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Lawyers Seek Tax Cut on Marcello Farm

Attorneys for jailed rackets figure Carlos Marcello will go before the State Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal Monday asking repeal of increased property assessments on Marcello's Churchill Farms property.

A hearing has been set for 1:30 p.m. on the case.

The move will mark the beginning of a week of legal hearings both in New Orleans and Tampa, Fla., on behalf of the 60-year-old Marcello.

Lawyers will appeal Tuesday to a three-judge panel of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Tampa on motions by Marcello for a new trial on assault charges.

IN THE MONDAY hearing, Marcello lawyers are appealing increased property assessments on the 4,000-acre Churchill Farms tract south of Westwego. Assessments on the property were increased last year from \$8,800 to more than \$263,000 by the Louisiana Tax Commission.

A similar suit seeking to knock down the hiked assessments was overruled by the 24th Judicial District Court in Gretna earlier this year.

The appeal contends the tax commission had no right to impose the increase and says the increases are unfair because similar Jefferson Parish property is not taxed equally.

THE SUIT NAMES Parish Assessor Lawrence A. Chehardy as a codefendant and asks for repeal of the assessments or equalization of all such property in the parish.

Churchill Farms, which has been estimated to be worth \$16 million to \$20 million, was at the center recently of allegations by Life magazine that Marcello used influence on state officials to have the sprawling, swampland tract drained.

Two other Marcello-connected interests had their property assessments raised in the tax commission action. Bayou Verrett Lands Inc. had assessments raised from \$13,000 to \$83,000 and Marsh Investment Corp. was upped from \$3,550 to \$90,000.

MARCELLO IS CONFINED at the Springfield, Mo., Federal Medical Center serving a six-month prison term for attempting to strike FBI agent Patrick J. Collins Jr. four years ago.

Marcello attorneys contend they have "new" evidence in the case. They also charge the grand jury which indicted Marcello was prejudiced by publicity and that Collins perjured himself on the witness stand.