment commission in which the taxpayer waives review of any assessment of the taxpayer's property in an allocation area during the term of any bond or lease obligations that are payable from allocated property taxes, unless the redevelopment commission waives (Continued next page)

Effective: July 1, 2020; January 1, 2021.

Buchanan, Boots, Walker, Charbonneau, Becker, Buck

January 14, 2020, read first time and referred to Committee on Tax and Fiscal Policy.



Digest Continued

the requirement in writing. Provides that a county fiscal body may adopt an ordinance to provide that the county assessor be reimbursed for legal costs (in addition to other specified costs under current law) incurred by the county assessor in defending an appeal that is uncommon and infrequent in the normal course of defending appeals.



Introduced

Second Regular Session of the 121st General Assembly (2020)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in this style type, and deletions will appear in this style type.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or *this style type* reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2019 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

SENATE BILL No. 399

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning taxation.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

1	SECTION 1. IC 6-1.1-4-28.5, AS AMENDED BY P.L.86-2018.
2	SECTION 33, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
3	JANUARY 1, 2021]: Sec. 28.5. (a) Money assigned to a property
4	reassessment fund under section 27.5 of this chapter may be used only
5	to pay the costs of:
6	(1) the reassessment of one (1) or more groups of parcels under
7	a county's reassessment plan prepared under section 4.2 of this
8	chapter, including the computerization of assessment records;
9	(2) payments to assessing officials and hearing officers for county
0	property tax assessment boards of appeals under IC 6-1.1-35.2;
1	(3) the development or updating of detailed soil survey data by
2	the United States Department of Agriculture or its successor
3	agency;
4	(4) the updating of plat books;
5	(5) payments for the salary of permanent staff or for the



1	contractual services of temporary staff who are necessary to assist
2	assessing officials;
3	(6) making annual adjustments under section 4.5 of this chapter;
4	and
5	(7) the verification under 50 IAC 27-4-7 of sales disclosure forms
6	forwarded to:
7	(A) the county assessor; or
8	(B) township assessors (if any);
9	under IC 6-1.1-5.5-3; and
10	(8) state conducted assessments requested under section 31.8
11	of this chapter.
12	Money in a property reassessment fund may not be transferred or
13	reassigned to any other fund and may not be used for any purposes
14	other than those set forth in this section.
15	(b) All counties shall use modern, detailed soil maps in the
16	reassessment of agricultural land.
17	(c) The county treasurer of each county shall, in accordance with
18	IC 5-13-9, invest any money accumulated in the property reassessment
19	fund. Any interest received from investment of the money shall be paid
20	into the property reassessment fund.
21	(d) An appropriation under this section must be approved by the
22	fiscal body of the county after the review and recommendation of the
23	county assessor. However, in a county with a township assessor in
24	every township, the county assessor does not review an appropriation
25	under this section, and only the fiscal body must approve an
26	appropriation under this section.
27	SECTION 2. IC 6-1.1-4-31.8 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA
28	CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS
29	[EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021]: Sec. 31.8. (a) As used in this
30	section, "department" refers to the department of local
31	government finance.
32	(b) This section applies only to a real property assessment of a
33	commercial building or structure used for retail purposes.
34	(c) A county assessor or a township assessor (if any) may
35	request the department to perform a state conducted assessment
36	of a particular property in the county for a specified assessment
37	date. The request must be made in the form and in the manner
38	prescribed by the department.
39	(d) If the department receives a request for a state conducted
40	assessment of a particular property in a county, the department

shall assume the duties of the county assessor with regard to the

assessment of that property for that assessment date.



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- (e) Before assuming the duties of a county assessor, the department shall transmit a notice of the state conducted assessment of the property for the assessment date to the county assessor, the county fiscal body, and the county auditor.
- (f) A county assessor that requests the department to perform a state conducted assessment under this section shall make available and provide access to all information requested by the department or the department's contractor that is related to the assessment of real property that is subject to the state conducted assessment in the county.
- (g) The department may enter into a contract with a professional appraising firm to conduct a requested assessment of the property under this section.
- (h) After receiving the report of the assessed value of the property from the appraisal firm acting under a contract described in subsection (g), the department shall give notice to the taxpayer and the county assessor, by mail, of the amount of the assessment of the property.
- (i) The department shall forward a bill for services provided under a contract described in subsection (g) to the auditor of the county in which the state conducted assessment occurs. The county shall pay the bill, without appropriation, from the county reassessment fund.

SECTION 3. IC 6-1.1-4-43.5 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A **NEW** SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021]: **Sec. 43.5. (a) This section applies to a real property assessment of commercial real property used for retail purposes:**

- (1) for the 2021 assessment date and assessment dates thereafter; and
- (2) if the commercial real property is occupied by the original owner or by a tenant for which the improvement was built.
- (b) This section does not apply to real property described in subsection (a) if the real property is sold:
 - (1) by the original owner for which the improvement was built; and
 - (2) to a subsequent purchaser in an arms length transaction.
- (c) This subsection applies to a taxpayer that files a notice under IC 6-1.1-15 after December 31, 2020, requesting a review of the assessment of the taxpayer's real property that is subject to this section. In determining the true tax value of real property under this section, true tax value shall be determined by the cost



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approach for the first ten (10) years of occupancy of the subject property, less normal depreciation and normal obsolescence under the rules and guidelines of the department. For purposes of this subsection, the land value shall be assessed separately. The assessed value of the land underlying the improvements assessed under this section may be assessed or challenged based on the market value of comparable land. For purposes of this section, economic and functional obsolescence of the subject property may be determined by application of aggregate market data, but shall not be determined by comparison to any other individual parcels.

(d) This subsection applies to a taxpayer that files a notice under IC 6-1.1-15 after December 31, 2020, requesting a review of the assessment of the taxpayer's real property that is subject to this section. A taxpayer must provide to the appropriate county or township assessing official information concerning the actual construction costs for the real property. Notwithstanding IC 6-1.1-15, if a taxpayer does not provide all relevant and reasonably available information concerning the actual construction costs for the real property before the hearing scheduled by the county property tax assessment board of appeals regarding the assessment of the real property, the appeal may not be reviewed until all the information is provided. If a taxpayer has not provided all relevant and reasonably available information concerning the actual construction costs of the property under appeal within ten (10) days prior to the scheduled hearing by the county property tax assessment board of appeals, the appeal is deemed void for that assessment year and may not be refiled or appealed. If a taxpayer does provide the information concerning the actual construction costs for the real property and the construction costs for the real property are greater than the cost values determined by using the cost tables under the rules and guidelines of the department of local government finance, then, for purposes of applying the cost approach under subsection (c), the normal depreciation and normal obsolescence factor as calculated under the rules and guidelines of the department shall be deducted from the actual construction costs rather than the cost values determined by using the cost tables under the rules and guidelines of the department of local government finance.

SECTION 4. IC 6-1.1-15-1.2, AS AMENDED BY P.L.121-2019, SECTION 3, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021]: Sec. 1.2. (a) **Except as provided in section 2.3 of this chapter,** a county or township official who receives a written



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notice under section 1.1 of this chapter shall schedule, at a time during business hours that is convenient to the taxpayer, a preliminary informal meeting with the taxpayer in order to resolve the appeal. If the taxpayer raises a claim regarding a matter that is in the discretion of the county auditor, the informal meeting must include the county auditor. At the preliminary informal meeting, in order to facilitate understanding and the resolution of disputed issues, a county or township official, the county auditor, if the matter is in the discretion of the county auditor, and the taxpayer shall exchange the information that each party is relying on at the time of the preliminary informal meeting to support the party's respective position on each disputed issue concerning the assessment or deduction. If additional information is obtained by the county or township official, the county auditor, or the taxpayer after the preliminary informal meeting and before the hearing held by the county board, the party obtaining the information shall provide the information to the other party. If the county or township official, the county auditor, or the taxpayer obtains additional information and provides the information to the other party for the first time at the hearing held by the county board, the county board, unless waived by the receiving party, shall continue the hearing until a future hearing date of the county board so that the receiving party has an opportunity to review all the information that the offering party is relying on to support the offering party's positions on the disputed issues concerning the assessment or deduction.

- (b) The official shall report on a form prescribed by the department of local government finance the results of the informal meeting. If the taxpayer and the official agree on the resolution of all issues in the appeal, the report shall state the agreed resolution of the matter and be signed by the official and the taxpayer. If an informal meeting is not held, or the informal meeting is unsuccessful, the official shall report those facts on the form. The official shall forward the report on the informal meeting to the county board.
 - (c) If the county board receives:
 - (1) a report on the informal meeting under subsection (b); or
 - (2) a report on a mandatory mediation conference under section 2.3(i) of this chapter;

indicating an agreed resolution of the matter, the county board shall vote to accept or deny the agreed resolution. If the county board accepts the agreed resolution, the county board shall issue a notification of final assessment determination adopting the agreed resolution and vacating the hearing if scheduled.

(d) The county board, upon receipt of a written notice under section



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- 1.1 of this chapter, shall hold a hearing on the appeal not later than one hundred eighty (180) days after the filing date of the written notice. The county board shall, by mail, give at least thirty (30) days notice of the date, time, and place fixed for the hearing to the taxpayer, the county or township official with whom the taxpayer filed the written notice, and the county auditor. If the county board has notice that the taxpayer is represented by a third person, any hearing notice shall be mailed to the representative.
- (e) If good cause is shown, the county board shall grant a request for continuance filed in writing at least ten (10) days before the hearing, and reschedule the hearing under subsection (d).
- (f) A taxpayer may withdraw an appeal by filing a written request at least ten (10) days before the hearing. The county board shall issue a notification of final assessment determination indicating the withdrawal and no change in the assessment. A withdrawal waives a taxpayer's right to appeal to the Indiana board.
- (g) The county board shall determine an appeal without a hearing if requested by the taxpayer in writing at least twenty (20) days before the hearing.
- (h) If a taxpayer appeals the assessment of tangible property under section 1.1 of this chapter, the taxpayer is not required to have an appraisal of the property in order to initiate the appeal or prosecute the appeal.
- (i) At a hearing under subsection (d), the taxpayer shall have the opportunity to present testimony and evidence regarding the matters on appeal. If the matters on appeal are in the discretion of the county auditor, the county auditor or the county auditor's representative shall attend the hearing. A county or township official, or the county auditor or the county auditor's representative, shall have an opportunity to present testimony and evidence regarding the matters on appeal. The county board may adjourn and continue the hearing to a later date in order to make a physical inspection or consider the evidence presented.
- (j) The county board shall determine the assessment by motion and majority vote. A county board may, based on the evidence before it, increase an assessment. The county board shall issue a written decision. Written notice of the decision shall be given to the township official, county official, county auditor, and the taxpayer.
- (k) Except as provided in section 2.3(j) of this chapter, if more than one hundred eighty (180) days have passed since the date the notice of appeal was filed, and the county board has not issued a determination, a taxpayer may initiate any appeal with the Indiana board of tax review under section 3 of this chapter.



(l) The county assessor may assess a penalty of fifty dollars (\$50)
against the taxpayer if the taxpayer or representative fails to appear at
a hearing under subsection (d) and, under subsection (e), the taxpayer's
request for continuance is denied, or the taxpayer's request for
continuance, request for the board to take action without a hearing, or
withdrawal is not timely filed. A taxpayer may appeal the assessment
of the penalty to the Indiana board or directly to the tax court. The
penalty may not be added as an amount owed on the property tax
statement under IC 6-1.1-22 or IC 6-1.1-22.5.

SECTION 5. IC 6-1.1-15-1.5, AS ADDED BY P.L.249-2015, SECTION 13, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2020]: Sec. 1.5. (a) As used in this section, "allocation area" refers to an area that is established under the authority of any of the following statutes and in which tax increment revenues are collected:

- (1) IC 6-1.1-39.
- (2) IC 8-22-3.5.
 - (3) IC 36-7-14.
 - (4) IC 36-7-14.5.
 - (5) IC 36-7-15.1.
 - (6) IC 36-7-30.
 - (7) IC 36-7-30.5.
- (8) IC 36-7-32.

- (b) A taxpayer may shall enter into a written agreement with an entity that is authorized to establish an allocation area in which the taxpayer waives review of any assessment of the taxpayer's tangible property that is located in an allocation area for an assessment date that occurs during the term of any specified bond or lease obligations that are payable from property taxes in accordance with an allocation provision for the allocation area and any applicable statute, ordinance, or resolution, unless the entity that established the allocation area waives the requirement in writing. An agreement described in this subsection may precede the establishment of the allocation area or the determination to issue bonds or enter into leases payable from the allocated property taxes.
- (c) If a taxpayer enters into a written agreement described in subsection (b) with an entity that is authorized to establish an allocation area with respect to tangible property located in a particular allocation area, the taxpayer may not:
 - (1) obtain a review by the county board of a county or township official's assessment of the tangible property;
 - (2) obtain a review by the Indiana board of the county or township official's assessment of the tangible property; or



1	(3) obtain judicial review of the county or township official's
2	assessment of the tangible property;
3	for an assessment date that occurs during the term of any specified
4	bond or lease obligations that are payable from property taxes in
5	accordance with an allocation provision for the allocation area and any
6	applicable statute, ordinance, or resolution.
7	SECTION 6. IC 6-1.1-15-2.3 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA
8	CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS
9	[EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021]: Sec. 2.3. (a) This section applies
0	only to a notice of appeal under section 1.1 of this chapter with
1	respect to an assessment of a taxpayer's commercial real property
2	that is subject to IC 6-1.1-4-43.5.
3	(b) Instead of a preliminary informal meeting under section
4	1.2(a) of this chapter, the taxpayer and the county or township
5	assessing official (or their representatives) shall attend and
6	participate in mandatory mediation as set forth in this section.
7	(c) The county board shall set the time and place for the
8	mandatory mediation conference and send notice to the taxpayer
9	and the assessing official and the attorneys of record at least thirty
20	(30) days before the date set for the mediation conference.
21	(d) The county board shall designate one (1) member of the
22	county board to serve as the mediator for purposes of a mandatory
23 24	mediation conference under this section.
24	(e) At least seven (7) days before the mandatory mediation
25	conference date, the taxpayer and the assessing official shall submit
26	to the mediator a confidential statement setting forth the party's
27	factual or legal position on the issues presented by the notice of
28	appeal, including the information that each party is relying on to
.9	support their respective position concerning the assessment.
0	(f) The following provisions apply to a mandatory mediation
1	conference conducted under this section:
52	(1) IC 4-21.5-3.5-17 (individuals present at mediation).
3	(2) IC 4-21.5-3.5-18(c) through IC 4-21.5-3.5-18(e)
4	(confidential statements).
5	(3) IC 4-21.5-3.5-19 (mediator meetings with parties).
6	(4) IC 4-21.5-3.5-24 (rules of evidence do not apply).
7	(5) IC 4-21.5-3.5-26 (mediation regarded as settlement
8	negotiation).
9	(6) IC 4-21.5-3.5-27 (confidential and privileged nature of
-0	mediation).

(g) At a mandatory mediation conference, the mediator shall

facilitate the negotiation of an agreed settlement of the assessed



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- value of the commercial real property. However, the mediator has no authority to render a determination on the notice of appeal.
- (h) The mediator shall report on a form prescribed by the department of local government finance the results of the mandatory mediation conference. If the taxpayer and the assessing official agree on the resolution of all issues in the appeal, the report shall state the agreed resolution of the matter and be signed by the assessing official and the taxpayer. If a mandatory mediation conference is not held due to the failure of a party or the party's representative to appear at the mediation conference, the mediator shall report that fact on the form.
- (i) The mediator shall forward the report on the mandatory mediation conference to the county board.
- (j) If a mandatory mediation conference is not held under this chapter due to the failure of a party or the party's representative to appear at the mediation conference, the county board's determination of the assessment under section 1.2 of this chapter may not be appealed to the Indiana board of tax review.
- SECTION 7. IC 6-1.1-15-3, AS AMENDED BY P.L.121-2019, SECTION 5, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2021]: Sec. 3. (a) A taxpayer may obtain a review by the Indiana board of a county board's action with respect to a claim under section 1.1 of this chapter, **except as otherwise provided in section 2.3(j) of this chapter.**
- (b) The county assessor is the party to the review under this section to defend the determination of the county board. The county auditor may appear as an additional party to the review if the determination concerns a matter that is in the discretion of the county auditor. At the time the notice of that determination is given to the taxpayer, the taxpayer shall also be informed in writing of:
 - (1) the taxpayer's opportunity for review under this section; and
 - (2) the procedures the taxpayer must follow in order to obtain review under this section.
- (c) A county assessor who dissents from the determination of the county board may obtain a review by the Indiana board, **except as otherwise provided in section 2.3(j) of this chapter.** A county auditor who dissents from the determination of the county board concerning a matter that is in the discretion of the county auditor may obtain a review by the Indiana board.
- (d) In order to obtain a review by the Indiana board under this section, the party must, not later than forty-five (45) days after the date of the notice given to the party or parties of the determination of the



1	county board:
2	(1) file a petition for review with the Indiana board; and
3	(2) mail a copy of the petition to the other party.
4	(e) The Indiana board shall prescribe the form of the petition for
5	review under this chapter. The Indiana board shall issue instructions for
6	completion of the form. The form and the instructions must be clear,
7	simple, and understandable to the average individual. A petition for
8	review of such a determination must be made on the form prescribed
9	by the Indiana board. The form must require the petitioner to specify
10	the reasons why the petitioner believes that the determination by the
11	county board is erroneous.
12	(f) If the action for which a taxpayer seeks review under this section
13	is the assessment of tangible property, the taxpayer is not required to
14	have an appraisal of the property in order to do the following:
15	(1) Initiate the review.
16	(2) Prosecute the review.
17	(g) If an owner petitions the Indiana board under IC 6-1.1-11-7(d),
18	the Indiana board is authorized to approve or disapprove an exemption
19	application:
20	(1) previously submitted to a county board under IC 6-1.1-11-6;
21	and
22	(2) that is not approved or disapproved by the county board within
23	one hundred eighty (180) days after the owner filed the
24	application for exemption under IC 6-1.1-11.
25	The county assessor is a party to a petition to the Indiana board under
26	IC 6-1.1-11-7(d).
27	SECTION 8. IC 6-1.1-15-10.7, AS ADDED BY P.L.180-2016,
28	SECTION 9, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
29	JANUARY 1, 2021]: Sec. 10.7. (a) The county fiscal body may adopt
30	an ordinance to provide that the county assessor be reimbursed for
31	certain costs incurred by the county assessor in defending an appeal
32	under this chapter that is uncommon and infrequent in the normal
33	course of defending appeals under this chapter. Costs include appraisal,
34	legal, and expert witness fees incurred in defending an appeal.
35	(b) The ordinance must specify:
36	(1) the appeal or appeals and why they are uncommon and
37	infrequent;
38	(2) a detailed list of expenses incurred by fund and by parcel
39	number; and
40	(3) that the county auditor will deduct the expenses listed in the

ordinance from property tax receipts collected in the taxing

district in which the parcel is located before apportioning receipts



1	to taxing units for the next semiannual settlement under
2	IC 6-1.1-27.
3	(c) Property tax receipts that are collected under this section must
4	be deposited in the county fund that incurred the initial expense.
5	(d) Expenses for an appeal that are deducted from a civil taxing
6	unit's property tax revenue under this section are not considered to be
7	part of a payment of a refund resulting from an appeal for purposes of
8	a maximum permissible property tax levy appeal under
9	IC 6-1.1-18.5-16.

