



WEEKLY UPDATE FEBRUARY 13 - 19, 2022

RUSH TO THE MARCH 24, 2022 ANNUAL COLAB DINNER - FUNDRAISER - MADONNA EXPO, 5:00 PM, HOSTED COCKTAILS, DINNER, PAGEANTRY, LIVE AUCTION, CELEBRATE FAMILY, HERITAGE AND FREEDOM



COLAB San Luis Obispo is looking for someone with an interest in regional politics and time to dedicate to our organization. This is a paid position, not volunteer, that will assist our Board and Executive Director with meetings, membership, and administrative functions. Approximately 10-15 hours per week. (Mostly) flexible scheduling. Interested? Shoot us an e-mail at colabslo@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

13th Annual



DINNER & FUNDRAISER

**Come Support the Work We Do to
Preserve Heritage, Family &
Freedom**



**THURSDAY,
MARCH 24, 2022
MADONNA EXPO CENTER**

**5:00 pm Social Hour, Open Bar
6:15 pm Filet Mignon Dinner & Wine
Exciting Auction Too!
\$125 a person
\$1,250 a table, seating for 10**

For tickets:
On-Line Reservations & Payment can be made at
www.colabslo.org/events.asp
or
Mail your check to
COLAB SLO County, PO Box 13601, SLO, CA 93406
Cocktail Attire Optional
More info at (805) 548-0340 or
colabslo@gmail.com

THIS WEEK

BOS SUPER POLICY WEEK

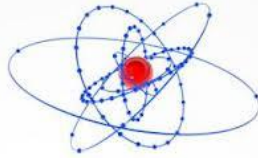
COUNTY CHARTER PROPOSAL - MORE LOCAL CONTROL

CONGRATULATIONS ON CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

FINANCIAL INTERNAL OVERHEAD PLUMBING NEEDS DAYLIGHT



**JOINT MIT-STANFORD TEAM WILL REPORT ON
WHY DIABLO SHOULD BE KEPT OPEN
COULD ALSO PROVIDE HUGE INDUSTRIAL SCALE DESAL
WHILE KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON - WITH NO CO₂**



Not to mention keeps 2000 jobs and \$1 billion of economic activity

**THE BOARD SHOULD SADDLE UP, KICK THE TIRES, AND COME
OUT SWINGING. ASK: WHERE DO THE CANDIDATES STAND?**

LAFCO CANCELLED

LAST WEEK

**A LITE WEEK IN GENERAL
NO BOS MEETING**

**COASTAL COMMISSION
MESSES WITH THE COUNTY ON ADUs & ROLLS OVER TO SEVERELY
RESTRICT VACATION RENTALS IN LOS OSOS**

**PLANNING COMMISSION LITE
ANOTHER INDOOR CANNABIS FACILITY IN NIPOMO APPROVED**

EMERGENT ISSUES

**COVID OMICRON INFECTION RATE HAS BROKEN
WE WILL SEE WHAT COMES NEXT**

COLAB IN DEPTH

SEE PAGE 28

OUR ELITE IS NO ELITE AT ALL

The only real recent public service of elites has been to persuade us why they were never elites at all.

By VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

CALIFORNIA HOMELESSNESS: BILLIONS ARE SPENT EVERY YEAR, AND THE PROBLEM JUST GETS WORSE

BY LEE OHANIAN

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, February 15, 2022 (Scheduled)

Item 6 – Submittal of a resolution adopting the Countywide Cost Allocation Plan for FY 2022-2023. One of the little-known techniques of county government in California is how overhead costs are allocated among the departments. This is done through a mechanism called the “annual cost allocation plan,” which assigns overhead costs to the service departments in an effort to bring down the general fund costs of the support departments.

The write-up states in part:

The Cost Plan is an important document that allocates the costs of central servicing departments (e.g. Administrative Office, Auditor-Controller, Human Resources, Central Services, County Counsel, etc.) to the departments receiving the services. The Cost Plan also allocates building and equipment use allowance that is based on the cost of the buildings and equipment and their useful lives.

And

All costs are allocated on a basis that is directly related to the amount of service required, i.e., personnel costs are allocated by the number of employees in each department, building use-allowance is allocated by the square footage used by each department, etc. The purpose of allocating costs is to determine the amount of Countywide overhead each department should include when calculating the total cost of a particular service, program, or its entire operation.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS *It is estimated that the General Fund will recover \$18.8 million of indirect costs during the current fiscal year and \$19.2 million in Fiscal Year 2022-2023.*

The tables below and text (italicized) suggest some further scrutiny.

Table A 2. *The County Auditor-Controller is instructed to bill the organizations listed on Exhibit A on a quarterly basis for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.*

FOR 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR			
BUDGET UNIT	FUND	FUND CENTER	2022-2023
<u>Non-General Fund Departments</u>			
Roads	1200000000	245	\$ 341,981
Parks	1201500000	305	335,879
Wildlife and Grazing	1204000000	330	870
Fish and Game	1205500000	331	1,924
Emergency Medical Services	1207000000	351	1,743
Drinking Driver Programs	1204500000	375	65,885
Library	1205000000	377	596,757
Public Works	2900000000	405	1,559,255
Fleet Services	2901000000	407	147,496
Workers' Comp	2901500000	408	92,753
Liability Self-Ins	2902000000	409	133,878
Unemployment Ins	2902500000	410	330
Medical Malpractice	2903000000	411	3,501
County Dental Plan	2903500000	412	1,358
Airports	2000000000	425	267,993
Golf Course	2000500000	427	80,601
			\$ 3,632,204
<u>General Fund Budget Units</u>			
Waste Management	1000000000	130	\$ 17,816
Child Support Services	1000000000	134	110,256
Health Department	1000000000	160	1,362,076
Behavioral Health	1000000000	166	1,891,318
Department of Social Services	1000000000	180	4,705,724
Public Works Special Services	1000000000	201	53,561
			\$ 8,140,751
Total			\$ 11,772,955

These numbers have not been approved by the State and are subject to change.

The overhead rates listed in Exhibit B for each department shall be utilized in the computation of fees for services provided to the general public.

Table B

**COUNTYWIDE OVERHEAD RATES
FOR 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR**

Fund Center	Department	Overhead	Expenditures	2022-2023 Overhead Rates
100	Board of Supervisors	476,245	1,697,918	28.05%
104	Administrative Office	389,455	3,342,928	11.65%
109	Assessor	1,103,002	9,795,938	11.26%
110	County Clerk Recorder	726,542	4,435,004	16.38%
111	County Counsel	385,263	4,687,680	8.22%
112	Personnel	694,759	7,143,240	9.73%
113	Facilities Management	573,926	8,073,470	7.11%
114	ITD	3,106,691	17,798,991	17.45%
116	Central Services	894,772	2,473,643	36.17%
117	Auditor-Controller, Treasurer, Tax Collector	1,067,135	8,106,870	13.16%
118	Talent Development	11,184	694,709	1.61%
119	Communication and Outreach	11,428	114,629	9.97%
130	Waste Management	14,669	767,133	1.91%
131	Grand Jury	59,979	84,435	71.04%
132	District Attorney	1,149,339	19,237,903	5.97%
134	Family Support	106,910	3,956,233	2.70%
135	Public Defender	145,894	7,792,282	1.87%
136	Sheriff-Coroner	4,143,291	81,650,939	5.07%
137	Animal Services	116,061	2,571,114	4.51%
138	Emergency Services	294,081	1,448,937	20.30%
139	Probation	1,141,138	23,534,359	4.85%
140	County Fire	891,751	20,204,250	4.41%
141	Agricultural Commissioner	353,443	6,463,904	5.47%
142	Planning Department	1,918,670	14,866,364	12.91%
160	Health Department	1,892,895	41,657,744	4.54%
166	Mental Health	1,117,167	79,519,736	1.40%
180	Department of Social Services	6,401,988	68,114,266	9.40%
184	LEMC	15,448	8,181,353	0.19%
186	Veterans' Services	25,710	741,365	3.47%
201	PW Special Services	67,968	3,519,578	1.93%
215	Farm Advisor	80,350	617,989	13.00%
222	Community Parks	529,320	4,397,524	12.04%
245	Roads	444,815	19,469,266	2.28%
266	Co-Wide Automation	-345,082	600	-57513.67%
290	Community Development	12,339	423,896	2.91%
305	Parks	494,674	5,443,150	9.09%
330	Wildlife and Grazing	3,133	3,022	103.67%
331	Fish and Game	1,891	30,950	6.11%
351	Emergency Medical Services	-139	308,895	-0.05%
375	Drinking Driver Programs	157,801	1,485,503	10.62%
377	Library	1,218,542	10,799,374	11.28%
405	Department of Public Works	1,501,059	20,619,086	7.28%
407	Fleet	132,768	4,574,125	2.90%
408	Workers' Comp	276,573	4,942,129	5.60%
409	Liability Insurance ISF	96,594	4,582,140	2.11%
410	Unemployment Insurance	377	57,959	0.65%
411	Med Mal Insurance	3,443	661,681	0.52%
412	Dental Insurance	117	224,359	0.05%
425	Airport	516,120	5,245,721	9.84%
427	Golf Courses	68,636	3,357,951	2.04%

These numbers have not been approved by the State and are subject to change.

1. *The Countywide Cost Allocation Plan for fiscal year 2022-2023 (on file in the Clerk's Office) is hereby approved and the overhead charges listed in Exhibit A are hereby adopted for use in the 2022-2023 fiscal year, and for the preparation of the 2022-2032 budget. Note: As of this writing the Plan was not online. There is simply a notice that it exists.*

2. *The County Auditor-Controller is instructed to bill the organizations listed on Exhibit A on a quarterly basis for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.*

3. *The County Auditor-Controller is instructed to bill the general fund departments that are not Primarily funded by Federal and State agencies 3.5% of their appropriations excluding fixed assets and countywide overhead.*

4. *The overhead rates listed in Exhibit B for each department shall be utilized in the computation of fees for services provided to the general public.*

5. *County departments that receive cost reimbursement from Federal and State agencies shall utilize the State-Approved Cost Allocation Plan to include indirect costs in their claiming process when allowed.*

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2020-21 Adopted	FY 2020-21 Estimated	FY 2021-22 Requested	FY 2021-22 Recommended	Change from FY 2020-21
Licenses, Permits, and Franchises	\$6,571,543	\$6,107,604	\$6,232,911	\$6,572,073	\$530
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$125,441	\$81,408	\$91,355	\$128,480	\$3,039
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$5,515	\$36,963	\$5,515	\$5,515	\$0
Charges for Current Services	\$744,605	\$585,289	\$893,140	\$893,140	\$148,535
Other Revenues	\$587,816	\$571,282	\$496,600	\$505,960	\$(81,856)
Interfund	\$401,919	\$411,073	\$559,749	\$559,749	\$157,830
Total Revenue	\$8,436,839	\$7,793,619	\$8,279,270	\$8,664,917	\$228,078
Salary and Benefits	\$13,774,032	\$13,077,830	\$14,419,169	\$14,883,191	\$1,109,159
Services and Supplies	\$2,832,084	\$4,045,018	\$2,383,294	\$2,399,535	\$(432,549)
Gross Expenditures	\$16,606,116	\$17,122,848	\$16,802,463	\$17,282,726	\$676,610
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$0	\$(1,618)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Expenditures	\$16,606,116	\$17,121,230	\$16,802,463	\$17,282,726	\$676,610
General Fund Support	\$8,169,277	\$9,327,611	\$8,523,193	\$8,617,809	\$448,532

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

Double Dip? Table B, when viewed in combination with the Budget and the item narrative, evinces a double dip. We use the Planning Department as an example, but the logic pertains to all the Departments and fund centers on the list.

1. Planning is directed to scale up its fees by \$1.9 million (12.9%) of \$14 million of its \$17.3 million total budget. The reason the rate is not applied to the whole \$17.3 million is:

The County Auditor-Controller is instructed to bill the general fund departments that are not primarily funded by Federal and State agencies 3.5% of their appropriations excluding fixed assets and countywide overhead.

Thus, it appears that the \$14 million represents the net, after the fixed assets and countywide overhead is subtracted out.

2. The Planning Department is a “general fund department” and is supposed to pay 3.5% of its appropriations. This would be 3.5% of \$14 million, or \$490,000. This is ostensibly used to offset its proportionate share of support departments, such as Human Resources, Auditor Controller, Purchasing, County Administration, etc.

3. Separately, it is directed to build into its fees 12.9 % (\$1.9 million) to cover the same overhead costs as the 3.5%. This would bring the aggregate rate to 16.4%.

4. However, as already noted, the Department receives \$8.6 million from the General Fund, which is largely generated by the property tax, sales tax, and transient occupancy tax. Yet the 3.5% is assessed against the entire \$14 million, which would have to include some portion of the \$8.6 million general fund contribution. This seems to be some sort of circular compounding.

5. Finally, the regular taxpayer has contributed \$8.6 million to the General Fund portion. If that taxpayer now seeks a \$10,000 minor use permit, that person is paying both the 12.9% and 3.5%, as these are to be included when the Department gins up its fees each year. Again, the internal compounding would appear to be a double or triple dip.

6. We asked staff that worked on the Cost Allocation Plan how the departments apply the 12.9% to gin up their fees. For example, if Planning determined that the cost of a certain class of permits is \$10,000 per permit, do they build this into the base calculation or add it to the total? Staff did not know and said each department does it differently. The tracing may be included in the cost plan, but as noted above, this is not available to the Board or Public in sufficient time to be studied prior to the approval of this item on the consent calendar.

7. Presumably, the \$1.9 million of the overhead fee component reduces the amount of general fund contribution needed by Planning, which in turn frees up an equal amount to be applied in the budget for the support service departments and fund centers.

Just how is this applied on the receiving support department side? For example, the financial summary for the Human Resources Department below shows a net general fund contribution of \$4.8 million. What part of this is available due to the cost allocation plan – both cost allocation assessments and savings in general fund due to linking the rates in the fees?

Human Resources Department

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2020-21 Adopted	FY 2020-21 Estimated	FY 2021-22 Requested	FY 2021-22 Recommended	Change from FY 2020-21
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$5,204	\$0	\$5,204	\$5,204	\$0
Charges for Current Services	\$53,176	\$45,907	\$43,176	\$43,176	\$(10,000)
Other Revenues	\$5,300	\$0	\$5,300	\$5,300	\$0
Interfund	\$1,570,889	\$1,570,889	\$1,824,559	\$1,824,559	\$253,670
Total Revenue	\$1,634,569	\$1,616,796	\$1,878,239	\$1,878,239	\$243,670
Salary and Benefits	\$5,176,424	\$5,279,138	\$5,224,067	\$5,323,720	\$147,296
Services and Supplies	\$1,891,387	\$2,398,369	\$2,602,873	\$2,503,220	\$611,833
Gross Expenditures	\$7,067,811	\$7,677,507	\$7,826,940	\$7,826,940	\$759,129
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(1,119,193)	\$(1,246,202)	\$(1,161,020)	\$(1,161,020)	\$(41,827)
Net Expenditures	\$5,948,618	\$6,431,305	\$6,665,920	\$6,665,920	\$717,302
General Fund Support	\$4,314,049	\$4,814,509	\$4,787,681	\$4,787,681	\$473,632

8. In addition to these charges and offsets, are the departments charged directly for any of the support department services? If so, how much are these charges in addition to the charges and fee offsets here?

9. The write-up states that the combined internal subsidies of the support departments raised by this procedure range from \$18 to \$20 million per fiscal year. Yet the combined total of Table A and B is far higher than these amounts. What is happening here?

It would be worthwhile for the Board to pull this off the Consent Agenda and set it for an afternoon when they have some quality time to spend. The Auditor Controller and CAO could present some plumbing charts.

Item 30 - Request to 1) provide direction to staff on proposed language for a County Charter to be submitted to the voters regarding the appointment process for County elected positions and 2) provide other direction as appropriate. Per prior Board Direction, County Counsel Rita Neal is submitting language for adoption of a County Charter. The Board direction came on a split 3/2 vote with Gibson and Ortiz-Legg dissenting. Gibson was particularly critical of the idea, stating that it is a solution in search of a problem.

Promotes Local Control: Actually, it is a good idea because it would give the people of the County and its elected Board members control when a Board member vacancy occurs midterm. Currently and under General Law provisions, the Governor has the power to fill such vacancies. Given the fact that the Socialist Party, operating under camouflage as the Democratic Party, has controlled the office for decades and will probably control it forever, this is a good move. It promotes local control and fairness. So far in the last decade, Democratic governors have appointed Cayrn Ray and Dawn Ortiz-Legg.

The proposed Charter also provides for the filling of vacancies in the Countywide offices of Auditor Controller, District Attorney, Assessor, Sheriff, and Clerk Recorder by election. This

would forestall the sort of conflict that ensued when the Clerk Recorder position became vacant, and the Board appointed a successor. Gibson will criticize the proposal as too costly.

This is a limited Charter, which does not revise the basic structure of the County itself. The annotated draft below is self-explanatory and contains some possible alternative versions for some sections.

CHARTER OF THE COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

We, the People of the County of San Luis Obispo, with a desire for self-determination in selecting our county elected officials and to initiate the process to govern our county by charter government, do hereby adopt this charter.

ARTICLE I. POWERS OF THE COUNTY.

Section 100. The County of San Luis Obispo is a political subdivision of the State of California. It has all the powers provided by the constitution and laws of the state and this Charter. It has such other powers as necessarily implied.

ARTICLE II. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

Section 200. Governing Body. The governing body of the county is a Board of Supervisors of five (5) members elected by and from designated supervisorial districts.

Section 201. Filling of Vacancies in the Board of Supervisors. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of supervisor, the vacancy shall be filled as follows:

- A. If, at the time the vacancy occurs, the remaining term of office is 365 days or greater, then the vacancy shall be filled by a vote of the electors of that district at a special election to be called by the Board of Supervisors not less than 56 days nor more than 70 days after the vacancy occurs, except that if the vacancy occurs within 180 days of a regularly scheduled election held throughout the supervisorial district, the election to fill the vacancy may be consolidated with that regularly scheduled election. The person receiving the highest number of votes in that election shall fill the vacancy.

[ALTERNATIVES: (1) The Board could fill the vacancy; (2) the Board could have the Governor fill the vacancy if the Board fails to appoint someone within a certain number of days; or (3) the vacancy could be filled by the individual in the previous election who had the next highest votes and if that individual fails to accept the office, then the vacancy is filled by the Board;]

- B. If, at the time the vacancy occurs, the remaining term of office is less than 365 days, then the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by majority vote of the Board of Supervisors.

[ALTERNATIVES: (1) The vacancy could be filled through a special election. If the Board prefers this option, then it is recommended that a “bottom end” be included on the number of days remaining in office so the provision would read as follows: “If, at the time the vacancy occurs, the remaining term of office is less than 365 days *but greater than 180¹ days*, then the vacancy shall be filled by a vote of the electors of that district at a special election to be called by the Board of Supervisors...”; (2) The Board could have the Governor fill the vacancy if the Board fails to appoint someone within a certain number of

¹ [Draft Note: 180 days is typically the standard minimum number of days required to process a

days; or (3) the vacancy could be filled by the individual in the previous election who had the next highest votes and if that individual fails to accept the office, then the vacancy is filled by the Board.]

[OTHER ALTERNATIVES: (1) If the remaining term is less than 180 days, then the charter could require that the office remain vacant until the next general election; and (2) At least one county charter prohibits the Board from appointing a person who has filed nomination documents with the county elections official to qualify as a candidate for Supervisor.]

Section 202. Filling of Vacancies in Other Elective Offices. Whenever a vacancy shall occur in any elective county office, other than in the Board of Supervisors, the Board of Supervisors shall fill the same in the manner, and the appointee shall hold office for the time, provided by general law.

Section 203. Continuation of Office. Any person holding an office, either elective or appointive, on the effective date of this Charter shall continue in office pursuant to the provisions of this Charter.

ARTICLE III. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

Section 300. General Law Governs. Except as expressly set forth in this Charter, the general law set forth in the Constitution of the State of California and the laws of the State of California shall govern the operations of the County of San Luis Obispo.

Section 301. County Ordinances Enacted by the Voters Remain in Effect. Ordinances of the County of San Luis Obispo adopted by the voters prior to the enactment of this Charter shall remain in full force and effect and may only be modified or repealed by a vote of the people.

Section 302. Severability. If any provision of this Charter, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this Charter, and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

[END OF COUNTY CHARTER]

Refined Recommended Schedule

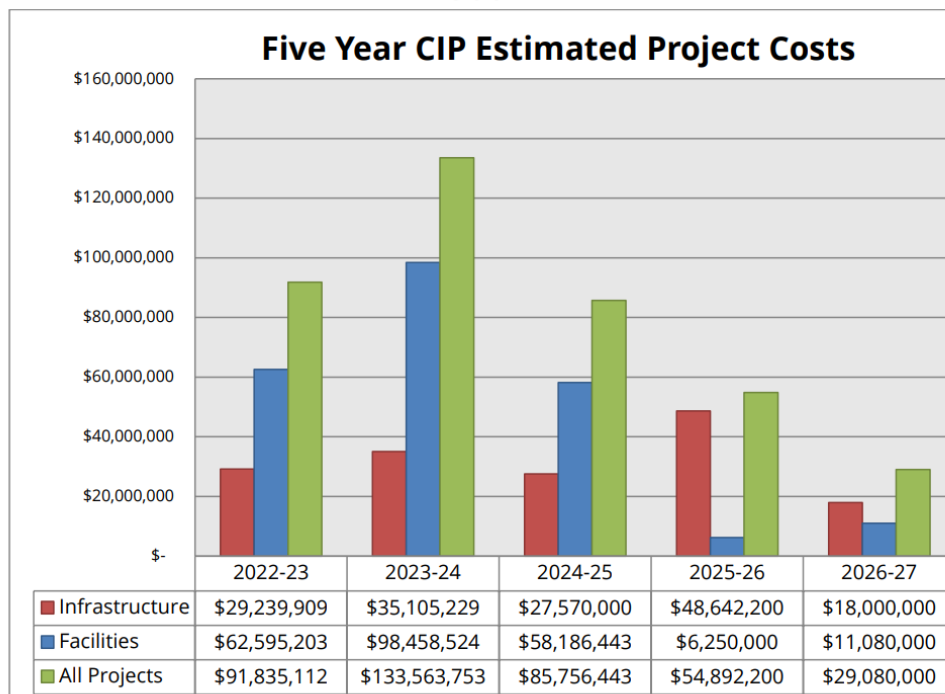
June 21, 2022	SUGGESTED LAST DAY San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors to adopt a resolution/ordinance placing a measure on the November 8, 2022, Consolidated General Election ballot.
June 23, 2022	BY THIS DATE the Elections Official shall send the Notice Calling for Submission of Primary/Rebuttal Arguments FOR and AGAINST the measure to be published.
July 22, 2022	PRIMARY ARGUMENTS DUE – LAST DAY for proponent(s) to change or withdraw Primary Arguments.
July 22, 2022	IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS DUE from County Counsel. FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT DUE from Auditor (if directed by B.O.S.)
July 23 - August 1, 2022	PUBLIC EXAMINATION PERIOD - Primary Arguments, Impartial Analysis, Fiscal Impact Statement (if applicable).
August 2, 2022	REBUTTAL ARGUMENTS DUE - LAST DAY for proponent(s) to change or withdraw Rebuttal Arguments.
August 3 – 12, 2022	PUBLIC EXAMINATION PERIOD - For Rebuttal Arguments Only.
August 29, 2022 *	ELECTION OFFICIAL'S DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF LOCAL MEASURE INFORMATION TO PRINTER: Submission of ballot/sample ballot material to printer by County Elections Official.

Item 33 - Submittal of the Infrastructure and Facilities Five Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The annual update and adoption of the Five-Year Plan is one of the most important policy actions of the County, as it allocates funding for infrastructure such a roads, buildings, drainage and flood facilities, bridges, and so forth. It also contains sums for larger maintenance projects.

The Board letter states in part:

The Five-Year CIP includes capital and major maintenance projects expected to cost in excess of \$100,000. In all, there are 173 projects valued at \$590 million including previous allocations, in the Five-Year CIP spread over communities and rural areas. The plan includes 48 infrastructure projects, with a total estimated value of \$250 million. Of these projects, 25 are expected to be implemented in FY 2022-23 with a total estimated cost of \$29 million. The plan includes 125 facility projects identified in the plan with a total estimated cost of \$340 million. Of these projects, 38 are expected to be implemented in FY 2022-23 at an estimated value of \$63 million.

A copy of the program is available at the link: [139992 \(ca.gov\)](https://www.santaclaracounty.ca.gov/139992)




The County has upgraded the presentation and organization of the program in recent years. It is extensive and goes from higher level summaries down to detailed project sheets.

The only real criticism we have is that there should be a section that shows future investments and projects which are not included because there is no discernable future funding. Although this is obviously not part of the program, it is important for the Board and Public to understand what

is not covered. For example, how much funding is needed to expand the infrastructure to facilitate the development of housing?


There is an informative Power Point available at [Five Year Facilities and Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan](#)

Both this PowerPoint and the Program book itself at [139992 \(ca.gov\)](#) are well worth a look and are emblematic of the good staff work required for putting the whole complex effort together.



**County of San Luis Obispo
Infrastructure and Facilities
Five Year
Capital Improvement Plan**

FY 2022-23 through FY 2026-27



Capital Improvement Plan Page 1 of 63

MATTERS AFTER 1:30 PM

Item 35 - Diablo – Current Status and Possible Future Retention:

1. The quarterly update on the PG&E Diablo Canyon Power Plant Decommissioning Project permitting and Environmental Impact Report preparation.

2. A presentation by the authors of the Stanford University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) study titled, “An Assessment of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant for Zero Carbon Electricity, Desalination, and Hydrogen Production.”

Decommission Permit Application: As noted by the title, this item contains two very important subjects. Most important is **Sub-item 2**, which includes a presentation by the authors of the independent joint MIT-Stanford study of the importance of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant.

With respect to **Sub-item 1**, status of processing PG&E’s application to decommission and demolish the plant, the staff has presented the graphic below:

EIR Process and Schedule



Independent MIT-Stanford study of retention of the plant: The Board has provided a tremendous service and has displayed great leadership by bringing this study forward in the original and having its actual authors present. We recognize that such a move is controversial and will outrage the so-called “progressive” left and its underlying enviro-socialist base. The courage to place this on the agenda is to be commended. It is the first time in the last 11 years where the Board of Supervisors or any other political leaders other than Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham have lifted a finger to look at this issue.

The Board should take policy leadership to convince State and local officials to take actions to assist the plant to stay open on an economically viable basis. Actions could include giving presentations to all 7 cities, giving presentations to all chambers of commerce (including preservation of the plant in its Legislative Program), deputizing staff to give presentations at

service clubs, civic groups etc., working with PG&E to toll demolition permitting, assisting the Feds and State to see if the Feds and State can work out a preservation solution, working with the Feds to extend the plant licenses beyond Fee 2024 and 25 to see if a solution can be worked out

Presenters will include:

Several of the Stanford/MIT study authors will provide an overview of the study and be available to answer questions. The presenters include:

Justin Aborn
Senior Consultant,
LudicCatalyst, LLC

Ejeong Baik, PhD
Candidate,
Department of Energy
Resources
Engineering, Stanford
University

Jacopo Buongiorno
Professor of Nuclear
Science and
Engineering, Director of
the Center for Advanced
Nuclear Energy Systems,
MIT

John E. Parsons,
Senior Lecturer, MIT Sloan
School of Management,
Associate Director of the Center
for Energy and Environmental
Policy Research, MIT

Top Line Conclusions

Electricity-10 year delay:

Delaying the retirement of Diablo Canyon to 2035 would:

- Reduce California power sector carbon emissions by more than 10% annually from 2017 levels and reduce reliance on gas
- Save a total of \$2.6 Billion in power system costs between 2025 and 2035
- Bolster system ability to mitigate brownouts as demonstrated by reliable performance during Aug 2020 brownouts

Electricity to 2045 and beyond:

If operated to 2045 and beyond, Diablo Canyon could save up to \$21 Billion in power system costs and spare 90,000 acres of land from use for energy production, while meeting coastal protection requirements.

Top Line Conclusions (II)

Desalination:

Using Diablo Canyon as a power source for desalination could substantially augment fresh water supplies to the state as a whole and to critically overdrafted basins regions such as the Central Valley and Central Coast, producing fresh water volumes equal to or substantially exceeding those of the proposed Delta Conveyance Project—but at significantly lower investment cost

Hydrogen:

A hydrogen plant connected to Diablo Canyon could produce clean hydrogen to meet growing demand for zero-carbon fuels, at a cost up to 50% less than hydrogen produced from solar and wind power, with a much smaller land footprint

Polygeneration:

Operating Diablo Canyon as a polygeneration facility—with coordinated and varying production of electricity, desalinated water, and clean hydrogen—could provide multiple services to California, including grid reliability as needed, and further increase the value of the Diablo Canyon electricity plant by nearly 50% (and more, if water prices were to substantially increase under conditions of worsening drought)

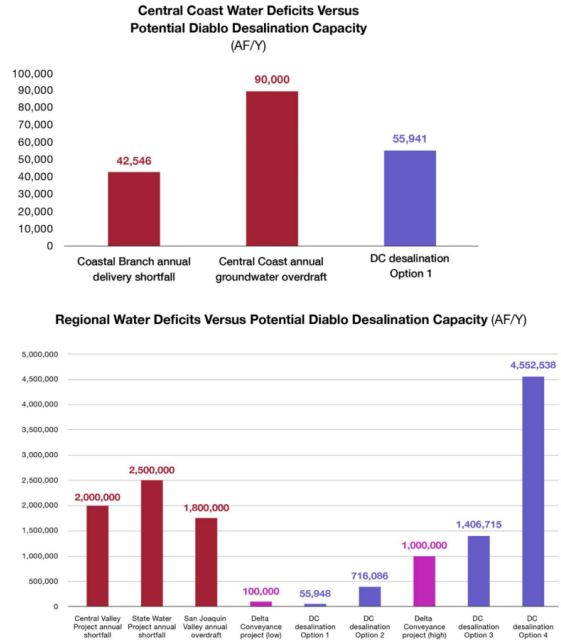
While this was not intended as a definitive study, these conclusions warrant a further consideration of extending the life of the Diablo Canyon plant beyond 2025.

Diablo Canyon Coupled to Desalination

Diablo Canyon could be a powerful driver of low cost desalination to serve urban, industrial, and agricultural users.

A plant equal in size to the currently operating Carlsbad desalination plant would have a roughly 50% lower cost of water at Diablo Canyon.

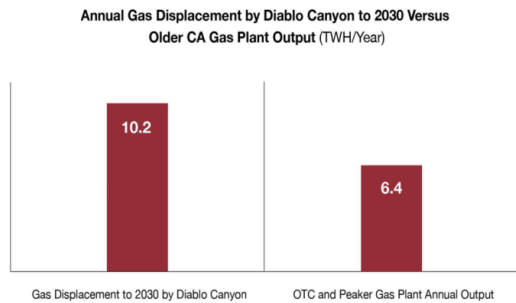
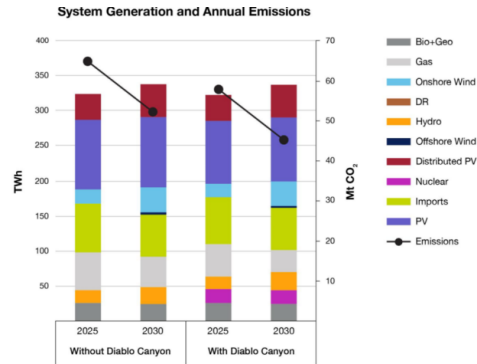
Significantly larger plants that could be constructed on the site are shown to produce water volumes in the same range as current statewide shortfalls and the proposed Delta Conveyance Project, but at significantly lower investment cost.



Diablo Canyon and Electricity Carbon Reductions 2025-2030

Even assuming rapid and unconstrained buildout of renewable energy, the continued operation of Diablo Canyon would significantly reduce California's use of natural gas for electricity production from 2025 to 2030 by approximately 10.2 TWh per year, more than the output of the state's older gas peaker and once through cooling units.

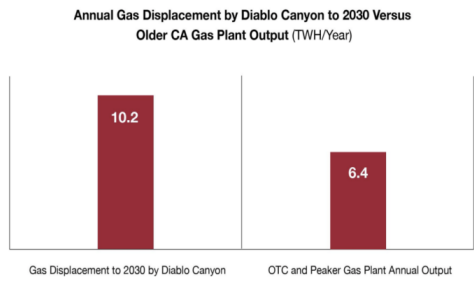
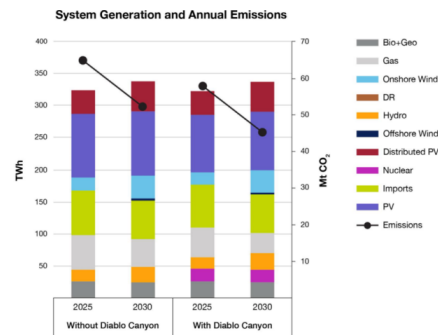
In doing so, Diablo Canyon would also reduce California carbon emissions by an average of 7 Mt CO₂ a year from 2025-2030, corresponding to an 11% reduction in CO₂ from the electricity sector relative to 2017 levels, for a cumulative total of 35 Mt CO₂ to 2030.



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Page 8 of 17

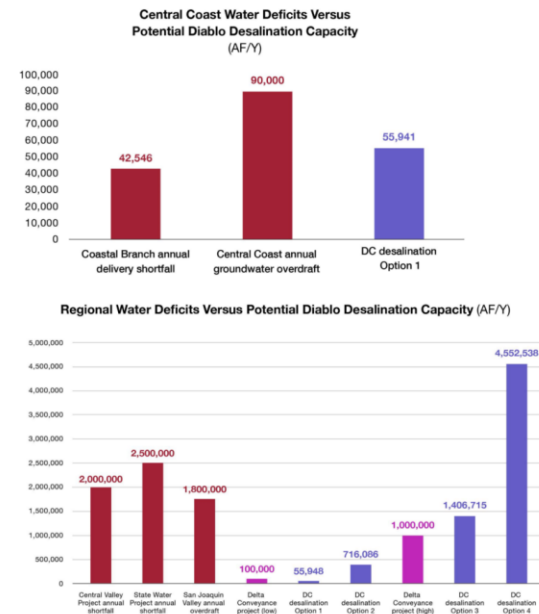
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Attachment 2



See the full PowerPoint at <https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/140077>

SLO Local Agency Formation Commission (SLOLAFCO) Meeting of Thursday, February 17, 2022 (Cancelled)

The meeting has been cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 17, 2022.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 (Not Scheduled)

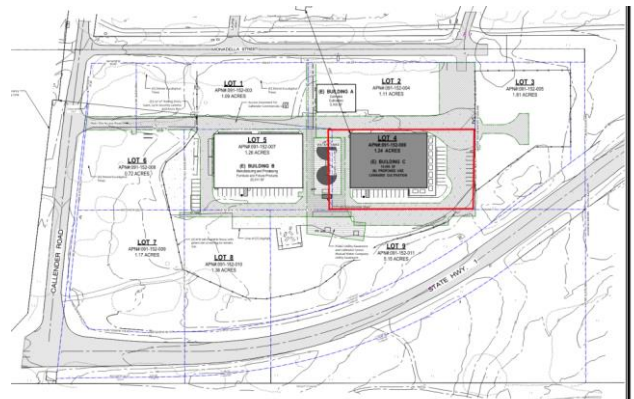
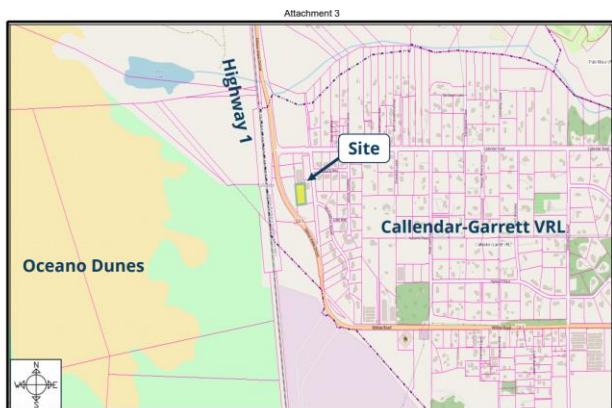
The next regularly scheduled meeting is set for Tuesday, February 15, 2022.

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, February 10, 2022 (Completed)

Item 5 - Hearing to consider a request by Crown Genetics, LLC for a Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit (C-CNBS2021-00001) to establish up to 7,397 square feet of indoor cannabis cultivation canopy, 1,716 square feet of ancillary processing, and ancillary transport within an existing 19,509 square foot building. A modification from the location standard set forth in County Code Section 23.08.418.d.1 is requested to reduce the 1000-foot standard from a sensitive receptor (recreational park) to 577 feet. A modification from fencing standards set forth in Section 23.08.418.d.6 is requested to waive the standard requiring fencing fully enclose all cannabis activities and allow for the project building to provide the functional equivalence of security fencing and screening. The proposed project was approved unanimously. The Commissioners cited the fact that the grow will be indoors in a carbon filtered building as the reason for approval.

The Commission is gradually drifting to a position of not wanting to approve outdoor grows unless they are very isolated. Instead, they seem to be favoring indoor grows.

During the beginning of the meeting, there was an update by staff on proposed actions to streamline the approval of agricultural preserves.



Item F16d - Public hearing and potential action on request by San Luis Obispo County to amend the LCP's¹ Land Use and Implementation Plans to update provisions related to accessory dwelling units and, if the Commission does not take a final action, possible action to extend the deadline for final Commission action on the amendment. The item was approved with modifications.

Background: The State Legislature, in a belated attempt to provide more housing, passed a statute requiring cities and counties to allow for additional dwelling units (ADUs on existing lots). The County submitted its revised zoning ordinance, which incorporates the provisions, to the Coastal Commission to receive approval for conformity with the Coastal Act.

Statutes Clash:

The Coastal Commission says, "Not so fast." First, the Commission report states:

The changes proposed are mostly straightforward and should help to facilitate the development of ADUs. And since the LCP's existing tools to address core coastal resource issues (e.g., related to ESHA, wetlands, riparian corridors, public views, natural landforms, coastal hazards, etc.) remain in effect, the LCP as proposed to be amended should serve to ensure ADUs are appropriately sited and designed in most cases.

But then avers:

First, the proposed amendment would allow ADUs on rural agricultural lands where they are not currently allowed by the LCP, even though primary residential development is tightly controlled by the LCP so as not to impair agricultural use and productivity. Additionally, the proposed amendment provides an exception to allow both guesthouses and ADUs/JADUs in Agricultural and Rural Land use categories, while in all other land use categories ADUs/JADUs and guesthouses are not allowed on the same parcel. While well intentioned, the end result would be to encourage additional residential units in more rural and agricultural areas as opposed to more developed parts of the County where such units can be adequately served. If not better controlled, this would lead to non-agricultural development that would likely adversely impact agriculture.

Why would it be bad for agriculture? The farmer or rancher could use the extra income from the rental.

And then adds:

Second, as proposed, the amendment does not differentiate between areas with significant service constraints and those where infill development can likely be accommodated without significant coastal resource impacts. In particular, the lack of a sustainable water supply in Cambria and Los Osos is well known to the Commission and the County. There, even existing

¹ LCP – Local Coastal Plan

water extractions to serve existing development has led to coastal resource degradation (e.g., groundwater overdraft, seawater intrusion, fishery impacts, ESHA degradation, etc.), and both communities continue to be designated a Level of Severity (LOS) III under the LCP in terms of water supply.

As such, suggested modifications are included to not allow for ADUs in Los Osos and Cambria for the time being.

And slams the door with:

And finally, the proposed amendment broadly eliminates off-street parking requirements for ADUs, but doesn't differentiate between areas where this is unlikely to lead to significant public coastal access impacts versus where it is. In particular, the County's coastline is home to a number of very popular visitor destinations where on-street parking along the shoreline is a key part of the available parking supply for many visitors, and is often the only available way to access the coast.

And

County and Commission staff are in agreement on the suggested modification language. Both staffs have also coordinated with State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) staff on the proposed amendment, and HCD staff has not registered any objections to the amendment as modified. Staff thus recommends that the Commission approve the proposed amendment with suggested modifications.

Accordingly, no ADUs will be permitted in the coastal sections of the County if the County accepts the Commission's direction. Do you suppose this is OK with Supervisor Gibson? - You betcha. Put them in Templeton, Nipomo, and anywhere else where the coastal elites don't live. Ditto for vacation rentals – the item immediately below.

Item F16e - Public hearing and potential action on request by San Luis Obispo County to amend LCP provisions for vacation rentals in the unincorporated community of Los Osos. The item was approved with modifications.

Background: Originally, the Commission staff was opposed to the very restrictive maximum 55 vacation unit limit. Suddenly, it changed its position to agree with the County's very restrictive limit. Many letters from Los Osos residents supporting the limits were received and cited by the Commission Staff for its change of position. Supervisor Gibson also advised the staff of his support for the restrictions.

The proposed amendment's 55-unit cap and 500-foot buffer requirements raise some concerns with respect to conformance with LUP requirements to maximize public recreational access and prioritize visitor accommodations. The proposed LCP amendment is one of the more limiting versions of such caps and buffers that the Commission has considered (and is significantly more limiting than the rules that apply).

Staff had previously scheduled this proposed amendment for an October 2021 Commission hearing, but postponed that hearing in light of significant comments received after the staff report was distributed that made staff reconsider its recommendation (which was then for the amendment to be approved as submitted) in light of same.

Staff has since reevaluated the issues and worked with County staff on solutions to identified problems, including two suggested modifications with which County staff is in agreement, all of which is described herein. LCP-3-SLO-21-0027-1 Part F (Los Osos Vacation Rentals) to other areas of the County).

In evaluating these concerns, including in light of comments received from interested parties, a number of issues were identified. Some of these are specific to Los Osos, but many of them are also generically issues under the LCP because the LCP structure for vacation rentals, including as it relates to the individual communities with additional standards, is the same.

In the end, the staff cited water restrictions as a key reason not to allow more than 58 vacation rentals.

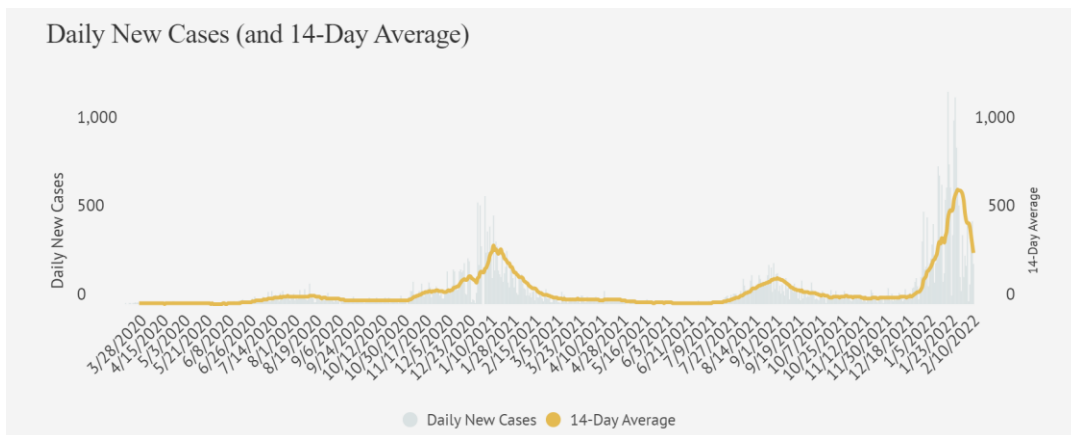
A minimum of one water conservation sign shall be posted in each restroom and kitchen of the dwelling. Water conservation signs shall encourage occupants to reduce water usage by stating (a) the importance of conserving water in Los Osos and (b) ways in which occupants can reduce the amount of water used during the stay. Water conservation signs shall be created and posted utilizing County approved language.

This seems to me a token way for the Commission staff to get around its own supposed concern about water supply.

On the one hand, the purpose of the Commission is maximizing access to coastal resources. But on the other, and in reality, they back the NIMBY position.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - COVID: The downward trend continued for the 2nd week in a row. The indoor masking requirement will be lifted on February 16, 2022, for those who have been vaccinated. Everyone will have to be on the honor system.



Hospitalized (7 in ICU)

SLO County's Indoor Mask Order Will Be Lifted on Feb. 16, in Alignment with State

Author: Public Health

Date: 2/9/2022 10:35:06 AM

State order continues to require universal masking in healthcare, school, and other high-risk settings

San Luis Obispo, CA — County of San Luis Obispo Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein announced today that the local [Health Officer Order requiring masking in all indoor public places](#) will be lifted next Wednesday, Feb. 16 in alignment with state masking policy. The mandate was put in place on Sept. 1, 2021, in response to a surge in COVID-19 hospitalizations fueled by the Delta variant and remained in place through the winter's Omicron surge.

“Masking is a simple and powerful tool that helped protect our local health care capacity during intense surges of COVID-19,” said Dr. Borenstein. “Now that SLO County has weathered the worst of this Omicron surge, we can lift this requirement and look to our community to wear a mask when it’s most important to do so: in crowded indoor spaces, if you are at higher risk or close to others who are, if you feel unwell, or if you are in any of the settings still covered by state requirements. Throughout the pandemic, we have sought to balance public health measures with pre-pandemic normalcy—this change reflects another such moment.”

[The State order](#) continues to require masking in indoor public places for those who are not vaccinated and for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, in healthcare facilities, schools, child care, homeless shelters, emergency shelters, corrections, long-term care facilities, and public transit.

While COVID-19 continues to spread in SLO County, new cases have slowed, and hospitalizations have recently remained stable. Thirty SLO County residents are currently hospitalized with severe COVID-19, down from 67 at the peak of the recent surge and 67 when the order was put in place. The risk of hospitalization and death remains higher for those who are not vaccinated: in January, Californians who were not yet vaccinated were [30 times](#) more likely to die from COVID-19 than those who had received a booster dose.

Access to [COVID-19 treatment](#) in SLO County has also increased for those at high risk of severe illness, and is expected to expand further in the weeks ahead. Two COVID-19 vaccines are now fully authorized by the FDA and remain widely available at no cost countywide, including as boosters.

“Getting vaccinated as a community is our ticket out of hospital surges, away from the drumbeat of preventable deaths, and out of restrictions like masking requirements,” said Dr. Borenstein. “Today, we are in the position of being able to lift one layer of protection. As we look ahead, I implore you to protect yourself and your family by staying up-to-date with your vaccine.”

Testing if you have symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19, along with isolating if you are sick or test positive, remains important for helping control the spread of this serious disease.

To schedule a vaccine appointment, visit slopublichealth.org/vaccines or call (833) 422-4255. To schedule a testing appointment, visit slopublichealth.org/testing or call (888) 634-1123.

For updates on COVID-19 in SLO County, visit slopublichealth.org/COVID19 or call the recorded Public Health Information Line at (805) 788-2903. Phone assistance is available at (805) 781-5500 Monday - Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Control click on the icon COVID Advice for sure fire ways to not catch COVID by a video “expert”². It may take several firm clicks.



Covid Advice
(9).MOV

Item 2 - California Single Payer Health Care Bill Withdrawn. The national media took note of the unwillingness of even the most leftist legislature this side of Venezuela to continue processing the bill.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022 - VOL. CCLXXIX NO. 30

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Single-Payer Dies Again in California

California is the land where progressive dreams are born, die and reincarnated. Democrats in Sacramento last month revived single-payer healthcare legislation, only to watch it expire again last week. Misguided hope springs eternal.

Democrats in the state Senate passed a bill in 2017 for a single-payer health system, but it died in the state Assembly because it didn't include revenue to pay for the \$400 billion annual cost. Last month Assembly progressives resurrected the legislation, plus an enormous tax bill to finance it.

This included a 2.3% excise tax on businesses with more than \$2 million in annual gross receipts; a 1.25% payroll tax on employers with 50 or more workers; a 1% payroll tax on workers earning more than \$49,900; and a progressive surtax to start at 0.5% on income over \$149,509 and rising to 2.5% at \$2,484,121.

These sweeping tax increases were too politically toxic even for Democrats who believe in

confiscatory taxation as an article of faith. Gov. Gavin Newsom campaigned on single-payer but declined to endorse the bill. “It’s one thing to say, it’s another to do,” he said last month.

Lacking enough Democratic votes to pass the bill, progressives killed it. “I don’t believe it would have served the cause of getting single

payer done by having the vote and having it go down in flames and further alienating members,” said San Jose Assemblyman Ash Kalra, the bill’s author.

Now recriminations are flying. “I’m deeply disappointed that the author did not bring this bill up for a vote today,” said Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon. Mr. Kalra blames Mr. Newsom: “It hurts when you’re trying to garner votes for a policy that the Governor is brushing aside despite a prior commitment to it.”

Lest anyone think single-payer is dead, Mr. Kalra said “this is only a pause” and “we will not give up.” The left never does.

**The cost is too much
even for America’s
progressive paradise.**

² Not a recommendation of SLO County Health Department.

Item 3 - Court Denies Injunction on County Redistricting Plan. The Judge found that the imposition of an injunction would be too disruptive and would undermine voting. The plaintiff leftists announced that they will appeal the decision.

SLO COUNTY WINS FIRST REDISTRICTING MAP CHALLENGE

February 20, 2022

By KAREN VELIE

A judge shot down an attempt to temporarily reverse the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors' adoption of the Patten map on Wednesday, a win for the Republican board majority.

SLO County Citizens for Good Government and three SLO County residents, registered Democrats, filed a lawsuit on Jan. 12 challenging the county's selection of the Patten map, arguing it benefits the Republican Party at the expense of Democrats and Latinos. The plaintiffs then sought an exparte order to temporarily restrain the county from holding elections based on the new supervisorial district map.

The plaintiffs wanted the court to either revert back to the old boundary map, or select Map A, both of which were promoted by Democratic supervisors Bruce Gibson and Dawn Ortiz-Legg during the redistricting process.

During the hearing on Wednesday, the plaintiffs' attorneys argued that many primarily Democratic voters will lose their right to vote in the 2022 election because of redistricting, causing irreparable harm. Superior Court Judge Rita Federman did not agree.

"The right to vote may be delayed, but it will not be eliminated," Judge Federman wrote in her ruling. "Accordingly, petitioners do not establish a significant showing of irreparable injury."

Plaintiffs argued that the map chosen by the board majority diluted Latino votes, a claim rejected by Judge Federman, who found "there are no protected class interests at issue in this case."

While the plaintiffs' attorney said the 2011 map is considered the status quo map, the county's attorneys argued the recently adopted Patten map is the status quo map. Judge Federman again agreed with the county.

The newly adopted Patten map places the largest portion of San Luis Obispo in a district with Cal Poly and Morro Bay, which plaintiffs argued was breaking up communities of interest in favor of keeping the city more intact, which is a lower priority. Judge Federman rejected the claim, writing that cities can be considered communities of interest.

As for plaintiffs' argument that the county should have considered whether the adopted map favored or discriminated against a political party, Judge Federman agreed. Even so, the judge found the plaintiffs unlikely to succeed on the merits of the case.

While it is illegal to draw a district to favor or disfavor a political party, "the mere fact that a particular reapportionment may result in a shift in political control of some legislative districts ... falls short of demonstrating such a purpose," according to the ruling.

As a result of the ruling, candidates for the June 7 election will rely on the Patten map to determine their district. While the plaintiffs lost their motion for a temporary restraining order, the case is ongoing with a case management conference scheduled in March

This article first appeared in the February 10 Cal Coast News. Karen Velie is an investigative reporter.

Item 4 - Another Putin Motivation for Annexation of Ukraine. Russian control of Ukraine will provide it huge influence in world food markets. It's not just oil and gas (from other regions), but real power over peoples' survival.

A RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR COULD RIPPLE ACROSS AFRICA AND ASIA

BEWARE OF FOOD PRICE SPIKES AND REVOLUTIONS IF UKRAINIAN GRAIN DELIVERIES ARE DISRUPTED.

BY ALEX SMITH



Combines harvest wheat in the Novovodolazhsky district of Ukraine's Kharkiv region on July 25, 2017. PAVLO PAKHOMENKO/NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

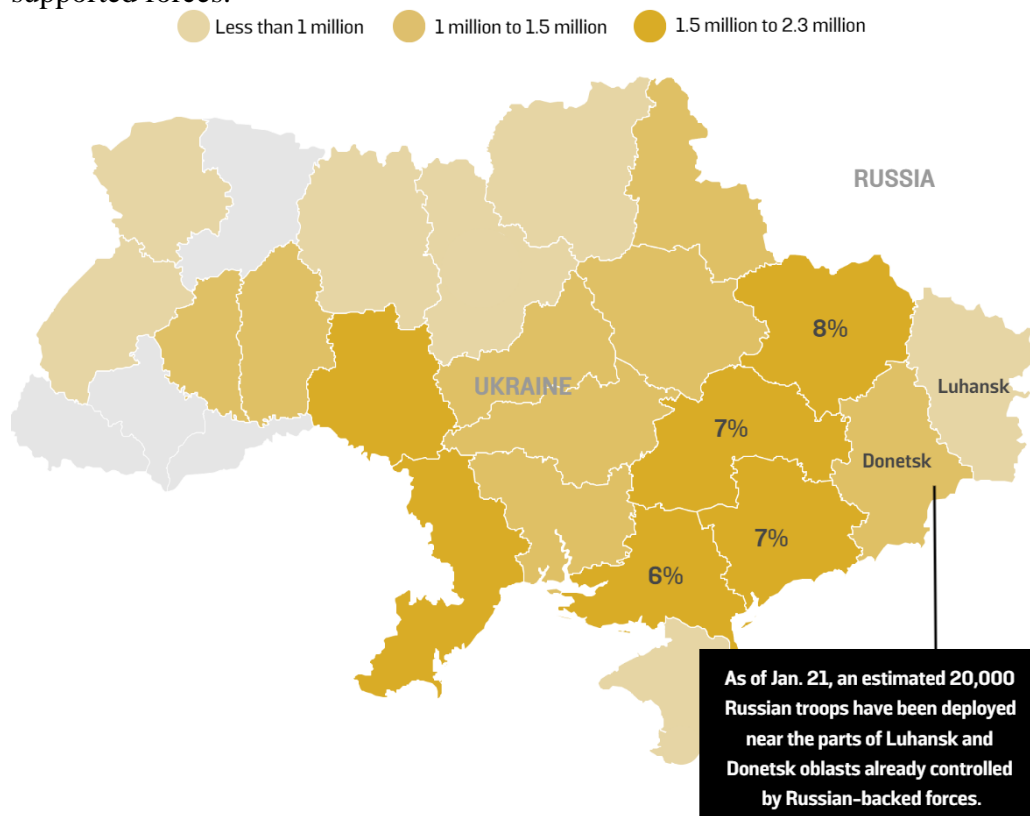
With some of the most fertile land on Earth, Ukraine has been known as Europe's breadbasket for centuries. Its fast-growing agricultural exports—grains, vegetable oils, and a host of other products—are crucial to feeding populations from Africa to Asia. And it so happens that a substantial part of Ukraine's most productive agricultural land is located in its eastern regions, exactly those parts most vulnerable to a potential Russian attack. As the war clouds gather along Ukraine's borders, one concern that has gone relatively unnoticed is the question of what happens to these regions—and to the countries around the world that depend on Ukraine for food—in the case of a Russian attack.

Ukraine Border Crisis

Ukraine is a top exporter of corn, barley, and rye, but it's the country's wheat that has the biggest impact on food security around the world. In 2020, Ukraine exported roughly 18 million metric tons of wheat out of a total harvest of 24 million metric tons, making it the world's fifth-largest exporter. Customers include China and the European Union, but the developing world is where Ukrainian wheat has become an essential import. For example, about half of all wheat consumed in Lebanon in 2020 came from Ukraine, according to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Relying on bread and other grain products for 35 percent of the population's caloric intake, Lebanon is critically dependent on Ukrainian wheat.

Of the 14 countries that rely on Ukrainian imports for more than 10 percent of their wheat consumption, a significant number already face food insecurity from ongoing political instability or outright violence. For example, Yemen and Libya import 22 percent and 43 percent, respectively, of their total wheat consumption from Ukraine. Egypt, the largest consumer of Ukrainian wheat, imported more than 3 million metric tons in 2020—about 14 percent of its total wheat. Ukraine also supplied 28 percent of Malaysian, 28 percent of Indonesian, and 21 percent of Bangladeshi wheat consumption in 2020, according to FAO data.

Unfortunately, a large part of the country's wheat production comes from the historical breadbasket of eastern Ukraine—Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts, just west of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are already partially occupied by Russian and Russian-supported forces.



SOURCE: FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE; STATE STATISTICS SERVICE OF UKRAINE; FEDERAL STATE STATISTICS SERVICE OF RUSSIA; ROCHAN CONSULTING

Should a possible attack on Ukraine turn into a Russian land grab from where Russian-supported separatists have already established their so-called republics, it could mean sharp declines in wheat production and a precipitous fall in wheat exports as farmers flee the fighting, infrastructure and equipment are destroyed, and the region's economy is paralyzed. Whoever controls the land will ultimately extract its riches, but if conditions in the Russian-controlled eastern parts of Ukraine are any guide, instability and paralysis may lie over the region and seriously impact production far beyond the initial invasion.

It's barely been a decade since the Arab Spring, for which rising food prices were the spark that lit the fuse of revolution.

Global food prices are already rising along with those of other commodities, and any disruption risks further price shocks as importing countries scramble for supplies in a tightening market. Food insecurity would be exacerbated in the many developing countries that depend on Ukraine for their sustenance. In politically unstable countries such as Libya, Yemen, and Lebanon, additional food price shocks and hunger could easily turn an already bad situation worse. In many other countries, too, price spikes and food insecurity could inflame conflict, heighten ethnic tensions, destabilize governments, and cause violence to spill over borders.

These scenarios should not be taken lightly. It has barely been a decade since the uprisings of the Arab Spring, for which rising food prices were the spark that lit the fuse of revolution in Tunisia and Egypt. More recently, one only needs to look at Kazakhstan to see how quickly a rising price for a staple—in this case, fuel—can lead to protests, violence, and, in Kazakhstan's case, a Russian military intervention. A population's grievances might be much broader and have accumulated over many years, but it's often a price shock that sets off conflict. Hunger can increase tensions-producing inequality and simultaneously radicalize mass political movements.

Russian intervention in Ukrainian agriculture is nothing new. The horrific famine perpetrated by Soviet policies in Ukraine in the 1930s—known as the Holodomor and considered a genocide by many historians—killed between 4 million and 7 million Ukrainians. While various causes played into the famine, the connections between harsh grain delivery quotas placed on Ukrainian farmers by Moscow, forced collectivization, deportation and killings of farmers, and ethnic Ukrainian starvation are hard to dismiss.

There are many reasons why a Russian invasion of Ukraine should be stopped before it happens. Disruption of food deliveries from one of the world's most important breadbaskets should be high on that list. If an invasion is unavoidable, governments around the world must be prepared to react quickly to avoid food insecurity and potential famine, including by sending food aid to needy countries and expediting supply chain shifts to redirect exports to Ukraine's current customers.

Finally, the potential for a food crisis caused by a European war should also serve to refresh and underscore our priorities. Countries should work to alleviate inequality, reduce corruption, and improve political representation—all of which increase societywide resilience, not just with respect to food. As the threat of climate change has expanded our thinking to include the future of the entire planet, we must also widen our thinking about geopolitical conflict. Planetary crisis

may indeed be right around the corner, but it is most likely to stem from things that are as old as human civilization itself: war, famine, and disease.

Update, Jan. 22, 2022: The map in this article has been updated to clarify the parts of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts that are under the control of Russian-backed forces. Alex Smith is a food and agriculture analyst at the Breakthrough Institute. Twitter: @alexjmssmith This Article first appeared in the January 22, 2022 edition of Foreign Policy Magazine.

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



OUR ELITE IS NO ELITE AT ALL

The only real recent public service of elites has been to persuade us why they were never elites at all.

By VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

An elite is always variously defined.

The ideal elites, as ancient philosophers argued, were a “natural elite” due to their exemplary character, aptitude, and work ethic. Understandably, a towering few ascended from all walks of life to positions of power, influence, and occasional wealth.

But such a natural meritocracy, for obvious reasons, rarely leads to an equality of result.

Who Are Our Elite?

Our current idea of ostensible elites could be defined by noting their money and influence. But money alone—even in the huge sums now found on Wall Street and in Silicon Valley—is not the *only* elite criterion.

Donald Trump is a billionaire with much influence and lives accordingly. Yet few of our “elite” would consider him a kindred soul. Ditto Elon Musk. He is the richest man in the world. But the elite mostly despise and ostracize him.

Birth itself has given way somewhat to insider influence and professional parentage. You may be a fifth-generation scion with a name such as Mellon, Vanderbilt, or Rockefeller, but if your dad was not an ambassador, your mom not a VP at CBS, your sibling not a Harvard professor or Google executive, you have fallen out of the elite.

Zip codes still count. Although there are certainly “elites” who hail from Kansas City, Boise, or Sacramento, most of those who exercise national clout are found inordinately on the two coasts, from Boston to Washington, D.C., and from Seattle to San Diego—with respective windows on the wealth of Europe or Asia.

The Obamas were going to be anointed as multimillionaires wherever they lived. But they would not necessarily remain as elite as they have become living back in Chicago rather than in a tony D.C. neighborhood and out on Martha’s Vineyard. So, it was an easy call for them to follow the trajectory of the Clintons rather than the Georgia-bound Carters.

In the 21st century, other elite criteria seem to count as much as the old markers of lineage, money, and location. “Certification,” defined as degrees from the “right” undergraduate and graduate schools, is essential for an elite resumé.

Such brands have little to do with education *per se* or aggregate knowledge acquired. (It is not clear that an Ivy League student would do better on the same SAT, taken upon graduation as earlier, upon admittance). Are our best generals those with Yale degrees, and our best CEOs those with Stanford MBAs? And are *Harvard Law Review* editors—think Barack Obama, the boss of Lois Lerner, Eric Holder, James Comey, and John Brennan—our top legal and ethical minds?

The point of certification is that it is the cattle brand to open networking doorways and empower even banal arguments from authority. A Harvard MBA or a Princeton BA is not difficult to obtain. But *getting into* such places in the first place to obtain such a certification most certainly was hard. And whether it was in the past a matter of being white, rich, and well connected, or in the present being non-white, female, and well-connected, the key is joining an elite club—not justifying one’s membership in it by current and future demonstrable excellence.

Another route to being an elite is found in some sort of political, media, academic, sports, or entertainment celebrity—the Robert De Niros or LeBron Jameses of the world. We are not sure how all these celebrated people became elites, only that some exercise influence and win adherents through their ubiquity—and notoriety. A Don Lemon or Jeffrey Epstein is not an elite by virtue of proven achievement or innate talent, much less character. But they sort of became mysteriously famous for being famous (or infamous). □



Jackson Lee/GC Images/Getty Images

The Kardashians are elites. But they reached this status by merchandising and popularizing larger than normal posteriors—and to be frank, more shamelessly than others—posting selfies of their ample boobs and butts. Ditto an earlier Madonna or Britney Spears, both of whom could somewhat sing in addition to doing burlesque. □

Finally, left-wing politics are essential for the new elite. The brilliant Tom Sowell or Shelby Steele is not an elite; the racist Ibram Kendi or madwoman Joy Reid is. □

The CNN masturbatory legal-eagle Jeffrey Toobin is considered an elite expert of jurisprudence, despite having never won a landmark case or being renowned for his courtroom presence or seminal legal scholarship. In contrast, proven expert constitutionalists, such as Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas or Samuel Alito, are not so well regarded as authorities on the law by the elite. □

Does Harvard Law have a mini course on ethics, advising graduates not to expose their phallos to female colleagues? That is the sort of Toobin illness that would earn a poor deplorable time in the clink or a lifetime on the sex-offender register. □

So woke progressivism does not just cement elite membership. It also serves as an acceptable scab to mask a lack of character beneath, especially in the case of scoundrels like one-time would-be presidential contender Michael Avenatti, or the once blackfaced like Justin Trudeau and former Virginia Governor Ralph Northam. It covers the bloody work of former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo as well as long-ago discredited fabulists like Dan Rather and Brian Williams, or plagiarists like the famous Doris Kearns Goodwin, the late Steven Ambrose, and even Joe Biden. □

The Elite *Res Gestae*

What counts more, however, is not so much who becomes an oligarchical elite, but *what* exactly has this newer sort of elite class done for our society at large? □

Collectively, this generation’s record of leadership, such as it is, has been mostly dismal: no Hoover Dam, no subsequent moon-landing or trip to Mars, no Normandy Beach or Inchon, no polio vaccine, no “Casablanca,” “The Best Years of our Lives,” or “Shane” movies, and no novels like *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Tender is the Night*, *Absalom, Absalom!* or *Invisible Man*—but plenty of California-like Solyndras and Stonehenge high-speed rails, skedaddles from Kabul and Benghazi, gifting of \$80 billion in arms to the Taliban, double-vaxxed and boosted, sorta, kinda short-term immunity, “X-Men” and “Avenger” comic-book films, and *How to Be an Anti-Racist* best sellers. □

The more we gained Silicon Valley billionaires, the more we moved into the world of 1984, merely substituting J. Edgar Hoover’s G-men for woke, suit-and-tied James Comey, Andrew McCabe, Peter Strzok, Lisa Page, and Kevin Clinesmith—or legions of nerds with cancel buttons sitting in rows of computer carrels in Menlo Park. □

Movers and shakers who operate Facebook, Twitter, Spotify, or GoFundMe are much more devoted to Soviet-style censorship than to the First Amendment. They worry far more over profits rather than over the Uyghurs. And their creed is more McCarthyism than the Sermon on the Mount. □

Our four-star elite officers have more degrees than ever, more contact with the Hill and the White House—and had no more idea, than the clueless bureaucrats who dispatched them, how to discover what was the purpose in Libya or the agenda in Afghanistan. □

General Mark Milley was more interested in virtue signaling his furor at white rage than in keeping safe a \$1-billion embassy in Kabul, \$300-million worth of refits at the Bagram airbase, and \$80 billion in arms. He was not so worried over how to win wars or keep the peace. As an elite, he knew he could ignore all that and still not be fired—if he at least virtue signaled his crusade against white rage. □

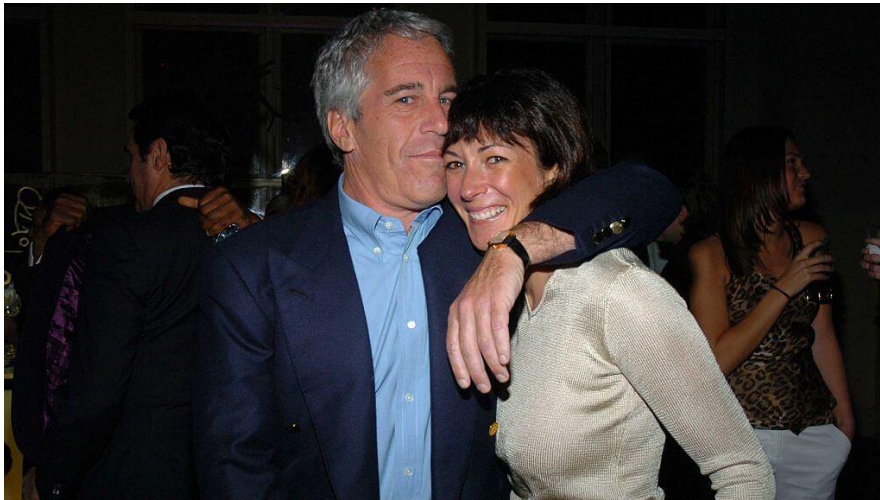
In the current generation of our loud, woke military, we will likely see Afghanistan return as a pre-9/11 terrorist headquarters, Iran go nuclear, North Korea step up its missile launches, and Taiwan and Ukraine at best squeezed into Finlandization, and at worst absorbed. □

The more the public listened to the architects of lockdowns, mandates, and quarantines—the elite at the CDC, NIH, and NIAID, the political hypocrites like California Governor Gavin Newsom, former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and sham-modelers such as Neil Ferguson of the Imperial College, London—the more people died in classical “the medicine is worse than the malady” fashion. □

There are no finer degreed-elites in the world than our medical professionals such as Anthony Fauci, Francis Collins, and Peter Daszak. The three became international rock stars as they

crafted a coverup by denying links between the pandemic and the Wuhan virology lab, and their own efforts either to fund or hide gain-of-function viral research. □

We don't quite know how we got into \$30 trillion of debt, normative \$2-trillion deficits, growing stagflation, and adherence to an unhinged modern monetary theory that assures us printing money ensures prosperity. We only know that the 7-Eleven manager, the owner-operator truck driver, and the electrician grasp a lot more about economics than do the Ph.D.s who wrote, argued, and led us into this mess. □



Joe Schildhorn/PMC/Getty Images

The Elite Pantheon

Finally, examine the marquee elites of the past few years. Do we remember the late Jeffrey Epstein, the pedophiliac blackmailer who posed as a legitimate money manager? Do we remember the Lolita express paparazzi who jetted to his various hot spots, whether President Emeritus Bill Clinton or the royal Prince Andrew or allegedly even the global climate change scold Bill Gates? Why did the richest men in the world and so many from Harvard University court him? In contrast, most of the working class knows enough to steer clear of pedophiles. □

We are suffering a plague of cop shootings. Yet in a few days, our multimillionaire Super Bowl entertainers will share one thing in common: They all have advocated or glorified violence against the police. □

At one time or another, we were told the following elites were geniuses or cutting-edge—men and women in the know and to be known: Woody Allen, Alec Baldwin, the two Cuomos, the always shouting, always furious, always pampered, but otherwise inane and empty Greta Thunberg. □

Our corporate elites gave millions in their stockholders' money as penance to BLM, without a worry where, how, or why those millions were spent—or siphoned off in real estate investments by the grifter leadership.

Nikole Hannah-Jones is now our nation's elite chronological expert whose rare insight on race, history, and war taught the nation that 1619, not 1776, was our true foundational date. But so far, she has failed to convince anyone of her latest notion that 1865 was the first year of the Civil War.

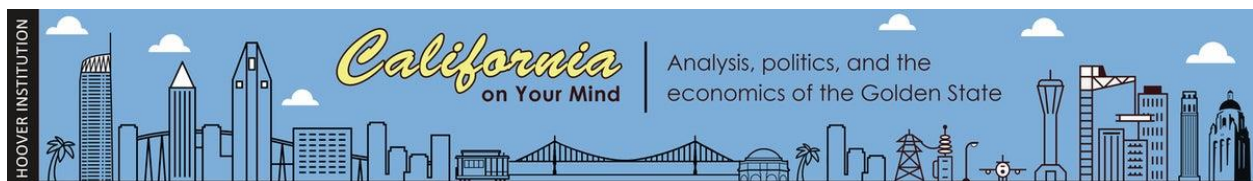
Ditto Whoopi Goldberg. She claims rare insight on the catalysts of the Holocaust, apparently better than its architect Adolf Hitler, who, we are told by her, really did not exterminate 6 million Jews because of his racial hatred of Jews. Instead, Professor Goldberg, of "Ghost" fame, lectures us that what went on at Treblinka was a sort of tit-for-tat catfight between white people. Had Goldberg said Hitler took chloroquine rather than killed 6 million for non-racial reasons, she would likely have been censored or kicked off social media.

Elites hate the truckers. We know that from their outrage over the Canadian trucker strike—and Justin Trudeau's infantile meltdown. They care little for the working moms who lost their jobs when schools closed, and who had to quit work to watch their children. They have no concern for the small businesses that went broke, as the Zoom class made more money than ever during COVID-19. The more we elected credentialed district attorneys, the more crime shot up, the innocent suffered, and the elite shrugged.

The elite gave us the Russian collusion hoax, the beatification of the prevaricator Adam Schiff, the iconization of the disingenuous conniver Alexander Vindman, the neat idea of modern monetary theory, the bold idea of open borders, the beloved idea of critical race theory, and a spiking violent crime wave explained away by critical legal theory.

The only real recent public service of elites has been to persuade us why they were never elites at all.

*Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush. Hanson is also a farmer (growing raisin grapes on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author most recently of The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won, The Case for Trump and the newly released The Dying Citizen. This article first appeared in the February 7, 2022 issue of *American Greatness* and then subsequently in much of the national media.*



CALIFORNIA HOMELESSNESS: BILLIONS ARE SPENT EVERY YEAR, AND THE PROBLEM JUST GETS WORSE

BY LEE OHANIAN

California is home to about 12 percent of the country's population but has about 30 percent of the total homeless population, and about 47 percent of the country's unsheltered homeless. Homelessness is arguably the state's most pressing issue and has been for decades, despite state and local government throwing billions at the problem, year after year.

How much has been spent? Between 2019 and 2021, [\\$12 billion](#). How much worse is homelessness? A nearly [seven percent increase](#) between 2019 and 2020.

I can imagine you have some questions. Where does the money go? Well, that's complicated, what with so many programs and agencies involved in this business. Why does homelessness get worse? Because throwing money at problems without thinking them through usually doesn't succeed. Why don't we have a better estimate of how many people are homeless, who they are, and why they are homeless? Exactly.

We should have answers to these questions, but we don't, even though homelessness has been at a crisis level for decades in the state. But perhaps we might make some progress this year if the Legislative Democrats and the governor are willing to open the door to their Republican colleagues and pursue this issue on a bipartisan basis, because this chronic, inhumane, and grossly expensive failure will not get better without a true bipartisan effort.

Last month, many of California's Republican state legislators in both the State Senate and Assembly [sent a letter to Governor Gavin Newsom](#) urging him to call an extraordinary legislative session to address these and other questions about California homelessness to create new approaches to deal with this issue.

There is absolutely no question that the state's approach to homelessness needs a complete do-over. And the Republicans get this. The Republican letter tells us exactly why the policies implemented over decades, ones that likely have exceeded \$100 billion in spending over the last 25 year, have failed.

One key factor behind the failure identified by Republican lawmakers, one that would jump out at anyone, is that there is no accountability in the vast sea of homelessness agencies and programs. If there were accountability, we would understand these failures. If there were accountability, we would not continue to blindly spend billions every year without asking why we aren't moving the needle. If there were accountability, we would have had the equivalent of an extraordinary legislative session long ago to come up with a game plan that has the potential to win, instead of doubling down on chronic failure.

Apropos of this being the week of the Super Bowl, if California homelessness policy were a football team, then the coaching staff and general manager would have been fired and the NFL

would have booted out the team's owner, all long ago. Complete do-over. And this complete do-over should begin with implementing accountability.

Perhaps the most striking failure of all this is that California, the most technologically advanced state in the country, still does not have an information technology infrastructure in place to adequately compile data and analyze these data to make informed policy choices. To implement accountability, we need information so that we can better understand the issues and measure our progress.

Just how good are our data? Not very good. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) coordinates a single-point-in-time count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. What we do know is that the state's homeless population is almost certainly larger than what is reported to HUD, presently around 160,000, and is perhaps much larger.

The Republican letter also highlights another major factor behind our failure to make progress on homelessness. The letter argues forcefully that the state has focused far too much on the idea that homelessness can be solved if we just build more housing. If it were only that simple. Republican lawmakers have identified the 800-pound gorilla in the room: mental health issues and substance abuse.

This makes dealing with homelessness exponentially more difficult and requires that we fundamentally rethink nearly everything we have been doing on this front. And this is where compiling better data is crucial for understanding the next step. Current official estimates for those among the California homeless population struggling with mental health issues, substance abuse, or both is about 29 percent, but [the Los Angeles Times found a 67 percent rate](#). The implications for designing effective policies based on which of these numbers you pick are enormous.

I suspect that the number is much closer to the [LA Times](#) estimate than the official estimate, given that other studies of homeless, including those of different homeless populations, find that around 50 percent or more of homeless people deal with mental health issues or substance abuse, with one study finding nearly an 80 percent rate of mental health/substance abuse issues. And this leads Republicans to identify creative solutions that have the potential to truly move the needle, by providing medical care and treatment for those with these illnesses.

I had the opportunity to speak with one of the letter signatories, Senator Pat Bates (R-Laguna Niguel), about the Republican ideas to address homelessness. Senator Bates comes from a background as a social worker and thus knows much about these issues. "It is heartbreaking to see what is happening to these individuals," she remarked. "We must and can do better with investments in data infrastructure and analysis so we know how and where to make investments that will help these individuals and that will improve our communities more broadly."

Bates and her colleagues recommend prioritizing investments in mental health and substance abuse infrastructure, noting that California has an extreme shortage of inpatient psychiatric capacity and providers, among the worst in the country. They also note that a few demographic

groups, including veterans, former foster children, and domestic violence victims, have a comparatively very high chance of experiencing homelessness.

These facts indicate that policies should target these populations to provide support before they fall into homelessness. But currently, there is little, if any evidence of targeted programs toward these constituencies or toward increasing the availability of prevention programs.

Senator Bates stressed the need for a special legislative session so that the many facets of homelessness can be studied under one tent. She also stressed the Republicans' interest in working cooperatively on bipartisan solutions.

The reaction from Governor Newsom so far? Silence, which is remarkably sad because effective solutions don't have party lines. And if this silence continues, we will flush billions more into the yawning black hole that has become California homelessness policies—where dollars enter, and where most of those suffering never emerge.

Lee E. Ohanian is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of economics and director of the Ettinger Family Program in Macroeconomic Research at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

He is associate director of the Center for the Advanced Study in Economic Efficiency at Arizona State University and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, where he codirects the research initiative Macroeconomics across Time and Space. He is also a fellow in the Society for the Advancement of Economic Theory.

*His research focuses on economic crises, economic growth, and the impact of public policy on the economy. Ohanian is coeditor of [Government Policies and Delayed Economic Recovery](#) (Hoover Institution Press, 2012). He is an adviser to the Federal Reserve Banks of Minneapolis and St. Louis, has previously advised other Federal Reserve banks, foreign central banks, and the National Science Foundation, and has testified to national and state legislative committees on economic policy. He is on the editorial boards of *Econometrica* and *Macroeconomic Dynamics*. He is a frequent media commentator and writes for the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, and *Investor's Business Daily*. He has won numerous teaching awards at UCLA and the University of Rochester. This article first Appeared in the February 11, 2022 Hoover Institution Daily Update.*



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