

Senate Local Government Committee

FINANCING SEISMIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Constituents and local officials often ask about ways to finance seismic safety improvements, even on private property. This information sheet lists the available programs.

Benefit assessments. Local agencies can issue 1913 Act bonds to finance seismic safety improvements (Streets and Highways Code §10100.2). These bonds are financed with special assessments. Local officials can also use 1913 Act bonds to pay for work to improve property to meet fire safety standards (Streets and Highways Code §10100.3).

Mello-Roos special taxes. Local officials can issue bonds under the Mello-Roos Act to pay for work to improve property to meet seismic safety standards (Government Code §53313.5). These bonds are financed with special taxes, subject to 2/3-voter approval.

General obligation bonds. Counties can issue general obligation bonds, with 2/3-voter approval, to pay for seismic safety work (Government Code §29900.5), as can cities (Government Code §43602.5). These bonds are financed by a higher ad valorem property tax rate, outside the regular 1% rate.

Geologic hazard abatement districts. These districts can pay for earthquake improvements, including structural work (Public Resources Code §26500, et seq., especially §26525 [b]).

Redevelopment. Redevelopment agencies can provide for seismic retrofitting of unreinforced masonry buildings, historical property, and other structures within redevelopment project areas (Health and Safety Code §33420.1).

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February 1, 1994