

Nebraska Tax Equalization Review Commission:

We are property owners in Hitchcock County, Nebraska. For years, we have questioned the previous Assessors office on the validity of the way our CREP acres were taxed, with no reasonable answer given.

Then in the first week of February 2015 we received a letter from the Hitchcock County Assessor's office in regard to those acres. Finally, they were going to take a look at them. I called the office to discuss this. I was also referred to the directive from the State of NE 09-4 directing County Assessors to identify all government programs which includes CREP and CRP acres. We provided our contract and permission to access all information from our local FSA.

Then the war began. Ruth Sorenson, State Property Tax Administrator, came to Hitchcock County in her infinite wisdom of taxing property. First, she had no idea what CREP acres were or could not give a description, but just was rude and tried to make our county Assessor look bad. The Hitchcock County Assessor did answer all questions appropriately when given the opportunity. After this meeting, it was quite apparent, that Ms Sorenson had made decisions on a personal revenge basis against our Assessor instead of any professionalism, in addition of being rude to Hitchcock County Taxpayers.

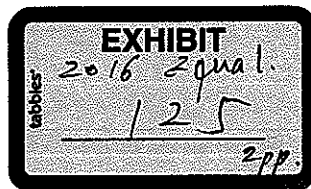
I did contact Gov. Ricketts on KRVN's radio show to make him aware of this issue, and to date have not had a response.

The CREP program was a program designed by Congressman Tom Osborne in an effort for Nebraska to meet a lawsuit's demand to provide water to Kansas, as required by a 1943 compact. It worked for the state as Enders Dam, which we had irrigation water from had basically gone dry and the NRD had placed moratoriums on wells and pumping restrictions. Therefore, the contract required produces remove irrigated acres from production for a contracted fee. Producers had to plant to native grasses that the Federal government approved. Producers are not allowed to use those acres for anything, not even grazing.

We are still required to pay water taxes (on water we do not receive) and irrigated property taxes on land that is no longer irrigated. And now Ms. Sorenson wants to raise our taxes 50% on those acres. We don't get a raise on the contract from the state. We don't get paid for the water they are taking. We don't get relief to make any money on those acres to pay the additional taxes. What in the world is this woman thinking?

Our Son purchased acres owned by his aunt that lies in the middle of our farm. The price was set by an independent broker, Lashley Land and Recreational Brokers out of North Platte. This price was non-negotiable to us, and they designated the CREP acres separately. So he has no control over these acres and now they want to raise taxes 50%. There is no additional return available on these acres, as they are under contract.

This property is located within several miles of Hayes County, Nebraska which is close and comparable to Hayes County values.



So how does Ms. Sorenson come up with this value? She made it up. There are no sales that indicate these acres are worth more. These actions have a smell of fraud to Hitchcock County Taxpayers.

Governor Ricketts has worked hard to try and give us some agriculture tax property relief. So is this the plan, she raises the taxes 50% to undermine the governor's effort to cut our taxes. None of this makes sense.

The values should be set according to information available to the Hitchcock County Assessor.

We are asking to be treated fairly with Hayes County, not Red Willow County. We are also asking that Ms. Sorenson does not have any authority in setting land values. That is the job of our Hitchcock County Assessor.

We would like to offer our statement as an exhibit to the:

Hitchcock County Order to Show Cause.

Ronald B. Bauer 4-26-16

Ronald B. Bauer

Date

Victoria L. Bauer 4-26-2016

Victoria L. Bauer

Date

Kathleen M. Carson 4-26-2016

Notary Public

Date

Seal:

