

State of California Board of Equalization

PUBLIC COMMENT

Agenda item N

Subject:

Relief for owners of historical aircraft due to Covid-19 cancellations of aircraft displays.

Chairman Vasquez, and BOE board members,

Owners of historical aircraft who normally display our historical aircraft throughout the calendar year have been unable to display them due to all display days at various airports in California being cancelled starting in the month of March 2020. This also includes venues outside of California. The reason for this communication is to secure relief for historical aircraft displays during the past/current stay at home order due to the covid-19 pandemic.

Section 577 220.5 page 26 (Aircraft of historical significance) states: (3) “The aircraft is available for display to the public at least 12 days during the 12-month period immediately preceding the lien date for the year for which the exemption is claimed.”

Section 577, Chapter 5, page 27 states: As used in the statute, available means that if an aircraft was formally scheduled for display at a qualifying site and the display was cancelled (e.g., because of rain), the date would count as a day available for display.

Available for display to the public at least 12 days shall be defined as displayed or available for display for 12 periods with each period being four or more hours during one 24-hour period.

During an average of a 12-month period, this would require 1 display per month to satisfy the minimum requirement for property tax relief for historical aircraft as the lowest common denominator.

We firmly believe that Covid-19 pandemic is far more serious than any weather phenomena, which cancelled these events. This should fall under the same qualification.

There is no requirement that the aircraft display site be in California. Some aircraft owners of historical aircraft display their aircraft at venues like Oshkosh in Wisconsin and Sun N’ Fun in Florida. Both of these events were canceled this year due to Covid-19. As stated above, if a qualifying site is cancelled (because of rain), or in this case Covid-19, the date would count as a day available for display. We consider “formally scheduled” as an invitation on a reoccurring basis each month. While rain may be a cause for cancellation of an event, and now most recently with the fires throughout the state of California due to visibility, certainly the pandemic could be considered the same for cancellation. We would like some guidance as to how we claim days that aircraft were available for display, but the venue was not.

Our recommendation would be a self signoff by the aircraft owner for display days the aircraft was available, with an accompanying letter stating the aircrafts availability, date of display which was cancelled, along with the a copy of section 577, chapter 5, page 127 stating those displays claimed that were cancelled due to Covid-19.

Speaking on behalf of those who display our historical aircraft, we would like to ask for relief for display days being cancelled due to the covid-19 pandemic. In order to fulfill the mandate set forth in section 577 for 12 displays in 12 months, the following are offered as options:

1. Submit all the display sign off signatures you have participated in for 2020 to your county of record, and call it complete for the year.
2. For all those participating in the historical aircraft displays (on record), waive the entire year and start fresh in 2021 or when it is deemed safe for display days to continue for those in the high risk category.
3. Allow the owner of historical aircraft to self-sign off for displays they normally would have attended during the Covid-19 cancellation of displays.

We have been pursuing relief on several fronts for this issue since April 2020. As we approach the end of this tax year, we are asking for a fair resolution as soon as possible. Since the owners of historical aircraft do not pay property taxes on their aircraft if they are participating in this program, the state of California, and local counties are not losing any tax dollars. The only groups losing out are those interested in looking at our historical aircraft.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

John Ringel

Historical Aircraft owner

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Cellphone [REDACTED]