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County Authorizes Increase in Real Property Tax Exemption for Cold War Military Veterans

An amendment, increasing the limits of the Onondaga County Cold War Veterans Real Property Tax Exemption, was signed into law this week by County Executive Joanne Mahoney after a public hearing on the measure.

The original law, passed by the Onondaga County Legislature in August, set the maximum allowable exemption at 15 percent of the assessed value of qualifying residential real property not to exceed \$12,000. The amended law, recommended by the Legislature's Veterans Advisory Committee, Chaired by Legislator Bob DeMore, (R) of Fabius and approved by the full Legislature, increases that amount to \$36,000, the amount authorized by New York State law.

The purpose of this local law is to provide a limited property tax exemption for eligible residential property of Cold War veterans, pursuant to New York Real Property Tax Law similar to that which is currently available for Veterans of other periods of conflict such as WW II, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War.

A "Cold War veteran" is a person who served on active duty in the United States armed forces, during the time period from September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991, and was discharged or released under honorable conditions. "Active duty" means full-time duty in the United States Armed Forces, other than active duty for training. Veterans currently receiving the Alternative or Eligible Funds Exemption for service during other qualifying periods are not eligible for this exemption as an additional benefit.

In addition to the basic exemption, Cold War Veteran's receiving a compensation rating from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or from the United States Department of Defense because of a service connected disability, may be exempt from taxation at a higher percentage rate. Un-remarried surviving spouses of deceased Cold War Veterans are also potentially eligible for the exemption.

In order to qualify, Veterans need to provide a copy of their military discharge or DD- 214 to their local tax assessor. Veterans who filed for the exemption by the March 1st deadline, for tax year 2011, will not need to re-apply to receive the increased exemption.

For assistance in obtaining copies of discharges and DD 214's, Veterans can contact the County Veterans Service Agency by calling 315-435-3217. Veterans with questions should contact their local tax assessor for more information