



For Immediate Release

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San Joaquin County Strengthens Protections Against Real Estate Fraud

Stockton, CA - San Joaquin County is taking decisive action to protect residents from real estate fraud by moving to codify Senate Bill 255 into county law, expanding early warning protections for property owners and strengthening accountability for those who prey on seniors and vulnerable residents.

Led by Fourth District Supervisor Steve Ding, the effort reflects a coordinated partnership with San Joaquin County District Attorney Ron Freitas and the Assessor Recorder County Clerk's Office under Assessor Recorder Steve Bestolarides.

SB 255 requires counties to establish a Recorder Notification Program that alerts property owners when key documents affecting ownership are recorded, including deeds, quitclaim deeds, mortgages, and deeds of trust. Notifications must be sent within 30 days, providing an early alert if fraudulent activity may be underway.

"Real estate fraud is no longer rare, and it is no longer simple," said District Four Supervisor Steve Ding. "These schemes rely on silence and delay. This program gives property owners timely notice, clear information, and a chance to act. That is how government should work, especially when seniors and families are at risk."

Assessor Recorder Steve Bestolarides emphasized prevention and transparency. "Our office safeguards the public record," said Bestolarides. "This notification program gives residents visibility into what is happening with their property. When people know quickly, they can stop fraud before it causes lasting damage."

"Real estate fraud harms individuals and communities by causing financial loss, instability, and eroding trust in the housing market. The District Attorney's Office is addressing this issue through education and strong partnerships, including the work of our Real Estate Fraud Unit and our collaboration with the Recorder's Office. By codifying Senate Bill 255 into county law, the Board of Supervisors is strengthening protections and enabling earlier intervention when fraud is suspected."

The program is funded through existing Fraud Fee revenue within the Assessor Recorder County Clerk's Office and builds on long standing county efforts to combat financial exploitation.

County officials encourage residents to remain vigilant, review mailed notifications carefully, and report suspicious activity immediately.

"This is about awareness, prevention, and accountability," Ding said. "San Joaquin County has been ahead of the curve for more than a decade, already notifying residents when changes are made to their deed, title, or other property records. Today's action strengthens that work by codifying it into law. I want to thank our Assessor Recorder and our District Attorney for being proactive, verifying transactions, and having the right people in place to investigate fraud when it occurs. When residents are informed and scammers know they will be caught, everyone is safer."

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San Joaquin County Supervisor Steve Ding represents District 4 which includes the communities of Lodi, Woodbridge, Thornton, Linden, Lockeford, Clements, Acampo, Morada and East Stockton.