



State Board of Equalization

News Release

Michelle Steel, Member

3rd District – Rolling Hills Estates

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Michelle Steel: California State Board of Equalization Extends Call Center Hours in April

800-Number Hours Extended During Peak Filing Period to Better Serve Taxpayers

Michelle Steel, Third District Member of the State Board of Equalization (BOE), today announced it will extend its Taxpayer Information Section Call Center operating hours beginning April 20, 2009 through April 30, 2009 in an effort to reduce wait times and better serve taxpayers during this peak return filing period.

Taxpayers can call the toll-free 800-number: 800-400-7115 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. starting Monday, April 20, through Wednesday, April 29, and on Thursday, April 30 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Hours may be extended further if needed.

The Taxpayer Information Section Call Center last extended its hours of operation in January 2009, BOE's most recent peak filing period. In January, more than 57,700 calls were answered, an increase of over 12,600 calls over January 2008.

As BOE continues to transition taxpayers to efilings rather than submitting paper returns, the Taxpayer Information Section Call Center is providing customized assistance to help taxpayers. Taxpayers are being informed they will no longer receive paper returns from BOE, leading to an increase in the number of calls to the Call Center. More than 160,380 taxpayers filed their tax returns by efile in January 2009. It is anticipated that there will be more first time efilers in the current tax filing period, as more taxpayers have been notified they should transition from paper to electronic filing. A total of 830,175 taxpayers are currently eligible for BOE efilings.

The Call Center answers nearly 500,000 calls per year from taxpayers, tax practitioners, and the general public. In addition to extending hours, more Call Center representatives will be available to answer phone inquiries; and depending on the volume of calls, hours may be extended further to assist taxpayers.

Call Center toll-free number: 800-400-7115

If you are calling from outside of the 48 contiguous states, please call 916-445-6362 to reach our Taxpayer Information Call Center. TDD service for the hearing impaired is available at 800-735-2929 and 800-735-2922 from voice phones. During non-peak times, Call Center operating hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Pacific Time), excluding state holidays.

Best Times to Call the Toll-Free 800-Number

Historically, callers experience the shortest wait times from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. each day. Generally, the highest volume of calls received daily is between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. In addition, the last week of the month has a higher than average volume of calls. Taxpayers calling during this time may

experience longer wait times or a busy signal rather than get immediate assistance due to the increase in the number of taxpayers filing returns by efile for the first time.

Local Assistance is Also Available at California State Board of Equalization Offices Statewide

The BOE has 23 local field offices available to assist taxpayers. To find the office closest to you, visit www.boe.ca.gov/info/phone.htm.

The BOE is committed to helping all California businesses and individuals comply with the state's complex and changing tax laws. BOE offers a full range of services tailored to the diverse needs of the state's businesses—from electronic services to personal assistance with tax compliance questions.

Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006, Michelle Steel serves as Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate. In 2008, Steel uncovered a \$42 million mistake in the agency's sales tax refund procedures. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes.

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