

---

---

# NEWS

---

---



**RICK AUERBACH**

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY ASSESSOR**

---

---



320 Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012  
Telephone: (213) 974-3101 • Fax: (213) 617-1493 • [assessor.lacounty.gov](http://assessor.lacounty.gov)

CONTACT: ROBERT KNOWLES  
(213) 974-3101

OCTOBER 20, 2009  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MISLEADING PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION MAILERS**  
**AGAIN OFFERING LOWER ASSESSMENTS -**  
**AT A HIGH PRICE**

Los Angeles County Assessor Rick Auerbach today reminded homeowners to be on the lookout for scam mailers from private companies offering to file assessment reduction claims for a hefty fee - a decline-in-value review done for free by his department and usually without any request or appeal from the owner.

"As the tax collector mails out bills this month," Auerbach noted, "so, too, are private companies sending out their official-looking offers to implement a review procedure for fees of \$150 or more. This pays the company to file a simple one-page form available at no cost on our website at <http://assessor.lacounty.gov> or by calling any of our offices. The website also provides information about decline-in-value reviews.

"Many property owners assume these letters come from the county," he added, "because the firms use names resembling government agencies and include parcel identification numbers. The envelopes look official and only in small fine print do the letters sometimes mention they are not from my department."

Because of real estate market conditions, Auerbach added, his department undertook a proactive decline-in-value survey this year which resulted in lower assessments and tax savings on 334,000 homes and condominiums.

"These are legal, but sophisticated scams, often using inaccurate data to 'estimate' potential tax savings," Auerbach stated. "Some even violate laws requiring disclaimers that the letters are not from government agencies and the requested payment is not an official fee."