

## Vacant/Blighted Property Legislation

The Mayor's proposed graduated fee system for vacant property with no exemptions was amended. What has taken its place is a proposal created by Councilmember Muriel Bowser and Councilmember Jack Evans.

Under the Bowser-Evans proposal, a property owner would still be required to register their vacant building, ("Vacant building", is being redefined at D.C. Official Code § 42-3131.05(5)), but would allow for a number of exemptions from the vacant property registration fee of \$250. [Read more>>>](#)

The final legislative language was still not available, at press time. However, as we understand it, the exemptions, among others, include: a one-year exemption if you are actively listing a property for sale or for rent (two years for commercial properties); property undergoing active construction or undergoing active rehabilitation, renovation, or repair; property subject to pending application for a necessary approval for development before the various DC Boards and agencies; property subject to probate proceedings.

However, if the property does not qualify for an exemption, the property will have to pay the \$250 registration fee AND be subject to a newly created – VACANT PROPERTY TAX RATE of \$5/\$100 of assessed value.

This proposal will create 4 property tax class rates in the District:

<b>Class 1 Residential</b>	<b>\$0.85 per \$100 of assessed value (currently)</b>
<b>Class 2 Commercial</b>	<b>\$1.85 per \$100 of assessed value (currently)</b>
<b>Class 3 VACANT</b>	<b>\$5.00 per \$100 of assessed value (PROPOSED for this October 1, 2010)</b>
<b>Class 4 Blighted</b>	<b>\$10.00 per \$100 of assessed value (currently)</b>

Over \$2.5 million dollars will be generated from this new VACANT PROPERTY RATE. Unfortunately, this money will fund other programs not related to improving nuisance or blighted properties.

Your association fought this issue throughout the budget process. Besides the many phone calls and emails in response to the Calls to Action, numerous members from all parts of the District testified before four different council committees and still more members attended office meetings with Councilmembers and the Council Chairman.

We strongly advocated for five particular points:

- 1) Blighted properties cause the most damage to the community. Blighted properties should be the District's focus.
- 2) Code Violations, and more specifically repeated code violations, lead to Blight (not vacant properties.)
- 3) We strongly oppose a VACANT PROPERTY TAX CLASS.
- 4) We strongly oppose a FOURTH PROPERTY TAX CLASS.
- 5) We strongly oppose the registration of merely vacant property.