

INCENTIVE TAXATION

Under this rubric a number of groups have sprung up, finding Incentive Taxation a useful label for gaining open-minded attention. The "godfather" of this movement is Incentive Taxation, the periodical edited by Steven Cord.

The Colorado Incentive Tax Association was recently formed by James L. Busey and his colleagues, and it has received good publicity in the press.

The Massachusetts Incentive Tax League, spearheaded by Mitchell Chanelis and Robert Zwicker, is working to get a local option bill introduced into the state legislature this year. Such a bill was introduced in 1982, aided by Thomas Brownell and Joseph Hermann, Representatives, but did not get passed.

On Long Island, the Nassau County Incentive Taxation Chapters are busy, and the chairman, Stan Rubenstein, had an editorial message concerning land value taxation read on WPIX-TV, as well as letters printed in Newsday.

The Incentive Tax League, Delaware Valley Chapter, centered in Philadelphia, sponsored a Municipal Revenue Roundtable in Valley Forge on November 13. There was much testimony on behalf of land value taxation by representatives of Pennsylvania cities. Philadelphia Councilman James Tayoun, a strong supporter of LVT, told of troubles introducing it in Pennsylvania's first city, Philadelphia. As a result, the Incentive Tax League is issuing the following appeal:

TO ALL GEORGISTS:

As many of you know, Philadelphia has become a strong active center of political activity on behalf of land value taxation. There is a growing interest among municipalities in the revenue-producing aspects of land value taxation. New Castle, McKeesport and Harrisburg evidence the success of Steve Cord, Dan Sullivan and other Incentive Tax League members. Philadelphia, the nation's fourth largest city and historic cultural center, is also in the middle of a heated battle over property tax reform, and LVT can play a major role in the City's future.

The Incentive Tax League has secured active support from several members of the City Council, and most importantly from Council member James J. Tayoun, who introduced in the Council a bill designed to permit differential application of rates on improvement versus land values in accordance with TTL recommendations.

It came as no surprise that the strength of opposing landed interests was mobilized soon after testimony occurred on the bill before City Council's Finance Committee. Councilmember Tayoun was "advised" by key, powerful political figures to withdraw his support for the bill, and the Chamber of Commerce (similarly pressured, we believe) came out against the bill, arguing that land "extensive" businesses would be injured. As you can see, we are faced with a tremendous challenge.

Although firmly committed to LVT, Councilmember Tayoun has stressed to us that passage of this bill will require considerable planning, media exposure, additional tax studies on particular parcels and an aggressive public awareness campaign. Needless to say, responding to these proposed measures involves a substantial commitment of time, energy and resources by us all.

Your colleagues in Philadelphia need your support. Help us bring LVT to Philadelphia and thereby bring Georgist ideas into the mainstream of urban economic policy. Please send your contribution to the Incentive Tax League at 616 S. 10th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147. Let us know you are with us in the strategic battle for LVT.

Richard L. Biddle  
Edward J. Dodson