COLAB
San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

WEEKLY UPDATE
AUGUST 21 - 27, 2022

THIS WEEK

BOS MEETING

TRIALS, TRAILS, BETRAYALS, & COASTAL COMMISSION COMBINE TO THWART PROPERTY RIGHTS IN AVILA AND SHELL BEACH

NEW COMBINED PUBLIC SAFETY DISPATCH CENTER PROPOSED
TRUE COST IS OBSCURED
PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED & BENEFITS NOT LISTED

COUNTY AG PRODUCTION EXCEEDS $1 BILLION

BOS TO RETURN MISDIRECTED WATER FUNDS TO CORRECT ACCOUNT
WHAT ABOUT THE INTEREST?
WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

PLANNING COMMISSION LITE

LAST WEEK

NO BOS MEETING

LAFCO LITE

EMERGENT ISSUES

MONKEYPOX IS HERE
ARE THE FEDS, STATE, AND COUNTY READY?

COVID LOW IN COUNTY

SO-CALLED INFLATION REDUCTION ACT PASSED
MASSIVE CLIMATE PORK, 15% BUSINESS TAX, IRS ON STEROIDS

DIABLO MAY LIVE

COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 17

ELECTRIC, NOT ELECTRIC
BY DIANA FURCHTGOTT-ROTH

INFLATION MAKES PEOPLE POORER (AND IT'S THE GOVERNMENT'S FAULT)
BY ANDRÉ MARQUES

GREEN FASCISTS ARE DESTROYING THE WORLD
The green agenda needs to become the topic of open, honest, balanced, and very public debate.
BY EDWARD RING

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

SLO Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, August 22, 2022 (Scheduled)

Item 13 - Monthly Investment Report for July 2022. The reports are displayed on the following pages below. The system lost $163,217,021 in the first half of this year. The Trust hopes that investment markets will recover to ameliorate the loss before the end of 2022. Systems that are on a July - June fiscal year were severely impacted. If things improve, the Trust may not suffer as badly.

	06/30/22	12/31/21
FIDUCIARY NET POSITION		
Fiduciary Net Position Restricted for Pension Benefits	**$ 1,586,745,768**	**$ 1,749,962,789**

	July	**Year to Date 2022**		2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Total Trust Investments ($ millions)	$1,691			$1,775	$1,552 year end	$1,446 year end	$1,285 year end	$1,351 year end
Total Fund Return	3.0% Gross	**-5.8%** Gross		15.2% Gross	8.9 % Gross	16.3 % Gross	-3.2 % Gross	15.5 % Gross
Policy Index Return (r)	3.6%	-7.2%		12.8%	10.0 %	16.4 %	-3.2 %	13.4 %

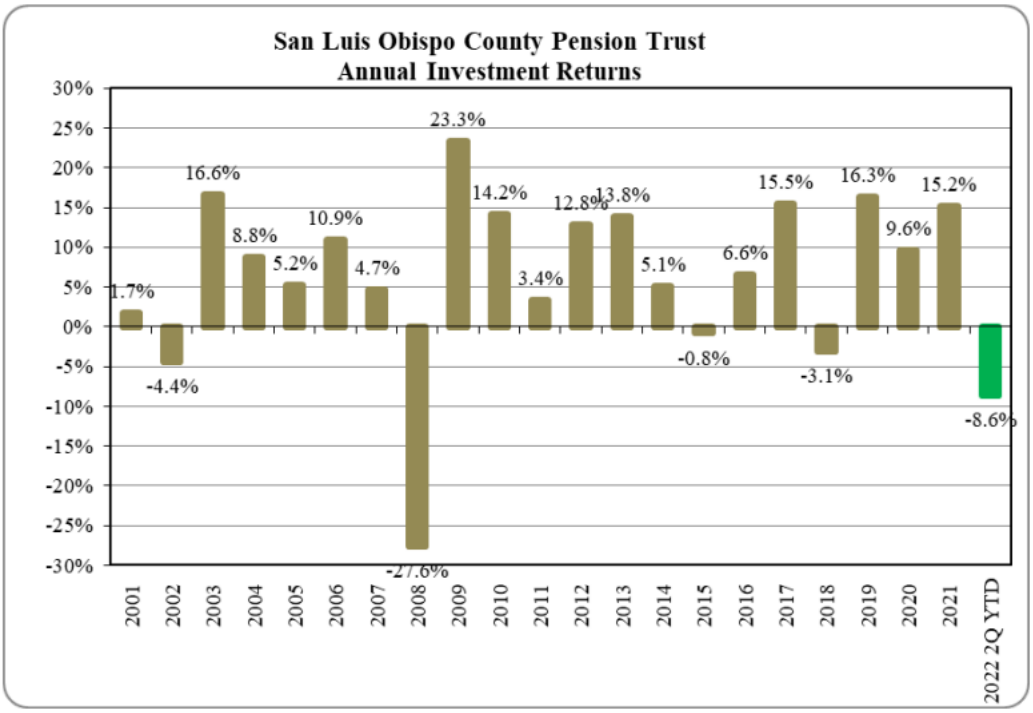
(r) Policy index as of Nov. 2021 Strategic Asset Allocation Policy with 2022 Interim targets:

Public Mkt Equity-	24% Russell 3000, 17% MSCI ACWI ex-US
Public Mkt Debt-	11% Barclays US Aggregate,
Risk Diversifying	8% Barclays US Aggregate,
	4% Barclays 7-10yr Treasury, 3% Barclays 5-10yr US TIPS
Real Estate & Infrastructure-	13% NCREIF Index (inc. Infrastructure)
Private Equity-	7% actual private equity returns
Private Credit-	4% actual private credit returns
Liquidity-	6% 90 day T-Bills

Pending annual updates to interim targets.

Item 11 - Quarterly Investment Report for the 2nd Quarter of 2022:

Attached is the 2Q22 quarterly investment report from the Trust's investment consultant - Verus. Scott Whalen of Verus will present and discuss the quarterly report. The history of SLOCPT investment returns, gross of fees, is shown below. While the SLOCPT operates on a calendar year accounting and actuarial valuation basis, many other retirement systems are on a July1 beginning fiscal year. For comparison, the SLOCPT gross rate or return for the 4 quarters ending with 2Q22 was -4.0%.



Equity Markets – After the precipitous plunge into bear market territory in June, equity markets flattened their decline in early July with a lot of intra-month volatility. For the year-to-date through June the S&P 500 posted a negative -20.0% return.

- **Equity Markets** – The pronounced bear market through much of 2022 thus far turned the corner in July with the S&P 500 showing the following –

Dec. 31, 2021	4,766	
June 30, 2022	3,785	down -20.6% from the start of the year
July 31, 2022	4,130	down -13.3% " " " " " "
Aug. 16th	4,305	down -9.7% " " " " " "

The Economy ♣ Inflation – The July US CPI inflation report for posted at another high of 8.5% year over-year increase. This 12-month period of CPI increases incudes the July CPI increase that was 0.0% - good, albeit early, news on turning the corner on inflation.

• The Fed's Survey of Consumer Expectations for July showed declines in consumer's views on 1 year and 3-year inflation outlooks. The most recent survey showed median expectations for 1-year CPI inflation at 6.2% (down from 6.8% in June) and 3-year CPI inflation at 3.2% (down from 3.6% in June). This is a positive indicator that current high inflation rates are not necessarily becoming entrenched in consumer expectations.

♣ New Jobs and Unemployment - The July jobs report from the BLS on nonfarm employment continues to show an economy in growth with a surprisingly large gain of 528k new jobs. The unemployment rate in July fell again to 3.5%. The strong labor market, while welcome as a sign of economic health, does raise concerns over continued inflationary pressures from labor costs. One early sign of perhaps a

peaking of the jobs market is that the number of vacant jobs in the US fell sharply to 10.6 million – although still high by historical standards.

"In the first half of 2022, the optimism of the post-pandemic recovery finally met the harsh reality of lingering inflation and tightening monetary policy. Investors and central banks alike underestimated the stickiness of inflation. But as the sharp policy pivots and heavy selling of stocks through 1H22 suggest, the risks from elevated inflation and slower growth are now widely acknowledged. Our recent quarterly Strategy Summit was the most pessimistic since the depths of the pandemic, and although stocks are already in bear market territory, in our view the sell-off is not over.

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, August 23, 2022 (Scheduled)

Item 13 - Submittal of two resolutions authorizing perpetual easement agreements for the Ontario Ridge Trail in the unincorporated community of Avila Beach. Exempt from CEQA. District 3.

The Usual Government Shakedown: For decades the County has planned for the extension of a trail that connects the Avila Beach Cave Landing Parking lot (famous and infamous for open sex, fires, trash, drinking, and other misbehavior) to a proposed parking lot next to the 101 Highway in Shell Beach (See the map below on page 6). The McCarthys attempted to permit a residence on their property (see the map below) and were fiercely opposed by the Coastal Commission and wokist appropriators on the grounds that the home would be blight on the view of the bluffs and hill from the ocean. The McCarthys were bullied into granting a trail easement over what would become their front yard. When they sought to have the County allow a better alignment back in 2017, trail users (and non-user advocates), the Coastal Commission, and both former Supervisor Hill and current Supervisor Gibson opposed the relocation. It should be noted that the planning Commission had already approved the relocation on a 4/0 vote. The matter was then appealed by the trail users. The Board of Supervisors rejected the appeal on 2/2/0 vote, with Hill and Gibson supporting the appeal, Arnold and Peschong opposing the appeal, and Compton absent.

The Related McCarthy Home Permit: The hypocritical Hill stated during the Board meeting of September 19, 2017, that "He was supportive of the house, but the trail was a prescriptive right and should remain where it was." He asserted that buyers of property on the coast must understand that they have to comply with a much broader interest of the commons on the cost. Leaving the trail in its original location complicated the permitting for the proposed house.

Gibson piled on with the suggestion that that the trail matter be postponed until the home permitting was dealt with by the Coastal Commission. Once the County approved the home, 2 Coastal Commissioners actually appealed the decision to Commission, including themselves. Then the Commission denied the approval on the grounds that the home violated coastal view requirements and that its water well was not proven sufficient. Even though the well was to be temporary until the home could be connected to the Shell Beach water system, the Commission ultimately denied the permit.

The McCarthys appealed to the Superior Court, which found in their favor. The Coastal Commission then appealed to the 2nd District Court of Appeals, which in June 2022 overturned the Superior Court decision and denied the permit.

The Board Letter Is Silent on the Sad History: This Board letter makes appear that everything is great, and "Oh boy we are now able to finish the easements necessary to create a through trail." The

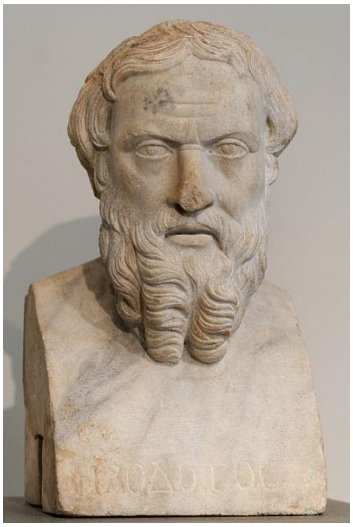
Board and public should remember this tragic story and how property rights were incrementally annihilated.

Now it appears that the County induced two neighboring property owners to "donate" easements connecting to the McCarthy easement.

1. Grant of Easement; Satisfaction of Condition. For valuable consideration, Grantor grants to Grantee, its successor and assigns, a non-exclusive, perpetual easement (the "Easement") in, on and over the Easement Area, subject to all the limitations, terms and conditions of this Agreement. It is understood and acknowledged by the parties hereto that, although the Easement Area is described on Exhibits "B" and "C" attached, upon construction of improvements for the Trail, adjustments to the Easement Area may occur in the field, which shall be mutually agreed to by the parties. The parties agree that upon completion of construction of improvements to the Trail, the parties shall mutually execute, in recordable form, and record, a modification to this Agreement, which provides for any necessary corrected legal description of the Easement Area (the "Modified Easement Area") and quitclaims back to Grantor (or his successor) any portion of the originally described Easement Area not included in the Modified Easement Area. The Department of Parks and Recreation Director or designee is authorized to execute, on behalf of the County, a modification to this Agreement consistent with this paragraph and any necessary quitclaim deed.

Just what valuable consideration are these grantors receiving from the County for what will become a heavily used trial that may be habituated by the same destructive people who now vandalize the Cave Landing Parking lot? Presumably, these owners might have a better chance of securing a permit for one home on these large ocean view properties. But who knows, after the Coastal Commission gets done with them? Have any promises been made by County officials or Coastal Commission staff in this regard?

Big picture: Here again, we see the constant erosion for property rights and the abolition of people's ability to enjoy the quiet private use of their property in the name of some alleged public benefit. It should be noted that back in 2006 the County purchased the property containing the green trail segment on the map below. The owners at that time offered to sell the County the parcel, but the County declined.



As the ancient Greek Historian and Geographer Herodotus stated thousands of years ago: "We can contend with the evil men do in the name of evil, but heaven help us from the evil men do in the name of good."

He didn't have Monkeypox.

Item 18 - Request to authorize a budget adjustment from Flood Control Zone General – Fund Center 450, Designated Project Seed reserves, in the amount of $6,510,450, to the State Water Tax Fund – Fund Center 536, by 4/5 vote. We reported last month that the Civil Grand Jury exposed the County staff depositing state water revenues into the wrong account and thereby contributing to a higher property tax. This item authorizes the transfer to the correct account.

The Department's comprehensive review included the historical funding source for the unallocated portion of the District's State Water and how revenue collected from sales of the unallocated portion of State Water was accounted for. Review of accounting records for expenditures related to the unallocated portion of the District's State Water reflected payment out of the State Water Tax Fund. The review of revenue deposited for the multi-year water sales program spanning from 2008 to 2014 confirmed it was deposited into Flood Control Zone General. The revenue deposited into Flood Control Zone General totaled $6,510,450 from the sale of the unallocated portion of the District's State Water. The Department determined that any revenue received from the sale of the District's unallocated State Water should be deposited in the State Water Tax Fund.

Should interest be credited as well?

Who decided to allot it into the wrong account in the first place?

Was the decision deliberate?

Why are people who don't benefit from State water paying for it?

Item 19 - Request to award a Design-Build contract to Diani Building Corp., which incorporates Diani Building Corp. proposal documents (Clerk's File), in the amount of $23,482,458 for the Co-Located Dispatch Facility project; and authorize the Director of Public Works, or designee, to approve change orders for a contingency amount up to $1,500,000; and submittal of a resolution certifying the Co-Located Dispatch Facility project Final Environmental Impact Report (Clerk's File); and authorize a budget adjustment, in the amount of $25,250,000 for $25,000,000 in Capital Outlay and $250,000 in Issuance Costs in Fund Center 230 - Capital Projects Fund, WBS# 320061, using $25,250,000 bond proceeds from the Public Financing Authority, by 4/5 vote. The project will consolidate the Fire and Sheriff dispatch centers into a combined facility in the north end of Templeton.

The projected cost of the project is $39.9 million of which $25.6 million is to be provided from a debt issuance. It is estimated that the debt payments with principle and interest ever 25 years will total $37.5 million. Thus, the true cost of the project will be $52.2 million.

The write-up describes the physical features of the project but does not cover the reasons justifying operational benefits.

What problem or problems are we now experiencing that will be corrected and that justify the expenditure of $52.5 million?

When, where, and how often do these problems occur?

Will the staffing requirements for the new facility be less than, equal to, or more than the current two facilities?

Who will command the dispatch center?

How will the operational costs be shared?

Why is the facility being placed in north Templeton, miles from the seat of the County government?

Will the EOC remain at Kansas Avenue? Shouldn't the EOC be co-located next to the Dispatch center?

If it is moved to Templeton, it will be distant from the seat of government. Does this make sense from an information flow point of view and civilian control of public safety, particularly in protracted disasters?

Will the dispatch center serve as the Public Safety Access Point (PSAP)? How will calls be routed to the Sheriff's side and the Fire side?

Will the new center be designed to survive earthquakes and major weather events? What about shielding from radiological, bacteriological, and chemical agents in the area?

Why is Santa Barbara County spending even more millions to separate Sheriff and Fire dispatching into separate communications centers after decades of combined operations?

Are there any independent studies that present best practices for a decision?

One table lists the direct cost of the project (without debt interest) as $36.9 million.

Table 1: Estimated Total Project Costs to Completion	
Building Design and Construction *(Design-Build Contract Costs)*	$23,482,458
Design-Build Contract Contingency	$1,500,000
Other Building and Site Costs *(Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment, Network/Data, Security)*	$5,670,102
Soft Costs *(Professional Services, Administration, Permits/Fees, Testing/Inspection, Project Contingency)*	$6,028,963
Estimated Total Project Costs to Completion	**$ 36,681,523**

On the other hand, the other table below lists it as $39.9 million without debt service.
Why are they different? Perhaps the prior year funding?

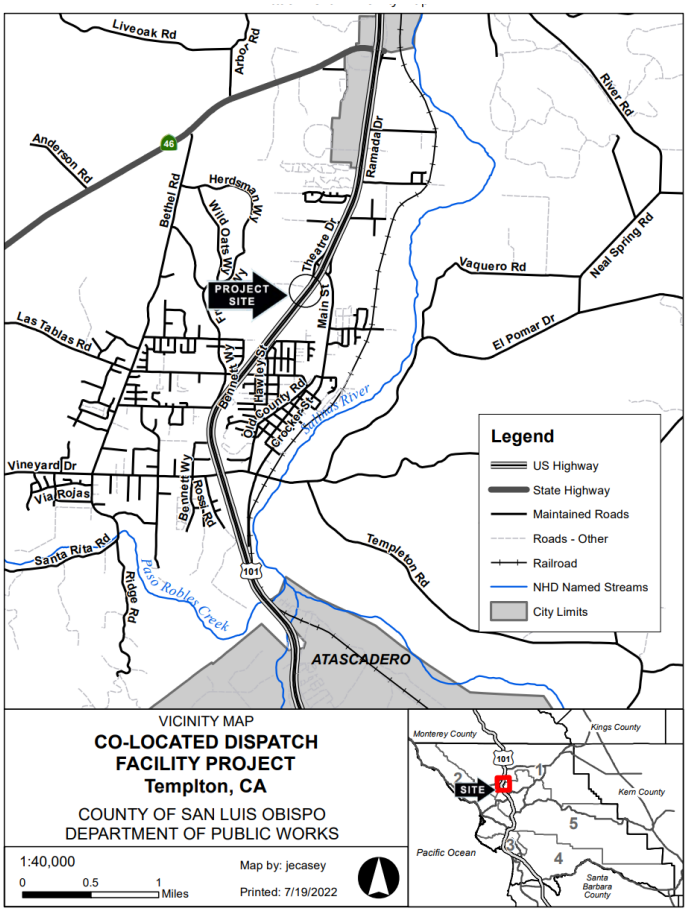
Are upgraded data management systems included in the cost, or will these be separate? Is there a ballpark estimate?

Why is such a major policy item (including going to debt) on the consent calendar?

Table 2 - Current Funding					
Funding Source:	**Prior Year Funding**	**FY 2022/23 Funding**	**Total Current Funding**	**Estimated Project Funding**	**Variance**
3250095 Des FB - Fire PFF	$168,280	$8,301,274	$8,469,554	$8,469,554	$0
3250220 Des FB - Law PFF	100,000	2,185,816	2,285,816	2,285,816	0
3250307 Des FB - Prop 172 Solar Sheriff	480,318	0	480,318	480,318	0
3250307 Des FB - Prop 172 Solar Probation	1,260,747	0	1,260,747	1,260,747	0
3250307 Des FB - Prop 172 Solar Fire	685,700	2	685,702	685,702	0
General Fund	163,274	0	163,274	163,274	0
Remaining Budget Project #320137	145,221	0	145,221	145,221	0
Building Replacement Reserves	237,295	944,431	1,181,726	1,181,726	0
Debt Issuance	0	0	0	25,250,000	25,250,000
Total Funding	**$3,240,835**	**$11,431,523**	**$14,672,358**	**$39,922,358**	**$25,250,000**

What interest rate was used to calculate the debt service? Was the current inflationary environment factored in?

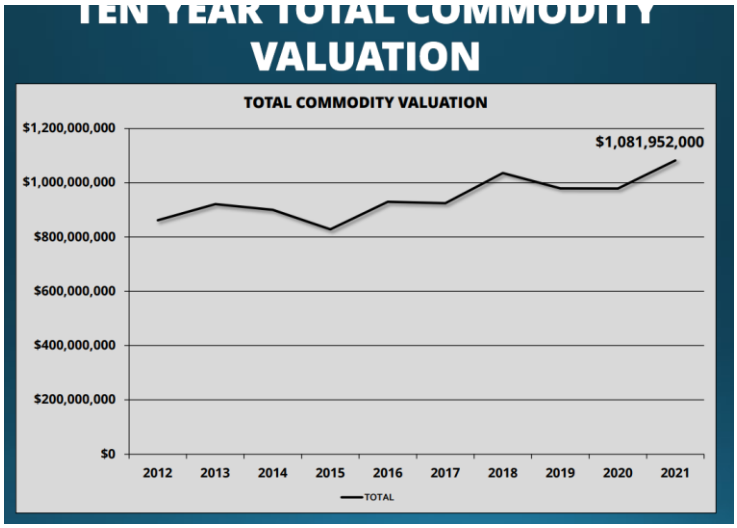
Table 3 - Annual Debt Funding Sources			
Funding Source	**Estimated Funding Range**		
	Estimated PFF (3 Year Average)		**Estimated PFF (FY 2022/23 Budget)**
PFF - Fire	$560,000	to	$362,866
PFF - Law	120,000	to	110,496
Total PFF	**$680,000**		**$473,362**
General Fund	820,000	to	1,026,638
Total Annual Debt	**$1,500,000**		**$1,500,000**



Item 29 - It is recommended that the Board receive and file the 2021 Annual Agricultural Statistics for San Luis Obispo County. The report is positive in that the crop value exceeded $1 billion in spite of drought, COVID, labor shortages, increasing state regulatory interference, and volatile economic markets.

TOTAL VALUATION

- **2021 Crop values recorded for San Luis Obispo County reached a record high of $1,081,952,000, an approximate 10% increase over 2020.**
- **This is the second time that agricultural values in the county have exceeded the billion-dollar mark.**
- **The overall market for agricultural goods was strong during 2021.**
- **Fruit and nut crops bolstered the overall county crop value with a record year.**
- **Vegetable crops along with nursery products remained relatively stable while field crops and livestock producers experienced a decline in value.**



Planning Commission Meeting of Tuesday, August 25, 2022 (Scheduled)

The Commission's agenda is light in that it contains only 2 requests for permit extensions for single family residences, and 1 Conditional Use Permit for a small winery with a tasting room.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, August 16, 2022 (Not Scheduled)

The Board did not meet and was not scheduled. As noted above, there will be a meeting on August 23, 2022.

Local Agency Formation Commission Meeting of Thursday, August 18, 2022 (completed)

The meeting agenda was very lite and the agenda items pertained to internal operations.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1- Pandemics, Epidemics, and Coming Attractions. Are the authorities telling us the truth about Monkeypox? It seems to be spreading much faster than was predicted a few weeks ago. Moreover, infections are reported in patients who are not gay and who have not had sex with an infected person.

The Federal Centers for Disease Control reports that it was far behind the curve with SARS COVID 19. Will they be behind the curve on Monkeypox? Current bulletins relate the disease to gay sex, but

independent experts are beginning to question the accuracy of this information as it spreads to other communities. Authorities have also stated that it is not so bad, but new data is emerging. See the article in Addendum I on page 28 for details. Once it gets going, will the risk be as low as authorities now project? Remember, when COVID first started, you had to be eating bats!

The County reported its first case last week.

First Case of Monkeypox Identified in SLO County Resident

Author: Public Health Department

Date: 8/15/2022 3:12:14 PM

San Luis Obispo, CA—The first case of monkeypox has been identified in a San Luis Obispo County resident, following an uptick in cases globally and in California. The risk to the general public from this virus remains low, as the virus is usually spread through prolonged, close physical contact.

The individual, who is believed to have contracted the virus while traveling in another part of California, is recovering in isolation and is in good condition. The Public Health Department is in communication with the individual's close contacts and is providing vaccine to those who have been exposed to the virus. The vaccine is effective at preventing infection during the period after an individual is exposed to the virus but before symptoms develop.

The case was diagnosed when the individual experienced symptoms and promptly sought care.

Not the SLO County case, but it can get bad.

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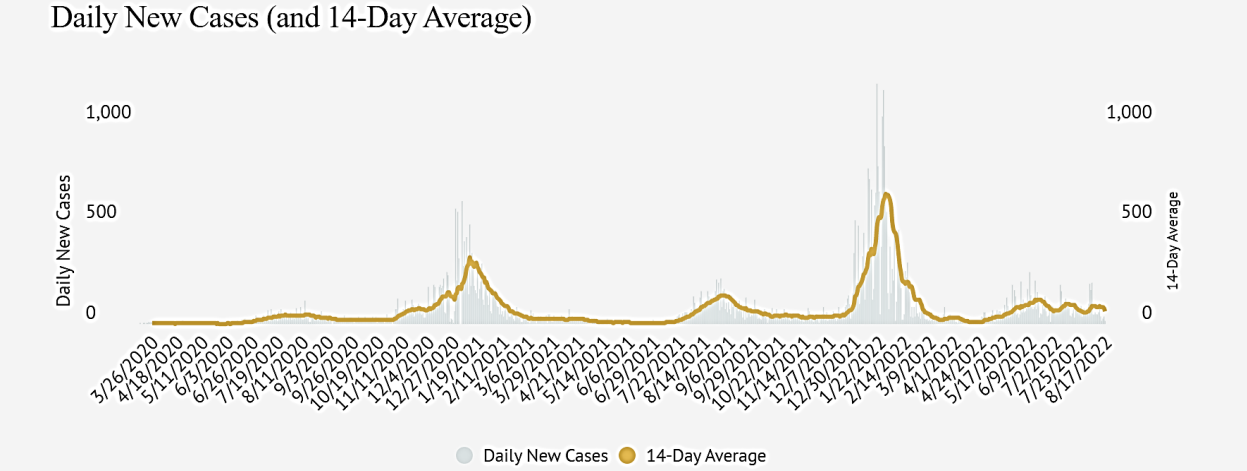
COVID in SLO County



10 (1 ICU) **SLO County Residents with COVID-19 in Hospital

Item 2 - "Inflation Reduction" Act. The Act, which is misnamed as it adds $800 billion of new expenditures in an already inflationary period, was narrowly approved by both houses of Congress and signed into law by the President. Billions in patronage slush for climate change, porky public works projects, and expansion of Obama Care (drug subsides, etc.) are included.

The frosting on the cake is $88 billion to exponentially increase the staffing and power of the IRS.

Proponents claim that the Act will be tax neutral for filers with less than $400,000 per year. No one has explained:

Is that number on gross income or taxable income?

How are married vs. single filers impacted?

How will the tax table for those with over $400,000 look? Next year's version will reveal the truth. Why doesn't the administration publish it for everyone to see?

Married Tax Brackets				
Marginal Rate	Income Range			Taxes You Pay
10%	$0	to	$19,750	10% of taxable income
12%	$19,751	to	$80,250	$1,975 plus 12% of the income over $19750
22%	$80,251	to	$171,050	$9,235 plus 22% of the income over $80250
24%	$171,051	to	$326,600	$29,211 plus 24% of the income over $171050
32%	$326,601	to	$414,700	$66,543 plus 32% of the income over $326600
35%	$414,701	to	$622,050	$94,735 plus 35% of the income over $414700
37%	$622,051	and above		$167,308 plus 37% of the income over $622050
Single Tax Brackets				
Marginal Rate	Income Range			Taxes You Pay
10%	$0	to	$9,875	10% of taxable income
12%	$9,876	to	$40,125	$988 plus 12% of the income over $9875
22%	$40,126	to	$85,525	$4,618 plus 22% of the income over $40125
24%	$85,526	to	$163,300	$14,606 plus 24% of the income over $85525

Item 3 - Diablo: Please see the article below for the current and next steps.

DIABLO LIVES!

BY JAMES B. MEIGS

California governor Gavin Newsom announced a plan to roll back the planned retirement of Diablo Canyon, the state's only surviving nuclear power plant. For several months, Newsom had been tentatively exploring options to keep the San Luis Obispo plant running. Nonetheless, the announcement was something of a shock. After all, not so long ago, the governor had helped lead the political movement demanding that the plant be closed. And until quite recently, California's elite class—lawmakers, journalists, entertainers—were almost unanimously opposed to the very idea of nuclear power, seeing it as a risky and unnecessary distraction on the road to bounteous wind and solar power.

How did this rapid change in public opinion come about? In some ways, California's sudden embrace of nuclear power recalls the famous quotation attributed to Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has." Though the quotation is probably apocryphal, it captures the way a tiny cohort of pro-nuclear advocates made their case, plugging away year after year, gradually winning both policymakers and the public to their side.

"It was very lonely at first," recalls Michael Shellenberger. In 2016, when California's Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) announced plans to retire Diablo Canyon, he was one of the handful of environmentalists to speak up in defense of the plant. Their viewpoint wasn't popular. "We were demonized and accused of all sorts of terrible things," he told me. Diablo Canyon had always been a lightning rod for criticism. Thousands protested the plant's construction in the early 1980s; singer Jackson Browne was among the many arrested trying to block the gates. The *Los Angeles Times* called the demonstration "the Normandy Invasion of civil protests." Even after the plant opened in 1985, environmental groups, including Friends of the Earth and the Natural Resources Defense Council, kept fighting to shut it down.

In 2013, Senator Barbara Boxer, Friends of the Earth, and other anti-nuclear advocates forced the early retirement of California's San Onofre nuclear plant near San Clemente. By 2016, environmentalists were successfully running the same playbook on Diablo Canyon. Legal activists tied up PG&E with lawsuits, while state officials—including then-lieutenant governor Gavin Newsom—looked for

bureaucratic maneuvers that would force the company to close the plant. They knew that by 2025 PG&E would need to get the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) approval to extend Diablo Canyon's operating license. They vowed to do everything they could to block that process. (New York governor Andrew Cuomo, working with Riverkeeper and other anti-nuclear activists, used similar tactics to force the closure of the Hudson Valley's Indian Point power plant in 2021.)

Finally, PG&E threw in the towel, announcing it would not seek a license extension. The embattled power company promised it would replace the plant's 2,200 megawatts (nearly 9 percent of California's electricity) with renewable energy projects.

At first, almost everyone agreed that California was better off without Diablo Canyon. Friends of the Earth said closing the state's last remaining nuclear plant would help "make California a global leader in fighting climate change." Governor Jerry Brown signed a bill mandating that Diablo's power be replaced with lower-cost, zero-carbon alternatives. Nuclear was the past; wind and solar were the future. Nuclear plants are "cheaper to close than to run," declared environmental guru Amory Lovins. Even Elon Musk joined in; lawyers for Tesla (which just happened to own a solar-panel company) filed a legal brief supporting the planned shutdown. For the most part, conservatives didn't object either. Many had become convinced that cheap natural gas was making nuclear energy obsolete. Taxpayers for Common Sense recently described nuclear power as a "failing industry," propped up by government subsidies.

But not everyone went along with this consensus. As Robert Bryce wrote in *City Journal* at the time, the old-guard, anti-nuclear environmentalists—groups like the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council—were suddenly challenged by the "pro-nuclear New Guard Greens." Shellenberger, who co-founded the eco-modernist Breakthrough Institute and later launched the pro-nuclear advocacy group Environmental Progress, began lobbying then-governor Jerry Brown to keep Diablo Canyon open. A few contrarian environmentalists, including *Whole Earth Catalog* founder Stewart Brand and climate scientist James Hansen, joined him in the quixotic quest.

These pro-nuclear greens picked apart the rosy forecasts made by renewable-only advocates: adding more wind and solar to the grid can help bring down carbon emissions, they argued, but the unpredictable swings in power production from those sources make managing the grid more challenging. To balance out intermittent wind and solar power, utilities typically turn to natural-gas-fired power plants, which can quickly fill the gaps when renewables flag. While renewable-energy supporters glossed over these problems, eco-modernists argued that the numbers don't lie. By 2021, wind and solar were providing an impressive 25 percent of California's electricity production. But natural gas use had surged even more, accounting for 50 percent of the state's power.

The strategy of closing nuclear plants while building wind and solar was leading to what Breakthrough Institute analyst Adam Stein calls "treadmill decarbonization": despite billions in clean-energy investments, the state's carbon emissions were barely creeping down. Meantime, California's electricity prices were the nation's highest, and the state was becoming dangerously prone to blackouts. Just as Germany has done in Europe with its disastrous Energiewende program, California was providing a case study in how *not* to decarbonize an economy.

To make matters worse, analysts predicted that, if Diablo Canyon closed as scheduled, the state's carbon emissions would jump 11 percent and ratepayers would be on the hook for billions of dollars. Despite these looming disasters, the anti-nuclear elite remained unmoved. There are "better ways to fight climate change," a *Los Angeles Times* editorial sniffed. Any hardships imposed by closing the

plant should "serve as an impetus for California to accelerate the shift to renewable energy." From the lofty perspective of the *Times* editorial board, huge burdens on California consumers—and massive increases in emissions—somehow constituted a win for the climate. Shellenberger, the Breakthrough Institute, and others relentlessly challenged this kind of economic and environmental innumeracy.

These nuclear supporters didn't just crunch the numbers; they also built a network of grassroots advocates. In 2016, Shellenberger visited the Diablo Canyon plant and got to know some of the workers there. He encouraged them to fight for their plant and their jobs. "Many workers gave up right away," he recalls. Two who didn't were Kristin Zaitz and Heather Hoff, both young mothers who had never planned to work in the nuclear industry but who came to love it. He encouraged them to start a nonprofit, Mothers for Nuclear, and they turned their experiences, both as parents and as nuclear professionals, into powerful advocacy.

"Nuclear is our best hope in combating climate change and protecting the future for our children," Hoff's Twitter bio reads. Both women talk about their outdoorsy upbringings and how they want to pass that love of nature on to their children. And both discuss their worries about climate change and its potential impact on the state. Long before Newsom's announcement, Zaitz described plans to close the plant as a looming disaster she was powerless to stop. "Out of misunderstanding and fear," she wrote, "California may close the best-run nuclear plant in the world and replace it with fossil fuels." For many, such intimate advocacy is more persuasive than white papers and statistics.

Today, Mothers for Nuclear has branches in several countries around the world and is one of many grassroots advocacy groups trying to win over ordinary civilians. I recently wrote about Zion Lights, a British environmentalist who left the radical Extinction Rebellion and founded the pro-nuclear advocacy group Emergency Reactor ("The Green War on Clean Energy," Summer 2022). The group holds cheerful street rallies promoting nuclear energy in London and other cities. In the U.S., Madi Hilly, the young founder of the Campaign for a Green Nuclear Deal, writes entertaining Twitter threads explaining why fears of nuclear waste are unfounded. There are many similar examples.

In 2016, even the nuclear industry seemed apologetic about advocating for nuclear power. "But we held the line and worked to persuade people," Shellenberger says. "Over time it became safer for people to come out in support of nuclear, and eventually in favor of Diablo." While only a handful of experts spoke out on behalf of Diablo Canyon when its eventual retirement was first announced, by 2022, a growing chorus was calling for the plant to be saved. This past February, some 79 leading scientists—including Obama administration energy secretary Steven Chu—signed a letter urging Newsom to save the plant. A May 2022 poll showed that 58 percent of California voters support keeping Diablo Canyon open.

Newsom's proposal calls for the state to issue a forgivable $1.4 billion loan to help keep the plant operating until 2035. (Free-market advocates are right to be galled that PG&E requires a subsidy to support a plant that ought to be quite profitable in today's market. But in contrast to the billions the state spends subsidizing wind and solar, Newsom's offer will save money for ratepayers.) The plan still needs to be approved by the state legislature, and the NRC must begin the long process of approving an extension of the plant's operating license. Alex Trembath, deputy director of the Breakthrough Institute, warns against premature celebration. "I'll feel better when they actually approve the loan and extend the operating license," he told me.

Still, nuclear advocates are optimistic that the measure will pass and the NRC will support the **extension. In pro-nuclear social media circles, the reaction to Newsom's announcement was**

ecstatic. Even a year ago, almost no one would have predicted this stunning turnaround. "Good news for California & the world," Zion Lights tweeted. "Advocacy works!"

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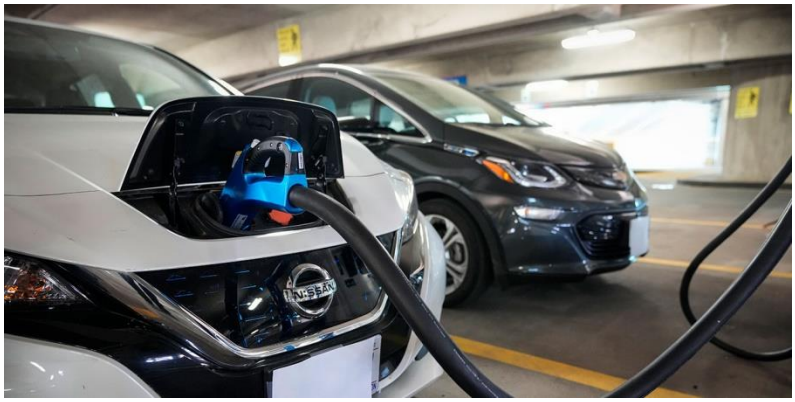
COLAB IN DEPTH

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

ELECTRIC, NOT ELECTRIC

BY DIANA FURCHTGOTT-ROTH



The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will allocate more than $15 billion in credits and loans for electric vehicle and battery manufacturers, as well as tax credits for buyers of electric vehicles. The stated rationale: these cars produce fewer carbon emissions than cars with internal combustion engines. But recent research shows that this may not always be true.
Consider an April paper published in the *SAE International Journal of Electrified Vehicles* by a team of engineers and data scientists.

The paper compares greenhouse gas emissions from plug-in, battery-powered electric vehicles with emissions from hybrid vehicles, which combine internal combustion engines with small battery packs. The conclusion: pure plug-in battery-powered vehicles can create *more* emissions than hybrids and even some traditional internal combustion engine vehicles—whose fuel delivery, air delivery, and ignition systems have improved over the past 20 years, increasing overall vehicle gas mileage.

Electric cars don't have tailpipe emissions, but their batteries are charged using electricity. And electricity production—unless it's from renewables, hydropower, or nuclear energy—results in carbon

emissions. The authors cite data from the Energy Information Administration, which show that the proportions of electricity sources typically activated and deactivated to match demand often bear little resemblance to the proportions for total electricity generation. To minimize emissions and cost, electricity grids tend to use clean sources such as nuclear, solar, and wind as much as possible. But demand often exceeds what these sources can provide, making "marginal sources" that respond immediately to demand—hydropower and fossil fuels—necessary.

Most studies of emissions use average emissions rates—the rates from the total proportions of electricity generation. But these rates include zero-emission sources that are not available to meet increased demand, meaning that average emission rates are artificially low in most of the United States. Added electricity demand from the rapid adoption of all-electric vehicle fleets could therefore move the economy further away from the point where most of the demand can be met by low-emission sources.

What about fuel-powered hybrid vehicles? These recover energy from the braking system and use it to supplement smaller internal combustion engines. The study's model finds that they produce fewer emissions today than electric vehicles in most of the United States. Only the most optimistic projections of U.S. grid cleanup suggest electric-vehicle emissions superiority, even with an 18-year electric-vehicle life. Unfortunately, these hybrids will not qualify for new electric car credits, because they are not plugged into charging systems.

As the authors note, decarbonizing electricity production would change the emissions calculus. "A mix of powertrain technologies is the best path toward reducing transportation sector emissions until the U.S. grid can provide electricity for the all-electric fleet infrastructure and vehicle operations with a carbon intensity that produces a net environmental benefit," conclude Tristan Burton, Cooper Burns, and Kelly Senecal of Convergent Science; Graham Conway of the Southwest Research Institute; Felix Leach of Oxford University; and Scott Powers of the Houston Astros. Nuclear power would be revolutionary because it generates substantial amounts of emissions-free electricity, but nuclear plants take years to build and add to the grid. The IRA contains $30 billion in tax credits over the next ten years for nuclear-power subsidies.

In any case, electric vehicles have practical problems. Drivers pay more for less-convenient mobility: Ford's F-150 Lightning electric pickup truck costs $46,974, compared with a base price of $32,000 for a traditional model. GM, Tesla, and Rivian have hiked the prices of their electric models. Meantime, batteries and electric-car components usually come from China, where they're made with coal-fired electricity. To reduce dependence on China and minimize fossil-fuel use globally, the IRA restricts electric vehicle credits to cars made in the U.S. that source their battery components from North America. That provision may bring some future production to the United States, but substantial manufacturing cost differentials between America and China will likely remain. For now, most electric cars won't qualify for the law's tax credits.

Attempts to lower emissions in the United States shouldn't overlook this research. Focusing on battery-powered electric vehicles may neglect more fruitful means of emissions reduction. As the researchers write, "the future is eclectic, not electric."

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INFLATION MAKES PEOPLE POORER (AND IT'S THE GOVERNMENT'S FAULT)

BY ANDRÉ MARQUES

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the US was 9.1 percent in June. Taking into account that the government lies about inflation, it is better to consider Shadow Government Statistics' CPI (based on the 1980s CPI methodology), which was (as of July 13) about 17 percent.

The government claims that this high CPI is due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (you could argue that, one of the reasons is the sanctions on Russia's economy, which don't do much to harm to the Russian government and hurts ordinary people both inside and outside Russia). But this is just an excuse for the government to not admit the blame. It is clear the war has an influence on the CPI, as it eliminates the supply of various goods and services, which ends up increasing prices. However, the CPI has been going up since February 2021.

The 2020 and 2021 lockdowns (and the followed supply shocks) were also a big factor, but the real reason prices are going up is the inflation (monetary expansion) created by the US government both in 2020 and 2021.

Yes, supply shocks cause increases in SOME prices in the economy, *but not a general increase in the prices of goods and services*. If there is a supply shock of certain goods (making their prices higher), but the money supply does not change, there will be a new equilibrium of supply and demand for the various goods and services in the economy (since the money supply is the same and individuals will have to change the allocation of their budget, so the prices of the goods that will have a lower demand will decrease).

Once the supply shock of these goods ended, their supply would increase, and their prices would decrease (changing the equilibrium of supply and demand once again). Only an increase in money in circulation can make ALL (or almost all) prices in the economy rise simultaneously, as the value of money decreases and more units of currency are needed to pay for goods and services.

Inflation (the expansion of the money supply) and the consequent increase in prices is a disguised tax. The US government increased its spending and its budget deficit. So, it issued more debt securities, which were mostly purchased by the Federal Reserve (Fed) through an increase in the monetary base

(M0). Then, the government spent the newly created money, increasing the amount of money in circulation in the economy (M1 and M2), which tends to make prices higher.

Note that the government increased its spending without raising taxes in the same proportion. The cost of the increase in government spending was paid by the population (nothing from the government is free; not even for the poor, who suffer the most from taxes, as their incomes are lower) not by taxes, but by the increase in prices that occurred due to inflation.

Also bear in mind that government borrowing, by itself, is not inflationary. If debt securities are all absorbed by the market (by investors and financial institutions) no new money is created by the central bank.

However, even in this case the economy is damaged because when the government goes into debt it appropriates resources that could be used for productive investments (which could increase the productivity of the economy and make prices lower). In addition, government indebtedness also implies interest costs. To pay the interest (which tends to increase as debt grows), governments often raise taxes and/or borrow even more. The interest cost represents more resources that are expropriated from the economy by the government.

Price increases hurt everyone, especially the poor and the lower middle class (who have fewer resources). Due to rising prices, individuals will inevitably have to make budget cuts, buying fewer goods and services. The standard of living goes down. At best, individuals do not make budget cuts, but save less than before.

The poor and the lower middle class are also more heavily affected because, due to rising prices, wealthy people and the upper middle class (who have enough income to afford to not make budget cuts) end up saving and investing less (of course, they barely feel this change themselves, but it is a great cut in the savings and investments in the economy). If there is less investment in the economy, productivity does not increase (or even decreases) and prices tend to increase in the medium and long run.

But even the wealthy people and the upper middle class can be heavily affected by rising prices caused by inflation. Imagine, for example, a retail company. If prices rise, individuals (notably the poor and the lower middle class, which are the majority) will stop buying certain products (after all, their income is not high enough for them to have the luxury to afford not to do it).

Therefore, even with rising prices, the company's profit decreases (or the company ends up incurring loss), also considering that, due to inflation, the costs of producers and the retail company increase. This is what happened a few months ago with Target, which registered lower profits. The owners of large retail companies and companies that produce the goods happen to register lower profits (or even incur losses), and investors and financial institutions that buy the stocks of these companies also lose (since the stocks are worth less and the companies tend to pay less dividends or even suspend it).

Therefore, everyone is worse off due to government-generated inflation. But it is the poor and the lower middle class who take most of the bullets.

Governments always claim to help the poor and the lower middle class. But these are precisely the ones who bear most of the cost of governments (taxes, indebtedness, regulations, and inflation). After all, the upper middle class and the wealthy can turn to lawyers, accountants, and tax consulting agencies to allocate their assets in order to pay less in taxes (all legally).

And it's a good thing they do so (if not, there would be even less investment in the economy and prices would be even higher). They may also buy a lot of gold, invest in assets priced in currencies that are less inflated, or resort to any other form of wealth protection.

Therefore, the poorest are the ones who actually pay for the government. It is precisely because of governments that the poor and the lower middle class, in most cases, don't get richer. It is the government that perpetuate poverty, precisely to justify their existence by pretending to help the poorer. After all, if there were no monetary inflation created by governments, prices would tend to decrease as the productivity of the economy rose and the standard of living would rise.

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GREEN FASCISTS ARE DESTROYING THE WORLD

The green agenda needs to become the topic of open, honest, balanced, and very public debate.

BY EDWARD RING

Earlier this summer, the CO2 Coalition was banished from LinkedIn. The CO2 Coalition, with only three full-time employees and an annual budget of under $1 million, had committed the unpardonable sin of sharing contrarian perspectives on climate science. Its work, produced by a network of volunteers that includes dozens of distinguished scientists, offers indispensable balance on a topic that requires honest debate now more than ever.

Among the many comments that followed LinkedIn's decision, the mentality of the climate crisis mob came through loud and clear. If "the science is settled," then any contrary perspective is dangerous and must be silenced. A typical comment: "Why does LinkedIn allow so much Climate Disinformation to persist throughout its platform?" Brigades of these content wardens continuously log complaints with LinkedIn against climate skeptics. The impeccable work of Bjorn Lomborg is one of their next targets.

This is not the environmentalism of previous generations, and this new zealotry does not negate or diminish the common sense concern for the environment that most reasonable people share. But this new breed of intolerant, fanatical environmentalism, manifested in the movement to avert a "climate crisis," is perhaps the most virulent and dangerous expression of fascism in America today. If left unchecked, this fascistic climate change movement will destroy freedom and prosperity while it destroys the planet it purportedly wants to save.

Ideological and Economic Fascism Combined

This is not a frivolous accusation because, in this case, the shoe fits. There are two types of fascism. One is based on ideology and manipulates popular emotions, and the other is based on economics and appeals to elitist greed. The climate crisis movement has found a way to combine both.

Ideological fascism requires a tribal, *us versus them* mentality, and the climate crisis movement provides this. The climate warriors are the good guys, and the "deniers" are dangerous heretics who must be crushed. They portray the "climate emergency" as a crisis of existential dimensions, which must be resolved by any means necessary.

As with any fascistic movement, green propaganda is hyperbolic, primal, and terrifying: rising seas, flooding, super fires, extreme weather, burning heat—and anyone who says otherwise is the enemy. The time for discussion has passed. And with every big storm or super fire, the potential for more militancy grows.

Economic fascism is variously defined, but the climate movement in the United States fits every credible definition, as it affects big business and big government. Some call it socialism with a capitalist veneer. That would certainly apply, as the industrialized Western nations are suddenly required to atone for causing the climate crisis by transferring wealth to the developing world, and the privileged American middle class must similarly atone by giving up their homes for apartments, their automobiles for buses and trains, their meat for insects, and submit to rationing of energy and water.

Economic fascism is also defined as "planned capitalism," or corporatism. America has been drifting in this direction for at least the last few decades, greatly accelerated by the climate crisis. Small businesses and small farms expire under green regulations they can't afford, as oligarchs and multinational corporations gobble up the broken pieces. Environmentalist-enabled corporatism is the reason the American middle class is dying.

Environmentalist-inspired regulations have imposed curbs on home building, resource extraction, and infrastructure investment. These artificial limits create scarcity and exploding prices for every essential good, which diminishes the prospects of all but the very wealthy. Government and big business, working together, are using the climate crisis to destroy the economic independence of American households to empower and enrich themselves. This economic model is explicitly fascist.

But as the United States transitions from a constitutional republic populated mostly by a prosperous middle class to a fascist police state populated by a destitute and broken people ruled by an oligarchy professing fealty to an environmentalist ideology, are the policies they've implemented in the name of saving the planet even working? That is, even if they're right about the dangers, and there really is a climate crisis, is all of this upheaval they advocate doing any good?

No.

A disinterested examination of the schemes that constitute clean technology and renewable energy reveals a landscape of fads and scams that have cost trillions of dollars and accomplished absolutely nothing. Worse still, if these schemes are allowed to continue, the consequences for both humanity and the earth's ecosystems will be more catastrophic than all but the most apocalyptic climate crisis scenarios.

Biofuel Ecocide

Biofuel is an obvious example. Contributing barely *one-half of one percent* of all global energy, there are now an estimated 300,000 square miles of biofuel plantations on earth. From the jungles of Borneo and throughout the Pacific Islands, palm oil is extracted to produce biodiesel, while from the rainforests of the Amazon to the American Midwest, sugar cane and corn is grown to produce bioethanol. Every year, more jungle is burned and wildlife incinerated to create new biofuel monocultures, with a pall of smoke that drifts thousands of miles.

The environmental catastrophe that large-scale biofuel production represents is easily demonstrated. If you replaced 100 percent of the oil consumed worldwide with biofuel, it would require *25 million square miles*. To put this in perspective, the total farmland worldwide is only 12 million square miles. Yet, in a barefaced and epic charade, every time these jungles burn, another European commodities broker gets to collect a commission on a "carbon credit."

Imagine if not just oil, but *all* energy produced on earth today came from biofuel. To accomplish that would require 43 million square miles, which is 70 percent of the entire land surface on Earth *including* Antarctica.

Proponents of biofuel claim it will be possible eventually to extract ethanol cost-effectively from cellulose—the fiber that constitutes most of the mass of any plant. But notwithstanding the need either to leave harvest slash in the ground to maintain soil health, or inject massive quantities of petroleum-derived fertilizer, cellulosic ethanol extraction remains an extremely costly endeavor. Extracting biofuel from algae in a factory environment has promise in theory but remains far from a commercial reality.

Meanwhile, rainforests burn, supposedly so we can use less fossil fuel.


Getty Images

Land-Hogging Species Exterminators

Wind energy is equally disastrous to the environment. In 2021, wind turbines only contributed 1.1 percent of total global energy production, delivering electricity at a rate of only 26 percent of their installed capacity. Wind energy is an unreliable intermittent form of energy that ultimately will require additional *trillions* of dollars to be spent on new high voltage lines and battery farms to balance the power grid. But these "wind farms" already consume hundreds of thousands of square miles, with their land footprint set to increase as purveyors are discovering they cannot operate at maximum efficiency unless the turbines are spaced further apart.

An analysis published last year in the trade publication *Energy Follower* challenged the conventional spacing guidelines, which call for wind turbines to be spaced apart by a distance equal to seven times the rotor diameter. That alone calls for a stupendous amount of land, since that spacing would permit a maximum of four wind turbines per square mile. Citing work by Charles Meneveau, a mechanical engineering professor at Johns Hopkins University, however, the analysis went on to report that based on Meneveau's analysis of the performance of utility-scale wind farms, for maximum efficiency, "the suggested recommended separation of each turbine being 15 times the rotor diameter away from its nearest neighbors." That equates to *one* wind turbine consuming 1.2 square miles.

Based on this data, using wind turbines to generate the 28,466 terawatt-hours of electricity produced in 2021 from all sources worldwide would require *3 million square miles* of wind farms. That's more area than the combined footprint of every urban region on Earth. And this land would be uninhabitable—anyone who disagrees is invited to live on a wind farm. There will not be many takers.

Wind turbines not only consume unimaginable quantities of resources and land area. They already kill tens of thousands of raptors and bats every year. Potentially worse still, the blades are killing billions of insects at a time when total global insect mass—an essential part of nature's food chain—is in alarming decline. Wind turbines are also ugly as hell, despite all the slick marketing photography showing them presiding beneficently over green hills and clear skies.

Intermittent, Toxic, Nonrenewable Solar Power

Solar power is perhaps the least problematic of the so-called renewables, but it's still intermittent power. This intermittency is not only a daily challenge, which can only be addressed with massive

investments in batteries. It's also a seasonal problem. In temperate latitudes, the hours of daylight during summer are twice that of winter, and the further north you go the greater this seasonal challenge becomes. Solar power simply doesn't work during northern winters, or if it does, it has to be grossly overbuilt to compensate for fewer hours of daylight.

Solar power is also not terribly renewable. The basic material for photovoltaic panels is "solar-grade" polysilicon, which is most efficiently refined using sand. But the world is running out of sand. Extracting silicon from other sources such as obsidian, granite, quartzite, mica, talc, and sandstone is possible, but it is much more expensive and comes with a greater environmental impact. All of the raw materials necessary to manufacture photovoltaic panels are nonrenewable, including aluminum, steel, glass, copper, and silver. If mining these raw materials is so sustainable, why have environmentalists declared war on America's domestic mining industry?

And then there's the challenge of what to do with photovoltaic panels once they're spent. With a useful life of only around 25 years, and even at today's relatively minute scale, an unrelenting deluge of toxic solar panel "e-waste" is about to descend on humanity. A 2016 report from the International Renewable Energy Agency predicted that by 2050 the world will be generating about 6 million metric tons of new solar e-waste annually. To date, recycling solar panels is an expensive, energy-intensive business.

If panels were manufactured in America, using raw materials mined in America, and could be produced cost-effectively and mounted on roofs, solar might make sense as just one part of an all-of-the-above energy strategy. But intermittent power is not practical without massive concurrent investments in grid upgrades and large-scale energy storage systems. These costs, and the environmental impact of these additional infrastructure investments, mean as the percentage of power derived from intermittent sources increases, the economic and environmental case for them decreases.

Blood Batteries

If everyone were to go electric, minus nuclear power, hydroelectric power, or fossil fuels, that would require roughly 500 exajoules of power (nearly 140,000 terawatt-hours of electricity) to come primarily from the intermittent sources of wind and solar. To balance this on-again-off-again power, has anyone thought through how much raw materials will be required to build a global fleet of batteries, all of which must be decommissioned and recycled roughly every 10 years, to perpetually collect, store and discharge tens of thousands of gigawatt-hours, day after day, through all seasons, decade after decade?

Turns out, someone has. The redoubtable Alex Epstein has performed the algebra that environmentalists either ignore or lack the basic math skills to comprehend. He concluded that 1,330 terawatt-hours, at $300 per kilowatt-hour of battery storage, would cost $400 trillion—or nearly five times the GDP of the *entire global economy*. These 1,330 terawatt-hours only represent one percent of 2020's global energy consumption of 140,000 terawatt-hours, which therefore represents only three days of storage capacity. And even at that price tag, it is probably not enough storage to compensate for seasonal doldrums that periodically cripple solar and wind generation.

As it is, the raw materials for these batteries are sourced from overseas mines, devastating the local environment. West African cobalt miners, many of them children, endure appalling conditions. Naturally, environmentalists would never permit cobalt or lithium mining in the United States. Have you ever heard of blood diamonds? Call these blood batteries.

For everyone on earth to have access to *half* as much per capita energy as Americans use, global energy production has to *double*. That's 1,000 exajoules, twice what we produce today, and to do this, we need to develop *all* sources of energy. It is the minimum goal we must set in order to achieve universal global prosperity. To try to accomplish this with "renewables," via the supposedly benign footprint of biofuel, wind turbines, solar power, and batteries, would devastate the planet, consume all available raw materials, and fail to do the job.

Meanwhile, what is green fascism doing to ordinary people?

The Green Fascist Crimes Against Humanity

The green fascists have declared war on energy, water, and housing. They claim that conventional energy creates deadly CO2 emissions and attempt to forbid all debate about the validity of that theory. They claim water supply infrastructure destroys ecosystems and consumes unsustainable quantities of energy. They claim suburbs with single-family homes cause unacceptable increases in automotive pollution. Now they've also declared war on livestock, which they claim produce the allegedly deadly gas methane, and on farming itself, which relies on petroleum-based fertilizer. This is no joke. Look no further than the ongoing protests in the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, and across the globe. They're coming for our farms.

Where does this end? Without energy, water, housing, meat, and farm produce, civilization dies. Before that happens, though, billions of people who had either achieved a middle-class lifestyle, or were about to, will be wiped out. And as this reset runs its course, the green fascists will acquire more political power, and their corporatist allies will acquire more economic power.

If you have a problem with this, and speak up, you will be marginalized and smeared if not silenced. Just ask the CO2 Coalition. The rather staid mission statement of this network of expert volunteers, motivated by sincere concern for the future of humanity and the health of the planet, includes this excerpt: "The Coalition seeks to engage in an informed and dispassionate discussion of climate change, humans' role in the climate system, the limitations of climate models, and the consequences of mandated reductions in CO2 emissions."

LinkedIn needs to reinstate the CO2 Coalition immediately. And the green fascists' agenda needs to become the topic of open, honest, balanced, and very public debate.

Edward Ring is a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. He also is a contributing editor and senior fellow with the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. Ring is the author of Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism (2021) and *The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California* (2022).

Some Recent Headlines

Crime Watch

VIDEO: Flash mob vandalizes, loots 7-Eleven store following street takeover in Harbor Gateway

LADN: 'Flash mob of looters' ransacks LA 7-Eleven — and everybody's caught on video

SFC: Passenger groped, punched on BART train. San Francisco man arrested

SJMN: San Jose: Arrests made in shooting of Safeway worker at Willow Glen store

LAT $: L.A.'s Eastside Playboys gang target of massive sweep by FBI, LAPD

PE: 54 guns, over 2,000 rounds of ammunition seized from Menifee home

SFC: Man charged with double murder live-streamed crime, prosecutors say

SacBee: Roseville police arrest employee who allegedly attacked boss with a knife

ADDENDUM I

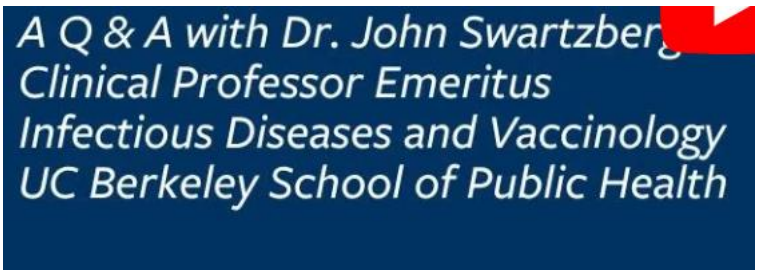
What is monkeypox and how worried should we be?

A Q&A with Dr. John Swartzberg
By Diana Stasko | August 12, 2022

Monkeypox was declared a public health emergency in the United States last week, with cases exploding to over 7,500 between May (when there were only two cases reported) and August 2022. We asked John Swartzberg, clinical professor emeritus of infectious diseases and vaccinology at UC Berkeley School of Public Health, to give us his perspective on the virus: where it came from, how it spreads, and what individuals can do to protect themselves from contracting it.

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

What is monkeypox and where did it originate?



John Swartzberg, MD, FACP

Monkeypox is a virus in the same family as smallpox, but fortunately it doesn't cause nearly as severe disease as smallpox does. We've known about it for over 70 years. Prior to the 1970s, it had been exclusively found in central and western Africa, causing human cases in a scattered fashion with some significant morbidity and some mortality. The mortality rates ranged anywhere from 1-10%.

So it's not a benign disease, but we hadn't seen it outside of central and western Africa until some scattered cases in the '70s. And then there was an outbreak [47 confirmed and probable cases, according to the CDC] here in the United States in 2002 associated with the importation of some rodents from Africa getting into the prairie dog population. We've seen cases occur outside of Africa, but nothing like what we're seeing now.

How does one contract monkeypox and how does it spread?

It's frustrating to talk about that because, as I said, we've known about this disease for over half a century, yet we haven't put a lot of effort into understanding it really well. And one of the things we just don't understand is how it's transmitted. What we do know is that the primary means of transmission is by skin-to-skin contact. If somebody's got monkeypox and they've got lesions and you rub up against that skin, that's the way you can get it. It's clear that that's a very important means of transmission.

We also know that the virus is found in oral secretions because you can get lesions inside your mouth as well, and those oral secretions can get distributed in the air. So there's the concern that maybe this plays a role in transmission.

But there are some big question marks about transmission that aren't really answered yet.
One is, can somebody transmit it that's infected but not diseased? That is, they have the virus—but they either don't yet have skin lesions or they have the virus and it just isn't causing any symptoms—what we call asymptomatic infection. And can these folks transmit it? We just don't know if we have an answer to that.

How does the virus impact those who contract it?

Worst case scenario is that this virus can extend beyond the skin or what we call the mucous membranes like in your mouth and can get into your bloodstream and go elsewhere in your body, causing very severe disease and even death. That's pretty rare. We've only seen very few cases. I think four to six deaths have been reported outside of Africa with this outbreak out of thousands and thousands of cases.

But we have seen people requiring hospitalization. That's not common, but it does certainly happen. It's because some of these lesions can be very, very painful and can cause difficulty with bowel movements or difficulty with urination. Skin lesions can get secondarily infected with bacteria. So it can be very serious in that regard.

And for those people who don't require hospitalization, it means that they're going to suffer from two to four weeks with very uncomfortable and sometimes painful lesions and difficulty with urination or with defecation. So it's not just a run-of-the-mill, benign disease.

Can someone be asymptomatic and possibly be a carrier?

Well, we don't know. There's no good evidence for that at this point. But there's just not a lot of good evidence, that is really the problem. We're not doing enough testing to know if there are people out there who are asymptomatically infected. We don't even know if it's an issue at this point.

But having a being in the midst of a major outbreak and not having this kind of information is very reminiscent of the early days of COVID-19.

How can people protect themselves from contracting the virus, whether it's by getting vaccinated or preventative behavioral measures they can take?

Well, here's the good news. We do have vaccines against this virus. The bad news is they're not as available as we need them to be right now, but that is going to get fixed over time. We also have medications that work. In particular, there's a medication called Tecovirimat (TPOXX is the brand name) that works very well.

So these are things we didn't have at the beginning of the COVID outbreak. The other thing that's terribly important is that you don't have to worry about getting monkeypox going into the grocery store or going out to dinner in a restaurant

So the important thing is to recognize that, unlike COVID-19, where you can just be minding your own business and get infected; with monkeypox, you just don't have to worry about getting infected unless you're going to be having very close contact, intimate contact with others.

Who should think about getting the vaccine?

Right now, 94-96% of the cases are occurring in men who have sex with men. So this is currently the high risk group, though we've seen some cases of spillover now to females and we've seen some cases of spillover to children.

This is the group (men who have sex with men) that needs to have a priority to get the vaccine. Though those in a monogamous relationship are not at high risk.

How does the vaccine work?

It works like any vaccine, it gives us protection, it educates our immune system to not allow the virus to replicate in the body. So if you get the vaccine before you're exposed, which is the ideal situation, it should prevent you from getting infected at all.

The incubation period for this virus is long; the average is about 10 days or so. So if you've had an exposure, and you learn about it the next day, if you can get vaccinated in the first four days, it will probably prevent you from becoming sick. And if you can take it before you become ill, it's going to moderate how seriously ill you become.

The vaccine is really very helpful, we just need to make them available.

What are some misconceptions that you've seen about monkeypox?

I think the biggest misconception is that there are certain people who are more predisposed to getting monkeypox. And that's just not true. We all have the potential to get monkeypox depending upon if we're exposed or not. So that's a major misperception we need to dispel.

I think there are also misconceptions about the role of the vaccine. I don't think people understand clearly how effective this vaccine can be and when they should be getting it.

I think that there's also a misconception, just from the name of the virus itself, monkeypox, which is a horrible name. The virus was first found in monkeys, but the monkeys got it probably from rodents. And this is probably a rodent virus, not a monkey virus. And so we ought to really change the name of this virus to get that misconception away.

There's also the role of inanimate objects and transmission. We know, for example, if somebody has monkeypox that the virus is hardy and can live on, for example, the sheets of a bed. And so if you're sleeping in the same bed with somebody, the virus could get transmitted that way. But just shaking hands with somebody is not going to spread this virus.

Monkeypox has been declared a public health emergency. How will that impact resources and management of the virus?

(Declaring monkeypox a national emergency) is going to make things a lot better very quickly. It gives the government authority and the ability to not only collect more data and more accurate data from the states, but it also gives the government greater ability to make vaccines available, and make medication more available.

So I think it is going to facilitate things greatly and we'll see the fruits of this pretty quickly.

If you had a crystal ball, would you see the trajectory of this virus being more like COVID-19 or more like HIV?

Like neither. It's certainly not going to be like COVID-19. We didn't know anything about COVID, obviously, because it entered the human population at the end of 2019. So we had to learn very quickly about that virus. We now know it's incredibly transmissible.

HIV is transmitted in a very different way. It's easier to prevent getting infected with HIV in many respects because it's not transmitted via the air like SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. People who have HIV are asymptomatic for long periods of time—they don't know they're infected. When you don't know when you're infected, it's much easier to transmit the virus.

So with HIV, it does require intimate contact, it's a sexually transmitted infection, although it's transmitted in certainly other ways as well, like blood. Monkeypox is very different. The predominance of transmission occurs in people who already have sores. Sores typically are, although not always, visible. So one knows when they're infected and are clearly contagious at that point.

And of course, as I mentioned earlier, the availability of both the drug and the vaccine can dramatically stop transmission. So we have all the tools right now at the beginning of this pandemic to stop it. Whereas with COVID-19, we didn't have the vaccine for 11 months. If we could aggressively get people who are at high risk vaccinated [for monkeypox], get people who are exposed vaccinated very quickly, and get people treated very quickly, I think we can prevent a significant spillover into the general population and maybe prevent this from becoming an endemic disease.

Unfortunately, because there's been such a delay in getting things done to prevent the spread of this virus, we may already be too late to prevent it. We'll just have to wait and see. But if we're really aggressive now, we can knock this down to a very low level.

Do you have any other thoughts that you'd like to share?

You know, it's been so hard dealing with COVID-19 over these two-and-a-half–plus years and now to be dealing with another virus that is spreading pretty quickly, it's really hard on the general population, certainly hard on me.

I think all of this is a clear statement that we've been neglecting the scientific and public health view on what we call the neglected infectious diseases, diseases that are occurring elsewhere in the world. We're just not paying enough attention to them. We could have controlled monkeypox in central and western Africa, because we had the vaccine for a good while, but we hadn't bothered to use it.

And this is the price you pay for it. It's also a commentary on the fact that the United States has been trying to do public health on the cheap for at least three to four decades. We're paying a dear price for that right now during the COVID-19 pandemic and now dealing with the pandemic with monkeypox. And surely we're going to be dealing with pandemics going forward.

We've been lecturing about the need to fund public health and the need to have a robust public health system for decades. You feel like Cassandra: She sees the future, but nobody will listen to her.

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