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## Mangano's proposed tax, fee increases draw fire

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Maureen O'Connell, Nassau's clerk, weighed in on County Executive Edward Mangano's budget Friday in a letter to county lawmakers.

"I am writing to advise you of my vehement objection to proposed fee increases . . . that negatively impact land filings in my office," the letter said.

In years past, O'Connell, a former state assemblywoman, has objected to every proposed fee increase impacting her office, which handles mortgages and other such filings.

But this time around, the criticism -- by one Republican of a fellow Republican's proposal, which, in Nassau, is a rarity -- appeared far harsher than O'Connell's usual tone.

In 2010, the letter points out, fees incurred by homeowners selling their mortgaged property and purchasing new mortgaged property totaled \$30 for the required three filings.

"This 5,250 percent escalation of fees during a five-year period is unconscionable," wrote O'Connell, who is not up for re-election this year.

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*"If two proposed laws impacting land recordings are passed by this legislature, the cost of the same transaction would rise to \$1,575.*

*"This 5,250 percent escalation of fees during a five-year period is unconscionable."*

*- Nassau County Clerk Maureen O'Connell*

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O'Connell's letter, which urged lawmakers to reverse the fee increases, capped a tough week for Mangano's proposed budget.

In her letter, O'Connell labeled as "catastrophic" Mangano's proposal to hike tax map verification fees. And she included an explanation on why she thought this year's proposed increases are particularly bad. "The housing market in Nassau County has been subject to near collapse -- with many areas still recovering from superstorm Sandy damage, zombie houses resulting from slow-moving foreclosure proceedings, and tight financing," O'Connell wrote.

"These factors make selling or purchasing a home extremely difficult as it is . . . Nassau County recording fees are among the highest in the nation . . . clearly, any proposed fee increases would crush the real estate market," she wrote.