



**WEEKLY UPDATE
MAY 10 - 16, 2020**

**A NATION OF SLAVES IS ALWAYS PREPARED TO
APPLAUD THE CLEMENCY OF THEIR MASTER
WHO, IN THE ABUSE OF ABSOLUTE POWER, DOES
NOT PROCEED TO THE LAST EXTREMES OF
INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION¹**

**APOCALYPSE NOW
BY ANDY CALDWELL**

Who Ordered Apocalypse Now?

Nobody has described what we just did to our society and economy better than Professor of Medicine, Professor of Health Research and Policy, and Professor of Statistics at Stanford University, John Ioannidis: “The current coronavirus disease, Covid-19, has been called a once-in-a-century pandemic. But it may also be a once-in-a-century evidence fiasco. The perfect storm of that quest for very urgent, spectacular, exciting, apocalyptic results.”

The tragedy here is that the apocalyptic results did not emanate from the virus, which, after all the hype, had a death rate lower than an average flu. No, the disaster was triggered by politicians, bureaucrats, and technocrats who kept their finger pressed down on a panic button that unleashed a nuclear scale meltdown of our economy, while severely afflicting our mental and emotional well-being.

¹ Gibbon, Edward, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. II, page 63. Random House.

How bad is our situation? The US Treasury just borrowed \$2.99 trillion in the current quarter, more than five times the previous record, and even that hasn't made a dent in this government-induced economic catastrophe. California is already having to borrow money to meet unemployment claims. One of four businesses in America are on the verge of bankruptcy, and some sectors of our food supply chain are breaking.

Of all the ironies, government's "selection bias" to keep us healthy has resulted in a medical catastrophe. California hospitals alone have suffered \$14 billion in losses. Tens of thousands of medical practices, including Sansum Clinic, are on the ropes. Patients have foregone potentially life-saving diagnostics and procedures because they were told nothing but the virus warranted our attention.

What are details of the overreaction as it relates to the spread of the virus in Santa Barbara County? As it turns out, over 300 of the 526 confirmed cases of the virus in our county occurred within the confines of institutions that were closed to the general public, namely, nursing homes and the Lompoc Federal Prison. The rest of us, that is, all but 150 people out of 440,000, proved remarkably resilient to succumbing to this virus that spread unchecked for months before the governor's shutdown order.

Sweden is now being hailed by the World Health Organization for their approach which shunned an economic shutdown and stay-at-home orders. Sweden instead isolated and protected the most vulnerable while leaving it up to its citizenry to practice common sense. As one European official put it, it was not Sweden, but the rest of the world, that attempted a grand experiment by way of quarantining healthy people.

Lowell Ponte, PhD, summed up our mistake quite well, "The less some scientists know about a deadly new virus, the more they tend to make worse-case predictions and urge worst-case policies. Dr. Fauci now admits to having relied on false information and wildly inaccurate computer models. The doctor's second role is as a high bureaucrat and coronavirus commissar. The reflexive position of bureaucrats is to delay and demand more studies. A bureaucrat is never fired for saying "no"- only for saying yes to some policy or project that fails."

In conclusion, as Scott Atlas, MD, Stanford Medical Center and Hoover Institution, states: "The overwhelming majority of people do not have any significant risk of dying from COVID-19. Vital population immunity is prevented by total isolation policies, prolonging the problem. We know from decades of medical science that infection itself allows people to generate an immune response – antibodies. That has been falsely portrayed as a problem requiring mass isolation. In fact, infected people without severe illness are the immediately available vehicle for establishing widespread immunity. People are dying because other medical care is not getting done due to hypothetical projections."

Hence, we have just witnessed the worst man-made disaster in the history of this country.

Andy Caldwell is the Executive Director of COLAB of Santa Barbara County, Public Affairs Radio Host on KUHL 1440 , and the Republican candidate for the California 24th Congressional District.

THIS WEEK

MAY 12TH BOS MEETING CANCELLED

**INTEGRATED WASTE BOARD MEETING MAY 13TH
CHANCE TO END BOTH PLASTIC BAG AND POLYSTYRENE BANS
BIGGEST NO BRAINERS IN COUNTY HISTORY**

PLANNING COMMISSION MAY 14TH

**COASTAL COMMISSION MAY 13TH
ADOPTING SEA LEVEL RISE MYTH 3.5FT BY 2050**

LAST WEEK

**SPECIAL BOS MEETING ON FRIDAY MAY 8TH
BOARD WARY OF DEFYING GOVERNOR
FEARS RETRIBUTION AGAINST COUNTY AND ITS BUSINESSES
STATE AGENCIES USED TO PUNISH BUSINESS THAT OPEN IN VIOLATION
CHURCHES STILL LOCKED DOWN – COSTCO OPEN**

**COUNTY PLAN –“STEPS TO ADAPT AND REOPEN
TOGETHER” DISPLACED BY STATE
THE GOVERNOR MOVES THE BALL**



**A NEVER ENDING PROJECT - \$1 MILLION TO STUDY
COUNTY BUILDINGS CONDITION TABLED**

**STRICT HEMP REGULATION ORDINANCES ADOPTED
EFFECTIVELY BANS OUTDOOR CULTIVATION – EXCEPT ON LARGE
TRACTS AND IN REMOTE AREAS**

**SYMBOLIC GROWTH CONTROL ORDINANCE
ADOPTED AGAIN BUT THERE IS HARDLY ANY
GROWTH TO REGULATE**

SLOCOG CANCELED

**SLO COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 23**

**WHEN GOVERNMENTS SWITCHED THEIR STORY
FROM "FLATTEN THE CURVE" TO "LOCKDOWN
UNTIL VACCINE"**

BY RYAN MCMAKEN

TRIUMPH OF THE WOKE OLIGARCHS

BY JOEL KOTKIN

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, May 12, 2020 (Canceled)

The meeting was canceled. The staff is undoubtedly exhausted with keeping up with all the permutations of the COVID-19 and demands for ending the lockdown, not to mention Governor Newsom's moving of the goal posts for meeting the related State requirements. It is likely that staff is also struggling with the preparation of the 3rd quarter Financial Report and the FY 2020-21 Annual Budget in the teeth of the lockdown economic disaster. Staff could also be in conversations with the various unions about measures to forestall layoffs.

The next scheduled meeting is set for Tuesday, May 19, 2020. The public will probably be able to see information on the extent of the negative financial impacts.

Integrated Waste Management Authority Meeting of Wednesday, May 13, 2020 (Scheduled)

Two No Brainers - End Bans on Polystyrene Containers and Plastic Bags:

Item 15 -

Consider Postponement of Ordinance No. 2019-1, "An Ordinance Regulating Polystyrene and Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Food Containers and Products"

BACKGROUND:

IWMA's Ordinance No. 2019-1, "An Ordinance Regulating Polystyrene and Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) Food Containers and Products" approved October 2019, was scheduled to take effect on April 9, 2020. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the "Shelter at Home" order, many restaurants, grocery stores, and other retailers are only offering customers take-out food services. Staff is recommending the Board postpone implementation of the ordinance to facilitate retailers' service options, to allow the COVID-19 threat to expire, and to encourage economic recovery for a time period to be determined by the Board.

The IWMA Board should approve this recommendation and then schedule a new item to rescind the ordinance permanently.

Item 16 -

Discussion Regarding Single-Use Plastics in San Luis Obispo County During COVID-19 Environment

BACKGROUND:

On April 22, 2020, California Governor, Gavin Newsom, executed Executive Order N-54-20, which suspends the state’s single-use bag ban/fee for 60 days as a result of impacts of the COVID-19 State of Emergency. However, the State suspension does not apply to agencies that implemented a local single-use bag ban prior to 2015. The San Luis Obispo Integrated Waste Management Authority adopted Ordinance No. 2012-1 on January 11, 2012 (prohibiting the free distribution of single-use plastic bags/adding a \$0.10 fee per bag), therefore the County is not affected by the State’s Executive Order. Staff recommends the Board discuss issues related to the use of single-use plastic/fee during the current COVID-19 “Shelter at Home” as follows:

1. Does the IWMA desire to suspend Ordinance No. 2012-1 (and the associated fees) for a certain period of time to allow the temporary use of single-use plastic bags?
2. Given the fact that restaurants are currently providing “take-out-only” service, does the Board desire to request and/or demand that restaurants supply single-use plastic eating utensils and accessories only upon request?

The IWMA Board should learn from the COVID experience and rescind the bag ban not only for the duration of the COVID virus problem, but forever.

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, May 14, 2020 (Scheduled)



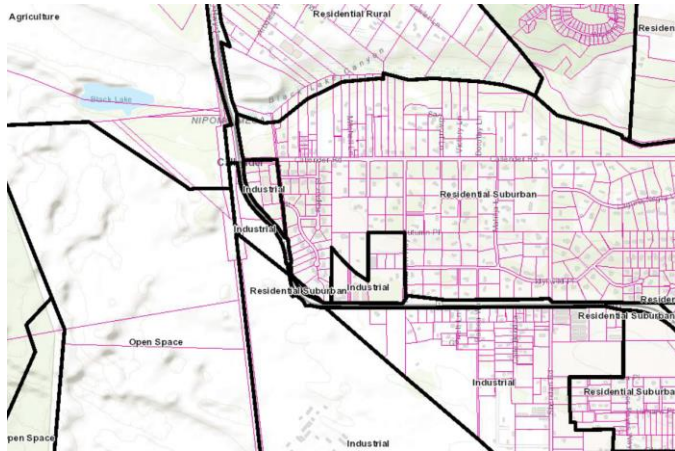
In General: The agenda mostly contains routine requests for cell towers, project extensions, a dog kennel (the dogs will have to wear masks), etc. The one exception is the large project proposed next to Highway 1 in Nipomo. This is the first substantial project which we have seen come through this year. The staff recommends approval.

Item 11 - Hearing to consider a request by Gary Bagnall for a Conditional Use Permit/Coastal Development

Permit (DRC2017-00057) to allow construction of approximately 140,000 square feet of industrial floor area in two buildings on a 9.1-acre parcel. The project will result in the disturbance of approximately 7.8 acres and removal of approximately 5.9 acres of eucalyptus trees in two phases, beginning on the northern portion of the site with construction of a 46,500 square-foot industrial building in Phase I. Phase II would continue on the southern portion of the site with construction of the remaining 93,300 square feet of industrial building floor area. Improvements include the installation of an on-site water and wastewater system and two 70,000-gallon fire suppression storage tanks. The parcel is outside of the Coastal Zone, but the southern property boundary abuts the Coastal Zone boundary at the Willow Road right-of-way; therefore, required offsite improvements on Willow Road require a Coastal Development Permit.

The Staff report describes the project as follows:

The project includes the construction of two new light-industrial buildings on the 9.11-acre parcel, resulting in approximately 140,000 square-feet of developed floor area. Each new facility would contain three sub-buildings that would be used for storage, re-packaging, and wholesale distribution of pet supplies. The project would occur over two phases and result in the removal of approximately 5.9 acres of eucalyptus trees for a total site disturbance of approximately eight acres.



SOUTH ELEVATION - BUILDING A (BUILDING B SW/SE)



NORTH ELEVATION - BUILDING A (BUILDING B SW/SE)



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



WINTERHAVEN & WILLOW
 CIVIL ENGINEERING
 1400 WINTERHAVEN BLVD
 SUITE 100
 WINTERHAVEN, CA 95984

LFOA, LLC
 1400 WINTERHAVEN BLVD
 SUITE 100
 WINTERHAVEN, CA 95984



DP7.0

Monarch butterflies nest on the site. The approval requires mitigations to protect the butterflies and continue the nesting.

Monarch Butterfly Mitigation

1. *Revise phasing to preserve habitat until mitigation is implemented*
2. *Implement direct and indirect mitigation measures*
 - *Include nectar-feeding plant species in site landscaping*
 - *Create replacement habitat in existing conservation area*
 - *Identify and fund monarch butterfly education program*
 - *Monitor site and replacement area for monarchs through Winter 2022*

California Coastal Commission Meeting of Wednesday, May 13, 2020 (Scheduled)

Item - W6g Briefing and consideration of adopting “Making California’s Coast Resilient to Sea Level Rise: Principles for Aligned State Action.” The Commission is expected to adopt the Principles. Embedded within them is the presumptive condition that the mean sea level will rise a minimum of 3.5 feet over the next 30 years. Once adopted, the Commission will impose this standard on all the coastal and estuarine cities and counties via their coastal plan and ordinance conformance. In turn this will severely restrict coastal development and maintenance.

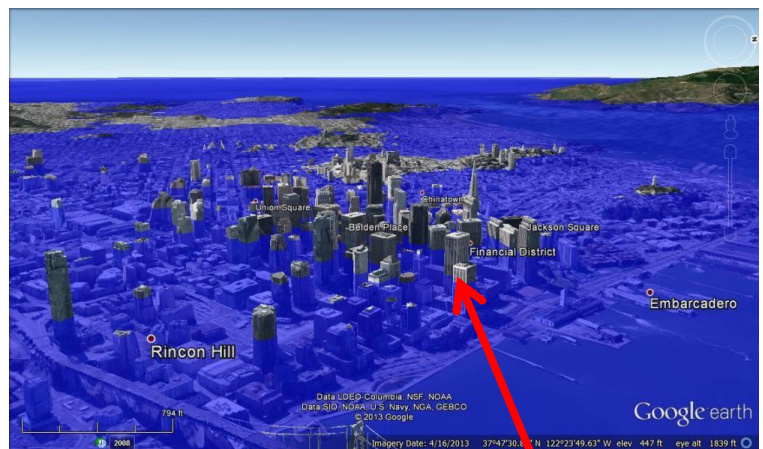
This item is sliding through without any comments in the record from the California Association of Counties, the California’s League of Cities, or any individual city of county. Pismo City Councilman Erik Howell is on the Commission. Call or email him and warn him to pull the item and try to stop this.



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Suite 2000
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(415) 904-5202
Erik.Howell@coastal.ca.gov

Remember the metric being adopted is:



The Commission will be ok at 80 meters sea level rise on the 20th floor.

The Principles for Aligned State Action also include a target of 3.5 feet of sea level rise by 2050 for planning purposes, which sets a precautionary minimum baseline and which will provide a metric by which to measure statewide progress on adapting to sea level rise.

1. Staff should go to the proverbial blackboard and show the math based on NOAA Data.
2. The matter should be circulated to all the coastal cities and counties for their review on their public agendas with comment by the public prior to any action by the Commission.

B. Summary of Principles for Aligned State Action

1. Develop and utilize best available science

- *Apply best available science to planning, decision-making, project design, and implementation*
- *Utilize a minimum target of 3.5 feet of sea level rise by 2050, and more protective targets for 2050/2100 for critical infrastructure*

2. Build coastal resilience partnerships

- *Coordinate regularly on SLR resilience issues, policies, planning, processes, mandates, permitting, information, funding, and projects*
- *Collaboratively collect, share, and publicize the latest information on SLR*
- *Build strong relationships with all partners at all levels of government, and with the public, nonprofits, businesses, and other stakeholders*
- *Coordinate and partner with tribes to ensure inclusive and multicultural stewardship of lands and waters subject to SLR*

3. Improve coastal resilience communications

- *Align SLR messaging and implement a coordinated public awareness and education campaign*
- *Increase transparency, efficiency, and alignment of state and local coastal resilience processes, policymaking, and decision-making*

4. Support local leadership and address local conditions

- *Support local planning and adaptation policies and projects that address local and regional conditions*
- *Evaluate and learn from local conditions*
- *Prioritize early protection of and capacity building for the most under-resourced and vulnerable frontline communities*

5. Strengthen alignment around coastal resilience

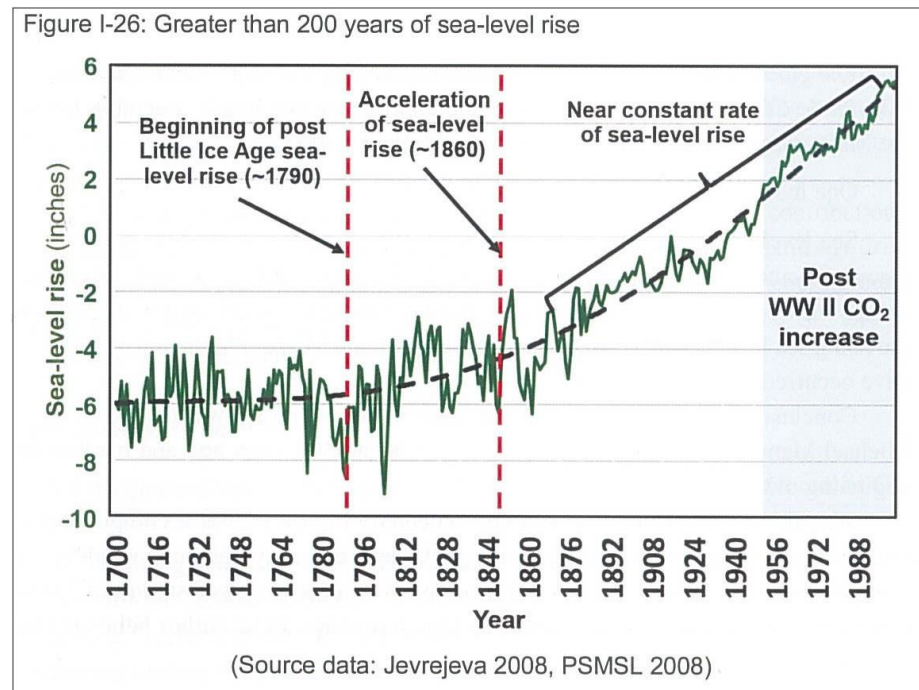
- *Develop and apply baseline, Administration-wide SLR assumptions, projections, targets, terms, and standards into coastal projects, retrofits, planning, funding, regulatory, and permitting initiatives*
- *Ensure that up-to-date SLR resilience planning is in place coastwide*
- *Collaboratively work to pursue and develop specific funding sources*
- *Avoid creating unnecessary duplication of existing state agency authority*

6. Implement and learn from coastal resilience projects

- Protect and enhance public trust natural and cultural resources
- Protect critical public water-dependent infrastructure, ports, harbor districts, and other evolving public trust needs and uses
- Prioritize the use of nature-based adaptation measures
- Build coastal resilience by increasing the number of restoration and adaptation projects
- Prevent impacts from SLR to public access



San Francisco Embarcadero with the Bay Bridge in the background during the annual King tides. The Coastal Commission has requested people to go out and take pictures to bolster its argument.



The Federal Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) data on sea level continues to rise at a rate of about one-eighth of an inch per year. Thus it will take 8 years for it to rise 1 inch or 48 years to rise one foot. How does the Coastal Commission get 3.5 feet in only 30 years?

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Special Board of Supervisors Meeting of Friday, May 8, 2020 (Completed)

Item 1 – Update on COVID-19 in San Luis Obispo County and direction to staff as necessary.

The Board unanimously endorsed submission of a form to the State requesting that it be allowed to open the economy in accordance with the Governor's 4-phase reopening conditions and plan. All bets may be off if the State does not concur.

The Board held the special meeting to take actions to address State edicts which were suddenly promulgated by the Governor on Wednesday, May 6, relative to requirements for the counties to be allowed to begin phased reopening of their economies. After a lengthy session punctuated by 35 remote testimony speakers, the Board endorsed sending its plan to the State. The Plan is essentially its START Plan (see detail below), converted into what the State has denominated as the Variance Attestation Form. The Health officer of any county that aspires to begin opening its economy must certify under oath that its plan conforms to Governor Newsom's plan. The certification document is very detailed and contains metrics such as a specified low rate of COVID infection, no deaths for the prior 14 days, social distancing, masks, types of businesses permitted, and all the rest.

The County plan explicitly meets all the requirements except one.

Epidemiologic stability of COVID-19. A determination must be made by the county that the prevalence of COVID-19 cases is low enough to be swiftly contained by an epidemiological response. Given the anticipated increase in cases as a result of modifications, this is a foundational parameter that must be met to safely increase the county's progression through Stage 2. The county must attest to:

No more than 1 COVID-19 case per 10,000 in the past 14 days prior to attestation submission date.

Its rate for the past 14 days has been 1.4. The Health Officer believes that this very insignificant variance can be waived by the State Department of Health. The request was made verbally and in writing Friday. As of this writing the result is not known.

These requirements were added after the publication of the Governor's 6 criteria for opening were published weeks ago. He moved the goal posts.

We asked, "What if someone dies in the State prison? Does the lockdown resume for 14 days"? Does everything go back to "start" as in the Monopoly Game or what? There has been no answer so far.

Public Has Been Duped By Bait and Switch

Remember that the lockdown was designed to flatten the COVID-19 infection rate curve to provide time for the society to create surge capacity in the health care system. This seems to have occurred for the most part. Now, however the State and other governments are welching and moving the goal posts by requiring that there ultimately be a preventive vaccine which can eliminate or suppress the virus prior to really ending the lockdown.

For the grim details, see the economic analysis, *When Governments Switched Their Story from "Flatten the Curve" to "Lockdown until Vaccine"* in the COLAB In Depth section below on page 23.

A brief snippet on Governor Newsome's pronouncement is displayed immediately below:

Gavin Gov. Newsom Says California 'Not Going Back to Normal' Until We Have a Vaccine

The state is hiring 10,000 workers to track down Californians exposed to COVID-19

By [Katy Grimes](#), May 7, 2020 7:33 am

07 May 2020 7:33 am

California Gov. Gavin Newsom announced this week that, while California will move into the next phase of reopening its economy this week, it is "not going back to normal" until there is a vaccine.

"We're not going back to normal. It's a new normal with adaptations and modifications, until we get to immunity and a vaccine," Gov. Newsom said.

A vaccine? That's what the World Health Organization wants — a global vaccine. Remember when Dr. Anthony Fauci [said](#), "If back to normal means acting like there never was a coronavirus problem, I don't think that's going to happen until we do have a situation where you can completely protect the population."

According to Dr. Fauci and others, developing a deployable vaccine could take 12 to 18 months, if ever. In the meantime California is going to jerk everyone around with phased openings subject to relapses and goal post moving. Do you suppose that the Newsom, Feinstein, Pelosi, Getty, or the rest of the San Francisco nobility has any big pharma stock? Who is in on Remdesivir?

Other destructive actions in the same vein reported by various sources (while at the same time, the tourism industry is in lockdown collapse):

California to Lose as Much as \$72.1 Billion in Tourism Spending This Year

Over 600,000 travel related jobs to be lost by the end of the month

By [Evan Symon](#), May 5, 2020 2:57 pm

05 May 2020 2:57 pm

On Tuesday, a new projection by [Tourism Economics](#) was released showing that California is currently on track to lose \$72.1 billion in travel related spending this year.

In addition, by the end of this month, 613,000 travel and tourism related jobs will have been lost. This amounts to over half of the current number of travel and tourism related jobs out there pre-coronavirus state lockdown.

Travel and tourism spending in California had been growing in California for ten years before the coronavirus lockdown, with the state projected to have a 3.4% growth in travel related spending again this year. Travel-generated tax alone pumped \$12.2 billion into local and state governments last year. Travelers also spent approximately \$144.9 billion in total.

Meanwhile the State is attacking independent contract workers via AB 5.

Uber, Lyft Sued by California Over Alleged Labor Rights Violations

LA, SF, SD City Attorneys join California Attorney General in wanting to make rideshare drivers employees

By [Evan Symon](#), May 6, 2020 1:57 pm

06 May 2020 1:57 pm

On Tuesday, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced that the state is suing rideshare giants Uber and Lyft over numerous labor rights violations, and for not treating their drivers as employees.

California, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego push for AB 5 compliance, fines

Uber and Lyft have classified their drivers as independent contractors rather than employees. Under this system drivers are more flexible and can work when they want but also don't have some protections that employees have.

Becerra, joined by city attorneys from Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego, argued on Tuesday that under several Californian laws, most notably the controversial [AB 5](#) independent contractor defining law, rideshare workers should get more labor protections such as minimum wage, reimbursements, overtime, and offered health insurance. The extra hardships drivers now face with coronavirus restrictions were also pointed out.

“Californians who drive for Uber and Lyft lack basic worker protections—from paid sick leave to the right to overtime pay,” said Attorney General Becerra in a [statement](#) on Tuesday. “California has ground rules with rights and protections for workers and their employers. We intend to make sure that Uber and Lyft play by the rules.”

“Uber and Lyft both claim that their drivers aren't engaged in the company's core mission and therefore qualify for benefits,” added Becerra at a press conference. “If drivers in California contract the coronavirus or if they lose their job as a result, guess what? They're the ones that go missing. They're the ones that don't know what to do next. They're the ones who have to worry about how they'll pay their bills.”

California is also asking for fines to be levied against the rideshare companies due to lost tax revenue being paid into social safety net programs. If successful, Uber and Lyft could have to pay up to \$250,000 per driver, with money going to the state and to drivers who were affected by not being employees. While the state is estimating 'hundreds of millions' in fines similar to the \$640 million they were ordered to pay for [similar violations in New Jersey](#), if the full amount is applied in California, it could potentially reach over \$1 billion.

State to Revoke Liquor Licenses of Businesses that Defy Lockdown Orders

‘They're putting their public at risk; they're putting our progress at risk’

By [Evan Symon](#), May 7, 2020 5:13 pm

07 May 2020 5:13 pm

Earlier this week, California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) agents visited numerous Yuba and Sutter County restaurants and [threatened to revoke their liquor licenses](#) if they didn't close.

ABC agents in Sutter and Yuba restaurants

ABC has said that defying the orders is not only illegal, but it also ‘endangers public health and safety’. However, as of Thursday, most remained open despite the looming threat.

Yuba County and Sutter County joined Modoc County in completely reopening against Governor Gavin Newsom’s statewide lockdown orders on Monday. They have argued that they should reopen as the coronavirus is not affecting rural counties nearly as much, and that all reopening businesses are following state and county public health guidelines, such as the six foot distancing rule and mandatory masks.

“They’ve been really careful,” noted Yuba City resident Robert Douglas, who has dined at two area restaurants since reopening. “Everyone has been super careful. Our waitress came over in a mask and gloves, and all the surrounding tables were empty despite a lot of people showing up.”

“I still haven’t gotten used to it, but it reminded me of when I was at the hospital getting tested. That kind of safety has been implemented.”

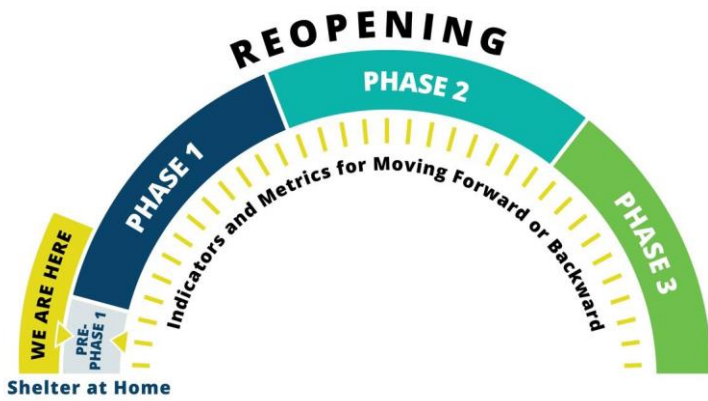
County Issued Draft COVID-19 Reopening Guide (START GUIDE)

The Board received a presentation on the Reopening Guide as part of the regular weekly COVID-19 staff report. COLAB included a detailed review in last week’s Update, which can be accessed at: http://www.colabslo.org/prior_actions/2020/Weekly%20Update_May-3_May-9_2020.pdf

Background: The County Health Department issued a draft document entitled the “Start Guide.” It provides the general conditions and cadence under which various categories of business, not-for-profits, religious institutions, and educational institutions may open. It also prescribes the operating requirements to which they must adhere when they do open. Under the best of circumstances it could allow just about all entities to open within 90 days of its start. It would not start until the Governor ends his lockdown orders, modifies them, or delegates the authority to manage the lockdowns to the counties.

The plan was prepared with input from a wide variety of business, educational, non-for-profit, advocacy, and religious groups. The full draft plan can be accessed at the link: <https://www.emergencyslo.org/en/resources/Current-Emergency-Information/Documents/START-Guide-v1.0.pdf>

Conceptually it is visually displayed in the graphic below:



The plan would not begin until the Governor releases the counties or at least San Luis Obispo County to go forward. As noted below in this Update, the County has sent the Governor a letter indicating that it is ready to go forward. A problem is that the letter does not quite make a specific request for the Governor to remove the County from the lockdown.

The plan phases are roughly 30-days long, each for a total of 90 days.

Move to Phase One when stay-at-home order is lifted or modified, and criteria have been met for 14 days
 Move to Phases Two and Three when guidelines are met for at least 30 days (Table 3)
 Move to the previous Phase when one or more criteria substantially worsen (Table 4)

Epidemiology: Criteria related to number of cases and deaths
Healthcare: Criteria related to capacity to screen patients, staff and stock hospitals, and accept patients
Public Health: Criteria related to quick testing, contact tracing, and other critical infrastructure

All Phases		Phase One Day 1 (if threshold criteria met)	Phase Two Day 30 (if threshold criteria met)	Phase Three Day 60 (if threshold criteria met)
Individuals	Continue to practice good personal hygiene Stay home when sick Protect vulnerable populations	Vulnerable populations continue to stay at home Physical distancing Masks recommended in public when physical distancing is difficult Monitor symptoms Gatherings of no more than 10 people Minimize non-essential travel	Vulnerable populations continue to stay at home Physical distancing Masks recommended in public when physical distancing is difficult Gatherings of no more than 50 people Minimize non-essential travel	Vulnerable populations can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing and minimizing exposure Physical distancing eased Gatherings with restrictions on numbers of people TBD Low-risk populations should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments
All institutions & businesses*	Adhere to START Standards and Guidelines for: Physical distancing, protective equipment, sanitation, and business travel	Partial/phased/modified reopening under <u>strict operating standards</u> for distancing, sanitation, hygiene Continue to support telework Ensure enough hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations at strategic locations Close common or congregation areas at workplaces and/or enforce strict operating standards Strongly consider special accommodations for personnel who are vulnerable Minimize non-essential travel	Remain open under <u>modified operating standards</u> for distancing, sanitation, hygiene Continue to support telework Ensure enough hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations at strategic locations Close common or congregation areas at workplaces and/or enforce modified operating standards Strongly consider special accommodations for personnel who are vulnerable Minimize non-essential travel	Resume unrestricted staffing and operations Most institutions and businesses fully reopen
Specific types of institutions & businesses*	Do not allow symptomatic people to return to work	General businesses (e.g. retail, manufacturing, personal care) phased/partial reopening Specific sectors: (e.g. food facilities, movie theaters, museums, places of worship) phased/partial reopening K-12 schools partial reopening Parks, playgrounds, and campgrounds modified reopening Fitness (e.g. gyms, pools) modified reopening Beaches, outdoor activities remain open with modifications Health-care - non-urgent surgeries and office visits can resume, when healthcare facilities and hospitals ready	K-12 schools, child care centers and summer camps modified reopening Massage, spa services modified reopening Post-secondary institutions TBD	Post-secondary institutions modified reopening Large entertainment and sporting venues modified reopening Visits to senior facilities and hospitals can resume with strict physical distancing protocols

*Refer to The START Standards and Guidelines

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, May 5, 2020 (Completed)

Item 1 - COVID-19 Update. This was a verbal report covering the statistics for the week. The main focus was on the reopening contingencies. Please see the item immediately above, Draft COVID Reopening Guide, for the details.

Item 12 - \$1.023 million Consulting Contract for Analysis of County owned Buildings physical condition. The Board unanimously postponed the item for consideration in 3 months. The action was taken in light of the pending revenue shortfalls due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Board members also attempted to obtain a fix on the scope of the project and what has been accomplished in the past.

Background: This was the latest iteration of what seems to be an endless project to ascertain the physical condition of the various County-owned buildings. The purpose is to better manage the capital investment and maintenance budgets for their upkeep. The write-up states in part:

The FCA program began in 2014 with a five-year contract for initial assessments of County-owned buildings. The objective of the FCA program is to identify and prioritize deferred maintenance and effectively plan for necessary maintenance and capital projects through ongoing condition assessments. The initial contract concluded in December 2019, resulting in facility condition data for 127 locations, with some sites containing multiple buildings.

Questions include:

- a. How much has been spent on the project since 2014?
- b. What actual products to date (reports, analysis, and sq. ft. per building or what?) were obtained for those expenditures?
- c. Was this major phase of the action recommended here always contained in the overall original project design?
- d. Are there more steps and expenses after this one?
- e. Has the project scope and cost changed since it started?
- f. When will it be completed?

Using the postponement, the Board should have staff prepare a report detailing the answers to these questions prior to entertaining the proposal again in 3 months, if ever. A deeper question: The roads have a \$176 million unfunded maintenance deficit. Parks is unknown but substantial. What if the building maintenance deficit is \$100 million? What could the County do about all of these?

Item 18 - Submittal of a resolution approving the County maximum annual growth rate and maximum annual allocation for new dwelling units for FY 2020-21, in accordance with the Growth Management Ordinance. The Board adopted the growth limits without much comment. Supervisor Peschong noted that future items should include tables showing the number of permits issued and the actual number of units contracted per year.

Background: The County has a long-standing growth limit on the number of new dwelling units that can be constructed in any given year. It has approached it only once in nearly 30 years. Housing production in the last decade has been limited to a few hundred units in the unincorporated area per year. Desperately needed apartment units for families have been almost nil.

Maximum Growth Rate for New Dwelling Units for FY 2020-21

Based on the current assessment of community resources, the recommended growth rate for new dwelling units for FY 2020-21 is the same as the previous year:

- 2.3% Countywide (excluding the Nipomo Mesa area, Cambria, and the Los Osos Prohibition Zone);*
- 1.8% for the Nipomo Mesa area; and*
- 0% for Cambria and the Los Osos Prohibition Zone.*

Item 22 - Hearing to consider adoption of a resolution amending the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 of the County Code, the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Title 23 of the County Code, Title 1 of the County Code, and the Coastal Framework for Planning Table “O” (LRP2019-00008) to allow for the cultivation of industrial hemp. The Board voted 4/1, Gibson dissenting, to approve a very restrictive set of ordinances regulating the conditions under which hemp may be grown and processed. Some of the key provisions included:

1. Hemp may only be grown in the Agricultural and Rural Lands zones.
2. For outdoor grows, the minimum parcel size is 400 acres.
3. Hemp will be banned from the Edna Valley Vinicultural Area entirely under a special zoning carve out. The exception was justified on the basis on the valley’s mature wine industry and prevailing high winds, which would spread spores and odors. There is also almost unanimous opposition to both cannabis and hemp by residents and farmers in the Valley.
4. Hemp will not be allowed within 2000 ft. of any vinicultural area.
5. Hemp will not be allowed within 1000 ft. of a Village or Urban Limit lines.
6. Refining and manufacturing of hemp will only be permitted within the Industrial and Manufacturing Zones.

There are many other restrictions within the ordinances

It is clear that the Board majority feels that it was burned on cannabis and is not going to allow that to happen with hemp. Supervisor Hill went along with the majority because part of his Supervisorial District contains the Edna Valley, which is dominated by viticulture, expensive estate type homes,

some wedding venues, and some event centers. The community feared the negative impact of the odors, though the odors are intermittent.

Supervisor Gibson, who usually supports regulatory expansion, waxed eloquent about farming. He noted that for years he farmed in Cayucos and opined that the ordinances as adopted constitute a de facto ban on hemp. He said you might as well put a total ban on it as adopt these regulations.

Background: This item came to Board with the Planning Commission’s recommendations for the regulation of industrial hemp. The Commission could not resolve some questions and left them open for the Board to fill in the gaps. The work on the regulations has been going on for over a year. There has been a major effort to develop consensus by various impacted groups, which has succeeded in part, but which has left areas of disagreement.

The decisions are difficult, as hemp was legalized as an agricultural crop 2 years ago by the Federal Government and the State Legislature. The plants look and smell like cannabis. The main difference between hemp and cannabis is that the level of THC (the active psychotropic substance in cannabis) is very low in hemp.

Since hemp is a legal agricultural crop (unlike cannabis), how far should the County go in its regulation? There are dangerous precedents. For example, what if someone does not like the odor of garlic, cauliflower, lavender, broccoli, onions, or chili peppers?

No SLOCOG Board Meeting on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 (Contingently Scheduled but Canceled)

Apparently there are no pressing issues requiring a meeting at this time.

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Supervisor Hill Speculation & Box Score

This Week: The Supervisor participated remotely by Zoom. He voted with the Board majority on severely limiting the hemp industry because his district contains the Edna Valley, which is overwhelmingly opposed to hemp cultivation in the vineyard and estate home area.

Last Week: Hill participated in the Board meeting and asked about mental health support for various groups in the COVID-19 lockdown.

Three Weeks Ago: Supervisor Hill appeared in person and participated actively in the meeting. He is clearly in the camp of maintaining the lockdown for as long as the County Health Officer requires it. He voted to send a letter to the Governor requesting that the County be allowed to manage its own phase out of the lockdown.

Four Weeks Ago: Hill participated in the Board of Supervisors Meeting (April 21, 2020) remotely via Zoom or whatever the County is using. There was no public discussion of his situation by the Board members.

Five Weeks ago: As noted at the top of This Weeks's Highlights above, there could be some question as to whether the Chairmanship resignation is a true resignation or merely a timeout.

Six Weeks Ago: Supervisor Adam Hill resigned his Board Chairmanship on Saturday evening April 11, 2020.

Seven Weeks Ago: The Board meeting was canceled. The staff had been diverted to managing the COVID-19 problems and was not bringing forward major business items. Hence, the Supervisor Hill situation remained in limbo. Vice-Chair Compton continued to provide leadership beyond the bureaucratic versions. According to the CalCoastNews, on April 8th, Hill's wife Dee Torres took some sort of legal action to attach the Supervisor's retirement account. This could portend several future paths, including his possible regular retirement or perhaps an application for a disability retirement. On the other hand it could be that they agreed to protect Torres in the future.

Separately, the Republican Party of SLO County sent out an alert encouraging people to request that the Board of Supervisors remove Supervisor Hill as Chairman of the Board. Unsurprisingly, and without even doing a news story, the San Luis Obispo Tribune immediately jumped on this idea editorially with all four feet, calling it a "Cheap Shot." All the while and simultaneously, they were saying that they have questions about Hill's behavior, treatment of others, and past eruptions. Nevertheless they are quick to continue to provide air cover. Is it OK to do bad things as a public official if you are severely depressed? If someone else committed some minor politically incorrect faux pas, such as admiring a colleague's clothing, the left and Tribune would be yowling for disciplinary action.

Eight Weeks Ago: On Monday, March 30, 2020, Supervisor Hill issued a news release to the SLO Tribune. Several Tribune articles have since then resulted. According to the articles (so far the actual news release does not seem available generally), Supervisor Hill stated that he did attempt suicide. He also stated that he wished to return to the job he loves. There is some speculation that his wife Dee Torres actually prepared the release. In that case it is not known if Hill actually authorized it. Some cynics theorized that she wants to keep him employed so that he can keep his County health insurance. In any case, he reportedly indicated that he was depressed because of the stress of the reelection process.

This in turn has generated more speculation and questions:

1. Hill seemed ebullient during the Board meeting of March 10th, by which time it was becoming clear that he had eked out a narrow victory over Stacey Korsgaden. He cheerfully presided over the meeting, glad-handed people in the audience, and was courteous to the other Board members. The next day, after the after the FBI raided his home and office under provisions of a sealed warrant, he attempted suicide because he was “depressed.”
2. The question then arises whether he was actually depressed by the election campaign or the import of the FBI raids. An important underlying question is whether he is a subject or a witness in the FBI investigation.
3. Is he healthy enough to resume his duties as Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, particularly given the COVID-19 operations and major uncertainty about the ultimate rate of infection and ability of the County to deal with the impacts while at the same time running its normal operations? Add an earthquake, public power shutdowns, large conflagration, civil unrest, other Supervisors becoming sick and incapacitated, or a combination of any of these. Should someone who is vulnerable be filling a slot on the Board, let alone serving as the chief elected official? Should he be the spokesperson and leader of the County in a major health/public safety crisis? For example, suppose the County needs to make a special plea for aid to the Governor or another agency, would Hill have the necessary stature and credibility at this point?
4. There is also the issue of the FBI investigation. Hill may not be a suspect, or whatever is alleged may be found not to have happened. He could be a witness or could have been thought to have records or materials pertaining to a suspect. The press release said that he was cooperating with the FBI. This could mean anything from helping them on the case or to ratting out accomplices in some alleged illegal activity to obtain a lesser charge.
5. Hill was reportedly on a 5150 psychiatric hold for several days. This is a short-term process to confine patients who are determined to be a danger to themselves and/or others.

6. If the seat becomes vacant, the Governor appoints the successor. As noted below in the background section, there had been some speculation that Pismo Beach City Councilman and Coastal Commissioner Eric Howell, a Democrat, might be a potential appointee. Alarmingly, we have heard that SLO Mayor Heidi Harmon might have a shot.

7. All of this combined with Hill's erratic and repeated bullying behavior puts a cloud over the entire Board of Supervisors and senior management. So far and prior to this latest episode, the Board has refused to undertake an investigation of Hill's other repeated irruptions. Even if the FBI investigation evaporates, the basic ongoing problem remains.

Nine Weeks Ago: Supervisor Hill did not attend the March 26 Board meeting. News reports indicated that his home had been raided by FBI agents simultaneously with his office back on March 11th. Staffers reportedly attempted to locate him to sign an emergency Declaration as Board Chairman but were unsuccessful.

Ten Weeks Ago: As of Saturday, March 21, no new information had been provided. The County's top of the list website public information posting, in addition to COVID-19, concerned an airline that had cancelled service to Las Vegas.

Eleven Weeks Ago: As of Saturday, March 14, 2020, the County had provided no official explanation of what had happened to its Board Chairman, his medical condition, his whereabouts, when he might return to duty, or anything else. A spokesperson simply stated that he had been released from the hospital and was currently under a physician's care. The County justified this lack of information on the basis of privacy concerns. This is bizarre, as Hill is the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors (the highest elected local official in the County) and has demonstrated successive episodes of erratic behavior over the years. Once someone takes on the mantle of visible public office, he or she forsakes the usual confidentiality customs. Hill is not exactly a Typist I in a remote office.

Background: On March 11, FBI agents arrived at the County Administration building before opening hour and tossed Hills's office. Later that day medical units were dispatched to Hill's residence. It was alleged that the police had to break the door down to enter, and the Hill was found unconscious, a suspected suicide attempt.

You would think that the County would have access to the presenting diagnosis by the paramedics, and, Health Information Privacy Act concerns aside, it would inform the public of the status of its chief elected official.

County leadership and the SLO Tribune (which has gone out of its way to provide air cover for Hill for years) have gone along as if he had an appendicitis or wrist fracture.

Meanwhile speculation about a successor has ramped up with the notion that if the position were to become vacant, Pismo City Councilman and Coastal Commissioner Eric Howell would be a likely

pick for appointment by Governor Newsom. On the other hand folks could walk into the next Board meeting and find Hill smiling and glad-handing as if nothing had ever happened. It is of course unknown if the FBI will make a case or if arrests and indictments will come down.

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WHEN GOVERNMENTS SWITCHED THEIR STORY FROM "FLATTEN THE CURVE" TO "LOCKDOWN UNTIL VACCINE"

Ryan McMaken

In the early days of the COVID-19 panic—back in mid-March—articles began to appear pushing the idea of "flattening the curve" (the *Washington Post* ran an article called "Flatten the Curve" on March 14). This idea was premised on spreading out the total number of COVID-19 infections over time, so as to not overburden the healthcare infrastructure. A March 11 article for *Statnews*, [summed it up](#):

"I think the whole notion of flattening the curve is to slow things down so that this doesn't hit us like a brick wall," said Michael Mina, associate medical director of clinical microbiology at Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital. "It's really all borne out of the risk of our health care infrastructure pulling apart at the seams if the virus spreads too quickly and too many people start showing up at the emergency room at any given time."

In those days, it was still considered madness to suggest outlawing jobs for millions of Americans or "shutting down" entire national economies in an effort to flatten the curve. Thus, the article lists far more moderate mitigation strategies:

By taking certain steps—canceling large public gatherings, for instance, and encouraging some people to restrict their contact with others—governments have a shot at stamping out new chains of transmission, while also trying to mitigate the damage of the spread that isn't under control.

What we got, of course, was something much more far reaching, radical, and disastrous for both the economy and for [long-term health problems](#).

For the next two weeks or so, governments mostly sold the idea of forced social distancing as a measure to flatten the curve and the phrase began appearing everywhere in social media, media publications and government announcements.

Many people found this message reasonable enough, especially when coupled with claims that hospitals and governments would seek to buy up large numbers of ventilators and expand capacity with temporary hospitals. This flatten-the-curve narrative persisted for two weeks or so, but at some point in late March and early April, the narrative switched to something new.

April 2: Fauci Says Nation Can only "Relax" Social Distancing Measures After There are Zero New Cases.

The *new* narrative was this: the death toll will simply be too gruesome and unbearable to allow people to continue on with some semblance of an ordinary life. So, we must keep society locked down indefinitely until a vaccine is found or until there can be enough testing and tracking of infections among the entire population. Until then, only minimal "essential" activities will be allowed. This could last eighteen months, or two years, or more. And even then, there will need to be "[COVID passports](#)" and official freedom-to-work documents issued by governments. The future is one in which every move must be controlled and monitored to prevent the spread of this disease.

Thus, on April 2, Anthony Fauci, one of the lead bureaucrats on the White House's COVID-19 advisory commission insisted that mandatory social distancing [could not be eased until further notice](#):

"If we get to the part of the curve where it goes down to essentially no new cases, no deaths for a period of time, I think it makes sense that you have to relax social distancing," [Fauci] added. *"The one thing we hope to have in place, and I believe we will have in place, is a much more robust system to be able to identify someone who is infected, isolate them, and then do contact tracing."* [emphasis added.]

Similarly, former presidential advisor and physician Ezekiel Emmanuel [flatly stated](#) that there is "no choice" but to stay locked down indefinitely:

Realistically, COVID-19 will be here for the next 18 months or more. *We will not be able to return to normalcy until we find a vaccine or effective medications.* I know that's dreadful news to hear. How are people supposed to find work if this goes on in some form for a year and a half? Is all that economic pain worth trying to stop COVID-19? The truth is *we have no choice.* [emphasis added.]

This messaging was used at the state level as well. On April 9, the Hawaii Department of Education, echoing Fauci, [announced](#) that all "public schools are expected to stay shut until COVID-19 is no longer spreading in the community, defined as four weeks with no new cases."

Needless to say, such a situation is unlikely to happen any time that's soon enough to save Hawaii from an economic implosion.

Similarly, in Colorado, [during an April 1 briefing](#), Governor Jared Polis stated that when it comes to COVID-19 his policy is "stamping this out," and claimed that mandatory social distancing could not be eased until total cases were falling.

This switcheroo on the reason for the lockdowns was a great victory for the World Health Organization (WHO) and advocates for widespread state controls on the economy and daily life. Already by early March, some WHO officials had come out in favor of the Chinese approach of draconian lockdowns imposed by the Chinese police state and surveillance state. As [noted by Statnews](#), Mike Ryan, the head of the WHO's health emergencies program, embraced the Chinese "containment" strategy and denounced flatten-the-curve style "mitigation" strategies as "counterproductive."

Perhaps not surprisingly, by early April we had leading national figures in the US insisting that China-style lockdowns were the only way to deal with the disease. "Flatten the curve" was still used as a slogan, but its meaning had changed.

Another Switch in Early May: Back to the Old Idea of "Flatten the Curve"

By early May, it was clear that the "containment" strategy was failing, since, in the United States at least, few elected officials were prepared to stomach the idea of keeping their economies locked down until a vaccine appeared or until new cases disappeared completely. After all, as unemployment numbers skyrocketed and [state and local government budgets cratered](#), "lockdown until vaccine" didn't seem like such a viable strategy anymore.

Indeed, two weeks earlier, the Hawaii Department of Education had already abandoned its declaration about the need for no new cases, with the department director backpedaling furiously and [stating](#):

"We would expect to be living with COVID-19 for a long time, and to have to wait for the last case to have occurred and another 28 days probably is not going to happen, so I believe that was really a placeholder."

By late April, numerous states' governors and municipal officials were discussing ways to scale back their lockdowns. Many governors and mayors nonetheless continued to claim that they would not allow any easing of the lockdowns until cases began to decline, or until testing became widespread. Neither of those things has happened, yet governments have already begun to significantly loosen lockdowns. In many states, total deaths have plateaued but show no sign of disappearing.

The Sweden Model Is the Future

"Flatten the curve" remains a popular goal among policymakers, but now we're back to the old definition: fear remains that hospitals and healthcare personnel will be overwhelmed. The preferred political solution lies in both continuing to encourage social distancing and in prohibiting larger gatherings. But the idea that everyone will sit at home until a vaccine is found has at the moment fallen out of favor except in the most dogmatically leftist areas.¹ Hard-left activist Matthew Yglesias, for example, [complained](#) this week that flattening the curve "isn't good enough."

Indeed, the Chinese-style containment strategy has failed so completely that even the WHO has abandoned it. The WHO now endorses the Swedish model, which is based on increasing healthcare capacity while relying primarily on voluntary social distancing. The *Financial Times* [reported on April 29](#):

The World Health Organization has defended Sweden's approach to tackling Covid-19, saying it has implemented "strong measures" to tackle the virus....

The director of the WHO's health emergencies programme said on Wednesday there was a perception that Sweden had not done enough to contain coronavirus, but "nothing could be further from the truth". Sweden has put in place a "very strong public health policy", Mike Ryan said, but unlike many other countries has chosen to rely on its "relationship with its citizenry" and trust them to self-regulate.

Its healthcare system has not been overwhelmed, he said, adding that its approach could be a "model" for other countries when lockdowns begin to relax.

In other words, the containment strategy favored by Fauci and Emanuel is dead (for now). Although it has not happened by design, the US is moving toward a Sweden model.

Nonetheless, one is still likely to encounter rabid "COVID warriors" on social media, who think that interminable lockdowns will (somehow) significantly reduce the overall total deaths from COVID-19. But it increasingly seems that such a scenario is wishful thinking.

In [a new article posted at *The Lancet* on Tuesday](#), Swedish infectious disease clinician Johan Giesecke writes on how lockdowns don't really reduce overall total deaths, and says that when it's all over, non lockdown jurisdictions are likely to have similar death rates to lockdown areas:

It has become clear that a hard lockdown does not protect old and frail people living in care homes—a population the lockdown was designed to protect.

Neither does it decrease mortality from COVID-19, which is evident when comparing the UK's experience with that of other European countries.

PCR testing and some straightforward assumptions indicate that, as of April 29, 2020, more than half a million people in Stockholm county, Sweden, which is about 20–25% of the population, have been infected (Hansson D, Swedish Public Health Agency, personal communication). 98–99% of these people are probably unaware or uncertain of having had the infection; they either had symptoms that were severe, but not severe enough for them to go to a hospital and get tested, or no symptoms at all. Serology testing is now supporting these assumptions.

These facts have led me to the following conclusions. Everyone will be exposed to severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, and most people will become infected. COVID-19 is spreading like wildfire in all countries, but we do not see it—it almost always spreads from younger people with no or weak symptoms to other people who will also have mild symptoms. This is the real pandemic, but it goes on beneath the surface, and is probably at its peak now in many European countries. There is very little we can do to prevent this spread: a lockdown might delay severe cases for a while, but once restrictions are eased, cases will reappear. I expect that when we count the number of deaths from COVID-19 in each country in 1 year from now, the figures will be similar, regardless of measures taken.

Will Giesecke be proven correct? We'll find out.

TRIUMPH OF THE WOKE OLIGARCHS

BY JOEL KOTKIN

Like the rest of the country, although far less than New York, California is suffering through the Covid-19 crisis. But in California, the pandemic seems likely to give the state's political and corporate elites a new license to increase their dominion while continuing to keep the middle and working classes down.

Perhaps nothing spells the triumph of California's progressive oligarchy more than Governor Gavin Newsom's decision to off-load the state's recovery strategy to a [task force](#) co-chaired by hedge-fund billionaire Tom Steyer. A recently failed presidential candidate, Steyer stands as a progressive funder. He is as zealous as he is rich. Steyer sometimes even found the policies adopted by climate-obsessed former governor [Jerry Brown](#) not extreme enough for his tastes.

Some [conservatives](#) wistfully hope that the pandemic will push the climate crusaders to the side. In California, at least, the corporate aristocrats, the governmental apparatus, and the progressive nonprofits have the momentum to impose their ultra-green vision on the state's residents. Steyer may have made much of his fortune on [fossil fuels](#), including coal, but now, approvingly described as "[a reverent Christian](#)," the Bay Area mogul seems to be eager to repent, both through his political largesse and as operator of a [fulsomely organic ranch](#) down the coast from [his San Francisco manse](#).

What Kind of Recovery Will the Oligarchy Allow?

Steyer's failed, self-funded presidential run was full of extreme notions, such as imposing a "state of emergency" to address climate issues, essentially shutting down fossil fuels; and, as a kind of bonus for those who still can find work, promoting a [\\$22 an hour minimum wage](#) while offering [alms](#) for the soon-to-be-eliminated legions of miners and energy workers.

If this is what he wants for the recovery, Steyer will simply accelerate the state's already poor performance in creating higher-wage middle- and working-class jobs outside those created or subsidized by government. Over the past decade, according to Chapman University's Marshall Toplansky, the vast majority of jobs being produced in California pay under the median wage, and

40% pay under \$40,000 a year. Since 2008, the state has created five times as many low-wage jobs as high-wage jobs.

California's climate regulatory regime, notes relocation expert Joe Vranich, has been particularly hard on manufacturing. Over the past decade, according to [BLS data](#), California has fallen into [the bottom half of states](#) in manufacturing-sector employment growth, ranking 44th last year; its industrial new job creation has been negative, compared with gains from competitors such as Nevada, Kentucky, Michigan, and Florida. Even without adjusting for costs, no California metro ranks in the US top ten [in terms of well-paying blue-collar jobs](#); but four metro areas—Ventura, Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Diego—sit among the bottom ten.

Perhaps nowhere will the pain be worse than in Bakersfield, capital of California's once-vibrant oil industry. That industry is now slated for extinction by policymakers, even as the state has emerged as the [largest US importer of energy and oil](#), much of it from Saudi Arabia. This ultimate effort at “virtue signaling” will cost [California](#) as many as 300,000 generally high-paying jobs, roughly half held by minorities, and will particularly devastate the San Joaquin Valley, where 40,000 jobs depend on the industry. “Imagine that the state dictated that the entertainment industry be eliminated from Los Angeles, or the tech industry be eliminated from Silicon Valley. That is what removing the oil and agriculture industries from Bakersfield is like. “It is an existential threat to the entire area,” says Rob Ball of the Kern County Council of Governments.

Poverty and Denial

In California today, anyone who dissents—even [a scientist](#) or respected economist—with the green party line is dismissed as a heretic who is not worth listening to. This treatment is facilitated by a media that tends to embrace [the most apocalyptic](#) projections of, for example, [coastal erosion](#), with little attempt to ascertain the facts or look at alternative analyses.

The predictably pious Steyer and his fellow commissioners will no doubt claim devotion to the interests of average citizen. But, as a new lawsuit filed by some 300 civil rights leaders asserts, the policies being backed by Steyer and his fellow commissioners have already had produced disastrous results for millions of Californians. The real collective badge of shame is not California's GHG emissions but the prevalence of poverty amid enormous affluence.

Critically, economic growth, at least outside asset- and iPhone-price inflation, is itself considered [a threat to the planet](#) within the environmental community, which largely [hails the Covid lockdowns](#) as a “fire drill” for future actions to promote “[de-growth](#).” The open hope, as a *Psychology Today* writer

puts it, would be to tame “the human beast” by imposing low-consumption lifestyles on hoi polloi, including in developing countries. Such policies might not affect the prospects for social media, search, or import-dependent firms like Apple, but they have already been beastly for millions of Californians.

Even before the lockdowns, which could last until summer, California’s [cost-adjusted poverty](#) level was among the highest of any state and remained higher in 2019 than in 2007. Nearly one in five Californians—many who are working—lives in poverty (using a cost-of-living adjusted poverty rate), the highest rate of any state; the [Public Policy Institute of California](#) estimates that another 20% live in near-poverty—roughly 15 million people in total.

The lack of upwardly mobile jobs has created poverty rates for California’s Latinos and African Americans, most of them working, and has made them [poorer than their counterparts](#) elsewhere, including in Texas, California’s primary competitor for talent, jobs and company locations and a state with a similarly diverse population. More than half of all California Latino households, now a plurality in the state, can barely pay their bills, according to a [United Way study](#). “For Latinos,” notes longtime political consultant [Mike Madrid](#), “the California Dream is becoming an unattainable fantasy.”

The loss of jobs, particularly in hospitality and retail, from the coronavirus crisis could further exacerbate this situation further. The most extreme and, most obvious expression of pervasive inequality and economic dysfunction lies is evident on our streets. Indeed, even as homelessness has been reduced in much of the country, it has continued to swell in California. Roughly [half the nation’s homeless population](#) lives in the Golden State, many concentrated in disease- and crime-ridden tent cities in either its largest urban region, greater [Los Angeles](#), (its largest urban region) or in [iconic San Francisco](#).

And for Our Next Act: Making the State More Vulnerable to the Next Pandemic

When Steyer and other members of the task force—one can’t help but compare them to the crime commission run in New York City by Charles “Lucky” Luciano—decide to open the economy, they will no doubt claim, as with their climate pieties, that they are acting purely on the basis of “[science](#)”—as long as it agrees with their conclusions.

Logic is not a strong point here, since the green lobbies and their developer allies keep pushing density and getting people out of the relative safety of their cars and into mass transit, which, along

with entrenched poverty, has done much to deepen the crisis in New York, as the Manhattan Institute's [Howard Husock](#) observes.

As of April 26, [Los Angeles County](#), with almost 2 million more residents than New York's five boroughs, had suffered 913 Covid deaths, compared to 12,067 in New York City. The Big Apple accounts for over two-fifths of all US transit ridership, and its [subways](#) have repeatedly been singled out, including in a [recent MIT report](#), as incubators of the pandemic.

The key here may be what demographer Wendell Cox has described as "[exposure density](#)." Compared with Angelenos, Cox suggests, New Yorkers tend to work in large, crowded workplaces and are far more [mass-transit-dependent](#). On an average workday, more than 5 million people jostle onto the city's subway trains—nearly 40 times as many as ride LA's subway lines and 15 times as many when the lower-capacity light rail lines are added in. The rates of infection and death are far lower in the surrounding areas—even in more dispersed, car-dependent Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

Even San Francisco, the nation's second-densest municipality, with more than 500,000 residents, has been far more successful in controlling the virus's spread. The city is somewhat less car-centric than greater Los Angeles; and the [Bay Area](#) transit commuting rate is about 60 percent lower than that of New York (combined statistical areas, or CSA). San Francisco has a vehicle ownership rate at least [85% higher](#) than in the four most dense New York boroughs (Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Queens) and is a much smaller city; San Franciscans are far more able to cab, Uber, or drive their own vehicles, avoiding crowded public transit.

Clearly, some ways to reduce exposure, as well as GHG emissions, would embrace telecommuting, which had been expanding and seems certain [to grow in the future](#). But California, unlike other states, has no interest in adopting telecommuting as a key strategy; instead, it seems eager to embrace the viral formula of New York, which is driving [a new exodus](#) from the country's premier urban center.

They continue to push their transit and density strategy despite concerns about social distancing and a profound resistance from hoi polloi. As in many areas, the greens have no real interest in actual data: despite state climate policies designed to push people onto buses and trains, transit ridership has lagged—in [Los Angeles](#), it is lower than in 1985—and virtually all population growth has taken place on the periphery of large metropolitan agglomerations.

California's problems won't end with this pandemic. Under the leadership of politicians like Newsom and Steyer, however promising the future is for the tech oligarchs and green energy speculators, the

Golden State seems determined to offer ever less opportunity for the state’s already struggling middle- and working-class families—except, perhaps, to get sicker when the next pandemic comes along.

*Joel Kotkin is a Presidential Fellow in Urban Futures at Chapman University in Orange, CA and executive director of the Urban Reform Institute in Houston, TX. His next book, *The Coming of Neo-Feudalism*, will be published by Encounter in May.*



Snuffy



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Sustaining Member: \$5,000 + \$ _____

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

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

MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio Internet Public Hearing Friend

COLAB Member(s) /Sponsor(s): _____

NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

For those who choose not to join as a member but would like to support COLAB via a contribution/donation. I would like to contribute \$ _____ to COLAB and my check or credit card information is enclosed/provided.

Donations/Contributions do not require membership though it is encouraged in order to provide updates and information.
Memberships and donation will be kept confidential if that is your preference.
Confidential Donation/Contribution/Membership

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check Visa MasterCard Discover Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: ___/___ Billing Zip Code: _____ CVV: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____

(Revised 2/2017)