

Houston News

No property tax break for Ike victims

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By Lee McGuire / 11 News

On the outside, Jim Kaufman's Nassau Bay home looks like it survived Hurricane Ike, but from the inside, it's clear, it did not.

Video



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“It’s a pretty devastating blow to come back and see this. It’s all gone,” said Kaufman.

Kaufman said that his home is a total loss. But to Harris County tax assessors—it’s worth exactly what it was before the storm.

Taxing jurisdictions have the ability to “reassess” property after a hurricane, reducing home values and, with them, taxes. According to HCAD, after Ike, not one county - school district - or city - did anything of the sort.

“I think it’s unseemly that someone who has lost a house has to pay full appraisal on the house,” said State Senator Dan Patrick.

State Senator Patrick says local governments should have given taxpayers a break. Many considered it—but all rejected it.



11 News photo

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In Galveston ISD, administrators guessed a reappraisal would save the average taxpayer \$314, but would have cost the school district 6.5 million.

Kaufman said that this is the second time he's been through this. He said he moved here from Mississippi—after Hurricane Katrina washed his home there out to sea. Weeks later—the county waived his property taxes for the rest of the year.

“They realized it was just another kick in the stomach when you had already been down, to get kicked again,” said Kaufman.

Now, a second storm—and here, the taxes will stick.

“This is a catastrophe. And they're hitting us again with taxes that should be rebated. All the help we could get would be something we really, really need,” Kaufman said.

If your home was damaged by the hurricane and hasn't been repaired, you can get your appraised value reduced for this year, said experts.

You'll have to fill out a [decreased value form](#) with your appraisal district to make sure that happens, said experts.