



# COLAB

## San Luis Obispo County

September 2013 Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 7

### SLO BOARD ICLEI COVERUP

By: Michael F. Brown

**D**uring its regular September 10, 2013 meeting the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors rejected a simple request by Andrea Seastrand, a respected civic leader and former member of the US House of Representatives. Ms. Seastrand requested that the Board agendaize, for a future meeting, an informational item concerning endorsement of ICLEI's Resilient Communities Program. Supervisors Adam Hill and Bruce Gibson have signed an agreement committing to making San Luis Obispo County a "Resilient Community." (Note, the ICLEI link <http://www.resilientamerica.org/join-the-leaders/view-the-signatories/> lists Hill and Gibson as "inaugural signatories.") After the public comment period during which Ms. Seastrand made her request, Supervisor Arnold proposed that the matter be placed on a future agenda. Clearly the rest of the Board and the community need to understand what public policies two of their members are pledging to undertake. Supervisors Hill and Gibson (with Supervisor Mecham assenting) vigorously and insultingly refused to schedule the issue.

**Background 1:** ICLEI stands for the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. ICLEI's web site states that it is the *world's leading association of cities and local governments dedicated to sustainable development. We are a powerful movement of 12 mega-cities, 100 super-cities and urban regions, 450 large cities as well as 450 medium-sized cities and towns in 84 countries. We promote local action for global sustainability and supports cities to become sustainable, resilient, resource-efficient, biodiverse, low-carbon; to build a smart infrastructure; and to develop an inclusive, green urban economy with the ultimate aim to achieve healthy and happy communities.*

At some point during the development of its Climate Action Plan (CAP), San Luis Obispo County became a member of ICLEI and actually used ICLEI staffers to help design its Green House Gas Assessment (GHGA) document, which is a fundamental component of the CAP. The County has spent millions of dollars of taxpayer money on the GHGA, CAP, and related "smart growth" plans, conservation and open space restrictions, and related environmental documents. At present it is not clear if the County is still a member of ICLEI. Notwithstanding the County's prior membership, Board Chair Gibson rejects the idea that the County's Climate action Plan and smart growth efforts have any relation to or inspiration from ICLEI and other related international efforts. He insists SLO County's policies spring from State of California led policies, including SB 375 and AB 32 (State Greenhouse gas reduction laws) and the County's Board and staffs own political and professional judgments.

A quick visit to the ICLEI website is informative about the massive world, national, and local scope of the ICLEI vision and penetration into American, and especially into California local governments: <http://www.iclei.org/> a copy the agreement which the two signed is replicated in this newsletter:

See next page . . .



*This article was prepared by Mike Brown, Governmental Affairs Director of the Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business of San Luis Obispo County. Brown has 42 years of state and local government experience.*

# Resilient Communities for America Agreement

We, the mayors and local leaders of America, will lead the creation of more resilient cities, towns, and counties, built to overcome our nation's **EXTREME WEATHER, ENERGY, and ECONOMIC** challenges.



## A CALL TO ACTION

Communities across the country are on the front lines of three related challenges: record-breaking extreme weather fueled by climate change, unreliable and costly energy, and ongoing economic uncertainty. As the pace of change quickens, city and county governments must work to make communities more “resilient”: able to bounce back from disruptions in a sustainable way and maintain a good quality of life for all. As local elected officials:

1. We urge state and federal leaders to support our local resilience initiatives and to take meaningful steps to build resilience and security throughout the nation.
2. We commit to building community resilience through our own local actions, such as the paths to resilience described below.
3. We commit to sharing our solutions, success stories, and annual progress with other local governments through the Resilient Communities for America online platform.

## PATHS TO RESILIENCE CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS

- Evaluating local vulnerabilities to extreme weather and a changing climate, from heat waves and air pollution to droughts and floods.
- Adopting and implementing preparedness policies that protect vulnerable populations and natural resources from extreme weather and other climate impacts.
- Reducing the community’s carbon footprint to help reverse climate change and avoid the costs of adapting to more severe climate impacts.

## ENERGY SECURITY

- Transitioning to a renewable energy future to achieve greater energy independence, protect communities from price spikes, and ensure more reliable power during heat waves and other disruptions.
- Implementing energy efficiency programs that help residents, businesses, and municipal government save money and energy, lower carbon emissions, and reduce demand on the grid during severe weather events.

## INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

- Investing in upgrades to community facilities to safely serve the needs of changing communities decades into the future.
- Creating new models to finance improvements and manage risks to community assets through engagement with the private sector.
- Harnessing innovations in information technology and green infrastructure to optimize performance and reduce costs through more efficient operation.

## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- Retaining and attracting investment by safeguarding businesses from extreme weather and ensuring reliable access to energy, water, and other key resources.
- Supporting the private sector in creating more diversified local economies that are more resilient to economic downturn, through job creation in sectors such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and local agriculture.

## Hill/Gibson Sign Resilient Communities Pact

**Background 2:** As is evident in the sample agreement above, ICLEI has shifted its strategy from returning to a Stone Age economy to planning for disasters, which it asserts will take place as a result of global warming. This is obviously because most of the world's populations (especially in China, India, Russia, and Pakistan) could give a hoot about global warming and are doing everything they can to expand their industrial and energy economies. ICLEI has figured out that it was realizing diminishing returns from its apocalyptic global warming scare. Accordingly, it has switched its pitch and is exhorting cities and counties to require additional regulation, reduced property rights, abridged freedom, and increased fees and taxes in the name of disaster planning and mitigation. Heat waves, droughts, air pollution, and sea level rise are coming soon. (Good thing the Madonna Expo Center is on a high hill – COLAB's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Fundraiser on Thursday, March 27, 2014 will be safe).

**Hill and Gibson Are Afraid of Public Discussion and Exposure:** The last thing the two Supervisors want is for their support and embracing of ICLEI doctrine to be examined or questioned in public. Such a discussion would expose Gibson's assertion, that his support of the whole smart growth debacle is purely a local notion, as patently

false. In denying Supervisor Arnold's request, Gibson went so far as to assert that the resilient community program was part of the County's planning effort for the past four years. In his mind, it is a done deal. The Resilient Communities program wasn't officially launched until June 17, 2013. Gibson simply wants to avoid the issue. Arnold was "directed" by Gibson to contact the Planning Department if she had any questions. What an insulting and arrogant posture by the Chairman of the Board.

Supervisor Arnold could follow up her verbal request with a written regular item for placement by the County Administrator on the agenda, stating that there will be a discussion of the Resilient Communities Agreement. This item would be presented in accordance with the Board's Rules of Procedure Section VI, A. The rule provides that the CAO determines "while working closely with the Chairperson of the Board" which items appear on the agenda. Refusal of the CAO and Board Chairman to allow it to be placed on the agenda will confirm the cover-up and signal that Hill and Gibson are very nervous about a full discussion of their preemptory signing of the ICLEI "Resilient Communities For America Agreement".

■

### THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW



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# THE SUMMER OFFENSIVE

By: Michael F Brown

Throughout history and even in modern times, with the advent of mechanized and technological warfare, military aggressors have often chosen the summer season for launching offensive operations. Particularly in temperate zones, this means drier roads, better and safer shipping weather, more maneuver flexibility, and less stress on the troops from dangers such as winter freezing conditions. Both Napoleon and Hitler ultimately failed in their attempts to conquer Russia due to late offensive starts that left their armies facing diminished but recovering forces during the onset of the famous Russian winter.

Since May, San Luis Obispo County has its own version of a summer offensive. In our case, it's a series of leftist political, propaganda, and administrative initiatives led by Supervisors Adam Hill and Bruce Gibson, and supported by the San Luis Obispo Tribune Newspaper. Some of these include:

- Supervisor Gibson's Tribune amplified rant about the so-called "Children's Bill of Rights" (as if Children are not already protected by the real Bill of Rights).
- The Gibson/Hill led imposition of a confiscatory water moratorium and agricultural prohibitions in the north county. Remember, this happened supposedly in response to the "spontaneous" appearance at a recent Board Meeting of citizens with legitimate water concerns as a result of well problems and played itself out at that meeting with the Board giving work assignments and policy direction in violation of the Brown Act. Ultimately the Board approved the property value depressing urgency ordinance on the basis of generalized water elevation maps and without specific data about how many dry wells are actually in evidence.
- The Gibson/Hill refusal to attend an APCD meeting, thereby breaking the required quorum, even though both were in town, apparently healthy, and were photographed at events and even a coffee shop (Hill) conducting a discussion with a candidate for the vacant 4<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor's seat.
- An edict by Board Chairman Gibson that all speaker slips must now be submitted before the Clerk's reading of the subject agenda item. Many observers have noted that this prevents citizen participation and comment in response to a staff presentation or other speaker comments.
- An ongoing effort led by Supervisors Hill and Gibson to alter the makeup of the APCD Board by encouraging the Grover Beach City Council to remove its Mayor, Debbie

Peterson, from that Board, thereby changing the balance to a more pro-regulatory, pro-fee, and anti-dunes recreation body.

- Adoption of increased restrictions and expanded Board authority to interfere with or even prohibit the sale of mobile home parks to the tenants.
- Partial acceptance of a report from the Civil Grand Jury, which recommends a more severe events regulatory ordinance.
- Supervisor Gibson's letter to supporters announcing his intent to run for a 3<sup>rd</sup> term and soliciting campaign contributions. Gibson cites the work of COLAB as his prime reason for running.
- Potential appointment of a pro-"smart growth," pro-regulatory replacement by Governor Brown to the unexpired term of former 4<sup>th</sup> district Supervisor Paul Teixeira.

Remember that conditions change and that through planning, organizing, and communication, such initiatives can be turned back and used to discredit their proponents. The accumulative record becomes a focus for assigning accountability. High risk policies will often backfire. Resilience and staying the course are often the ultimate determinants of outcomes.



**Victory Is Arduous**



# NIPOMO NOW COMPETING WITH THE HAMPTONS

**D**unes dust notwithstanding, we are glad to see that the Nipomo Mesa has made it into the luxury destination home real estate world big time. The Friday August 30, 2013 Wall Street Journal (WSJ) “Mansion” section includes a full color half page display ad for Trilogy at Monarch Dunes in Nipomo. The WSJ “Mansion” section comes out every Friday and contains articles about and advertising for some of America’s (and sometimes the world’s) toniest homes and communities. In the subject version, Trilogy shared top billing with Scottish castles, New York townhouses, Hamptons’ estates, Ralph Lauren’s Telluride ranch, Newport RI “cottages,” and Pacific Heights (SF) mansions. (Is Saks coming soon?)

The eye-catching ad features pictures of a successful, happy looking couple in their late fifties enjoying the romantic ambiance, fit women in an outdoor exercise class, an elegant and well-appointed aquatics complex, a golfer silhouetted against a dawn sky, and a striking sunset view from the golf course out towards the Pacific and the dunes.

The accompanying text promotes “Unmatched resort-style club, 5 star amenities, championship golf, luxurious spa and 24/7 fun... Discover why Trilogy is the ultimate choice for a first or second home on California’s central coast.” A quick trip to the Trilogy website provides an even more (if not ironic) enticing description:

*Located in Nipomo in a eucalyptus grove in the heart of California’s Central Coast, Trilogy at Monarch Dunes is an exciting resort lifestyle golf community expertly designed and built by Shea Homes. At the heart of Monarch Dunes is the Monarch Club - an elegant 31,000-square-foot Club with fitness and tennis facilities, a resort pool, gourmet dining and other 5-star amenities. Here you’ll find everything from Tai Chi classes and state-of-the-art fitness equipment, to on-site health and fitness trainers, an art studio, exploration lounge, and rejuvenating full-service spa facilities. The stunning modern architecture of the Club provides a comfortable yet chic atmosphere perfect for enjoying a winemaker dinner at Adelina’s Bistro, or a quick lunch from the Marketplace*

Not surprisingly, there is no mention of one of the area’s greatest attractions – off highway vehicle (OHV) riding on the nearby dunes and beaches. Several residents of Trilogy have actively lobbied for dunes dust studies and restrictions before the Air Pollution Control District (APCD). They are part of the group asserting that the OHVs actually increase blowing dust (especially PM<sub>10</sub>) beyond what naturally occurs. Relatedly, APCD Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) Larry Allen and County Supervisor Adam Hill adamantly claim they have no intention to shut down OHV

riding in the dunes, notwithstanding that the APCD has compiled a huge amount of data alleging that the PM<sub>10</sub> is dangerous to human health. For example, in a July 12, 2013 email to Hill, Allen states “... a study published just this week shows a 50% higher risk of lung cancer for those with long term exposure to PM<sub>10</sub>. He further concludes, “There is also a very large body of epidemiological data on the significant health effects of exposure to crystalline silica, a known carcinogen and a large component of dust coming from the State Vehicle Riding Area (SVRA).”

It is confusing when Mr. Allen, Mr. Hill, and their friends assert that even though (in their view) the dust is dangerous, they have no intention of shutting down the riding. They should describe some specimen scenarios which (in their minds) explain how the alleged dust threats can be reduced to “acceptable” health levels (again in their minds) and OHV riding can continue. On the other hand, perhaps the real strategy is for the promotion of gentrification of the mesa and nearby communities and to marginalize or prohibit a long time traditional “middle class” pastime. Once all the studies are done and mitigation measures are developed, will Hill and Allen renege on their promises and invoke a situation “beyond their control,” change their minds, and pronounce that the dunes must be closed?

Actually, vehicles are allowed on the beaches (with a permit) in East Hampton. (The Bentleys, BMWs, Jags, and Mercedes, absent in this picture, are at the Maidstone Club):



“Bonac Forever”<sup>1</sup> Note use of snow fences, dunes grass, and beach rose to stabilize dunes (foreground).

Beautiful Trilogy Golf Course Below



Those Dunes Are Out There Somewhere.

<sup>1</sup> The name traditionally refers specifically to the [working class](#) families who live in an area called Springs (never, in local parlance, the Springs) in the north of the Town of East Hampton, New York (although it has also, for several decades, quite commonly been used to refer to the residents of East Hampton in general). Many of the original Bonac families in Springs were among the very early settlers of the town, having come from England, possibly [Kent](#) or [Dorchester, Dorset](#), in the 17th and 18th centuries. Wikipedia, August 2013

# FRACKING AND THE POOR

From the Wall Street Journal

**T**he natural gas boom may be America's best antipoverty program.

By now even the Obama Administration has recognized that the natural gas drilling boom has led to more high-wage jobs, more secure energy supplies and lower manufacturing costs. But one of the biggest benefits from fracking and other new drilling technologies is often overlooked: the windfall to American consumers, especially the poor.

A new study by the Colorado-based energy broker Mercator Energy quantifies the multibillion-dollar annual savings to American households through lower utility bills from the fall in natural gas prices.

From 2003-08, shortly before the fracking revolution took hold, the price of natural gas averaged about \$7.20 per million BTUs. By 2012 after new drilling operations exploded across the U.S.—from West Texas to Pennsylvania to North Dakota—the increase in natural gas production had slashed the price to \$2.80 per million BTUs.



Opponents of fracking join a rally outside the White House in August.

Mercator examined Department of Energy data on natural gas usage to find out how this 61% price decline translated into lower home-heating and electricity bills. According to the federal Energy Information Administration, American households use about 7.4 billion MMBTUs for home heating and residential electricity each year.

Thanks to the lower price for natural gas, families saved roughly \$32.5 billion in 2012. (That's 7.4 billion MMBTUs of residential use of natural gas times the \$4.40 reduction in price.) The windfall to all U.S. natural gas consumers—industrial and residential—was closer to \$110 billion. This is greater than the annual income of all of the residents in 14 states in 2011.

Mercator's most notable finding is that the income group helped the most by this bonanza is the poor because energy is a big component of their family budgets. Data from the annual report of the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (Liheap) show that poor households spend four times more of their income on home energy (10.4%) than do non-poor households (2.6%). That same report says that roughly 40 million households, or 36% of U.S. households, are eligible for Liheap. Though the poor on average spend less overall on heating and electricity, lower natural gas prices have still shaved about \$10 billion a year from the utility bills of poor families.

To put it another way, fracking is a much more effective antipoverty program than is Liheap. In 2012, Liheap provided roughly \$3.5 billion to about nine million low-income households to subsidize their home-heating costs. New drilling technologies saved poor households almost three times more. Low gas prices benefit nearly all poor households, while Liheap helps fewer than one in four.

These energy savings are especially impressive compared to what residents of other industrialized nations are paying. The natural gas price this summer increased to about \$3.70 per million BTUs, but that compares to the roughly \$10 that consumers pay in Spain or \$13 in China. According to the Mercator analysis, if natural gas prices were that high in the U.S., average home heating bills for millions of Americans would be almost 75% higher.

You'd think that good liberal egalitarians would welcome these financial savings to poor households. Yet most green groups, in particular the Sierra Club, continue to oppose fracking and are using lawsuits and political lobbying to stop it. Rich Hollywood types like Matt Damon propagandize against it. No one is doing more to increase income inequality in America than the affluent environmentalists who oppose natural gas drilling.

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*A version of this article appeared September 7, 2013, on page A14 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: Fracking and the Poor.*



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

General Member: \$100 – \$249 q \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Voting Member: \$250 - \$5,000 q \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining Member: \$5,000 +q \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sustaining Membership includes a table of 10 at the Annual Fundraiser Dinner)*

General members will receive all COLAB updates and newsletters. Voting privileges are limited to Voting Members and Sustainable Members with one vote per membership.

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Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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### How Did You Hear About COLAB?

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COLAB Member(s) /Sponsor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

**For those who choose not to join as a member but would like to support COLAB via a contribution/donation.**

I would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to COLAB and my check or credit card information is enclosed/provided.

Donations/Contributions do not require membership though it is encouraged in order to provide updates and information.

Memberships and donation will be kept confidential if that is your preference.

Confidential Donation/Contribution/Membership q

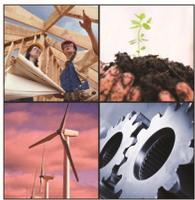
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# COLAB

San Luis Obispo County

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To achieve its mission, COLAB will engage in political activities which promote those common business interests and, in doing so, foster a positive image for agriculture, business, and labor in the community. COLAB represents its members before the SLO County Board of Supervisors and any other local or national governing body. If necessary, we will take legal or administrative action for the mutual benefit of the members.

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