



# **COLAB SAN LUIS OBISPO WEEK OF JUNE 24 - 30, 2018**



**CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER**

**MARCH 13, 1950 – JUNE 21 2018**

PLEASE SEE PAGE 14



## **THIS WEEK**

**NO BOARD OF SUPES MEETING  
SUMMER RECESS**

**PLANNING COMMISSION LITE**

**LAFCO CANCELLED**

**REGIONAL WATER BOARD MESSING WITH THE  
WOODLANDS COMMUNITY IN NIPOMO**

**COUNTY PENSION BOARD TO ADOPT HIGHER  
RATES  
(COUNTY WANTS POSTPONEMENT)**

## **LAST WEEK**

**DECEPTIVE OILWELL BAN PLACED ON  
NOVEMBER BALLOT**

**GRAND JURY REPORTS: SPEND MORE ON  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RECEIVED**

**STUDY OF DIABLO CLOSURE IMPACTS &  
ECON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY APPROVED**

**CIVILITY CODE OF CONDUCT ADOPTED BUT  
THE DISCUSSION WASN'T EXACTLY CIVIL**

**FORMAL FY 2018-19 BUDGET ADOPTED**

**HEMP BAN REJECTED**

## **SLO COLAB IN DEPTH**

### **SEE PAGE 14**

## **What Krauthammer Meant to Conservatives of My Generation**

**He wasn't only an influential columnist and essayist; he was emblematic of his times.**

**By Mathew Continetti**

## **Charles Krauthammer and me**

**By Lauri B. Regan**

## **THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS**

### **No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 (Not Scheduled)**

**The Board will be on a summer recess from June 24-July 6, 2018.** The next scheduled meeting is on July 10, 2018.

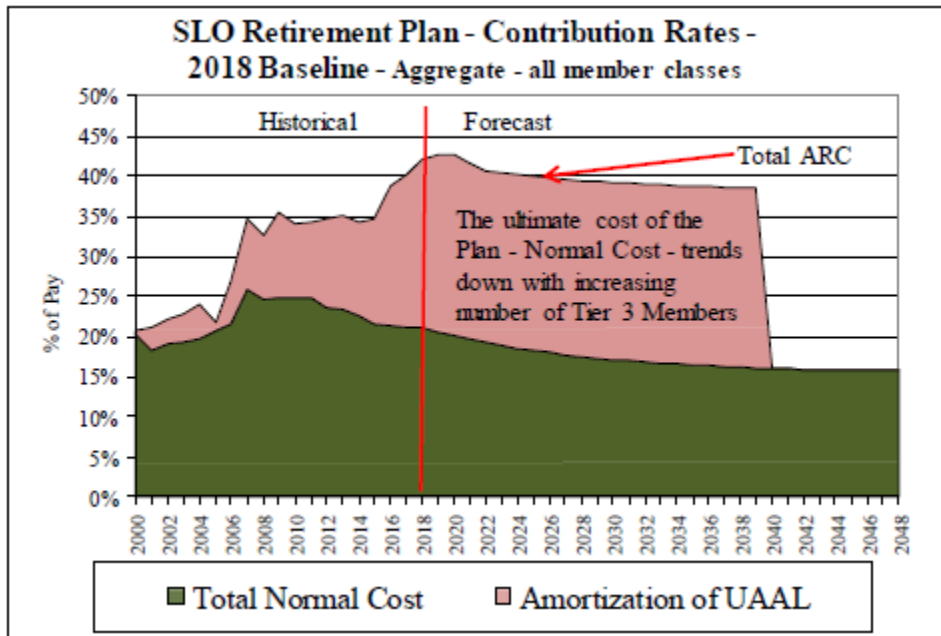
### **Planning Commission meeting of Thursday, June 28, 2018 (Scheduled)**

**There are no items of significant policy impact on this agenda.** Most of the items are requests to extend the time allowed for actual construction of previously approved projects. Also there are several cell tower applications.

**Policy Note:** We are halfway through the fiscal year, and there has been very little activity at the Commission. Other than a request for an extension of a section of the previously approved Trilogy master plan, there has been very little housing or commercial permitting. Most of the action in Planning and Building has been at the staff level attempting to sort out the marijuana regulations.

### **San Luis Obispo Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, June 25, 2018 (Scheduled)**

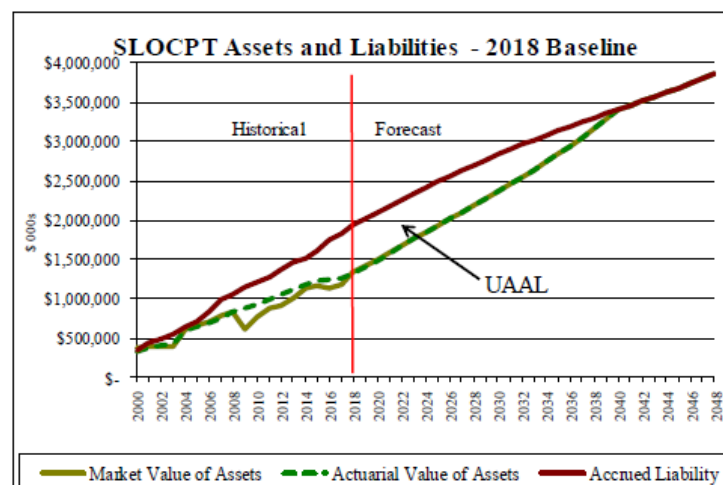
**Item 8 - January 1, 2018 Actuarial Valuation and Pension Contribution Rates.** The Pension Trust Board will consider the consulting actuaries' recommendations for raising the rates to deal with the unfunded accumulated actuarial liability (UAAL, in pink below). It will also adopt the rates for this fiscal year. Apparently the County has requested the Pension Trust Board to



consider postponing the increase until either January 2019 or July 2019. Doing this makes the rates go a little higher.

The chart to the left summarizes the unfunded liability which is to be paid off by about 2040. This assumes that the

system achieves an average rate of return (the discount rate) of 7% from 2018 to 2040. The chart below presents the same data in a different view:



Although the Trust achieved a 15% market return in 2017, on an actuarial basis it did not achieve 7%. The actuarial rate of return is different from the market rate of return because the actuarial rate is the projected amount required to amortize the UAAL over the projected amortization period (from now to 2040).

## Actuarial Analysis of Financial Experience

Composite Gain (Loss) for January 1, 2007 through 2017

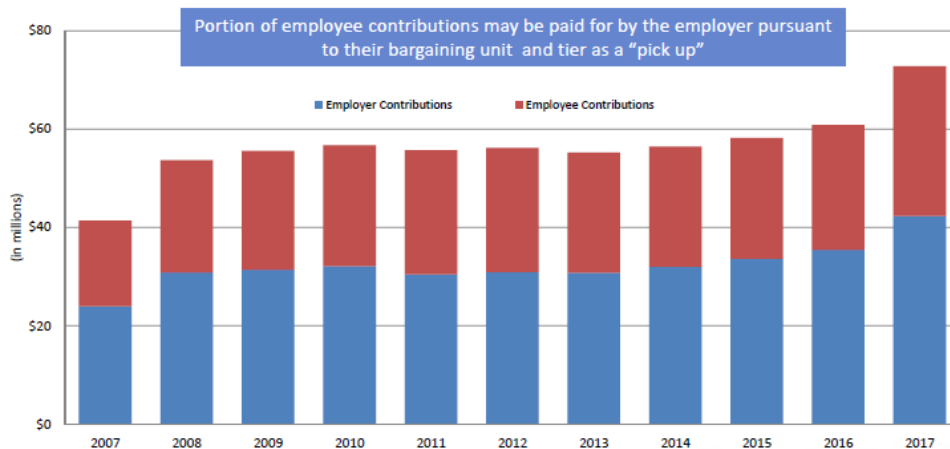
Valuation Date	Actuarial Gain (Loss)	Beginning of Prior Year Accrued Liabilities	Gain (Loss) Percentage Attributable to Investments	Gain (Loss) Percentage Not Attributable to Investments	Total Gain (Loss) Percentage
1/1/2007	(\$12,682,702)	\$831,289,683	0.01 %	(1.54)%	(1.53)%
1/1/2008	(8,713,157)	962,827,691	0.50 %	(1.40)%	(0.90)%
1/1/2009	(85,180,942)	1,057,124,348	(3.09)%	(0.70)%	(3.78)%
1/1/2010	3,281,208	1,150,214,145	(1.55)%	1.84 %	0.29 %
1/1/2011	3,596,270	1,216,153,057	(0.55)%	0.85 %*	0.30 %
1/1/2012	12,704,448	1,282,058,335	(1.73)%	2.72 %	0.99 %
1/1/2013	(18,925,942)	1,378,549,314	(0.83)%	(0.54)%	(1.37)%
1/1/2014	(1,139,190)	1,468,000,678	(0.77)%	0.69 %*	(0.08)%
1/1/2015	(32,743,994)	1,518,751,027	(1.53)%	(0.63)%	(2.16)%
1/1/2016	(58,036,495)	1,605,591,209	(3.22)%	(0.39)%	(3.61)%
1/1/2017	(44,978,787)	1,749,342,265	(2.57)%	(0.00)%	(2.57)%

\*The Board elected to accelerate recognition of \$10 million of the 2008 loss for the year ending December 31, 2010 and December 31, 2013.

## Historical Perspective

*How Has The Cost Of The Plan Been Shared?*

### Member Contributions and Employer Contributions



Employee contributions are increasing as a percentage of the total, but are actually partially offset by the so-called employer "pick up." We asked the staff how much this is in aggregate during our budget review but were told they could not calculate it at that time. Huh? Does this mean the County finance system cannot extract a category of expenditures by a simple code?

Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board meeting of Thursday/Friday, June 28-29, 2018, Santa Barbara County Administration Building, 105 E. Anapamu St., Santa Barbara (9:00 AM BOTH DAYS)

**Item 6 - More Strict enforcement and Standards for Total Dissolved Solids, etc. at the Woodlands in Nipomo.** The Water Board says the Development is not meeting the standards for discharged wastewater used on the golf courses, vineyard, and landscaped border areas (about 240,000 gallons per day). The write-up states in part:

*The Discharger has consistently not met the facility's TDS limit since it began operations and has incurred a TDS effluent violation virtually every month they have been in operation. The Nipomo Mesa as a whole usually fails to meet the Basin Plan's groundwater quality objective of 710 mg/L for TDS. Plans are in place to use the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin Characterization and Planning Activities study as the foundation for the development of a salt and nutrient management plan for this adjudicated basin. The Discharger is participating in the development efforts.*

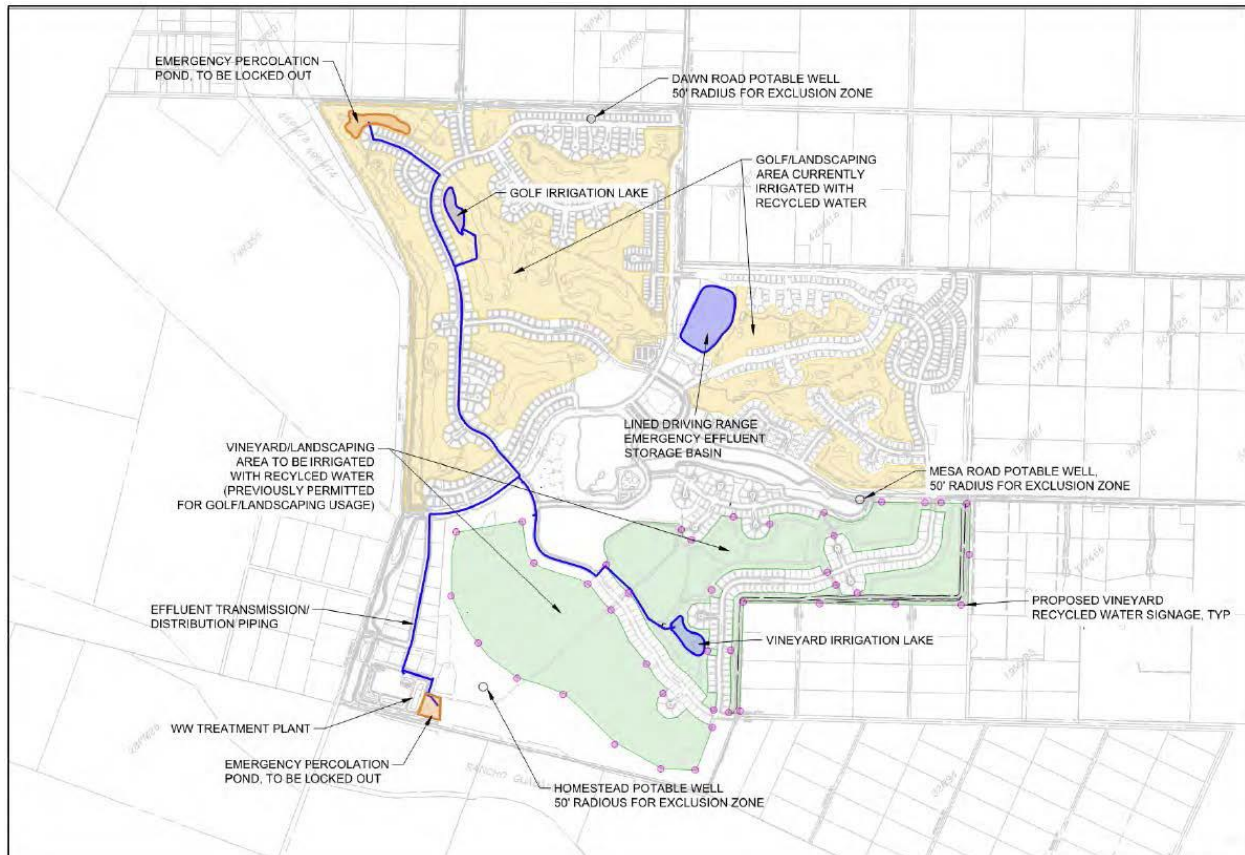
**New Permit Requirements:**

- 1. A requirement that within one year of the adoption date of the Order, the Discharger submit a study analyzing the steps that will be taken to reduce TDS in the water delivered to all reclaimed water users.*
- 2. A new provision requiring the completion and development of a groundwater monitoring network by installing wells MW5, MW6, MW7, and MW8 (Figure 1) within one year of the adoption of the Order.*
- 3. A new point of compliance for total dissolved solids will be located within each reclaimed water storage unit, and the effluent limit mean will be a rolling 6-month average.*
- 4. The MRP will now require electronic submittal of all reports, documents, and laboratory data to the GeoTracker database.*

What this will add to annual association fees?

What if they can't meet the requirements?





Check out the reporting requirements at the link below. It will gas your mind. Control click:

[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board\\_info/agendas/2018/june/item6/item6\\_att4.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2018/june/item6/item6_att4.pdf)

## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, June 19, 2018 (Completed)

**Item 5 - Grand Jury Report Critical of the County's Psychiatric Public Health Facility (PHF).** The Board received the report and approved its responses to the Grand Jury without comment. The Civil Grand Jury report found the facility to be programmatically inadequate and

physically dilapidated. Its key recommendation is for the County to construct and operate a new psychiatric hospital.

*The County should find or build a new psychiatric hospital facility, with sufficient room for patient treatment and recovery. Funding could come from reserves sources (County and/or MHSA) or pursuing a state grant.*

Such a new building and its operation would cost an initial millions and millions ongoing which the County does not have because the facility and its operation would have to meet full hospital accreditation standards in order to receive State and Federal cost reimbursements from Medi-Cal, Medicare, and other programs.

In a bit of irony, the Board of Supervisors rejected the idea of building and operating a new mental hospital because it does not have the funding (see item 6 below). This took place on the same day that the Board was being asked to ban the oil and gas industry and related potential new taxes and royalty agreements. Can banning off road riding on the La Grande tract at the Oceano Dunes be far behind?

#### **Item 6 - Grand Jury Report on Behavioral Services in the County – Spend Lots More.**

Similarly, the Board received the report and approved a response to the effect that it could do some things but didn't have funding for large program expansions.

This report focuses on the broader perspective of the inadequacy of the services, not in terms of quality, but in terms of access, frequency, and system coordination. The same question and forces described in Item 5 above were in play here.

Again and while the Board adopted a "balanced budget" on this same agenda, these recommendations were rejected as infeasible because there is insufficient revenue. Meanwhile shutting down oil and gas wells (see item 43 below), closing the dunes recreation, prohibiting 5-star destination resorts, prohibiting high tax paying estate and ranchette houses, rationing water instead of investing in abundant water construction and production, hamstringing the Phillips 66 Refinery, limiting Ag vertical integration, promoting stack-and-pack housing, and turning the Diablo site into a tax exempt preserve are all part of the prevailing policy theory of the County's scheme of land use.

#### **Item 7 - County and Cities Reach Agreement on Cost Sharing for New Animal Shelter Construction and Ongoing Operations.**

The plan was approved. Essentially the County will contribute the first \$1 million of the \$13.2 million cost of building the facility. The cities and County will share in the remaining \$12.2 million cost based on their estimated usage. The cities are getting a good deal. It is a total pain for a government to operate an animal shelter. Someone is always unhappy.



**Item 8 - Contract (\$325,000) with the Economic Vitality Corporation to Study the Economic Impact of the Closure of the Diablo Nuclear Plant – How to Replace that Impact Loss Through a Strategic Economic Development Plan.** The Board approved this item, which will initiate the first part of a contract with the EVC, which will manage the process. The entire process is expected to take several years and will ultimately cost \$1.2 million. The cities and business community are expected to contribute and raise funds.

The EVC has selected Vital Economy Alliance (Vital) of Brattleboro, Vermont, to be the consultant for the effort. Vital is really a consortium of consultants from different parts of the country with specialties in economic analysis, communications, community process, etc. Vital specializes in rural communities and regions which may not support industrial development. The effort seems to be very process heavy with many “stakeholder groups” and meetings. A danger is that it is a giant Delphi process to reach a predetermined conclusion – a “green economy,” whatever that is.

It is not clear where Vitals’ agricultural industry experience stands.

**Items 31 and 32 - Further Action on Boundary Modifications for the Los Osos Groundwater Basin and the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin.** Authorization for the staff to petition the State for boundary modifications based on updated detailed hydrological information was approved several weeks ago. The Board in its capacity as Water Agency passed resolutions supporting its prior actions as Board of Supervisors.

**Item 33 - Boundary Change for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin.** This one approved the request to the State to make the Basin Boundary for management purposes congruent with the Monterey/ SLO County line. Each County and its constituent basin governments would manage its portion to SGMA standards. In the end they would have to dovetail their respective plans to balance the entire basin.

**Item 38 - Request to approve a Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 renewal service contract (Clerk’s File), with the option to renew for two additional years (through June 30, 2021), for Emergency Shelter, and Wraparound Foster Care (WFC) with Family Care Network, Inc. (FCNI), a local foster family agency in the amount of \$6,655,000.** The write-up underscored this component of the social decay that is ravaging California under the progressive left regime:

*Statewide there are approximately 60,000 children and youth in foster care annually, 2 and countywide the Department of Social Services of San Luis Obispo County (DSS) provides foster care services to roughly three hundred and seventy-five (375) children and youth each year.*

Several of FCNI’s Annual Reports are attached to the Board item, are quite impressive, and are well worth a look. See the site:

[https://fcni.org/sites/default/files/flipbook/annual\\_report\\_16-17/?page=1](https://fcni.org/sites/default/files/flipbook/annual_report_16-17/?page=1)

**Policy Impact:** As in Item 5, above, the County is attempting to plug the dike against eroding social conditions, declining economic opportunities, and basic values decay. To the extent that abolition of the economic ladder provided by the oil industry contributes to family disarray, the public should be outraged at the proposal to ban the oil and gas industry in SLO County in agenda Item 43 below.

**Item 42 - Review and adoption of a Code of Civility.** The Board approved the Code of Civility unanimously. Both Hill and Gibson used the opportunity to lecture the Board majority that unless they used “fact based logic” and therefore ostensibly agreed with Hill and Gibson’s “fact based logic” on whatever matters are before the Board, they were being uncivil. Expect more of this tripe in the future.

**Item 40 - So-Called “Fracking” – SLO County Oil and Gas Well Ban.** Ultimately, and after considerable public comment and wrangling, the Board voted 4/0 to place the deceptively labeled measure on the ballot. Supervisor Peschong had recused himself because his consulting firm had worked for the oil industry in the past. The key decisions included:

1. Adopt the ordinance banning new oil and gas wells and fracking, even though there is no fracking in San Luis Obispo County.

**Or**

2. Place the measure on the November 6, 2018 general election ballot.

A prudent step was for the Board of Supervisors to request an independent opinion from the elected Auditor Controller on the potential negative financial impacts if the measure passes. This would be included in the ballot materials. The proponents were apoplectic about this and bombarded the Board members with communications demanding that they omit this important step.

Arnold and Compton proposed that this opinion be provided and that the full text of the ballot measure be included in the November General Election Pamphlet versus a summary. Hill and Gibson opposed both of these measures. There was considerable debate punctuated by testimony from the Auditor Controller that he really didn’t know much about the subject and could not really speculate on the future economic impact of the measure. There were several tie votes. For a moment it appeared that the measure would have to be placed on the ballot by the Superior Court if the Board deadlocked.

This is the last thing that the opponents wanted because if the issue went to Court, the oil industry could appear and challenge the legality of the ordinance itself. (See the legal issue section at the end of this article below for a refresher and update on this aspect.)

In the end there was a compromise by which the Auditor Controller would be directed to prepare the 500-word economic impact statement but only a summary of the ordinance would be

included in the election materials pamphlet. Given that the Auditor Controller had already stated that he couldn't analyze the measure effectively in the time allotted nor could he cover the subject in 500 words properly, the proponents got what they wanted.

### **At The Meeting:**

The most significant, but little noticed event during the hearing was the appearance and testimony of a representative of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). LULAC is the oldest Hispanic advocacy organization in the United States, founded in 1929 and headquartered in Washington DC. It has chapters (Councils) throughout the nation.



LULAC opposes the proposed oil and gas well ban in San Luis Obispo County. The spokesman stated that Hispanic county residents who work in the industry achieve upward social and economic mobility. Many of those who will ultimately lose their jobs if the measure passes are Hispanic. The measure will kill opportunity in a variety of ways. LULAC also pointed out that California's high gas prices and fuel taxes hurt the poor more than other groups.

**Policy Note:** Heretofore, left progressives and eco-politicos have assumed that they will be supported by Hispanics indefinitely. But here we see a divide. As more and more Hispanic voters come to understand the economics, elitism, and hypocrisy of the left progressive green move net, they will come to oppose the current power structure.

Interestingly, a LULAC Vice-President served on a Santa Barbara County economic policy forum last week and presented the same message in much stronger terms. Several SB County Supervisors and a number of mayors and city council members in the room perked up their ears.

Otherwise there were 23 speakers who supported the measure and 34 who opposed it.

In the end Gibson stated flatly: Passage of this ordinance "will not shut out oil and gas production in this County." OK, then logical Bruce, does that mean you don't support the shutting out of oil in the County? And if so why do we need the ordinance in the first place?

### **Background: Larger Public Policy Purpose:**

Banning oil wells, closing nuclear plants, creating energy chaos, socializing energy production and distribution, deliberately creating water shortages and forcing water rationing, forcing people out of their cars, herding people into dense zero lot line stack-and-pack housing, mandating solar panels on homes (new homes are just the first step), taking over the health care system (Newsome's single payer promise), and relentlessly increasing fuel taxes are all components of the left progressive plan to deindustrialize and impoverish California.

This in turn creates the pre-conditions and crises for justifying the elimination of private property of all types and the regimentation of society.



A smaller than anticipated crowd of progressive left “Fracktivist’s” attended the meeting to bully the Board and attempt to compel them to adopt the ordinance without a vote of the people. The Sierra Club, ECOSLO, and Surfrider Foundation all requested immediate passage or, if that was rejected, placement on the ballot.

### **Background:**

The measure (NOW ON THE BALLOT) is deceptively labeled an anti-fracking measure. One problem is there is no fracking in SLO County. Also deceptively, the measure states that existing oil wells can remain in service as legal **non-conforming** uses until they are depleted. The problem in this case is that some maintenance activities for existing wells are banned or will require substantial permitting and will be subject to rejection and challenge. Once a use is made nonconforming, there are all sorts of problems which Planning congers up. You want to put in a new pump, no; you need a storage building, no; you need a new tank, no; after all the use is non-conforming. How can the County approve its extension? This is another reason the measure is so deceptive and dishonest.

In the end the intent of the proponents is to drive the oil and gas industry out of the County. What if they decide next that red meat, single occupancy vehicles, and home fireplaces are bad for society? There is no end to the progressive left agenda. As they say, a primary target is the potential expansion of the Price Canyon oilfield. Charles Varney of Oceano is the front face of this effort. He helped lead the lynching of the Phillips 66 tank car proposal. He is also deeply involved in the Ocean Dunes recreation shutdown effort. If they can kill the Price Canyon oilfield, which provides feedstock to the Phillips Refinery, they may force the refinery’s closure. It is already suffering from pipeline closures by the County of Santa Barbara (which also prohibited the transportation of the former piped oil in trucks).

### **Legal Issue:**

In December, 2017 Monterey County Superior Court Judge Thomas Wills ruled that its voter approved Measure Z, which banned all new oil and gas wells, banned water injection wells, and restricted maintenance activities, was illegal. He did decide, with ironic logic, that provisions of the ordinance banning fracking were legal because there is no fracking in Monterey County. There would be no way for an appellant oil producer to appeal an anti-fracking provision because they had not yet been harmed. Industry witnesses in the trial testified that they did not intend to undertake fracking.

Significantly, several months ago, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors determined not to appeal the case, citing the probability that the appeal process would cost millions of dollars of taxpayer money and had no guaranteed results. We, of course cannot know what the Monterey County Counsel and their outside expert consulting attorneys said in closed session, but it apparently it wasn't good. The oil companies, for their part, agreed to no fracking, pointing out that the oil-bearing strata in Monterey County consist of alluvial sands and do not lend themselves to fracking.

The Court held in part: *...that California's state oil and gas legal and regulatory scheme "fully occupies the area of the manner of oil and gas production" and therefore preempts the Monterey County policy banning underground wastewater injection and prohibiting the drilling of any new wells. Because Measure Z sought to regulate the manner of oil and gas production by restricting particular production techniques it "is in conflict with general law and is therefore preempted."* The Court also held that Measure Z conflicted with both state and federal law governing underground injection. The Safe Water Drinking Act directed the Environmental Protection ...Agency "to oversee underground injection throughout the United States" and granted the State of California the primary enforcement responsibility. The county measure "directly conflicts" with the state's mandate.

Monterey County's oldest continuously producing oilfield at San Ardo has been in operation for over 70 years. The proponents of the oil and gas well ban, led by the Center for Biological Diversity, have filed an appeal. They will be able to spend millions on that appeal as they are ultimately funded by the usual coterie of Hungarian billionaires, Russian cronies of Vladimir Putin, Iranian Ayatollahs, and Middle Eastern oil sheiks who operate through a network of US foundations. They could care less about climate change, CO2, and water quality. They want to destroy the United States and Israel.

The measure qualified on the basis of the 20,313 signatures collected. However it is illegal on its face. Obviously County Counsel and the Board of Supervisors put it on the ballot and decided not to challenge it. County Counsel Rita Neal confirmed on the public record that the County will have to defend the Measure if it is approved. Ultimately, the County will have to spend millions defending the deceptive and destructive ordinance.

At least they know now that if it passes, the County will be in Court spending a ton of money to defend it. Reportedly, Monterey County has already spent in excess of \$1million defending their version up to this point and prior to the settlement.

The full text of the measure can be viewed at the link below:

<http://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/agenda/sanluisobispo/8831/VGV4dCBvZiB0aGUgTWVhc3VyZS5wZGY=/12/n/95211.doc>

**Item 48 - Adoption of the Proposed FY 2018-19 County Operating and Capital Budgets.**

The Board had already voted tentative approval of all the Budget sections. This item was treated as a formality. The Adopted Budget will be about \$733 million all in when the County dependent special districts and enterprise funds are counted.

**Item 50 - Hearing to consider and adopt an Industrial Hemp Urgency Ordinance to establish a moratorium on the cultivation of industrial hemp in all unincorporated portions of San Luis Obispo County with certain exemptions, by 4/5 vote.** Staff proposed an urgency ordinance to suspend new hemp operations until it can figure out their regulatory aspects. There was considerable opposition. The Board ultimately determined not to adopt the ordinance.

**Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Meeting of Thursday, June 21, 2018  
(Cancelled)**

There were no burning issues.

## **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**

### **What Krauthammer Meant to Conservatives of My Generation**

**He wasn't only an influential columnist and essayist; he was  
emblematic of his times.**

**By Mathew Continetti**

In 1993, Charles Krauthammer delivered the [commencement address](#) at McGill University. Some 20 years earlier, he told the graduates, he had been sitting in the same seats. "What I shall offer you today," he said, "is a reconnaissance report from a two-decade life expedition into the world beyond McGill College Avenue." Sardonicly likening himself to Marco Polo, Krauthammer said he had returned to his alma mater "without silk, with few stories, indeed, with but three pieces of sage advice."



The lessons? Don't lose your head, Krauthammer explained. Look outward and avoid the insularity and parochialism of narcissism. And save the best.

Krauthammer, who died of cancer this week, was born in 1950 to Jews who had fled the Holocaust. He exercised the same power over Gen-X and Millennial conservatives that William F. Buckley held for an earlier generation. But Krauthammer's conservatism was as unique as his biography—and revealing of the intellectual and political currents of the latter half of the American century. Krauthammer, like Walter Lippmann, was not only an influential columnist and essayist. He was emblematic of his times.

Krauthammer went from McGill to Oxford to study political philosophy, only to zigzag to Harvard where he enrolled in medical school and became chief resident in psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital. As he practiced medicine, however, he found he could not escape the call of politics—upon which, he would later write, all else depends. A job at the National Institutes of Health was his ticket to D.C. From there he wrote speeches for Vice President Walter Mondale. The election of Ronald Reagan left him out of a job. He found refuge at *The New Republic*.

The flagship publication of American liberalism had become a home of sorts for liberals uncomfortable with the direction of the Democratic Party after George McGovern's presidential nomination in 1972. Krauthammer described his foreign policy at the time as liberal internationalism: taking a hard line toward the Soviet Union, offering rock-ribbed support of the Jewish State of Israel, standing for the furtherance of democratic and pluralistic values abroad, and being willing to defend the Great Society at home. Increasingly, however, he found that he had more in common with Ronald Reagan's foreign policy than with Jimmy Carter's or even Walter Mondale's.

Key to this development was the so-called nuclear freeze—an issue where activists on the left, in his view, were losing their heads. “Indeed, those who refused to lose their heads to the hysteria were diagnosed as suffering from some psychological disorder,” he said at McGill. “Ten years later, with nuclear weapons still capable of destroying the world many times over—not a word about the coming apocalypse. The fever has passed.” But there were other inflammations. And by the late 1980s, this Great Society liberal was sounding more and more like a Reagan Republican.

His new allies were somewhat leery. While Krauthammer became more skeptical of the welfare state's ability to achieve desired results, and more supportive of a constitutionalism that judged government action by its adherence to the original meaning of the amended text, he was never a social conservative. He was suspicious of certainty. As he put it in [a tribute](#) to his hero Isaiah Berlin, "The true heart of the liberal political tradition is the belief that no one has the secret as to what is the ultimate end and goal of life. There are many ends, each deserving respect, and it is out of this very pluribus that we get freedom."

This skepticism made him wary of all those, including religious conservatives, determined to impose a singular truth on a population of 300 million Americans. "Freedom is being left alone," he said in the same [column](#). "Freedom is a sphere of autonomy, an inviolable political space that no authority may invade." And so Krauthammer often found himself at a distance from conservative positions on abortion, same-sex marriage, stem-cell research, intelligent design, and the place of religion in public life. In these divergences he became representative of a Beltway conservatism that, while allied with social conservatives and often enjoying their support, nonetheless stood apart from the concerns and beliefs that motivated them to political action.

Neither Berlin nor Krauthammer's other lodestar, John Stuart Mill, were without intellectual problems. Berlin, Krauthammer said, was not a creator but a curer. His work was a tonic, dissolving the pretensions of political romanticism in an acid bath of empirical moderation. But "the central paradox" of such liberalism, he wrote, was that "it made pluralism—the denial of one supreme, absolute value—the supreme, absolute value." It was a small jump from embracing multiple "ends of life" to fuzzyheaded and navel-gazing relativism.

But, looking beyond himself, Krauthammer found that lines must be drawn. And it was in the arena of foreign policy where Krauthammer drew such lines most sharply—not to mention, controversially. His support for the anti-Communist contras in Nicaragua cost *The New Republic* subscriptions. His lifelong commitment to Israel's survival made him the subject of vitriolic criticism. His proclamation of the "unipolar moment" after the fall of the Soviet Union, and his support for the first and second Iraq wars, both established the lines of argument for foreign-policy debate in the 1990s and 2000s and revealed cleavages within the conservative coalition that eventually would result in the rise of Donald Trump.

Krauthammer opposed a blanket ban on torture. "It would be a gross dereliction of duty for any government *not* to keep Khalid Sheikh Mohammed isolated, disoriented, alone, despairing, cold and sleepless, in some godforsaken hidden location in order to find out what he knew about plans for future mass murder,"

he wrote in *The Weekly Standard* [in 2005](#). America, he said four years later, could remain global hegemon through sheer will. “Decline is a choice. More than a choice, a temptation.” His circumspection and hesitance to adopt uniform rules was relaxed in the global arena, where he believed international law held no force and the survival of freedom could be ensured only through the exercise of raw power.

When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, Krauthammer became more than a public intellectual. He became a television celebrity. His appearances on Fox News Channel’s *Special Report with Bret Baier* introduced him to an audience of millions. For conservatives suspicious of Obama’s “[New Foundation](#),” Krauthammer’s evening commentaries were homiletic. They provided comfort and guidance: comfort that such a brilliant man shared one’s opposition to the president and the direction of history, and guidance in how to criticize the progressivism of Obama and his inheritors.

Krauthammer was aware of his peculiar status as a Harvard-trained psychiatrist holding forth multiple times a day on Rupert Murdoch’s cable-news channel. “I was once a speechwriter for Walter Mondale,” Krauthammer [said in 2009](#). “How do I explain that? Easy. Being born one generation too late, working for Mondale was the closest I could get to being a Trotskyite—which, as you all know, is the royal road to neo-conservatism.”

Like many, I became aware of Krauthammer through television. But not through Fox. Like Krauthammer discovering Berlin at age 19, I came across the good doctor sometime in the early 1990s, during one of his appearances on the syndicated public-affairs show *Inside Washington*. As a teenager in suburban Virginia interested in politics and foreign affairs, I was captivated by his clarity, his mordant wit, his breadth of knowledge, his incisiveness, his willingness to entertain all arguments, and his adamant defense of democracy, freedom, and pluralism. Then I discovered I was one of the lucky ones: I also could read him in my local paper, *The Washington Post*.

No more. Saddened by his death, I find myself grateful his words remain. For they are the touchstones of Krauthammer’s method, interests, passions, and commitments, of his wit, tragic view of life, curiosity, skepticism, and intellectual seriousness and credibility. They can’t be ignored, just as he could not be ignored. And they are his bequest to all of us.

“Conserving what’s best in the past is, well, conservative advice,” he said at McGill in 1993. “It was the advice of Chesterton who defined tradition as the democracy of the dead. Tradition is the ultimate democracy because it extends the franchise to generations past and benefits from their hard-earned wisdom.”

*Matthew Continetti is the editor in chief of the Washington Free Beacon. This article was first posted The Atlantic on June 22, 2018.*

## Charles Krauthammer and me

By Lauri B. Regan

The [death](#) of Charles Krauthammer affected me deeply, for he taught me by word and by example. This [article](#) from four and half years ago explains why. To my shock and delight, after it was published, he wrote me a personal note of thanks.

From American Thinker, January 7, 2014:

One Sunday night in early November I watched Bret Baier's [Special Report](#) in which he interviewed Charles Krauthammer. In responding to a question about his inclusion in his book, *Things That Matter*, a 2007 column about baseball player Rick Ankeil's fall and return to the major leagues, Krauthammer responded with a reference to a line from that article: "...the catastrophe that awaits everyone from a single false move, wrong turn, fatal encounter. Every life has such a moment. What distinguishes us is whether -- and how -- we ever come back."

Several hours later, I had a terrible accident. As it was occurring, my awareness that something bad was about to happen brought that line front and center in my consciousness. And Krauthammer's words -- more precisely, his life story -- inspired me to make my injury a defining moment from which I would recover and proceed to focus on the "things that matter."

Krauthammer explained in a 2011 column that "...if we don't get politics right, everything else risks extinction." Simple yet poignant; he could have started and ended the book there. But as I lay in bed reading *Things That Matter*, something struck me. Out of almost every piece included in the book (88 columns spanning three decades), there was a thought or statement that is just as relevant today as when first written.

As we ring in yet another year of disaster under the Obama administration, and predictions for 2014 from pundits and journalists taken to engage in such predilections overwhelm our inboxes, Krauthammer's prescient insights and sheer brilliance scream from each page. Here are some of my favorites (in the order in which they appear) and why I believe they are relevant today:

- Krauthammer's disgust with domestic terrorist Katherine Ann Power (who turned herself in for the murder of a policeman and father of nine "in order to live with full authenticity in the present" rather than out of remorse) is apparent as he observes

In an age where the word *sin* has become quaint - reserved for such offenses against hygiene as smoking and drinking... surrendering to the authorities for armed robbery and manslaughter is not an act of repentance but of personal growth.

Krauthammer wrote that column in 1993, 15 years before Barack Obama would saunter into the White House due, in part, to Americans ignoring his relationship with unrepentant domestic terrorist Bill Ayers.

- In writing about the brouhaha over Rudy Giuliani's threats to shut down a 1999 art exhibit that celebrated the "blasphemous, the criminal and the decadent," Krauthammer recognized that

Self-respect is a hopelessly bourgeois value. The avant-garde lives by a code of fearless audacity and uncompromising authenticity. And endless financial support... Why are we being forced to subsidize willful, offensive banality?

Krauthammer not only points out the moral decline of a culture that today breeds endless reality TV shows in which the Kardashians' and Desperate Housewives' public displays of dysfunction are commonplace while Miley Cyrus twerks her way to stardom. He is also offended that taxpayers are often financially responsible for behavior they find immoral (today, in the form of Obamacare's contraception and abortifacient mandates).

- "The Inner Man? Who Cares" written in 1999 just after new Nixon Watergate tapes were released is highly pertinent in light of an electorate that became enamored with a man they deemed their messiah based on empty rhetoric. Addressing the Nixon bashing that took place after his private thoughts became public, Krauthammer stated:

To think that one can decipher the inner life of some distant public figure is folly....

"Know thyself" is a highly overrated piece of wisdom. As for knowing the self of others, forget it. Know what they do and judge them by their works.

Had Americans taken Krauthammer's advice, Obama's postage stamp-sized resume, mysterious past, and questionable associations would have prevented him from winning the primary let alone the presidency.

- In 1983, Krauthammer published a column for *Time* entitled "The Mirror-Image Fallacy" in which he addresses "plural solipsism" -- the belief that the whole world is like me. In the age of obsession with political correctness, "Coexist" bumper stickers, and a president who believes his dynamic personality can heal the planet, Krauthammer's insights ring true. People suffering from this solipsism are the very ones who elected Obama on the basis that

If people everywhere, from Savannah to Sevastopol, share the same hopes and dreams and fears and love of children..., they should get along. And if they don't then there must be some misunderstanding, some misperception, some problem of communication.

He continues

If the whole world is like me, then certain conflicts become incomprehensible; the very notion of intractability becomes paradoxical. When the U.S. embassy in Tehran is taken over, Americans are bewildered....

Other messages from exotic cultures are never received at all. The more virulent pronouncements of Third World countries are dismissed as mere rhetoric. The more alien the sentiment, the less seriously it is taken. Diplomatic fiascos follow...

Krauthammer reasons that the U.S.

might have spared itself [certain humiliations in the Mideast] if it had not in the first place imagined that underneath those kaffiyehs are folks just like us, sharing our aims and views.

And concludes:

Those who have long held a mirror to the world and seen only themselves are apt to be shocked and panicked when the mirror is removed, as inevitably it must be.

The problem today is that by the time the mirror is removed by those in this administration who believe that Iranians, Syrians, Palestinians, and the like want peace with Israel, America and the West, it will be too late to reverse and contain the damage.

- Krauthammer observed in a 1985 column that Halley's Comet is "the grandest reminder that an individual can behold of the constancy of nature. This because of its cycle; It returns about every 75 years, once in a lifetime." (Is this cycle any different than that of the evil that consistently rears its ugly head throughout history?) He then promises, "The ice age will be back too." Al Gore conveniently ignored this column when peddling his global warming fear mongering.

- Krauthammer made a 2007 prediction that "If [Bush's] successors don't screw it up, within 10 years NASA will have us back to where we belong -- on other worlds." Five years later, he observed, "Is there a better symbol of willed American decline" than the voluntary "interment" of the space shuttle program. This is all the more poignant as China celebrates its first lunar landing (something to which Krauthammer ironically alludes in his final essay written four years ago), Iran brags of its second launch of a monkey into space, and Obama, clearly screwing it up, has relegated NASA to reaching "out to the Muslim world... to help them feel good...."

- In another 2011 column Krauthammer recognized that Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership, moral imagination and strategic genius... turned his own deeply Christian belief that 'unearned suffering is redemptive' into a creed of nonviolence that he carved into America's political consciousness.

Contrast this with Obama's own ("Goddamn America") church experience and "leadership" of an America in which racial tensions have soared and relations have been set back decades.



- As John Kerry heads back to the Mideast on his Don Quixote-like quest for peace, it would serve him well to read Krauthammer's 2011 column entitled "Land Without Peace." This is relevant with regard to the brokering of peace between the Israelis and Palestinians as well as the recent Geneva Agreement with Iran. Krauthammer reasons that if the Palestinians were to accept a deal with Israel, it would require them to "sign a final peace agreement that accepted a Jewish state on what they consider the Muslim patrimony." He continues:

The key word here is *final*. The Palestinians are quite prepared to sign interim agreements, like Oslo Framework agreements, like Annapolis. Cease-fires, like the 1949 armistice. Anything but a final deal. Anything but a final peace. Anything but a treaty that ends the conflict once and for all -- while leaving a Jewish state still standing.

As the administration pressures Israel to commit "national suicide" on behalf of the Palestinians, it simultaneously ignores the fact that the Iranians will never sign a final deal relinquishing their right to enrich uranium. In doing so, it is helping the country that has sworn to annihilate the "rabid dogs" in their midst achieve that goal.

- In 2006, Krauthammer took to task liberal American Jews who "are seized with the notion that the real threat lurks deep in the hearts of American Protestants, most specifically southern evangelicals." He concludes "it is a sign of the disorientation of a distressed and confused people that we should find it so difficult to distinguish our friends from our enemies." This column was written two years prior to those same Jews helping Obama win -- two times.

- On the serenity of the '90's, Krauthammer shared,

I recently told an assembly at my son's high school that they were living through a time so blessed they would tell their grandchildren about it. They looked at me uncomprehendingly....

With every passing month of such profound tranquility and prosperity, the implausibility of these times becomes all the more striking.

Golden ages never last.

- In the face of Obama's Geneva Agreement with Iran, Krauthammer's 2004 essay recognizing that "an Agreed Framework on plutonium processing with the likes of North Korea is not worth the paper it is written on" is a must read. One of the best lines pertaining to a foreign policy based on realism is "America is the land mine between barbarism and civilization."

- Krauthammer's final essay entitled "Decline is a Choice (2009)" has the disadvantage of having been written prior to Obama's second win. America has chosen decline and it did so by voting for American passivity, retreat, and failed leadership after a four-year record of "empirical evidence" (the stuff that led to Krauthammer's evolution from a Democrat to a Republican and what has led any thinking person to follow in his footsteps) proving what Obama's critics have been saying for years. But Krauthammer did recognize that

Facing the choice of whether to maintain our dominance or to gradually, deliberately, willingly and indeed relievedly give it up, we are currently on a course toward the latter.

Krauthammer observed that Obama's foreign policy is one

designed to produce American decline -- to make America essentially one nation among many. And for that purpose, its domestic policies are perfectly complimentary.

But he recognized that the Europeans

can afford social democracy without the capacity to defend themselves because they can always depend on the United States....

Europe can eat, drink and be merry for America protects her. But for America it's different. If we choose the life of ease, who stands guard for us?

He concludes his book with a bit of advice which, based on his foresight over the decades since we have been blessed with his wisdom, is certainly worth serious consideration:

Resist retreat as a matter of strategy and principle. And provide the means to continue our dominant role in the world by keeping our economic house in order.... And finally, ..."...Don't do what [we] are doing now."

What are the things that matter? Each of us has our own personal passions -- for Krauthammer they consist of "science, medicine, art, poetry, architecture, chess, space, sports, [and] number theory" to name just a few. But "in the end, they must bow to the sovereignty of politics." Krauthammer, like all those who have contributed to America's exceptionalism, recognizes that great societies have been created -- and endured -- due to the selfless passions of those whose perspective transcends their personal gratification. Does it take that one moment, the fatal encounter, to create such individuals? Perhaps not in such a dramatic fashion but easy street is certainly not the path to greatness. A society of self-entitled, indulgent, and narcissistic personalities focused on progressive dreams has proven to lead to decline. A society of citizens focused inward, blissfully ignorant of human nature and the evils determined to destroy them, is doomed to be banished to the annals of history. But history's lessons are at the fingertips of all who are open to learn. Reading *Things That Matter* is perhaps a cheat sheet -- the Cliff Notes version -- for those interested in helping the greatest nation in the history of mankind endure.

*Lauri B. Regan is a lawyer, a regular contributor to the American Thinker and serves on the boards of the National Women's Committee of the Republican Jewish Coalition and the Endowment for Middle East Truth. This article first appeared in the American Thinker of June 22, 2018.*



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# **STOP** The Oil & Gas **SHUTDOWN** In San Luis Obispo County

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## **Join Community Leaders, Small Businesses and Working Families in Opposing the Oil and Gas Shutdown Initiative**



### **A Complete Shutdown of Oil and Gas Production**

Safe and productive onshore oil and gas operations have been an important part of San Luis Obispo County's economy for decades. This initiative includes drastic provisions that would lead to the shutdown of all operations in the County.

### **The Loss of More Than 200 Jobs and Millions of Dollars to our County's Economy**

If the oil and gas shutdown initiative passes, over 230 mainly blue-collar workers and their families who are reliant on the

oil and gas industry will be threatened with losing their jobs. The impact of this job loss would ripple throughout our county. In addition to the loss of jobs, San Luis Obispo County would also lose an industry that is responsible for \$64 million in economic output. Considering the pending closure of Diablo Canyon – and the looming economic strain that it will put on our county – we cannot afford the loss of another major employer.

### **Loss of Revenues for Local Schools, First Responders and Public Programs**

The annual taxes and fees paid by the oil and gas industry provide over \$1 million to our County's General Fund. Our public safety departments, public schools and county programs benefit from these resources. A shutdown would force the county to make even more cuts to these vital services – forcing cuts in firefighting services, taking police officers off of our streets, opportunity away from our students and assistance from those who need it most.

### **More Oil and Gas will be Imported from Foreign Countries and Threaten Our Environment**

While our country is making the transition to a greater reliance on renewable energy, it is important that we maintain our energy independence in the interim. Shutting down local oil production in California does not result in less consumption -- rather it means replacing local oil and jobs with foreign oil to meet our energy needs. As long as we need oil and natural gas to drive our cars, heat our homes and make electricity, it's better to produce it responsibly here in California where we have the strictest global environmental regulations in the world.

### **Hurts Those Who Can Least Afford It**

California's gas prices are already among the highest in the country. Without local production in San Luis Obispo and other counties to meet our energy needs, gas prices and energy costs could rise, placing the heaviest burden on disadvantaged communities and working-class families.

Paid for by Stop the Oil and Gas Shutdown, a Coalition of Concerned San Luis Obispo Taxpayers, and Energy Companies that Create Jobs for Our Local Economy, Committee Major Funding from California Resources Corporation

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