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COUNTY AUDITORS OFFICE
GLENN COUNTY CALIF.

GLENN COUNTY

Audit Report

PROPERTY TAX APPORTIONMENT AND ALLOCATION SYSTEM

July 1, 1997, through June 30, 2002



STEVE WESTLY
California State Controller

June 2003



STEVE WESTLY
California State Controller

June 20, 2003

Mr. Don Santoro
Director of Finance
Glenn County
516 West Sycamore Street
Willows, CA 95988

Dear Mr. Santoro:

The State Controller's Office (SCO) has completed an audit of the methods employed by Glenn County to apportion and allocate property tax revenues for the period of July 1, 1997, through June 30, 2002. The audit was conducted pursuant to the requirements of *Government Code* Section 12468.

The audit disclosed that the county complied with California statutes for the allocation and apportionment of property tax revenues for the period audited.

If you have any questions, please contact Jerry McClain, Chief, Special Audits Bureau, at (916) 323-1573.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter Barnes".

WALTER BARNES
Chief Deputy State Controller, Finance

WB:jj

cc: (See page 2)

cc: John Rozsa, Chief Consultant
 Joint Legislative Budget Committee
Peter Derwiler, Consultant
 Senate Local Government Committee
Jane Brown, Assistant
 Senate Local Government Committee
Dixie Martineau-Petty, Secretary
 Assembly Local Government Committee
Martin Helmke, Consultant
 Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee
Judi Smith, Chief Consultant
 Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee
Sam Hull, Chief
 Office of State Audits and Evaluations
 Department of Finance
Catherine Smith, Executive Director
 California Special District Association

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Audit Report

Summary

The State Controller's Office (SCO) has completed an audit of the methods employed by Glenn County to apportion and allocate property tax revenues for the period of July 1, 1997, through June 30, 2002. The last day of fieldwork was April 16, 2003.

The audit disclosed that the county complied with California statutes for the allocation and apportionment of property tax revenues for the period audited.

Background

After the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the California State Legislature enacted new methods for allocating and apportioning property tax revenues to local government agencies and public schools. The main objective was to provide local government agencies with a property tax base that would grow as assessed property values increased. These methods have been further refined in subsequent laws passed by the Legislature.

One key law was Assembly Bill 8, which established the method of allocating property taxes for fiscal year (FY) 1979-80 (base year) and subsequent fiscal years. The methodology is commonly referred to as the AB 8 process or the AB 8 system.

The property tax revenues that local government agencies receive each fiscal year are based on the amount received in the prior year, plus a share of the property tax growth within their boundaries. Property tax revenues are then apportioned and allocated to local agencies and schools using prescribed formulas and methods defined in the *Revenue and Taxation Code*.

The AB 8 base process involved numerous steps, including the transfer of revenues from schools to local agencies (AB 8 shift) and the development of the tax rate area annual tax increment apportionment factors (ATI factors), which determine the amount of property tax revenues to be allocated to each jurisdiction.

The total amount to be allocated to each jurisdiction is then divided by the total amount to be allocated to all entities to determine the AB 8 apportionment factor (percentage share) for each entity for the year. The AB 8 factors are computed each year for all entities, using the revenue amounts established in the prior year. These amounts are adjusted for growth annually, using ATI factors.

Subsequent legislation removed revenues generated by unitary and operating nonunitary property from the AB 8 system. This revenue is now allocated and apportioned under a separate system.

Other legislation established an Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) in each county. Most local government agencies are required to transfer a portion of their property tax revenues to the fund. The fund is subsequently allocated and apportioned to schools by the

county auditor according to instructions received from the county superintendent of schools or the State Chancellor of Community Colleges.

Revenues generated by the different types of property tax are apportioned and allocated to local agencies and schools using prescribed formulas and methods, as defined in the *Revenue and Taxation Code*. Taxable property includes land, improvements, and other properties that are accounted for on the property tax rolls maintained primarily by the county assessor. Tax rolls contain an entry for each parcel of land, including the parcel number, the owner's name, and the value. Following are the types of property tax rolls.

- *Secured Roll*—This roll contains property that, in the opinion of the assessor, has sufficient value to guarantee payment of the tax levies and that, if necessary, can be sold by the tax collector to satisfy unpaid tax levies.
- *Unsecured Roll*—This roll contains property that, in the opinion of the assessor, does not constitute sufficient "permanence" or have other intrinsic qualities to guarantee payment of taxes levied against it.
- *State-Assessed Roll*—This roll contains public utility and railroad properties, assessed as either unitary or nonunitary property by the State Board of Equalization.
- *Supplemental Roll*—This roll contains property that has been reassessed due to a change in ownership or the completion of new construction, where the resulting change in assessed value is not reflected in other tax rolls.

To mitigate problems associated with the apportionment and allocation of property taxes, legislation (SB 418) was enacted in 1985 that requires the State Controller to audit the counties' apportionment and allocation methods and report the results to the California State Legislature.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of the audit was to review the county's apportionment and allocation of property tax revenues to local government agencies and public schools within its jurisdiction in order to determine whether the county complied with *Revenue and Taxation Code* requirements.

In order to meet the objective, the auditor reviewed the systems for apportioning and allocating property tax revenues used by the county auditor and the subsystems used by the tax collector and the assessor.

The auditor:

- Performed tests to determine whether there had been any incorrect apportionment and allocation of property tax:

- Interviewed key personnel and reviewed supporting documentation to gain an understanding of the county's property tax apportionment and allocation processes:
- Reviewed apportionment and allocation reports prepared by the county showing the computations used to develop the property tax distribution factors:
- Reviewed tax rate area (TRA) reports to verify that the annual tax increment was computed properly:
- Reviewed county unitary and operating nonunitary reports and Board of Equalization reports and verified the computations used by the county to develop the unitary and operating nonunitary property tax distribution factors:
- Reviewed property tax administration cost reports prepared by the county and verified administrative costs associated with procedures used for apportioning and allocating property tax to local government agencies and school districts; and
- Reviewed ERAF reports prepared by the county and verified the computations used to determine the shift of property taxes from local agencies to the ERAF and, subsequently, to public schools.

The audit was performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, and covered the period of July 1, 1997, through June 30, 2002. However, the SCO did not audit the county's financial statements. The scope of the audit was limited to:

- Reviewing operational procedures and significant applicable controls over the apportionment and allocation process;
- Examining selected property tax apportionment and allocation records; and
- Reviewing related property tax revenue data used to determine the apportionment and allocation computation process.

Review of the county's internal management controls was limited to gaining an understanding of the transaction flow in order to develop appropriate auditing procedures. The auditor did not evaluate the effectiveness of all internal management controls.

In addition, the auditor tested transactions used to apportion and allocate property taxes and performed other procedures deemed necessary. This report relates solely to the method used by the county to apportion and allocate property taxes.

Conclusion

The audit disclosed that the county complied with California statutes for the allocation and apportionment of property tax revenues for the period audited.

Follow-up on Prior Audit Findings

Findings noted in the prior audit report, dated June 17, 1998, have been satisfactorily resolved by the county.

Views of Responsible Officials

The audit results were discussed with county representatives during an exit conference held on April 16, 2003. Don Santoro, Director of Finance, and Debbie Newman, Assistant Director of Finance, agreed with the audit results. Mr. Santoro further agreed that a draft audit report was not necessary and that the audit report could be issued as final.

Restricted Use

This report is solely for the information and use of Glenn County, the California Legislature, and the SCO; it is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties. This restriction is not intended to limit distribution of this report, which is a matter of public record.



JEFFREY V. BROWNFIELD
Chief, Division of Audits