

MLIRD Statement Regarding 2018 Assessments

MLIRD shares its ratepayers' frustration with the Grant County Treasurer's late notices of MLIRD's 2018 assessment. This delay is solely the responsibility of the Grant County Treasurer.

The Grant County Treasurer is required by statute, RCW 87.03.270, to send notices of MLIRD assessments by April 1 of each year and has properly done so for decades by including them on the Grant County general tax notices. This year, the Treasurer refused to do so.

MLIRD used the same rate method in 2018 that it had in prior years. MLIRD's Board of Directors is authorized by RCW 87.03.445 to assess based on "rates or tolls and charges." For decades, the MLIRD Board has assessed based on rates applied against the total assessed value of lands of the district. For decades, the Grant County Treasurer has included those rate-based assessments on the general Grant County Tax Notice.

In 2018, the Grant County Treasurer refused to include MLIRD assessments in the General County Tax notices claiming that the method of assessment was illegal because the rate was applied to total assessed value rather than just the value of the land. The Grant County Treasurer made this decision even though no court had found the MLIRD assessment methodology was illegal, and even though the State Auditor had reviewed and approved MLIRD's assessment methodology in 2013. The Grant County Treasurer cited arguments made by plaintiff Mick Hansen in the Hansen v. MLIRD lawsuit. The judge in Hansen v. MLIRD lawsuit still has not decided the issue, but the Grant County Treasurer nonetheless refused to send the MLIRD assessment notices in March.

MLIRD filed its suit asking that the court order the Grant County Treasurer to send notices of MLIRD's assessments. The day before that case was finally going to be heard by the court, the Grant County Treasurer agreed to send notices of the MLIRD assessments and to continue to send MLIRD assessment notices until the judgment was final in the Hansen v. MLIRD lawsuit. This is exactly what MLIRD had proposed from the beginning of this dispute and exactly what MLIRD sought in its suit against the Treasurer.

This entire problem was created by the Grant County Treasurer's failure to perform a statutory duty.