

Miscellaneous

AB 373 (Wolk):

Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act, School Facilities Improvement Districts, Watch

Would make various changes to the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act and repeals the Education Code Section governing bonds issued under School Facilities Improvement Districts and makes conforming changes to the Government Code.


AB 1368 (Mullin):

School Bonds, Support

Would require the principal of the bonds to be payable not more than 40 years from the date of the bonds and would make conforming changes. Would authorize a district to issue notes that mature within a period not to exceed 5 years, rather than one year. The prohibition on the fiscal officer of a school district or a community college district issuing a renewal note that would have a maturity date later than five years from the date of the original issuance of the note would be restated. The total amount of the notes or renewals of notes issued and outstanding would be prohibited from exceeding the amount of the unsold bonds.

SB 784 (Torlakson):


State Infrastructure Bonds: Reports and Audits, Oppose

Would establish new and additional reporting and audit requirements for districts that receive Proposition 1D funding in an effort to ensure transparency and public accountability. C.A.S.H. testified in opposition to the bill stating that districts currently undergo thorough audit review and processes by the OPSC and their own local, independent auditors. The bill, which applies to all of the 2006 infrastructure bonds passed by the voters last November, is co-sponsored by the State Treasurer and State Controller. We have requested that the bill be amended to exempt Proposition 1D, and therefore school districts, or to use the existing auditing and reporting procedures of the OPSC. 

Smooth Construction Jobs – A CM'S Perspective

By Dick Cowan

A group of us at the Association of California Construction Managers (ACCM) were swapping construction problem stories and decided to share some simple but important tips to avoid problems from the past.

1. Be sure the plans and specs are what you want. Take the hard time to discuss what you need and want with the teachers, staff, Principal, parents, Superintendent, custodian, maintenance staff, local fire marshal, and DSA. Take the time to get consensus (I know it's not easy in education) and then sell everyone on the value of living with the decisions.
2. Be sure the plans and specs show what is underground and behind the wall. A high quality soils investigation and destructive investigations of structure and systems behind walls are cheap insurance. Call in some carpenters and scaffolding if you need it. Don't start the job and then "discover" what the custodian says he knew was there all along – dry rot, old plumbing, underground tanks, etc.
3. Solve problems; don't get trapped into playing the blame game. If plan problems create change orders, or surprise existing conditions create change orders, or specified products out of production create change orders, work with your designer and builder together to solve the problem. If you need cost savings ideas to balance out extra costs, challenge your builder and designer to come up with them. They are glad to help.
4. Pay builders fast and fair. The faster and more fairly your contract payment terms are, the more bidders you will attract, and the more money you will save.
5. Don't let your attorney and architect write a contract that is so protective of the District that it's unfair to the builders. They will stop bidding you or price your work to cover the risks they see.
6. Encourage competition in materials and equipment. Very high prices result when the specs are written around only one product. Some architects write a spec around one brand as a standard of quality and then say any other brand has to come in as a substitution request. This drives up competitive prices. If you need a certain brand for maintenance purposes, call it out as the preferred brand but allow alternates. Then ask your bidders how much premium you are paying for that sole source brand.
7. When it's time for final close-out paperwork to get retention released, see that the builder, District and designers all man up and keep up. Too often the team drives like crazy for completion, and then everyone is too busy to punch the job, or do reviews of closeout paper in a timely way, so closeout drags on. 

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