



COLAB

San Luis Obispo County

January 2012 Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

SAVE THE DATE...

for the **3rd Annual**

COLAB of SLO County Dinner & Fundraiser

WHEN: Thursday, March 22, 2012
Cocktails - 5:30 pm
Dinner - 6:30 pm

WHERE: Madonna Expo, San Luis Obispo

Detailed information coming soon with this years speaker and how to reserve tables and get tickets.

Resistance and Triumph: Overcoming the Enviro-Socialist State

The bad news is that the environmental socialist movement now controls the government of the State of California as well as that of many cities and counties within the State. The good news is that environmental socialism contains the seeds of its own destruction. Ultimately the high taxes, ever growing fees, and blighting regulations will undermine productive elements of society which in turn will erode governmental revenues and sap governmental power. The power of governments rests largely on their finances. As the private sector weakens, physical and social blight proliferates, capital facilities deteriorate, and existing businesses leave and seek to expand in more favorable economic climates. Ultimately, income taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes stagnate or decline. Enviro-socialist elites react by further raising fee and tax rates, which in turn accelerates the destructive

process. The problem is that, while one can take solace in the knowledge that ultimately the corrective forces will prevail and hold the enviro-socialists accountable, millions are unemployed, homes are foreclosed, life savings are destroyed, and most tragically, the hopes and dreams of generations are annihilated.

The era of dominance of environmental socialism may exist for decades. This fact is very disheartening to many of those who understand the problem, as well as leaders and potential leaders who would resist and ultimately seek to overcome the regime. Since the enviro-socialists control the government apparatus of the State of California as well as the government apparatus of many cities,

(Continued on page 2)

counties and special districts, the full force of professional staff expertise, contract patronage, alliances with powerful government employee unions, and job patronage are used to enhance their power and advance the enviro-socialist agenda. In the face of such daunting obstacles people may be tempted to give up and submit. On the other hand we

may regard it as our duty as citizens fight back. The American Revolutionary patriot Thomas Payne wrote as the colonies were threatened by the military might of the British Empire, *“Tyranny, like hell is not, easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph”*. Here are practical things we can do to resist:

- Be aware and stay informed. Spend 20 minutes per day (while having that cup of coffee or lunch) and doing a quick scan of the following sources: For local information read the COLAB SLO Weekly Updates and Monthly Newsletters at www.colabslo.org. Listen on line or on the air to the Andy Caldwell Radio Show on KUHL 1440 or KZSB 1290. For both local and State as well as national information read the free online Cal Chronicle at www.Calchronicle.com/ and also Stephen Franks' California Political News & Views at www.capoliticalnews.com/. For national perspectives check out the site Human Events at www.humanevents.com/. The guest articles, book reviews, and editorials contained in the last 2 pages of Section A of the Wall Street Journal are also quite helpful. The Journal can be obtained in paper format or on line. Of course there are many other fine sites as well.
- Get mad. As former University of Texas football Coach Darrell Royal (back when Texas won three national championships) used to say, *“You have to get mad to win football games.”* The injustice and destructiveness of the enviro-socialists policies are outrageous and are a powerful motivational factor.
- Recognize that anger can be destructive and must be converted into plans and action, which result in holding the currently powerful enviro-socialist regimes accountable. Elected officials, appointed board members, and sycophantic senior staff members should understand that once the consequences of their policies are widely understood as perpetuating economic decline and suffering, they will be held accountable legally, professionally, and materially. It should not be sufficient that they are allowed to retire into oblivion.

- Appeal your property tax assessment. While county assessors have made some minor adjustments as a result of the deep drop in real estate prices, they have not actually recognized the huge collapse in values. Go on the web and do a quick analysis of sales (not asking prices) of comparable properties in your area. It is likely that in many, many cases you will find that you have a strong argument for a lower property assessment. The process is free, and you do not need to hire consultants or experts. Stay away from firms that offer to file your appeal for a fee. You do not need to pay them, and online real estate sites offer ample data. Mass appeals will stress the counties administratively and when successful will undermine the power of the current controlling enviro-socialist elites in county governments, schools, cities and some special districts.
- Reject ballot measures which establish new or increased sales taxes, property taxes, or special tax assessments. Often voters who oppose general taxes will support a tax for a specific benefit such as roads, a school, a library, a new jail or parks. It is rationalized that these are specific benefits for which there is a demonstrated need. The problem is the new tax takes the pressure off the government officials for trying to balance their bigger operating budgets. Demand that they grow the natural economy to pay for these things instead to placing higher taxes on an ever-narrowing base.
- If you can afford the tuition, put your kids in private schools. The public schools are now a vast indoctrination system promoting enviro-socialism, political correctness, and value relativism. The teachers unions are powerful allies and funders of the enviro-socialist regimes in Sacramento and Washington. Eliminate the reason for their existence.
- Do not compromise on fees and regulations. Many business, agricultural, and trade organizations seek to minimize the damage caused by state and local enviro-socialist regimes by participating in efforts to ameliorate more egregious regulatory and fee proposals and seek compromise. Paid representatives and officers attend workshops, provide suggested wording changes, and otherwise “cooperate” to obtain crumbs. The current state of regulatory and tax conditions in the State and many cities and counties are clear proof that the strategy ultimately fails and is death by a thousand cuts.

(Continued on page 3)

Business owners and their trade associations, both large and small, should recognize that short-term cooperation and collaboration only advances the regime's ultimate goals. Some businesses, and especially those dependent on government contracts, may fear retribution if they or their representative associations oppose particular enviro-socialist policies. Such retribution may come in the form of economic ostracism and /or regulatory punishment. In these circumstances, the government is little more than a "legitimized" protection racket.

- Demand that your elected officials/candidates declare a moratorium on all new fees and regulations for their term of office or prospective term of office. When your elected official or aspiring candidate is at a meeting, campaign event, or other situation where there is a crowd, wait for the question period. When your turn comes ask this question: *"Given the sorry state of the economy, falling home prices, unemployment etc., will you agree to sign this pledge today to promise to vote against all new fees, taxes, and regulations if you are {elected, reelected, or for the remainder of your term?}"* (whatever the case is for that individual). Have a friend hand him/her the form-big letters and a signature block pre filled out with his or her name. Have extra copies for the crowd so they can see what you are asking. If they refuse to sign or

say they have to study the matter, hit them again at the next event.

- Organize: Set up study groups or writing groups. These may only be three or four people or can be more extensive. Write letters to the editor. Oppose new regulatory measures and fee increases. On major issues, appear at the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Air Pollution Control District, SLOCOG, and the Integrated Waste Management Authority. If you have a business association or trade group, make sure its staff alerts you to critical issues. Remember, it's not sufficient to oppose just the fee or regulation that affects your own particular business. Eventually the knock on the door will come for you. Groups should help one another by opposing all fees and regulations. Write, email, appear and complain.
- Support candidates who oppose the regime. Hold a coffee hour for a candidate in your home or with your business group (or both). If you are able, support such candidates financially. Remember, early support is important because a large proportion of votes are now by absentee (mail-in) ballots. These are sent out months before the actual Election Day. Thus, funding for media buys, printed materials and so forth must be accumulated very early in the campaign.



THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW

The only local talk show to cover the entire Central Coast!

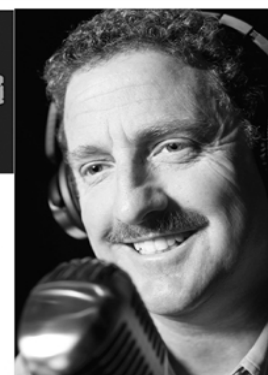
Central Coast Government watchdog, taxpayer, business and traditional values advocate Andy Caldwell interviews leaders and scholars on a variety of local, state and national issues.

Andy is Live Monday Thru Friday 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Call in 1-888-625-1440

Visit www.theandycaldwellshow.com for more information

Streaming Live on www.am1440.com and www.newspress.com



AM1440
KUHL • the information station

AM 1290
Santa Barbara News-Press Radio

The EVC sent out an electronic survey on December 6, 2011 to “employees and employers throughout SLO County to gather vital information about the needs of workforce housing.” The EVC believes, “that *sufficient housing for employees continues to be critical to any company’s success and the ability to create new jobs.* EVC indicates that, “input will be used to help homebuilders, planners, and local government make better and more informed decisions related to housing needs well into the future.

The survey contains 45 questions related to “workforce” housing. One problem is that the questionnaire never defines the term “workforce housing.” Presumably most people who have a job and live in a house or an apartment live in workforce housing. If an employee retires or suddenly becomes wealthy and does not need to work, does his or her house cease to be “workforce housing?” Is a house that is utilized as a vacation rental house excluded from the workforce housing stock? Does the EVC have the slightest idea how much workforce housing exists in the County? The state mandated housing elements of the County and the seven Cities may contain data concerning the lack of housing for the workforce. Ever since the State of California and its cities and counties intensified their schemes of land use regulation, beginning in the 1970s, housing has become progressively and accumulatively more unaffordable. Even in the current housing depression with falling prices, California housing is relatively expensive, consumes a large portion of the average family’s income, and often causes businesses that have locational choices to place new facilities outside the state or even relocate existing facilities to other states. One saving grace is the state’s fine weather, natural beauty, and youth oriented culture favoring year round outdoor activities. Thus, while housing opportunities may be much more attractive in Phoenix, Boise, or Carson City, climate concerns discourage many firms from relocating to such locations even though housing costs are lower, not to mention that taxes, fees, and regulatory interference, are much lower.

Since these facts are so well known it curious that the EVC would feel the need to conduct yet another survey on this subject. The County conducted a similar survey in 2005 prefatory to its launching of its Climate Action/Smart Growth regulatory initiative. That survey covered both cities and the unincorporated County and found that people preferred to live in single-family free-standing houses. The San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments (SLOCOG) just completed a scientific poll related to the willingness of voters to approve either a one-half cent or a one-quarter cent sales tax for transportation. While the poll

was focused on transportation project costs and the willingness of voters to pay higher taxes, it backed into the question of housing types because many of the questions involved preferred modes of commuting (bus, train, car, bike), which in turn connect directly to housing types and density. Respondents were quite negative on modes of commuting that require high density in order to become “cost effective.” Overwhelmingly, the respondents were concerned about the economy and jobs and support transportation money be spent on road maintenance and fixing potholes.

The survey’s 45 questions (some with multiple sub questions) deal with the respondents’ housing situation, whether they are satisfied with that situation, their commuting preferences, income and demographic data, whether they feel that their commute is too long, and related matters. The survey revisits some of the same questions included in the County’s 2005 poll, such as whether people prefer single family detached homes, suburban or urban living, and whether or not the availability of alternative transportation services to work sites (such as van pools, park and ride, car sharing, bike racks, etc.) is important.

The survey was due back by December 16, 2011, and for whatever reason the deadline had to be extended. It will be interesting to see how employees and their employers respond. The actual structure of the survey in terms of the design and size of the sample, demographic representativeness, and geographic distribution are not determinable from the survey itself, so validity is not determinable.

(Continued on page 5)



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.

A major concern of the EVC survey, like its two predecessors, purports to discover whether or not the respondents prefer denser, smart-growth type living accompanied by anti-automobile “alternative modes” of transportation. At this point there are probably many unemployed people and potential employed people (particularly people coming out of the educational system) who would live just about anywhere if they could find a job. A longer range question, given the financial means, is what type of housing and transportation people would ultimately prefer in terms of their life goals. In other words a 23 year old single systems analyst who is just starting out is likely to believe that an apartment in a dense active downtown setting is perfect. On the other hand, that same individual may well hope to be professionally successful, have a family, and have a dream of living in a 3600 sq. ft., 2 story, white post-modern Victorian house (with porches), a 3 car garage, a swimming pool and a one acre green lawn dotted with oak trees which slopes down to the five acres of grapes.

It should be noted that the County is a major funder of the EVC. On March 17, 2011, the Board awarded the EVC a \$190,000 to begin implementation of the countywide economic strategy. On October 25, 2011, the County awarded another \$80,000 contract to the EVC to implement economic development programs identified in the economic element of the County General Plan. One question is whether this survey is funded by either or both of these County sources? Of course the County’s original Smart Growth survey and the more recent SLOCOG survey were funded by government sources.

The County also plans to conduct a “Complete Community Survey” to conduct a technical survey of the features that will comprise a complete “strategically planned community,” and estimate the cost of transportation infrastructure and public facilities in four communities (San Miguel, Templeton, Oceano, and Nipomo) (\$84,000).”

Additionally, on December 13, 2011, the County awarded a contract for a “Land Use Economic Study” to identify “potential economic, real estate, and land use effects of possible measures to direct work growth from rural to unincorporated areas, as well as possible measures to encourage infill density in unincorporated communities (\$35,000).”

Why are all these surveys and research projects necessary when the County has already adopted its Strategic Growth Plan, adopted its Climate Action Plan, adopted its

Conservation and Open Space Element, and clearly announced that its policy is to ultimately either persuade and/or require people to live in denser urban communities and rely on mass transit in order to commute and conduct personal business? Are these studies and questionnaires designed to develop objective data or to try to confirm the County policy, which has already been legally adopted?

The business community, including the EVC, keeps telling the Board of Supervisors and other jurisdictions that they need to make the permitting process more certain, less costly, and more flexible. Of course, the County’s entire scheme of so-called “smart growth” is predicated on more regulations, more requirements, more processing, and more restrictions in order to execute the underlying social and economic engineering principles intrinsic to this scheme.

The business community may well want to reflect that it could take actions to control its own destiny with respect to employee housing issues, reduce government intervention, and actually test whether or not (the County government, for example) is a true friend of business. Many firms in the SLO County business community, including many firms that are members of the EVC, have expertise in land development and the production of all types of housing. The key to producing rental housing affordable to working families (that is, current and potential employees) is to develop projects that are sufficiently large to achieve economies of scale in terms of land costs, construction costs, and the so-called “soft” costs of the government imposed land entitlement process.

What if the business community put together an expert team of its members and proposed a number of such projects to the County and the cities? This would be a much more direct approach than surveys, studies, fees disguised as taxes (such as housing in-lieu fees), and endless hand wringing. The acid test would be whether a particular city council or the Board of Supervisors would actually approve a particular project at a sufficient scale to produce rental rates affordable to average workforce families requiring multiple bedrooms for children. The velocity, ease or difficulty, and result of obtaining that answer would constitute the real proof of a particular jurisdiction’s commitment to jobs, economic growth, and a better living standard for its citizens.

■

HALTING THE JUGGERNAUT

The juggernaut of interlocking local and regional government regulatory agencies that now dominate San Luis Obispo County (and much of California) constitute a formidable force under which the enviro-socialists are undermining private property and economic progress. By their control of the State and many local governments, these groups acquire expert professional staffs, full time legal specialists, powerful attractive web sites, dedicated public TV and radio stations, and public information specialists. The continuing volume of new regulations, fees, and ordinances issued by these separate entities, each with its own meeting schedule, board, and staff, makes it almost impossible for the citizens to even know what is coming next, let alone have the time, ability, and expertise to do something about it. So-called workshops are perfunctory and staff dominated. The public “discussions” are conducted in highly ritualistic meetings, usually held during business hours, when most citizens are unable to attend. The issues are too complex and incessant for the daily newspapers and TV stations to provide meaningful coverage (Local talk radio programs, such as The Andy Caldwell Show, are one of the few successful counters).

The specialized structure and incestuous interrelationship of the County, Air Pollution Control District, and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, Integrated Waste Management Authority, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Coastal Commission forestall accountability. Except for the County, none of these boards has members who are directly elected to the entity being served. It is a major problem of these special district structures that members are appointed elected officials from other entities. Compounding that, none of these boards has an elected chief official. The inherent structural deficiency in not having a chief elected official who must run for office and appeal to a large spread of constituencies throughout each entity is that there is no one who has appealed to the broader public interest and who can lead and engender policy based on the broader public interest. There is no jurisdiction-wide elected policy leader.

The deficiency of accountability to the entire community that is inherent in these non-elected narrow focus, single purpose regulatory boards is illustrated in the recent commentary by some of the County Supervisors and city councilors during the Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA) consideration of the single use bag ban. Each of the Supervisors and city council members serving on the IWMA is elected to a general purpose government responsible for balancing a broad range of priorities. This notwithstanding, a number of them stated that their duty and vote when acting in their role as an IWMA member is limited to waste management issues and not to the broader underlying community and social concerns that have been raised over and over again by the citizens. These members basically refused to consider the issues and used the institutional structure as cover.

Each entity selects its chief administrative officer or executive director separately. Exacerbating the problem, with the exception of the County Administrator, these administrative chiefs are single field subject specific experts (air pollution, transportation, garbage, water pollution, or whatever) who have no allegiance to balancing

broader competing societal concerns outside of their professional mission. Unlike city managers and county administrators, they are institutionally insulated from the direct economic and social consequences of their policy recommendations. Conversely, a city manager who undermines the health of local business may soon find that he or she faces dwindling revenues for basic services such as police, fire, and road maintenance -- problems that are almost immediately visible to the public. Unlike the city managers, executives in regulatory districts do not have to live with the economic consequences of their decisions. They are extremely well compensated and usually remain in their job for years. For example, the recently retired California Coastal Commission Director, Peter Douglas, had occupied his position since 1985 and was Deputy Director for ten years prior to that. These chiefs, who are insulated by contracts, state imposed professional qualification requirements, and the support of their membership associations, have almost unfettered ability to appoint their subordinates, who are doubly protected by civil service and unions.

These subordinate staffers, of course, are extensively trained specialists with degrees in environmental engineering, environmental science, hydrology, city and regional planning, and biology. They tend to be true believers who support, both professionally and ideologically, an intrusive regulatory and aggressive tax/fee environment. Most have little understanding of economics, agriculture, mining, finance, how business works, or even history. They are largely immune from the economic consequences of their actions. If the economy declines, their elected leadership simply raises fees to fill any gaps. Concepts of structured process improvement; eliminating non-value-adding processes; reducing requirements and fees; and utilizing program performance budgeting at the program cost center level are not part of their universe. As one staffer snarled at this writer when it was suggested that a proposed regulation be subjected to an economic impact analysis prior to being sent to the agency’s board for adoption, “Why would you do that? This is a regulation which is a benefit; it does not need economic analysis.”

Recently a very astute and engaged long-term community participant said in frustration, “*There is too much going on and I can’t keep up with all of this. We have to change the leadership and structure to fix this.*” As she correctly discerns, it is not sufficient to simply resist analytically and educationally. It is also essential to engage the enviro-socialists politically and to wrest from their hands the control of the resources and power of the government apparatus.

¹. Appointed by the Governor on a geographic basis. Some appointees must be sitting county supervisors or city council members.

². Appointed by Governor, Senate Pro Tem, and Assembly Speaker.



Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business
San Luis Obispo County
“Your Property – Your Taxes – Our Future”

PO Box 13601 – San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 / Phone: 805.548-0340 / Email: colabslo@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

Platinum Member: \$ _____ Gold Member: \$5,000 - \$9,999 ☐

Silver Member: \$2,500 - \$4,999 ☐ Bronze Member: \$1,000 - \$2,499 ☐

Executive Member: \$250 - \$999 ☐ General Member: \$100 - \$249 ☐

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

MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio ☐ Internet ☐ Public Hearing ☐ Friend ☐

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 ☐

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

All applications are subject to review and approval by the COLAB Membership Committee and Board of Directors.

Applications that are not accepted will have the dues or donations promptly refunded.



COLAB

San Luis Obispo County

P.O. Box 13601
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

DONATE!

We need and appreciate your support!

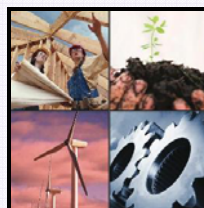
Help COLAB protect your property rights!

COLAB's mission is to promote the common business interests of its members by providing information and education on issues which have or may have an impact on its membership.

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.

COLAB is a 501 ©(6) non-profit organization. However, by law your donation is not tax deductible.

**You may donate by
sending a check to this address:**
PO Box 13601, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406



COLAB

San Luis Obispo County