

SAN MATEO DAILY NEWS

Also serving Foster City, Belmont and Redwood Shores

September 26, 2002

Bill streamlines bidding process

BY SARA GAISER
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

The San Mateo Community College District will be one of three districts in the state to benefit from a bill by Assemblyman Joe Simitian streamlining the bidding process for major construction projects.



SIMITIAN

The bill, AB 1000, will allow the district to cut some initial costs from projects of \$10 million or more by putting the project out to bid for both design and construction work at once, without going through a second bidding process after the design is complete.

"The process provides local governing bodies with a bit more flexibility and discretion than you would ordinarily find in the design-bid-build process," Simitian, D-Palo Alto, said.

San Mateo Community College District Chancellor Ron Galatolo

said the bill will be a huge help with the district's bond-funded construction plan, which includes a \$20 million science facility at the College of San Mateo, an \$18 million resource center and library at Canada College and a new student union and community center for Skyline College in the same price range.

Just in time

"This is really exciting for us," Galatolo said. "I applaud Simitian's efforts. This will greatly enhance our ability to do construction projects on time and within budget. This will allow us to form a partnership with an architect and a builder early in the process."

Simitian, a former school board member, carried a bill giving the same authority to school districts last year, but said he met some resistance this year when he tried to extend the approach to community college districts.

"Flexibility can be abused," he said, acknowledging the concerns of the bill's opponents.

To meet those concerns, provisions protecting against abuse were incorporated and the bill was reconfigured as a pilot project involving three districts including San Mateo, Los Angeles and Evergreen Community College District in San Jose, all of which happen to have just passed bond measures.

In addition, five other community colleges will be selected and allowed to use the authority on a single major project.

Galatolo said the district's bond spending will be supervised by an oversight committee.

Possible extension

AB 1000 expires in 2008, but Simitian said he would like to see to see it expanded to other districts.

"The timing couldn't be better given the wave of students passing through our system," he said. "We're going to be struggling with a shortage of dollars in the foreseeable future at the state level, so if you can find a way to stretch those dollars, it's good."