

Opinion: Brown's tax plan on shaky ground

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

The state budget that the Legislature will enact this week will assume that half of its deficit will be covered by voter approval of new income and sales taxes next November.

However, it's looking steadily less like a reasonable assumption and increasingly like just another in a long string of budget gimmicks, not unlike last year's bogus assumption that the tax system would generate an extra \$4 billion.

Indeed, one could say that Gov. Jerry Brown and fellow Democrats are doubling down on miracle money, from last year's \$4 billion to this year's \$8.5 billion.

History does not favor new state taxes. Voters have very rarely approved any new levies and even more rarely any new taxes that they would pay themselves.

Brown tries to get around that reluctance by emphasizing that most of the new taxes would be paid by those at the upper end of the income scale.

But one portion, a quarter-cent sales tax increase, would be paid by everyone. Polling indicates that as small as it is, the sales tax hike is a tough sell in a moribund economy.

Last week, a new Field Poll found that just 52 percent of registered voters favor Brown's tax plan.

Read the whole story