



## NEWS RELEASE

### Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford

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## Rutherford: Automatic Property Tax Refunds Legit

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**SAN BERNARDINO**—Property tax refund checks being automatically mailed to Upland and San Antonio Heights property owners have generated some questions about the legitimacy of the money.

So far, the San Bernardino County Auditor-Controller/Treasurer/Tax Collector's Office has fielded about 1,500 phone calls from residents who received the checks, including many homeowners inquiring about the validity of the spontaneous checks.

"I know it's not often that you get an unsolicited check in the mail, but I can assure you this is not a scam. It's a real refund," San Bernardino County Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford said.

The Board of Supervisors approved the refunds in February after a court determined the San Bernardino County Local Agency Formation Commission's action annexing Upland and San Antonio Heights properties into a special fire assessment district known as FP-5 was not valid.

In the past, property owners had to submit forms to receive property tax refunds. However, the Board of Supervisors adopted SB 1246 last year. It authorizes counties to issue refunds to property owners without a claim for refund if both of the following conditions are met: (1) There has been no transfer of the property during or since the fiscal year for which the taxes subject to refund were levied, and (2) The amount of the refund is less than \$5,000.

Supervisor Rutherford proposed adopting the law after the Board discussed how to handle more than \$9 million in unclaimed property tax refunds.

The automatic refunds residents are receiving include FP-5 assessments levied in the past two fiscal years: 2017-18 and 2018-19. The annual assessment is about \$148 per parcel.

Property owners who want to recoup any interest they may be owed as a result of the FP-5 assessments will need to file Form W-9 with the Tax Collector's Office.