



**COLAB SAN LUIS OBISPO
WEEK OF AUGUST 27 – SEPT. 2, 2017**

THIS WEEK/NEXT WEEK

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETINGS ON
AUGUST 29TH OR SEPTEMBER 5TH**

LAST WEEK

**SPECIAL ITEM ON JAIL DEATHS
JOHN PESCHONG MASTERFUL AS CHAIRMAN
IN TOUGH HEARING**

**PASO BASIN WATER PLANNING
COORDINATION STRUCTURE ADOPTED**

SLO COLAB IN DEPTH

(SEE PAGE 7)

**CLIMATE CHANGE: THE LEAST OF THE WORLD'S
PROBLEMS**

By Andy Caldwell

**BE VERY AFRAID, AS DEMOCRATS 'FIX' THE
HOUSING CRISIS**

By Steven Greenhut

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, August 29, 2017 (Not Scheduled)

August 29th is a 5th Tuesday. The Board does not generally schedule meetings on the 5th Tuesdays of the month. Additionally there will be no Board meeting on Tuesday, September 5th as it is a day after a holiday (Labor Day), when meetings are not normally scheduled. There will be 3 meetings on the subsequent Tuesdays in September.

Including the September meetings, there will be 10 meetings remaining in 2017 between now and the December recess. Significant issues that will probably come up in this period include:

Appointment of a County Administrative Officer

Appointment of a Planning Director

Appointment of an Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO), who is the Director of the APCD

The future of the Housing in Lieu Fee (actually a tax) which the progressive left seeks to preserve and expand

Concurrently there is likely to be reporting on the status of previous assignments by the Board to the staff relative to increasing the supply of housing in the County. Also it is expected that the state legislation will be adopted encouraging cities and counties to allow more housing and restricting some their ability to deny projects. It is also likely that the state will adopt new Legislation imposing new fees and taxes to generate revenue for subsidized "affordable" housing. Please see the article (BE VERY AFRAID, AS DEMOCRATS 'FIX' THE HOUSING CRISIS) in the **COLAB In Depth** section on page 9 for more insight into potential state actions and costs.

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) decision on the PG&E's rate increases in connection with the closure of the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant and consequent decision by PG&E on whether to extend the plant to 2025 or close it as soon as possible

Government takeover of electrical energy distribution through the so-called Community Choice Aggregation Program

A decision by the County on whether to relinquish its control of groundwater management in the area to be controlled by the formation of the Estrella - El Pomar - Creston Management Water District in the Paso Basin

Annual Fee Increases for the ensuing fiscal year

Potential California Coastal Commission intervention in the Oceano Dunes dust issue (at its September meeting)

The results of the current FBI investigation into the Andrew Holland jail death

Further actions by the Board of Supervisors related to jail, health department, mental health department, and general management issues related to:

Currently filed or impending lawsuits on other jail deaths and other alleged instances of prisoner mistreatment

Broader concerns about the mental health system and services

Adoption of ordinances regulating the cultivation, processing, distribution, and sale of recreational marijuana

Planning Department proposed work program for FY 2017-18

California Water Fix-Twin Tunnels – impact on Ag and future water costs

So-called “Chumash Heritage” Marine Reserve

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Then there is always hope for redemption in September.



LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, August 22, 2017 (Completed)

Item 12 - Hearing to consider the extension of the Marijuana (Cannabis) Interim Zoning/Urgency Ordinance No. 3334 pursuant to Section 25123, 25131, and 65858 of the California Government Code for a period of up to 12 months. Ordinance No. 3334 places limits on the cultivation of marijuana and requires all cultivators to register with the County of San Luis Obispo; exempt from CEQA. The Board voted unanimously to extend the current interim ordinance for one year.

The current interim marijuana regulatory ordinance expires on September 19, 2017. The work on the permanent ordinances will not be completed by then. The write-up contains some interesting data about the industry at this point. The adopting language of the permanent ordinance will contain a provision to terminate the interim ordinance once it takes effect.

By November 18, 2016, 455 cultivators applied for registration under the urgency ordinance. Of the 455 registrations, 288 were located within the California Valley Village Reserve Line (VRL) of the Carrizo planning area. Of the remaining 167 registrations, 10 were located within the coastal planning areas, 89 were located within the North County planning area, 3 were located in the Carrizo planning area (outside of California Valley VRL), 4 were located within the San Luis Obispo planning area, and 48 were located within the South County planning area (the remaining 13 registrations are under further review).

As we have reported previously, a major challenge is how to rationalize a reduction in the total number of potential grows if the Board wishes to limit the number.

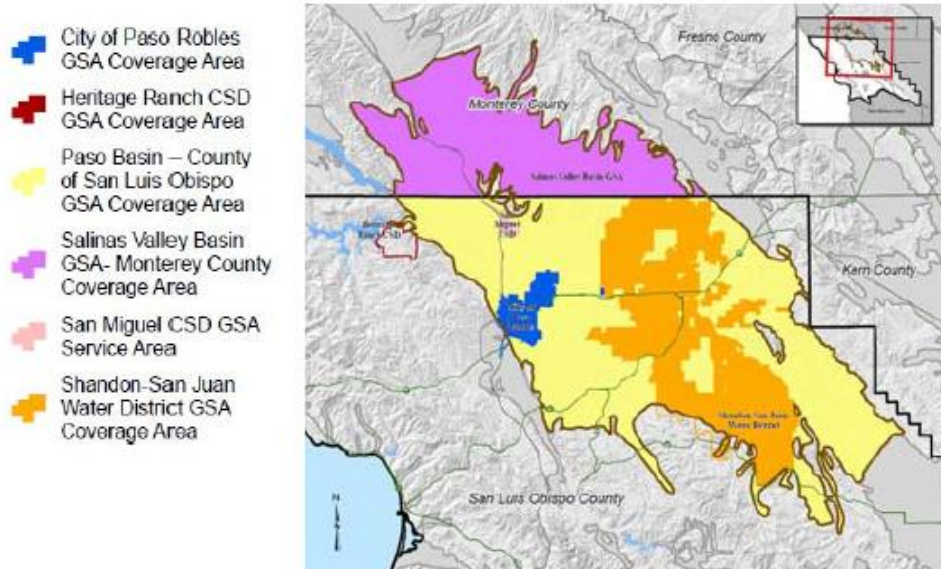
Item 16 - Submittal of a resolution approving a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding preparation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and appointing a member and alternate member to represent the County of San Luis Obispo on the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee. Districts 1 and 5. The Board approved the County's membership by MOA in the newly forming Paso Basin Cooperative Committee and appointed Supervisors Arnold and Peschong as the County representatives.

Background: The Committee will coordinate and potentially dovetail the various groundwater management plans being developed by member agencies in the Paso Water Basin. Ultimately and per the Groundwater Management Act of 2014, a plan must be

adopted and approved by the State that will bring the water basin into hydrologic balance in 20 years. The bottom line is that the agencies will have to agree on how to use less water in the future.

The area to be covered is displayed in the map below:

Paso Basin GSAs



Item 19 - Added Board Business Agenda Item #19 - Discussion about San Luis Obispo County Jail inmate health and safety. This item was added to the agenda at the request of the Board during the previous week's meeting. The County staff (primarily the Sheriff, Health Agency Director, and CAO) made presentations on the circumstances leading to the Andrew Holland jail death and its \$5 million dollar payment to the Holland family.

The hearing lasted from 2:20 PM to 7:00 PM and consisted mainly of extensive and often heart-rending public criticism by the Holland Family members and associates of the Sheriff, County Health Agency, County Mental Health Department, and County in general. There was also substantial testimony in support of the Sheriff by various citizens and law enforcement professionals. The Board hearing room was full and the meeting had to be video-linked to the adjoining classrooms down the hall to accommodate the overflow crowd.



In summary, some of the key observations are:

1. Board Chairman and 1st District Supervisor John Peschong is a superb presider and ran a very difficult and emotionally charged meeting with fairness, efficiency, calmness, and grace.
2. 4th District Supervisor Lynn Compton did her homework, studied the very difficult and sensitive matter, asked serious questions in a professional and respectful way, and was able to generate some meaningful data. She was not deflected by the usual evasive and off-point staff non-answers.
3. 5th District Supervisor Debbie Arnold was focused and able to obtain a unanimous vote (including from Gibson, who was opposed, pending further analysis of the larger policy context) to have the staff examine and report back on the feasibility and cost of contracting out jail medical services.
4. No one will be held personally and professionally accountable for the admitted mistakes, unadmitted mistakes, lack of initiative, lack of sense of urgency, or any other failings (some which we may never know) associated with the tragedy. Instead the County is treating the situation as a cause to install a variety of operational improvements based on “lessons learned.”
5. There is a jail video that shows the death of Andrew Holland. People who watched the video testified that it shows lack of care or concern for Holland and in fact that it shows jail staffers laughing in proximity to the dying or dead Andrew Holland. The County continues to refuse to release the video. Eventually someone will get the video into the hands of the media and public.
6. The Board of Supervisors has not commissioned an independent investigation by an outside expert investigative team to examine the events leading up to Andrew Holland’s death by examining witnesses, documents, and the details of the actual circumstances of the death. Instead, reliance is being placed on an FBI investigation that is reportedly focused on whether Federal Civil Rights were violated. It is not known if the FBI will report its findings unless some individuals are actually indicted.

Astonishingly and in this regard, Supervisor Hill stated, “We are not investigators, we’re budgeteers.” “I don’t know what happened to Andrew Holland... we’re not responsible for the jail and problems there...”

Absent such an investigation and transparent publication of the facts and conclusions, County officials and staffers will suffer interminably under suspicion of culpability even if they operated properly within the context of the rules and reasonableness and best practices at the time.

7. The issue has been politicized and there are people on both sides who see the issue as pro-Sheriff or anti-Sheriff, some on a partisan basis. A number of County Sheriff's Department sworn personnel were in attendance, as well as members of a Sheriff's Department volunteer Search and Rescue Team in their uniforms.

8. Supervisors Hill and Gibson will lead an effort to substantially expand County and community mental health services, not just in relation to the jail but generally. Under the glare of the obvious failures in this case (and perhaps others which pre-pending), the Board will likely approve some major new initiatives and funding. Apparently there is a comprehensive program called "Stepping Up," which may be a model for a more robust approach to mental illness.

Deeper Concerns: The underlying causes of homelessness, drug addiction (no one mentioned that the County will probably enable expansive use and production of recreational marijuana on October 3rd), and alcoholism are largely attributed to mental issues, which everyone regarded as increasing exponentially in society. No one seems to have any comprehensive theory of why this pandemic is occurring on an epochal basis in the first quarter of the 21st Century.

However, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill beginning in the 1980's is cited as one significant underlying cause. The jails of the nation end up serving as the "mental hospitals of last resort" – a role for which they are not and should not be equipped. The proliferation and acceptance of the recreational use of mind altering narcotics (both legal and illegal) is also suspected.

COLAB IN DEPTH

IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES AND FORCES

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE LEAST OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS

By Andy Caldwell

Billions of people do not have electricity, running water, sanitary sewage treatment, food security, public schools, democratic rights or any semblance of public safety. Every year, millions suffer from malaria and dengue fever, diseases we eradicated a century ago. They also suffer from all sorts of other maladies, many of which can be cured with meds that cost less than a dollar. Millions more starve because they can't grow enough food or store it safely to sustain them-selves. Compounding these problems are dictators and endless wars.

So, what do we offer these people who lack all these basics we take for granted? Do we offer to construct dams to prevent flooding, store water and create hydro-powered electricity? Do we build power grids? Do we drill for oil and natural gas? How about building nuclear power plants? Railroads to move goods and people? Water and sewer lines and treatment plants? Do we create natural gas distribution capacity? Do we give them refrigerators, heaters and air conditioners? Safe pesticides to kill the mice, rats, mosquitos and flies which vector the diseases that have killed 50 million children in Africa alone? Do we furnish them with tractors to plow their fields and modern tools to protect their plants from diseases and pests?

The answer to all these questions is no! We gloss over their current everyday misery while we hyperventilate about climate change in the distant future. Re-serving our right to live in modernity relegates them to living in perpetual energy and food poverty. They are not allowed to enjoy the benefits of a belated industrial revolution because we must save the planet while they suffer and die prematurely! We hypothesize about ocean rise while their real-time mortality rates continue unabated.

The key to understanding our values as it relates to these starving people stems from a Malthusian world view. Malthus believed population threatened the earth's resources in complete ignorance of the ability of technology to address problems and challenges. Hence, to this day, the one thing we do supply is condoms and abortions, as an ounce of population prevention is worth more than a pound of cure to live by! Additionally, we might build a few windmills since they are considered "sustainable" while we pre-tend that training them in organic farming methods is the way to go. This, despite the resultant lower crop yields, in countries where people are starving to death.

Our modern world is full of sanctimonious do-gooders out to save the planet from one perceived crisis after another while ignoring the less fortunate by way of deprivation. We pontificate about the future effect of climate change, contrived by way of computer models, while the world suffers the never-changing harsh reality and brutality of Mother Nature in real time. We portend that Mother Nature is benign while mankind is the cancer that is causing catastrophe. But, the masses know better. They suffer as they have for millennia from the same natural disasters that have continued unabated while modernity and technology protects us from a similar fate.

First Published in the Santa Barbara News Press. Andy Caldwell is the Executive Director of COLAB of Santa Barbara County, regular editorialist in the Santa Barbara News Press, and host of the daily weekday Andy Caldwell Radio Show an AM 1440 from 3 to 5 PM.

BE VERY AFRAID, AS DEMOCRATS ‘FIX’ THE HOUSING CRISIS

By Steven Greenhut

It’s common to hear complaints about a “do nothing” Congress, but California’s Legislature has the opposite problem. It wants to do just about everything. Whether it’s fighting global warming or creating a new state-run mini Social Security system to bolster private pensions, California’s legislators don’t lack any sense of ambition. This week, they’ve announced their goal of solving the state’s housing mess.

For California taxpayers and wannabe homebuyers, some advice is in order. Be very afraid. State officials often identify actual crises. Their solutions are the problem. They always involve higher taxes, new bureaucracies, more subsidies, and additional regulations that inevitably make every situation worse. It never dawns on legislators that their previous policies created the problem at hand.

Housing is the perfect example. Home prices continue to soar, and now are at levels last seen at the height of the 2008 real-estate bubble. Median home prices for the nine-county Bay Area — not just within the al-ways-costly city of San Francisco — have hit \$755,000. The median price in Orange County is \$695,000. Median prices for all of Southern California, which includes many down-market and inland regions, is a half-million bucks.

We’re still in the early stages of an actual legislative package and legislators are on vacation until late August. But we can take a guess at the likely approach from a series of bills that have been making their way through the Capitol. The plan — drum roll, please — is to float a \$3 billion housing bond. They also want to add new fees onto real-estate purchases to fund \$225 million in subsidies for affordable-housing-related pro-grams.

Of course, there will be rules that add to the price of new construction. The new subsidized projects must pay union-scale wages. The one bill that attempts to streamline local approval processes includes a pre-vailing-wage requirement that undermines some of the measure’s many benefits. The unions had tried, but failed, to pass a noxious bill that could have been interpreted to require union wage rates even on privately funded housing projects.

Expect state officials to push for more “inclusionary housing” — i.e., mandates that new developments include a percentage of below-market units that can be sold to low-income buyers who are lucky enough to be selected by lottery, as columnist Dan McSwain explains. Lucky, that is, until they try to sell their homes years later and find that they aren’t allowed to sell them at market rates.

This is indeed how Sacramento solves the housing crisis. They raise taxes and build government-specified projects constructed with union work rules. They won't let the market do its magic and let builders just build houses. The only kind of capitalism the state's Democratic leaders apparently favor is the kind with the word "crony" in front of it.

As state attorney general, Gov. Jerry Brown sued San Bernardino County for trying to permit suburban-style housing developments as part of his effort to battle urban sprawl. Yet these clampdowns on suburbanization have exacerbated the very sprawl legislators are trying to fight. In recent months he at least has acknowledged the limits of subsidizing housing and pushed for relaxed regulations, but this governor's market-oriented words rarely are backed up by action.

Families that can't afford a \$700,000 tract house on a postage-stamp lot in the Bay Area often choose to make the nightmarish commute over the Altamont Pass and into the hot and dusty Central Valley. Tracy and Stockton are lined with cheaper tract suburbs that cater to mega-commuters. The same thing happens in Riverside and the Inland Empire, where Orange Countians and Angelenos often move to take part in the American Dream.

And local governments make it inordinately difficult to build new housing. A 2015 survey found that "San Diego County's many layers of government regulation may explain 40 percent of the area's high cost of newly built housing," according to the San Diego Union-Tribune. At the very least, fees and land-use restrictions add tens of thousands of dollars to the cost of each house.

Liberal activists have applauded growth controls for years, but now are frustrated to find that their own preferred projects — high-density condos and apartments in older urban areas — face the same hurdles as traditional subdivisions. Longtime homeowners have become part of the problem, too. Sick of traffic and congestion, they lobby councils to oppose new developments and roadways. They've already got their garden spot, after all.

The Brown administration has not reformed the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which makes it easy for any environmental group to sue proposed new projects and drag out approvals for years, even decades. The law has also been used by unions, which see it as a convenient way to lever-age higher wages. Of course, whenever influential officials want a new project built (e.g., the NBA Kings' arena in Sacramento), the first thing they do is pass a CEQA exemption.

One proposed new development in the Santa Clarita Valley of Los Angeles County has finally gotten some needed approvals. Newhall Ranch, which will house 60,000 people, has been slowed by court rulings and environmental impact reports. Its eventual construction will be good news, albeit a drop in the bucket in the county's housing shortage. Developers have been trying to get the OK to build since the 1980s. When it takes three decades to permit a project, it's easy to see why this growing state has a housing shortage.

Even water shortages, often used to halt development plans for seemingly legitimate purposes, are caused mainly by government policy. There's enough water to serve the population; it's just that California's government refuses to build enough reservoirs to store it, and continues to earmark excessive water supplies for environmental purposes.

So we'll see more of the same policies that created the housing crunch in the first place. Probably the best advice for Californians who want to buy their first home: Sit tight and wait for the bubble to burst again. Ironically, last decade's bubble was caused by the government's efforts to promote homeownership, but don't get me started.

Steven Greenhut is Senior Fellow and Western Region Director for the R Street Institute. He appears on the Andy Caldwell Radio show at AM 1440 KUHL and has been a speaker at COLAB events.



HAVE A GREAT REST OF THE SUMMER.
THE WEEKLY UPDATE WILL BE BACK ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2017



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Assemblyman Travis Allen Files Ballot Initiative to Repeal California Gas Tax Increase



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(Revised 2/2017)