



Local News

Lawmaker Lobbies to Fix Troubled Board of Equalization Building



by **Rina Nakano** Reporter

March 4, 2014

SACRAMENTO-

Democratic State Assemblymember Roger Dickinson sent a letter to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee Tuesday to request a state audit and to introduce a bill to rebuild the troubled Board of Equalization building.

“All we’re doing by staying in the building with the existing workers is throwing good money after bad,” Dickinson said.

The 22-year-old building has had quite a history of deterioration. Falling windows, bursting pipes, roof leaks and mold problems have plagued the building.

Because of an exchange signed years ago, all maintenance responsibilities fall on the state, and not the contractor. Since its construction, taxpayers have spent more than \$64 million in repairs, plus at least \$1 million annually for building-related workers compensation claims.

“All the fixes we have done are ‘Band-Aid’ fixes, and they’re not addressing the real problem with design and construction problems,” George Runner of the Board of Equalization said.

The most visual reminder of the ongoing problems is the scaffolding the surround the building. It was put up after a Jan. 2012 incident where spandrel windows fell from between the 8th and 9th floors, and crash landed on the sidewalk. No one was injured.

Through his request, Dickson hopes the State Auditor realizes the state is spending too much money for repairs. Then he hopes the State will work together with private contractors to construct a new Board of Equalization headquarters.

He said this would not only provide a safer work environment for the employees, but also increase their productivity by at least 5 percent by consolidating several field offices into one building.

“I think it’s totally irresponsible how we are dealing with tax payers. To continue to invest taxpayer dollars in a building that cannot be fixed is very short sided, and is very wrong, and we need to stop that,” Runner said.

If all goes as planned, an audit will be performed, followed by the passage of a bill by the Legislature by April. That would be signed and approved by the Governor by September, and construction of a new building should begin shortly after.

Dickinson’s letter was supposed to be presented to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee Tuesday afternoon. However, the meeting has been postponed until a later time.

Read more: <http://fox40.com/2014/03/04/lawmaker-lobbies-to-fix-troubled-board-of-equalization-building/#ixzz2v7wpEXty>