



WISCONSIN Out-of-State Land Owners Association, Inc.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New items in this release:

- **News Article on Wisconsin Assessment Practices being challenged ...and being ignored.**

Door County D.A. Stalls Investigation into Assessment Wrongdoing Actions move to State's Attorney in pursuit of local justice.

In what appears to have been just an ongoing battle between two disgruntled out-of-state landowners and the local assessor, now appears to involve unauthorized tampering with the 1994 reassessment records resulting in local property owners receiving substantial property assessment reductions while leaving non-locals bearing more than their fair share of the tax burden.

Sturgeon Bay attorneys representing door property owners Gary Wait and Dewey Broberg petitioned Door County DA Gary Schuster to appoint a special prosecutor and a John Doe proceeding to determine why a former fact-finding investigation into the allegations is being covered up and who is lying as both sides continue to debate alteration and unauthorized modification of assessment records in violation of Wisconsin Assessment Practices.

Door County District Attorney, Gary Schuster denied the appointment in a letter dated August 25th and referred to Mr. Wait's affidavit "...is almost worthless." Schuster's letter continues on in what seemed an endless debate of law, process and procedure ridiculing the plaintiffs but ignoring the issues presented.

Commenting on Schuster's scathing rebuttal, Mr. Wait says: "We expected this from him. The factual misstatement's by the DA only continue to raise questions about his conduct and his witnessed statements to the Department of Justice." Referring to the case itself: "either we have a DA that lied to a justice department investigator and possibly directed a cover-up of a felony complaint, or we have someone lying to the DA about the investigation. In either event, someone is not telling the truth here."

The Door County DA seems to miss the point that the intent of Assessment Practices is to treat the valuation of property fairly and when there are any suggestions at all that this is not occurring, then the community at large should be outraged, including the media and

especially the entire Department of Justice. The issues are particularly disturbing to Wisconsin's out-of-state land owners who, more and more, are bearing unfair tax burdens. Certain tax districts are trying to protect native Wisconsinites from the escalating value of their property arising from the higher prices that non-natives are willing to pay for recreational land use. The supply-demand problem is not likely to go away considering that Wisconsin's 5 million people are surrounded by metropolitan areas in excess of 15-20 million.

In the last five years, the number of complaints about unfair assessment distribution has increased dramatically and with it the number of civil suits against assessors themselves. More and more, the courts are seeing the weaknesses in the Wisconsin system of assessment practices as reported to the Governor in 1994 by then Department of Revenue Secretary Mark Bugher. His letter to the Governor said: “ **we found that Wisconsin's property assessment system is widely perceived as unfair and in need of substantial change.**” Virtually nothing has been done to change Wisconsin's cumbersome two-tier assessment structure.

The Wisconsin Out-of-State Land Owners Association (OSLO) is a non-profit organization of over 11,000 resident and non-resident members dedicated to improving the benefits of owning property in Wisconsin as Seasonal Residents. Seasonal Residents account for over \$3 billion of revenue to the state; Seasonal Residents are not tourists.