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Contact: Jaime Garza
1-916-327-8988

Legislation to Relocate Board of Equalization Headquarters Desperately Needed

Sacramento – California State Board of Equalization (BOE) Member Betty T. Yee and Member George Runner welcomed Assemblymember Roger Dickinson to the BOE’s troubled headquarters building at 11 a.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2014. They showed him firsthand why Board Members voted unanimously to support his legislation to relocate staff from its 450 N Street headquarters building plagued by falling window panes, failing waste-water pipes, and mold.

Dickinson’s Assembly Bill 1656, would provide the needed authorization to relocate and consolidate Sacramento staff to one campus. Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee will decide whether to pass the bill on for a full floor vote on Friday.

“Our principal focus is the safety and welfare of our employees while they are engaged in the essential work of administering state revenue programs,” said Board Member Betty T. Yee. “BOE employees should not have to endure bursting pipes, air-quality concerns, and falling windows while they work for the taxpayers of California.”

“The State of California has wasted years and millions of dollars throwing good money after bad. It’s time for a solution that protects our employees and taxpayers,” said BOE Board Member George Runner. “Assemblymember Dickinson’s legislation is the bipartisan solution the Legislature and Governor need to solve this long-festering problem once and for all.”

The BOE has already spent roughly \$60 million of the taxpayers’ money for building repairs and remediation. Total costs related to repairs and relocation during construction are estimated to be between \$106 and \$115 million, which does not include lost employee productivity.

“After years of repairs, costing the state \$60 million to date and forcing our employees to work in an unstable environment, I am pleased that this fiscally and morally responsible legislation is moving forward. I fully support Assembly Bill 1656 which authorizes the Department of General Services to secure an alternate site that will consolidate and relocate the BOE Headquarters operations into one central location,” said BOE Chairman Jerome E. Horton.

“BOE employees deserve the peace of mind knowing the building they work in is safe and our state’s taxpayers should not have to continue paying to repair a bad building,” said Board Vice Chair Michelle Steel.

The building on N Street only has enough working space for 2,200 employees. The other 750 Sacramento-based BOE employees work in satellite offices located throughout the Greater Sacramento area.

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Elected in 2010, Chairman Jerome E. Horton is the Fourth District Member of the California State Board of Equalization, representing more than 8.5 million residents in Los Angeles County. He is also the Board of Equalization's Legislative Committee Chairman. He is the first to serve on the Board of Equalization with over 21 years of experience at the BOE. Horton previously served as an Assembly Member of the California State Assembly from 2000-2006.

Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006 and re-elected in 2010, Michelle Steel serves as *Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate*. In December 2007, Steel discovered the Board of Equalization had delayed the return of millions of dollars in security deposits owed to California businesses. Procedures were changed due to Steel's decisive leadership. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses. To date, over \$100 million in security deposits have been returned to taxpayers.

Board Member Betty T. Yee was elected to her post in November 2006. Her district includes many of California's coastal counties, from Del Norte to Santa Barbara, and includes the entire San Francisco Bay Area. Ms. Yee previously served as Chief Deputy Director for Budget at the California Department of Finance, covering a wide array of state and local finance policy matters.

Elected in November 2010, George Runner represents the State Board of Equalization's Second District. He is a leading advocate for California taxpayers. Runner has worked to improve California's tax policies and practices and to create and retain more private sector jobs in our state. Prior to his election to the Board, Runner served twelve years in the State Legislature, authoring the well-known California Amber Alert and California's Blue Alert. As a thoughtful conservative, his legislative priorities included improving the economy, business growth, education excellence, and public safety for all Californians. As a member of the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee, Runner consistently led the fight against tax increases and supported tax relief for families and businesses.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects \$56 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit www.taxes.ca.gov.

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