

CASE STUDY

Effingham County's Blueprint for Local Governments in Georgia: Navigating HB-581 Floating Exemption Changes

ABOUT

Georgia recently passed a state-wide floating homestead exemption (HB-581), which will change how local governments manage exemptions. The change has raised concerns about how under-resourced local governments will implement the new policies and handle the administrative burden. Luckily, Georgia can look to Effingham County as an example of what to expect.

The County passed a nearly identical local floating exemption over 15 years ago. After years of inefficient manual processes, Effingham implemented TrueRoll to manage their homestead administration proactively.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY'S HOMESTEAD CHALLENGES

A Heavy Administrative Workload: In 2009, Effingham passed the floating homestead exemption (The Carter-Burns Bill). The bill caps homeowners' taxes by an inflationary rate (just like HB-581). Implementing new homestead tax laws required additional work from the already busy tax office. They had a hard time keeping up with all the work.

AT A GLANCE

Challenges

- A homestead bill increased staff workload
- Inadequate technology
- Lost revenue

Results

- Over \$361,000 in recovered tax dollars
- 272 ineligible exemptions identified
- Tax equity



Effingham
County, GA

31,000+
Homesteads

71,541
Population

XSOFT
CAMA Provider

CHALLENGES CONT.

Insufficient Technology: Up-to-date tax rolls were critical to ensure tax accuracy when implementing the new law. However, manual processes and ineffective auditing made it impossible to keep records current.

Lost Revenue: Outdated tax rolls meant that ineligible homesteads went unnoticed, sometimes for five or more years. The County was missing out on exponential tax revenue to support essential services.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY'S PROACTIVE APPROACH

After years of difficulty managing their tax roll, Effingham County found TrueRoll to clean their records and automatically monitor the homestead eligibility status of over 31,000 parcels.

TrueRoll continuously monitors the County's tax roll in real-time, ensuring it stays up-to-date. This accuracy enabled the County to manage the new tax laws, identify eligible residents who didn't know they qualified, and uncover ineligible homesteads.

"We have found a tremendous amount of money," said Effingham Senior Appraiser, Jennifer Keyes. "When we go for budget hearings, it looks very good. When I can go to the county manager, saying this is the money that I found for you, they get all happy eyed"

THE TOOL

Proactive Monitoring: This tool scans hundreds of sources like voter records and rental site listings to flag unclaimed homesteads and potential violations as they occur. Effingham County now manages eligibility statuses as changes happen so no violations or unclaimed parcels go unnoticed.

RESULTS

- **Tax Accuracy:** The county identified 272 ineligible homesteads to date. Now no ineligible homesteads receive exemptions from the get-go.
- **Maximum Tax Recovery:** \$361,000+ back to the County
- **Tax Equity:** Actively monitoring homestead eligibility ensures everyone gets the exemption they deserve or pays their required taxes.

Georgia Counties - Looking for an Easy Way to Manage HB-581 Changes? [Book a demo](#)



"Counties that have never had a state or local floating [exemptions]—if you have a lot of homesteads or a lot of applicants—you are probably going to need someone to manage that now. This is where TrueRoll helps out, takes the labor intensity off your employees, and gives them a huge tool to be effective."

Neal Groover
Chief Appraiser
Effingham County, GA

METRICS & OUTCOMES



\$361,000+ RECOVERED TO DATE



272 DEDUCTION VIOLATIONS IDENTIFIED



TAX EQUITY