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## Massive Waste Found In Roofing Contracts

*Lawmaker: Combination Of Ignorance, Unsavory Deals To Blame*

(16)

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POSTED: 5:14 pm PDT June 30, 2010  
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**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** -- A lengthy investigation into school roofing contracts has unearthed massive waste on a scale some California lawmakers describe as **"criminal,"** especially at a time when teachers face layoffs.

Legislators on the Assembly's accountability committee got an earful Wednesday from contractors who described, in essence, a bidding

process for **school roofing work as rigged.**

"As a taxpayer through our organization, it's a real problem when we can't employ teachers because we're **throwing money away on roofs,**" said Greg Malarkey, of Malarkey Roofing.

Although none was specifically identified, **the problem is widespread** at districts up and down the state. It's part scam, part ignorance, according to an oversight committee.

School districts commonly let a company's sales representative write the specifications for a roofing job, giving that company a leg up and **stifling competition.**

"The end result is, you do limit the bids," said Assemblywoman Joan Buchanan, D-Alamo.

By some estimates, that hikes the cost 40 to 50 percent, though Malarkey thinks it's more than that.

"It's just amazing to me the amount of waste that's out there, and even potential fraud. **It's criminal,**" said Assemblyman Mike Villines, R-Clovis.

With at least 500 schools requiring new roofs each year in the state, the numbers are enormous.

"We are wasting somewhere between \$30 million and **\$120 million a year**

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at the school district level. **This is taxpayer money that could be going to maintain the rest of the school facilities,**" said Assemblyman Hector De La Torre, D-South Gate.

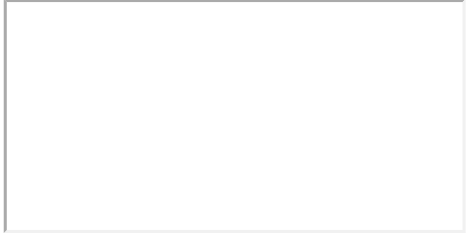
De La Torre said some of this is due to district ignorance, some due to unsavory sweetheart deals. His committee agreed to pursue several reforms, including developing broad standards for school roofing projects and setting up a toll-free hot line for whistle-blowers to report fraud.

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