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The Buzz: Faulty pump prompts 'fire watch' at state tower

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A new defect has surfaced at the Board of Equalization's 24-story building at Fifth and N streets, where windows have fallen out and mold has created health hazards.

JAY MATHER — Sacramento Bee file

- [Ballotwatch](#)

By 5 p.m. Wednesday, Betty Yee led John A. Pérez by 2,820 votes as the Democrats wait to see who will emerge to take on projected first-place finisher Ashley Swearingin in the state controller's race. Yee had received 816,059 votes and Pérez had 813,239 votes. Swearingin led with 940,182. Elections officials still must count about 300,000 remaining ballots. Pérez, the ex-Assembly speaker, far outspent Yee and Swearingin and was the only candidate to widely air TV ads.

– Christopher Cadelago

Faulty water pump triggers

'fire watch' at state tower

They walk. They watch. They sniff.

A faulty fire system pump at the Board of Equalization's beleaguered headquarters in downtown Sacramento prompted the state fire marshal last week to put the 24-story tower under "fire watch."

That means until the system is fixed, someone must continuously walk the N Street high-rise while on the lookout for fire hazards.

"This designated person is not allowed to perform any other work other than the fire watch duties," according to a board memo to employees.

"The person will walk each floor starting from the penthouse floor down to the 1st floor on a continual basis."

The secondary pump directs water up and down the 24-story tower, but the sprinkler system would still work if a fire broke out, said Department of General Services spokesman **Brian Ferguson**.

Repairs could take up to several weeks if a key component has to be fabricated, Ferguson said, but maintenance officials "seem to think they can get the part, off the shelf, in a week."

The 22-year-old building houses about 2,200 employees who process a variety of state taxes.

– Jon Ortiz

Worth repeating

"California as we know it is simply unsustainable."

CALIFORNIA COMMON SENSE, a nonprofit group dedicated to government analysis, in a report identifying the state's top 10 challenges. Water supply is first on its list.

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