**Officers**
Anne P. Baños
*Chair*

Nathalie Simon
*Vice Chair*

Louis M. Freeman, Jr.
*Secretary*

Carlin Conner
*Treasurer*

John Landrum
*Assistant Secretary*

Vanessa B. Claiborne
*Assistant Treasurer*

**Past Chair**
Steven W. Usdin

**President & CEO**
Rebecca Mowbray
*Samuel Zemurray Chair in Research Leadership*

**Board Members**
Ryan Adkerson
Ben Billings
Kheri Billy
Elizabeth Boh
Bob Brickman
Melanie Bronfin
Mollye M. Demosthenidy
R. Foster Duncan
Ben A. Dupuy
Perry Eastman IV
Elizabeth Hefler
Patrick Hernandez
Mike Katz
Merritt Lane
Lauren Mastio
Ronald P. McClain
Patty Riddlebarger
David C. Rieveschl
Kenneth St. Charles
Merrick Sloss
Syrita Steib
Douglas M. Stokes
Vera Triplett
Lamar Villere

**Honorary Board**
Harry J. Blumenthal, Jr.
J. Kelly Duncan
Ludovico Feoli
Hardy B. Fowler
Louis M. Freeman
Ronald J. French
Norma Grace
David Guidry
Hans B. Jonassen
Diana M. Lewis
Mark A. Mayer
Anne M. Milling
R. King Milling
Lynes R. Sloss
Sterling Scott Willis

**BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH**
400 Poydras St., Suite 2950
New Orleans, LA 70130
504-525-4152 / www.bgr.org

# BGR MEDIA RELEASE

*For Immediate Release – November 5, 2026*

**Contact:** Megan McNeill, *Director of Communications & Engagement*
mmcneill@bgr.org | 504-539-8020

## BGR: More Than a Third of New Orleans' Real Estate Value Is Off the Tax Rolls

NEW ORLEANS – In 2025, $2.74 billion, or 37%, of New Orleans' real estate assessed value was exempt from property taxes, according to a Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR) report released today. The share is likely among the largest nationally.

The report updates BGR's 1996 study, *Property Taxes in New Orleans: Who Pays? Who Doesn't? And Why?*, which found that 65% of real estate assessed value was off the tax rolls. Growth in taxable property value since Hurricane Katrina, along with post-Katrina reforms and anti-blight efforts, has flipped the shares of exempt and taxable real estate. But exemptions remain a major structural constraint on the property tax base, which provides about half of all local tax dollars in New Orleans.

"Many exemptions serve important public goals, and this report is not a call to tax all exempt property," said BGR President & CEO Rebecca Mowbray. "But when more than a third of the city's real estate value is off the tax rolls, the residents and businesses that do pay property taxes carry a greater share of the cost. With a key drainage tax set to expire in 2027, City leaders have an opportunity to make sure owners of tax-exempt property help support the services and infrastructure they rely on."

If all exempt real estate were taxable at 2025 rates, local governments in New Orleans could receive about $316 million more annually. If revenue stayed constant, the overall millage rate could have been about 32% lower. BGR presents these preliminary estimates only as an illustration of impacts that must be managed, not as a suggestion

that every exempt property should be taxed. The community benefits of exempt property, such as reducing burdens on government or improving quality of life, should be weighed carefully in any policy decisions.

Much of the exempt value is held by large public and nonprofit owners, with public property accounting for 55%. Louisiana also lacks a statewide exempt-property database, an essential tool for encouraging public transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, the Orleans Parish Assessor corrected two errors BGR identified that inflated the value of tax-exempt real estate by $721 million. Across the entire tax base, 33% of New Orleans' assessed value is exempt, the second-highest share among six large Southeast Louisiana parishes, after Ascension Parish.

Because exemptions are protected in the state constitution, changing them requires voter approval after a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. The report points state and local officials toward practical action. BGR urges:

- **City of New Orleans leaders to develop a fair, transparent and accountable fee proposal by 2027** for defined and prioritized infrastructure needs. BGR has found that 60% of the drainage system's existing revenue is at risk if one of three drainage property taxes expires in 2027 and another follows in 2031.

- **The Louisiana Legislature to strengthen reporting and accountability** in the spring 2027 session, including standardized statewide reporting of exempt property, periodic review of exemptions' benefits and costs, and fiscal analysis before any new or expanded exemptions.

The report also includes recommendations for parish assessors and local governments. The full report and summary are available at https://go.bgr.org/off-the-rolls.

# # #

*BGR is a private, nonprofit, independent research organization. Since its founding in 1932, it has been dedicated to informed public policymaking and the effective use of public resources in Greater New Orleans. For more information, visit BGR's website: www.bgr.org*