

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## Capo Unified to eliminate Mello-Roos taxes for some

By SHANE NEWELL

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The Capistrano Unified School District Board of Trustees unanimously voted to stop collecting Mello-Roos taxes from over 20,000 residents living Aliso Viejo and Mission Viejo at its meeting Sept. 28.

The Mello-Roos taxes were established in 1989 to help the district build and improve 12 schools in the region, including Capistrano Valley and Aliso Niguel high schools, and part of the district's education. The taxes allowed the district to sell \$100 million in bonds for such improvements.

Capistrano Unified Deputy Superintendent Clark Hampton said a decision was made a few years ago to stop collecting Mello-Roos taxes after the school bonds had been paid off. The final payment on the bonds was made Sept. 1, about four years ahead of schedule. Hampton said the early payoff occurred because Capistrano Unified had saved money.

"Even though the bonds were paid off," Hampton said, "the district could have continued to tax indefinitely."

The taxation could have continued being collected for years, the district said, since it was put in place before a state law required similar taxes to have end dates.

The district chose not to continue collecting the taxes even though income from future Mello-Roos taxes would have gone toward funding new facilities or modernizing old ones.

The vote also nullified the Community Facilities District 87-1, which encompasses 22,000 taxpayers in Aliso Viejo and Mission Viejo.

Board president Amy Hanacek applauded the decision.

"By ending this CFD," Hanacek said in a news release, "Capistrano Unified saved these homeowners \$10 million."

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