



**WEEKLY UPDATE APRIL 21 - 27, 2019**

**THIS WEEK**

**COUNTY LOST JOBS OVER PAST DECADE**

**NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT TO RECEIVE COUNTY SUPPORT**

**-TIME RUNNING OUT ON DIABLO CLOSURE-**

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HIGHLY TOUTED  
ECON DEV. STRATEGY ADOPTED IN 2011?**

**HOMELESS CENTER ROILS AG AND GROVER  
BEACH – CITY COUNCILS WANT SUPERVISORS  
TO TAKE THE HIT FOR DENIAL**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEAL APPEALED IN  
CAMBRIA**

**LAST WEEK**

**NO BOS MEETING**

**LAFCO PROCESS RAISES ANOTHER LEGALITY  
QUESTION ON WATER DISTRICT MODIFICATION**

# **AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEAL APPEALED IN CAMBRIA**

**COLAB IN DEPTH  
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## **DEATH, TAXES, AND A REDISTRIBUTION SCHEME FROM HELL**

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## **THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS**

**Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, April 23, 2019 (Scheduled)**

**Item 3 - Contract (\$300,000) with the Hourglass Project for the Development of a Central Coast Jobs Roadmap and Action Plan.** The Hourglass Project is a new-not-for profit created in response to the impending closure of the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant. Its website summarizes its key purposes as:

*We are a coalition of business and civic leaders who have come together to form a region-wide economic development **action tank** to create high quality jobs throughout the Central Coast Super Region – from Vandenberg Air Force Base to Camp Roberts.*

*With the ambitious goal of fostering a more prosperous economy that works better for all, we are calling on regional leaders to embrace **big thinking, bold action, and regional collaboration**, in order to shape a vibrant economic future for nearly half a million people.*

*The Hourglass Project is based on the shared belief that our economy’s problems are too big for any individual community to solve on its own and we need to collaborate regionally to create jobs.*

*This **call to action** has generated enthusiastic support from industry, education, government and nonprofit leaders all across the Central Coast.*

The key Hourglass deliverables for the project are displayed below:

**Applicant will provide a complete Central Coast Jobs Roadmap and Action Plan, which will include the following components:**

- **Vision:** Definition of the Central Coast Jobs Roadmap and Action Plan Roadmap main purpose, aspirations, and Objectives;
- **Program Governance Model:** Conceptual-level institutional and ecosystem model for the Central Coast Jobs Roadmap and Action Plan, defining overall structure, stakeholder roles and responsibilities (high-level).
- **Actionable Roadmap:** Time-bound (quarterly) plan to advance the Central Coast Jobs Roadmap and Action Plan, including key Implementation next steps
- **Performance indicators**, linked to Roadmap activities

**Applicant will provide a detailed overview of the architecture and approach for the regional database to the County.**

Hourglass Project, in partnership with appropriate consulting partners, will demonstrate to appropriate private sector and public sector users the architecture of a regional (all of San Luis Obispo County and Northern Santa Barbara County) data toolkit:

- Aggregate and display data related and described in work statement.
- Graphic user interface (website)
- Performance measurement dashboard that will track progress of Central Coast Jobs Roadmap and Action Plan Performance Metrics

This project will continue into calendar year 2020 and beyond, and is planned to include business data analysis tools, asset mapping, as well as predictive capabilities

## **Didn't the County, Business Community, and Economic Vitality Corporation Launch a Similar Initiative Earlier in the Decade?**

What happened to the County's highly touted Economic Strategy, which was announced with great fanfare in 2011? It was prepared by the Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC), which the County designated as its de facto economic development agency in lieu of having its own economic development office.

The existing economic strategy prepared and maintained for the County by the EVC is summarized as:

*The Economic Strategy Project was established in 2009 by the San Luis Obispo Economic Vitality Corporation (EVC) in partnership with the County of San Luis Obispo and the business community. The Project is the first-ever public/private partnership to perform an in-depth assessment and develop an economic strategic plan for the San Luis Obispo County region. The Project was published and endorsed by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) in 2010 and supported by both the private and public sectors. The EVC has been overseeing the implementation of the Project and completed a formal update to the Economic Strategy in 2015, also endorsed by the BOS.*

### **The Main Goal of the County/EVC Strategy includes:**

*It is envisioned that the strategy will positively impact our local economy and communities, based upon a greater understanding achieved through a deep analysis of our business sectors, and solutions from the business community for a healthier economy. The strategy offers ways to create more head-of-household jobs, foster more businesses compatible to our county, and create ways to develop more tax rolls for our local government for vital infrastructure and services.*

## **What Has the County Expended on Economic Development over the Past 10 Years?**

There does not seem to be any consolidated presentation of costs and outputs anywhere in the Budget book. To the best of our recollection the County has spent about \$140,000 per year on the EVC project, or \$1.4 million over the past 10 years.

It is spending \$200,000 per year on the SLO Hothouse small business incubator. This would be about \$600,000 over the last 3 years. It provided the SLO Art Museum a \$400,000 onetime grant for its capital campaign to construct a new expanded museum. The County has served as a conduit and assigner of tens of millions of dollars in Federal and State job triaging money over the same period.

**Employment in San Luis Obispo County Has Actually Declined Since the Recession and Recovery.** The Table below from the County's 2017-18 Comprehensive Financial Report (CAFR)

shows that employment has actually declined from 2009 through FY 2018. During the same period the County population increased by 10,000 (270,000 to 280,000).

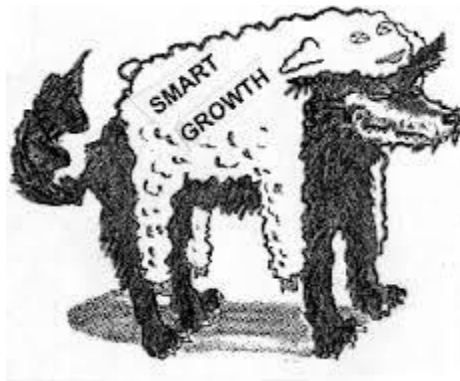
The departure of key employers such as Weatherby Fire Arms (which has moved to Wyoming) and PG&E (which will be closing Diablo in 2024) will further negatively impact these statistics. The County has been unfriendly to oil companies and denied Phillips 66 the ability to expand operations. Progressive radicals attempted to outlaw new oil and gas development in the County through a ballot measure. The Board of Supervisors will soon face major opposition against the replacement of the Plains Pipeline and the expansion of the Price Canyon Oil Field.

It is becoming more and more difficult for agriculture to survive, given water restrictions, resistance to vertical integration, Ag tourism, and State taxing schemes which attack the family farm.

While the addition of some high-tech information technology and science jobs are helpful, most of the people who work in agriculture, extractive industries, and manufacturing will not be transitioning to work as cloud system protocol designers or even systems engineers at Amazon (assuming the Mayor of SLO doesn't chase the company away).

Will existing traditional industries which employ people in real head of household jobs be shown any respect?

**PLEASE SEE THE TABLE ON THE NEXT PAGE:**



**Is so Called “Smart Growth” Really Negative Growth?**

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS  
CURRENT YEAR AND TEN YEARS AGO  
(UNAUDITED)**

Employer	2018			2009		
	Number of Employees	Rank	Percentage of Total County Employment	Number of Employees	Rank	Percentage of Total County Employment
Cal Poly State University, SLO	3,000	1	2.15%	2,693	1	1.91%
County of San Luis Obispo	2,920	2	2.09%	2,570	2	1.82%
Atascadero State Hospital	2,000	3	1.43%	2,200	3	1.56%
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	1,866	4	1.34%	1,719	5	1.22%
California Men's Colony	1,517	5	1.09%	2,000	4	1.42%
Cal Poly Corporation	1,400	6	1.00%	1,641	6	1.16%
Tenet Healthcare	1,305	7	0.94%	1,100	8	0.78%
Compass Health Inc	1,200	8	0.86%	-	-	-
Lucia Mar Unified School District	1,000	9	0.72%	1,080	9	0.76%
Paso Robles Public Schools	935	10	0.67%	-	-	-
Cuesta College	-	-	-	1,559	7	1.10%
San Luis Coastal Unified School District	-	-	-	873	10	0.62%

Total Employment Labor Force

120,500

141,200

Source:

1. SLO Chamber of Commerce
2. State of California Employment Development Department
3. 2008-2009 San Luis Obispo County CAFR

Please excuse the graphic quality but the County has digitally encrypted the CAFR so that tables and other information cannot be pasted from the document. This means we have to take a picture. No doubt the County wants to make it tougher for outsiders to distribute the information and make comments independent of the County's interpretation.

See the decrease from 2009 to 2018

**Item 31 - Homeless Funding Recommendations and a Shelter Siting Controversy.** In a secular and less momentous version of a Pascal Passion Play, no one wants take responsibility for killing a proposed homeless shelter and support services program slated to go into a former church complex in Grover Beach. The Grover Beach Mayor and Council, playing the Sanhedrin, are saying they support the project but are reportedly hoping the Board of Supervisors (presumably to play Pontius Pilot) will suffer the negative political correctness hit by denying the funding for the chosen site.

Meanwhile, the Arroyo Grande (AG) City Council (playing the role of King Herod) says it supports the project even though hundreds of their constituents, who live just across the city border, are up in arms. The leftist City Council may take a duck, like Herod, and hope the Supervisors, in their Pilot role, do the dirty work for them.

Whether the irony of the issue's timing will occur to the various interests is speculative. It's just 2 days after the celebration of the resurrection of Christ, who consorted with the poor, widows, lepers, prostitutes, contract government tax collectors, and others who were marginalized from society in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judea.

**Background:** As homelessness has mushroomed in California's poverty economy (the part that's not in Silicon Valley, San Diego, and fancy coastal enclaves), the State has invoked the usual government response, which is to throw billions of new dollars at the problem. Notwithstanding that County statistics show that homelessness has declined in the county in recent years, SLO County's share for this year is \$4.8 billion dollars. The County staff and representatives of homeless serving agencies have engaged in a process to determine how to divide up the money.

One of the selected agencies is the Five Cities Housing Partnership, which plans to use the funding to buy a former church property at 1935 Newport Avenue in Grover Beach. The basic project description is stated below:

Renovations to create housing navigation center and offices for 5CHC, development of a vocational/educational resource facility with commercial kitchen for training, transitional housing dorms for youth, and provide CE referrals, diversion and immediate needs, rapid re-housing, benefits advocacy, medically fragile and substance abuse case management, outreach, winter warming center, and other services. PSHH intends to develop permanent housing units on the property. Phase 1 - rehab Hillside Church for 5chc admin offices and housing navigation center and warming center. Phase 2 - transitional housing 44 beds (11 youth dorms) and 20 units of permanent supportive housing

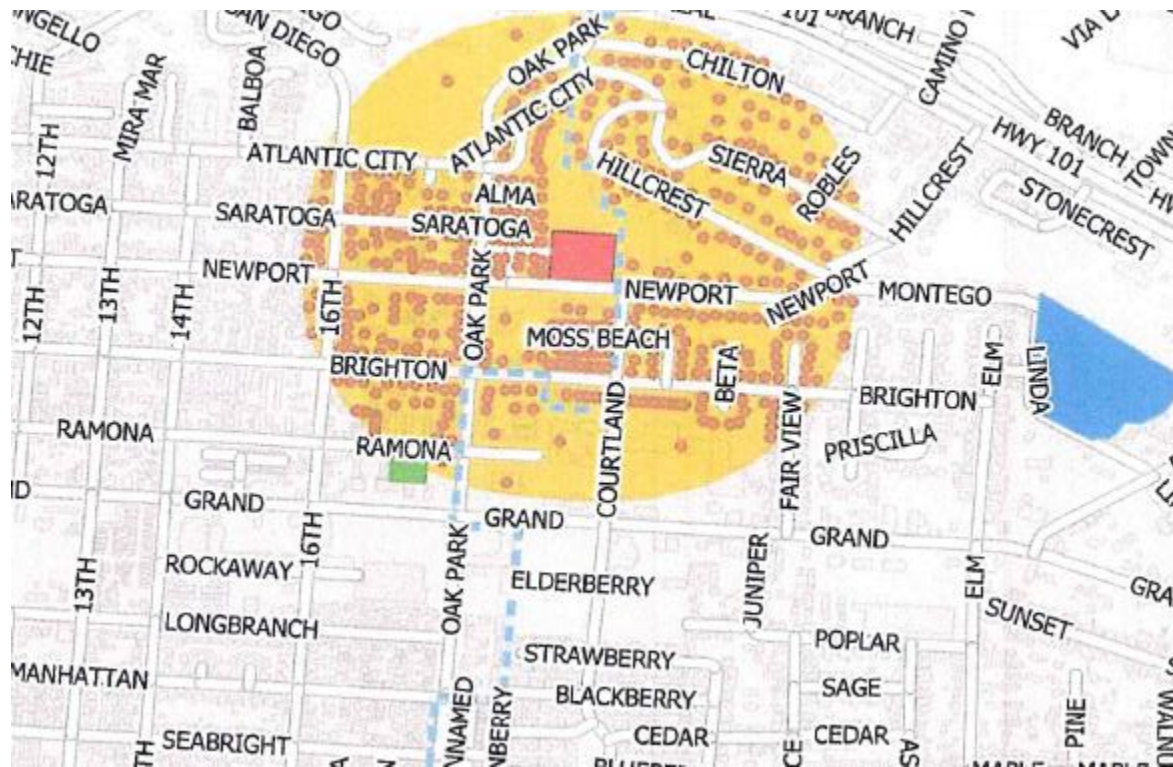
**Guess what?** Everyone purports to support the project but not in a residential neighborhood of single family free standing homes at this location. The proposed project is right on the border of Grover Beach and Arroyo Grande. Both City Councils have sent letters of support for the grant award. It turns out that residents on both sides of the boundary are strongly in opposition, fearing that the presence of homeless individuals in such numbers will be disruptive of the neighborhoods.

They cite the current problem with a warming shelter, which is operated on the property currently for 3 months of the year.

They are fearful that the homeless clients will exhibit dysfunctional behaviors, such as stalking, alcohol and drug abuse, defecating & urinating in public, and throwing trash around.

Complicating the problem is the fact that while the County Supervisors have the authority to make the funding grant, the City of Grover Beach has the zoning authority. City officials have signed off on a letter endorsing the grant and program. However, it is reported that the site is not zoned for an institutional use such as homeless shelters, feeding services, medical care, and other services. Apparently an application for a zone change is wending its way through the City's process. Since the Mayor and Council have already supported the grant and program formally, will they be able to vote on an appeal from their Planning Commission, which is very likely if it is approved at the Commission level?

For whatever reason, County staff and the Homeless Services Oversight Committee (HSCO) believed that the site was shovel ready, so to speak, but without zoning how could that be? The map extract below shows the site in relation to single family homes, which are shown as red circles. Schools are shown in blue and parks in green. The site is shown as a red rectangle. The dotted blue line is the Boundary between the cities.







The former church site would be purchased by the 5 Cities Housing Coalition. Separate from the controversy, did the Coalition get 2 separate independent appraisals by certified fee appraisers? This is proper practice for governments, and since the government is funding it, this should have happened and been documented in the application. This would be prudent, since most of the grant (\$2.6 million) for the Coalition is for the property purchase. Reportedly the property is already in escrow.

Downtown Santa Barbara has been severely impacted by an over concentration of homeless serving programs on the edges of its downtown. Feeding sites, clinical medical services, alcohol and drug prevention and treatment centers, and crisis drop-in and overnight facilities have changed the landscape.

It is not clear why governments don't use government sites which are already zoned for and developed as institutional land uses for these programs. Why couldn't these programs be situated behind fire houses, police stations, and larger facilities? As we have pointed out, many suburban and rural New England communities have town farms, where they provide services and which provide isolation from liquor stores, bars, drug dealers, and other sources of hazardous behavior.

The Board of Supervisors is likely have a long session on this item.

#### **MATTERS AFTER 1:30 PM**

**Item 35 - Hearing to consider appeals by Mary Webb and Christine Heinrichs of the Planning Commission's approval of a request by Peoples' Self-Help Housing for a Development Plan/Coastal Development Permit (DRC2012-00052) to allow the construction of a 33-unit apartment complex on the north side of Schoolhouse Lane across from Santa Lucia Middle School, approximately 0.65 mile north of the Highway 1/Main Street intersection, in the community of Cambria.** The 33-unit affordable project which was approved by the Planning Commission is being appealed on the grounds of insufficient water.

Staff points out that although Cambria is under a water use moratorium, the County's zoning gives special treatment to affordable housing. Moreover, the not-for-profit developer has a can and will serve letter from the Cambria Community service District.

Attachment 1



Townhome Building Type A



Townhome Building Type B

**Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, April 25, 2019 (Scheduled)**

**Item 5 - Hearing to consider a request by Larry Nasareno Montenegro Delgado for a Conditional Use Permit (DRC2017-001 08) to establish three acres of outdoor and 22,000 square feet of indoor cannabis cultivation, 28,800 square feet of indoor and 77,657 square feet of outdoor standalone cannabis nursery, non-volatile manufacturing, and distribution of cannabis on a portion of a 42-acre project site. The project includes construction of two greenhouses (57,600 square feet) to support the proposed indoor cultivation and indoor cannabis nursery. A 6,000-square-foot processing building would be used for non-volatile manufacturing, and the drying, curing, trimming, packaging, and labelling of non-manufactured cannabis product. Three 864-square-foot temporary office trailers are also proposed. The project will result in the disturbance of approximately 10 acres. The project would operate seven days per week, up to 24 hours per day. The project requests a modification from the parking standards set forth in Land Use Ordinance (LUO) Section 22.18.050.C.1 to reduce the required number of spaces from 128 to 19 and a modification from the setback provisions set forth in LUO Section 22.40.050.D.3.b to reduce the outdoor cultivation setbacks from 300 feet to 30 feet from the western property line, and from 300 feet to 258 feet from the eastern property line. The project site is located at 8380 Carrisa Highway in the Carrizo Planning Area. The Planning Staff recommends approval. The project went through a long environmental review process. The Topaz Solar Farm, which is nearby, was required to provide wild life transit corridors. It turns out that the wildlife are not using the corridors.**

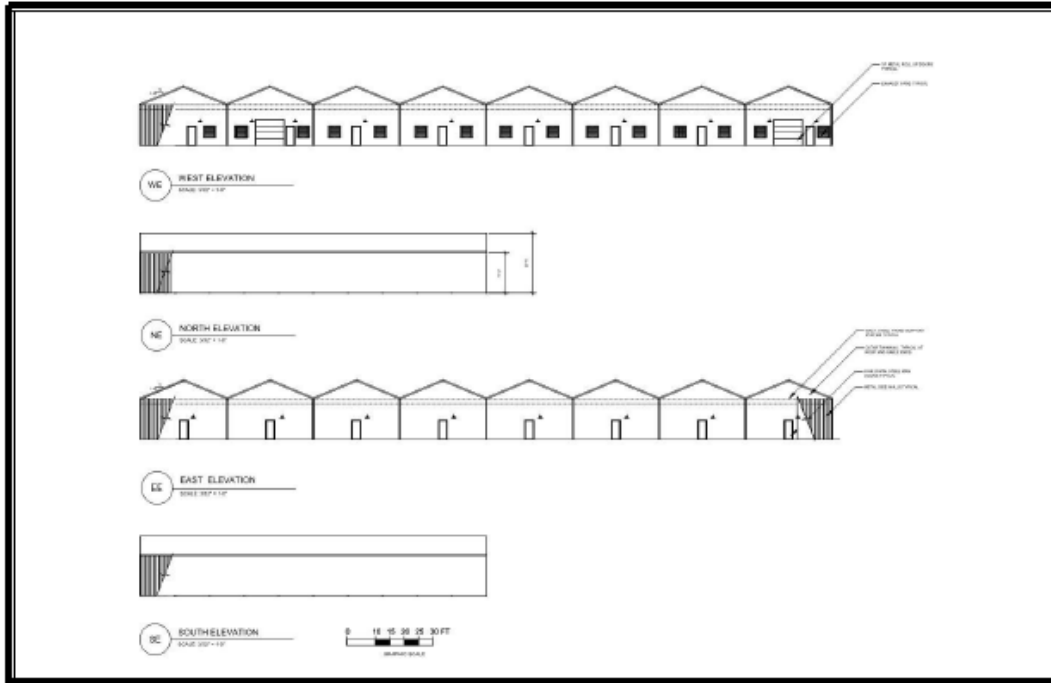
**Table 1 – Project Components**

Project Component		Structure Size (sf)	Canopy (sf)
Greenhouse 1 - Indoor Cultivation	1	28,800	22,000
Greenhouse 2 - Indoor Nursery	1	28,800	Up to 28,800
Outdoor Cultivation	1	n/a	130,680
Outdoor Nursery	1	n/a	77,537
Processing Building	1	6,000	n/a
Temporary Office Trailers (864 sq ft each)	3	2,592	n/a
Composting Area	1	23,000	n/a
Other Solid Waste	1	18,000	n/a
<b>Totals</b>		<b>107,192</b>	<b>259,017</b>
Total Area of Disturbance = 10 acres			

**Site in relation to the Topaz Solar Farm.** At least the cannabis farm will pay property taxes and other taxes. The solar farms are largely exempt under California’s renewable energy preferences.

Attachment 3





### Greenhouses

No written protests are in the file at this point.

## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

**No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 (Not Scheduled)**

**No Items:** No Board of Supervisors Meeting was scheduled.

**San Luis Obispo County Local Agency Formation Commission Meeting of Thursday, April 18, 2019 (Completed)**

**Item B-2: Memorandum From Legal Counsel Regarding Modification of an Approval Condition for the Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District EPC).** The Commission's Counsel

opined that the LAFCO did have the power to modify a condition for the approval of the EPC District. The Commission voted 7/0 to receive the report. There was no discussion and no public comment.

**Was the Process Legal?** A question has arisen with regard to the timeliness and required form of the request for a modification of Condition 11 (as explained below). The District formation was approved and formed in December 2017. The issue of modifying Condition 11 did not appear on the Commission agenda until November 2018. As noted above, the Commission's Counsel rendered a legal opinion that it was within the scope of Commission powers to make the modification. However and as noted in the State Statute quoted below, there is certainly a question:

**ARTICLE 3. Reconsideration [56895- 56895.]**  
( Article 3 added by Stats. 2000, Ch. 761, Sec. 211. )

56895.

*(a) When a commission has adopted a resolution making determinations, any person or affected agency may file a written request with the executive officer requesting amendments to or reconsideration of the resolution. The request shall state the specific modification to the resolution being requested and shall state what new or different facts that could not have been presented previously are claimed to warrant the reconsideration. If the request is filed by a school district that received notification pursuant to Section 56658, the commission shall consider that request at a public hearing.*

*(b) Notwithstanding Section 56106, the deadlines set by this section are mandatory. The person or agency shall file the written request within 30 days of the adoption of the initial or superseding resolution by the commission making determinations. If no person or agency files a timely request, the commission shall not take any action pursuant to this section.*

*(c) Upon receipt of a timely request, the executive officer shall not take any further action until the commission acts on the request.*

*(d) Upon receipt of a timely request by the executive officer, the time to file any action, including, but not limited to, an action pursuant to Section 21167 of the Public Resources Code and any provisions of Part 4 (commencing with Section 57000) governing the time within which the commission is to act shall be tolled for the time that the commission takes to act on the request.*

It is actually not clear who made the request for the modification. The EPC District Board asserted that it in fact met all the conditions and therefore would not have filed the request. There is no written request in the record. Suddenly the matter appears on the February 2018 Commission agenda. The write-up states that the Commission directed that the staff look into that possibility of replacing Condition 11 during its November 15 meeting. However, a review of the minutes of the discussion which were adopted during the January 2018 meeting indicate staff understood that the Commissioners "wanted more information about modifying or deleting condition 11." Instead, the

staff returned at the February meeting with a full blown modification proposal, which was adopted. Those minutes state in part:

There was discussion between LAFCO Staff and the Commissioners covering the following topics; Compliance with Condition 11, the possibility of revising conditions of approval, and clarification of the term “GSA Partner” and additional information about the Memorandum of Agreement between the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in the Basin.

LAFCO Staff clarified that the Commission wanted more information about the possibility of modifying or deleting previously approved condition 11, clarification of the term “GSA Partner” and the implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies in the Paso Basin.

**It appears that there never was a formal written request by anyone to modify Condition 11 as required by Statute. How did the “possibility” suddenly become an actionable item?**

Note that no direction to bring a modification forward was given.

**Background:** Approval of Condition 11 had in part originally required that unless the County relinquished its water management authority over the portion of the Paso Basin covered by the District, it could not become a Ground Water Sustainability Agency (GSA) under the State Ground Water Management Act (SGMA). The County refused, and thus the future of the district was subject to doubt. The clarified language removed the requirement that the District become a GSA unless the County does at some point relinquish its authority. The District will continue to be subject to SGMA requirements but will not have a vote on the Paso Basin Coordinating Committee, which is an interagency committee of cities, water districts, and the County, developing the basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

LAFCO modified Condition 11 to extend the deadline for 2 years while the GSP is being developed and then submitted to the State Water Resources Board for review and approval. The question then arose about the Commission’s authority to grant such a modification and waiver.

Ultimately the Commission revised Condition 11 to allow the District to remain in existence. The vote was split 4/3 with Supervisors Arnold and Compton and Atascadero Councilwoman Roberta Fonzi voting no and Tom Murry, Ed Waage, Robert Enns and Marshall Ochylski voting yes. The two Supervisors and Mrs. Fonzi have been concerned about this District from the outset due to its fragmented checkerboard footprint and the ability to vote water policy over a large portion of the basin on the basis of acres owned. Moreover the County Board majority (Arnold, Compton, and Peschong) does not wish to relinquish the County’s water management policy control over the basin.

It will be interesting to see if anyone challenges the legal opinion or even the validity of the entire process.

# **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**

## **DEATH, TAXES, AND A REDISTRIBUTION SCHEME FROM HELL (2 ARTICLES)**

### **A BIRTHRIGHT TO CAPITAL? BY ANDY CALDWELL**

This is part one of a commentary regarding California state Sen. Scott Wiener's Senate Bill 378, a California estate tax. He and his fellow socialists are now referring to the redistribution of your hard-earned money as a "birthright" (even to the foreign-born) or as "building wealth and assets among the poor" as they blame all economic inequality on racism, white privilege and the sin of leaving hard-earned savings and assets to your family.

The bill completely ignores the amount of tax money we already allot to the poor and the money that people voluntarily give to charity.

All of the following words and quotations are from Sen. Wiener's press release:

"SB 378, if passed by the Legislature, will appear on the November 2020 ballot. Upon approval, we estimate California will collect between \$500 million and \$1 billion annually in estate taxes. This new fund will address and alleviate socio-economic inequality and build assets among people who have historically lacked them, including helping low-income children build wealth through savings accounts.

"Wealth inequality is at a historic high in the United States, and it's obscene that the federal estate tax exemption has escalated so dramatically," said Mr. Wiener. "As the federal government has slashed the estate tax for wealthy families, working class and low income families - particularly black and Latino families - have struggled and have little or no wealth to pay for college, purchase a home or otherwise invest in their future."

The press release continues: "The most significant predictor of future financial success is the wealth level of a child's parents. Throughout history, federal and state governments have helped privileged families develop wealth through various programs, including giving gifts of land,

education, government-backed mortgages, farm loans, business subsidies and more. Some of these have been exclusively or disproportionately directed toward white families, leaving out communities of color, particularly black and Latino communities. This has resulted in an average white family having over 40 times more wealth than the average black family and over 20 times more wealth than an average Latino family. SB 378 seeks to address this massive wealth inequality by directing the funds collected from California's estate tax toward programs that will help build wealth in communities that have historically lacked them. For example, the funds can be used to establish and fund savings accounts for low-income children."

"We shouldn't let generational wealth determine who gets an honest shot at the California Dream," said Jessica Bartholow, policy advocate for the Western Center on Law and Poverty. "Everyone deserves to inherit the opportunity to achieve it, and changing the tax code to reflect that value is crucial."

"You can only eat three meals a day," said labor leader and civil rights activist Dolores Huerta.

"You can only wear one suit of clothes a day. What kind of conscience can people have when some have so much wealth and yet we have so many homeless people on our streets and families that have to work two jobs just to pay the rent and put food on the table? I think this is total corruption, and we have to find ways to change it. This bill offers a viable step toward reducing the corrupt levels of economic inequality we have today."

"I applaud Senator Wiener for this just and moral legislation," said Darrick Hamilton, executive director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.

"By establishing a birthright to capital, California Social Inheritance Accounts offer all Californians a shot at asset security, irrespective of their race, gender or the family financial position in which they are born."

My comments to follow on Sunday.

**Andy Caldwell is the executive director of COLAB and host of The Radio Show, weekdays from 3-5 p.m., on News-Press AM 1290.**

## **CALIFORNIA-STYLE REPARATIONS BILL BY ANDY CALDWELL**

On Thursday, I shared with you the details of state Sen. Scott Wiener's Senate Bill 378, which seeks to create a California estate tax. Mr. Wiener believes that parents who manage to save enough money to buy a home, or took the risk to start a small business and want to leave it to their children, is indicative of white privilege. That is, he believes that the state of California has the



right, obligation and moral duty to tax 40 percent of the value of assets in excess of \$3.5 million. Three and one-half million dollars is surely a lot of money, but rest assured, the Legislature will have the opportunity to lower this threshold on a whim.

Mr. Wiener has the temerity to consider this massive wealth redistribution scheme as a "wealth starter kit"? read that reparations ? for black and Latino families who haven't had the same leg up as white people. He, of course, makes no reference to the fact that most of the black families who are still in poverty in this state have been on welfare for successive generations, have failed to complete high school, eschewed marriage, and are no strangers to the debilitating effects of drugs and criminal activity. Nor does he mention that many of the Latino families who are struggling to get by are first-generation immigrants, many of whom are here illegally, with little to no education, no proficiency in English, and no job skills.

One of the quotes in favor of this bill states, "Our Golden State has the fifth largest economy in the world, touts itself as a bastion of progressive values, and yet has the highest poverty rate in the nation," said Anne E. Price, president of the Insight Center for Community Economic Development, who went on to say, "This paradox is possible because much of our economic policy is built on the long-standing false belief that anyone can make it financially through grit, resilience and hard work."

Hello? Hard work as a key to success is a false belief? So too, then, must be the call to finish high school, get a job before you get married, and don't get pregnant until after you get married. To the contrary, these adages are a proven guarantee to escape poverty in one generation.

Moreover, the bill plainly states that "private action and market forces alone cannot be expected to address wide-scale racial wealth inequality, and public sector intervention is needed. It is the intent of the Legislature to address the racial wealth gap by enacting legislation that would create California Social (read that socialist) Inheritance Accounts to counterbalance the uneven effects of intergenerational wealth transfer and reverse our state's record level of inequality."

The truth is altogether something different. What we earn, buy and sell gets taxed already. Now the state wants to tax us again if we have anything left over when we die. The truth is you can't make some people richer by making other people poorer, and you can't multiply wealth by way of division.

This legislation presents nothing less than an unmitigated moral, social, political and economic disaster. At a minimum, rich people will be sure to declare their permanent domicile in another state in order to evade this tax. And, due to the fact that the ultra-rich pay a disproportionate share of the taxes in this state, California as a whole will be worse off financially as a result.

Hence, California will present the double jeopardy of being too expensive to live here and even more expensive to die here. Finally, are newly minted black and Latino millionaires going to be exempt from the tax in the name of so-called racial wealth inequality?

*Andy Caldwell is the executive director of COLAB and host of The Andy Caldwell Radio Show, weekdays from 3-5 p.m., on News-Press AM 1290.*

# ARE THERE ANY LIMITS TO ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION?

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON|

The U.S.-Mexican border is essentially wide open.

Why? Because there is a general expectation in Mexico and Latin America that American immigration law is unenforced. Or it is so bizarre that simple illegal entry almost always ensures temporary legal residence, pending an asylum hearing.

A scheduled asylum hearing, in turn, is seen by border crossers as a mere formality to be ignored. The popular perception on the border, then, is to stick one foot illegally onto U.S. soil, and, presto, win permanent residence for you and any family members who wish to follow.

In an age of 500 sanctuary city and county jurisdictions, few illegal aliens believe they will ever be deported permanently, even if they have been apprehended committing serious crimes. There is also a general perception among would-be illegal entrants that prominent Democrats and progressives welcome their massive influxes as useful and will do their best to ensure illegal immigration continues unabated.

There is also the assumption that the greater the chaos at the border, the less likely Congress will take bipartisan action to end it. After all, 2020 is an election year and progressives are in no mood to hand Trump the semblance of a legislative victory. This fact is also known to would-be border crossers.

Illegal alien families sense that they are vital to progressive agendas of fundamentally transforming the country by importing first-generation, loyal constituents—a sentiment that is slowly replacing the prior idea of mostly young men coming to work off the books. In an increasingly tribal America, they expect on arrival to be recalibrated instantly from Mexican nationals without any experience of America into “Latinos” and “Hispanics” with historical grievances against the majority population of United States, to be remedied by reparatory hiring and admission, and facilitated by ethnic operatives.

Some polls in the past have suggested that a third of Mexico’s population would immigrate to the United States if possible. The percentages of would-be immigrants from Central America are likely to be even higher. In theory, 50 million could cross the border in the next two decades, which poses the question: *what are the theoretical limits on illegal immigration?*

When would it cease? When 50 million or 60 million or maybe 80 million foreign nationals entered illegally, without meritocratic criteria or much diversity?

Historically massive influxes of migrants from one nation to another are reflections of imbalances in fertility and demography, and radical political, economic, and cultural asymmetries. People vote *en masse* with their feet to escape violence, oppression and poverty to flee to a different, indeed antithetical, system that promises them greater security, freedom, and economic opportunity.

Think in the past of mainland China versus Hong Kong, East versus West Germany, North versus South Korea, or Europe versus North Africa and the Middle East. Or consider why indigenous residents of Oaxaca would give up their homeland to travel 2,000 miles to a quite foreign country whose traditions, language, culture, history, and values were often antithetical to their own.

### **Saturation Nowhere in Sight**

Mass population movements end (or never start) if there is border symmetry, in the fashion that Canadian and American immigrants roughly balance each other out.

The promise that Mexico and Central America in the early 21st century would obtain rough economic parity with the United States has not happened, despite progress there and lower birth rates in the United States. But what has transpired is a radical increase in cartel and gang violence, endemic corruption and general lowering of the quality of life south of the border.

Under such conditions, the logical limits of immigration can be calibrated not so much by whether countries south of the border reach parity with American standards of living, freedom, security, and quality of life. But rather the current issue is *whether regions of America, especially the American Southwest become roughly indistinguishable from Latin America and Mexico*, and therefore in terms of economic opportunity, safety, and quality of life do not offer that much of an improvement—or at least not such a radical margin of enhancement to justify abandoning one's homeland.

In such an equation, the more that illegal aliens arrive, swamp social services and tax law enforcement, the more that they create ethnic enclaves that resist rapid assimilation and the more that they sense that their hosts see them most useful as an identity politics constituency, then the more parts of the southwestern United States will seem more like Mexico, and perhaps to the point of eventually diminishing illegal immigration.

No one knows what the saturation point might be of illegal and unassimilated immigration, but influxes are now approximating each month a mid-sized American city. In theory, we may already be nearing a point where many immigrants are starting to see their new homes as not all that different from Mexico—although in general far more expensive.

### **How Illegal Immigration Changes Us**

Illegal immigration and its effects on a community are incremental but steady. This past week, two miles from my home, an illegal alien fled the scene of an accident that he had caused, which killed a

pregnant Mexican-American and critically injured her 11-year-old daughter. He is still at large. Within a 100-mile radius of central California, at least five citizens were killed by illegal alien gunmen in the last four months. When I go to town to drop off dry cleaning, I rarely hear English spoken. Almost all the stores in the shopping center (where I have gone for 50 years) have Spanish names. Few English signs are apparent or needed.

The formerly rich diverse community of Japanese-, Armenian-, Basque-, Portuguese-, Mexican- and Scandinavian-Americans have long since vanished. I stopped riding a bike in my rural environs four years ago, given the packs of unlicensed and unvaccinated dogs, and the owner's indifference to their attacks on passersby. From experience of driving each week across the Central Valley to the California coast, I assume that about one of every 20 cars at rural intersections will run the stop sign. I make the further assumption that if I am hit, the driver of the other car may well flee the scene and has no license, insurance or registration—and has never felt any real need to obtain them.

In my immediate rural environs, there is now the following: 1) an illegal dump of various junk, wrecked cars, and discarded household items; 2) a strange open-air vacant storage lot dotted with porta potties, trailers and assorted junk spread over five acres; 3) a bizarre sort of camp, in which lean-tos, shacks, and tents are hidden among an old persimmon orchard, where no one quite knows how many such structures are hidden inside the mysterious grove; 4) a permanent hanging gardens of Babylon-type of yard sale where a home's trees and bushes are littered with hanging clothing and flotsam and jetsam, some of them rotting from the recent rains; 5) a former backyard that is now a small goat mart; 6) an unlicensed, ad hoc outdoor barber shop; 7) an unlicensed, ad hoc outdoor daycare center.

I'll stop there, but the avenue where I have lived for 65 years in terms of the fundamental metrics of civilization—sanitation, single-family zoning, building codes, mosquito abatement, dog licensing and registration, and sanctions for illicit activity—has regressed a half-century or more.

Officials apparently assume that visiting these places can become a lose-lose-lose situation: the miscreant will not comply with citations, the bureaucratic costs of enforcement are not offset by collectable fines, and the touchy subject of illegal immigration may earn either unfavorable press coverage or censure from politically sensitive county and local officials. In other words, we are a world away from Nancy Pelosi's gated Napa estate, or Dianne Feinstein's \$40 million hilltop Pacific Heights mansion *but not from the results of their ideology*.

### **Future Without Law**

Life down the street is conducted mostly on the premises of rural Mexico, where one does what one pleases or must in terms of water, power, sanitation, business, commerce, leisure, and pets, without audit from authorities.

If one reads either the local or regional papers, it is composed of stories about one of three themes.

One, the disturbing litany of DUIs, gang stabbings and shootings, fatal hit-and-run accidents, police shootings of armed suspects, high-speed chases, robberies, and drug busts.

Two, there are also many human interest inspirational stories of illegal aliens from Mexico who are running successful businesses, whose children are star athletes or students. The subtext is not that they are doing the exceptional things other Americans are not doing, but that they merit special attention and approbation because of their immigrant status and the obstacles they have overcome.

Three, the grievance or victimization meme: the lawsuit against law enforcement, the filing of a bias claim against the county, the firing of an official for some alleged insensitivity, or the injustice of some agency that has curtailed support from, tried to deport, or was somehow biased against, an illegal alien.

The point is, that unlike the past, almost every new story is grounded in some sort of overt *ethnic* context, and ultimately related to illegal immigration and its effects.

Latino and Hispanic citizens, to the extent that they identify as such, may in the American Southwest be the key to the future of illegal immigration. So far, they have put up with higher taxes, swamped social services, gang activity, hit and run accidents and subpar schools that are the wages of illegal immigration, on the theory of ethnic solidarity and of general sympathy with the underclass of which many now in the middle class were once a part.

But no one wishes to have a neighbor who is an MS-13 member, or schools where non-English speakers hold back collective learning, or to be hit by an unlicensed driver who flees the scene. For successfully assimilated Hispanics there is a growing resentment that they are being used to support political agendas that are not conducive to improving the quality of life in their own backyards.

Translated that means, for example, that California's high income, sales, and gas taxes, along with sky-high housing, electricity, and gasoline costs, do not make one sympathetic to millions who arrive illegally and without English skills or a high school diploma but with plenty of instant needs for state services.

In sum, either when Mexico resembles California, Texas, Arizona, or New Mexico, or when these border states resemble Mexico, then illegal immigration will likely cease. Conventional wisdom has always postulated that declining birth rates, economic reforms, and globalization south of the border will discourage Mexicans and Central Americans from coming north as rough parity is achieved.

But it may be that as so many have already come north—and they are coming in increasing numbers—and as so few feel a need to assimilate, that an impoverished “north” is no longer a promised land and thus not necessarily a place for which it is worth abandoning one's homeland.

The other day I noticed for the first time that I have a lot more fear of an oncoming car in rural California than I had of intersections in Libya; a lot more worries about a wild stray dog wandering

into my yard than I did while living in Greece; a lot more anxiety of being shot or robbed than I did when visiting the current Middle East; and a lot less hope of being treated promptly *in extremis* at the local emergency room than I would have expected in Eastern Europe.

In that strange sense, I guess I have some hope that illegal immigration will soon taper off.

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(Revised 2/2017)