



Lawmakers discuss new building for Board of Equalization

About 2,200 work in main building at N and 5th streets

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (KCRA) -

After years of safety hazards and smelly, messy problems at the Board of Equalization building in downtown Sacramento, a state lawmaker is hoping to start the long process of having a new building built.

Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, D-Sacramento, and other lawmakers held a hearing at the state Capitol on Tuesday, when they started to weigh some complicated options: Let the BOE stay in the building and repair it, or spend many millions of dollars to build a new one.

The trouble is, even repairing it could cost as much as \$50 million -- and that still would not create room for the 700 BOE employees who work in other buildings, officials said. There are roughly 2,200 who work in the main building, on N and 5th streets.

Over and over again, windows have inexplicably fallen out of the building and shattered on the sidewalk below, frightening passersby as well as BOE employees. There have also been numerous reports of mold and flooding in the building.

"We know that this building actually presents a risk to innocent passersby who are exposed to the risk of this building somewhat," Dickinson said.

The state bought the building in 2006, not knowing that its problems would continue and even become worse, Dickinson said.

It was built in 1993, according to BOE records. That makes it only 20 years old, so it's not clear why the building continues to malfunction. The reason may not matter -- Dickinson said when the state bought it, the state assumed responsibility for the building's problems.

The assemblyman said he'll soon begin talking to other lawmakers about possibly passing a bill that would start the process of finding a new site and building a new structure.

Having employees split among buildings create extra costs, said Liz Houser, deputy director of administration for the BOE.

Houser told lawmakers during Tuesday's hearing that putting everyone in one building would let the agency do a better job of tax collection.

"In real terms, that means \$98 million," Houser said, describing the amount of money BOE says it would save in a new building. "As you are aware, just \$1 million can buy 467,000 school lunches, pay for one year's public schooling for 1,200 children or provide mammogram screenings for 98,000 women."

Officials will also have to figure out where to move – if lawmakers eventually approve the millions it would take to build a new structure somewhere.

Ideas for the current building are to lease it out and use that money to pay for more repairs.

Copyright 2013 by [KCRA.com](http://www.kcra.com) All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.
