



**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
**February 5 - 9, 2023**



**14th Annual Dinner &  
Fundraiser**

**THURSDAY,  
MARCH 30, 2023  
MADONNA EXPO CENTER**

Get the close up dual update on what's happening, what's next, and what you can do about it, direct from San Luis Obispo County Board Chairman John Peschong and Supervisor Debbie Arnold. Rally to their long haul perspective to sustain family, freedom, and heritage.



**5:00 pm Social Hour & Open Bar**  
**6:15 pm Filet Mignon Dinner & Wine**  
*Auction will be held after dinner*  
*(Auctioneer Todd Ventura)*

**\$125/person**  
**\$1,250/table (seats 10)**

For tickets:

On-Line Reservations & Payment can be made at [www.colabslo.org/events.asp](http://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](mailto:colabslo@gmail.com)

# ALERT

## COUNTY AGENDA SWITCHEROO PASO BASIN WATER ORDINANCES

### NOTICE

THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS WAS JUST REVISED  
GIBSON DEMANDS IT BE AT 9:00 AM

#### 2.7.23 BOS meeting Addendum to Order of Business

**Department:**

Administrative Office

**Description:**

Staff is amending the order of business on the agenda as follows:

1) Item # 36 the hearing to rescind Ordinance 3483, the Paso Basin Land use Area Planting Ordinance will be heard as the first item of the day at 9:00 AM; 2) Item # 31 the storm update will be moved to the first item in the afternoon after the recess, and 3) Item #32 Hearing to consider compensation increases for Board of Supervisors and approval of a resolution increasing the County contribution for Post-Employment Health benefits to Elected Department Heads and members of the Board of Supervisors will be heard as the last item of the day. All Districts.

**THIS MEANS THAT THE REPEAL OF THE PLANTING ORDINANCE WILL BE HEARD AS THE FIRST ITEM OF THE TUESDAY AT 9:00 AM. THE ITEM HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN SET AS THE LAST ITEM OF TUESDAY AFTERNOON.**

## THIS WEEK

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PASO PLANTING ORDINANCE RECISION 9:00 AM

COUNTY 2023 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM CHANNELS SANTA CLAUS  
WILL REDISTRICTING TREACHERY EMERGE FROM EXEC SESSION?

**WILL PRIVATE RURAL CAMPING BE ALLOWED?**

**LAST WEEK**

**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

**NO REGULAR BOS MEETING LAST TUESDAY**

**EMERGENT ISSUES**

**STATE RESERVOIRS STILL GAINING**

**NEWSOM BLUNTED ON COVID MANDATES**

**COLAB IN DEPTH**

**SEE PAGE 22**

**COYOTE PARABLE SPELLS OUT PERFECTLY**

**WHAT'S SO WRONG WITH CALIFORNIA**

*California's ridiculous policies speak for themselves*

**BY KATY GRIMES**

**ANARCHY, AMERICAN-STYLE**

*The Left runs Oceania, and we work for their various bureaus.*

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

**THE STATES POWER DOWN**

*Ambitious renewables mandates by local governments are eroding the electric grid's reliability*

**BY STEVEN MALANGA**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS  
SEE PAGE 38**

**California Severe Winter Storms, Flooding,  
Landslides, and Mudslides Presidential  
Declaration**

**DISASTER RECOVERY CENTER/LOCAL ASSISTANCE  
CENTER OPEN IN SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**GETTING DISASTER HELP FROM SBA**

**INITIAL STEPS: Register with FEMA, Apply with SBA, and Visit a Disaster Recovery Center**

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

**Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, February 7, 2023 (Scheduled)**

**NOTICE**

**THE ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS WAS REVISED ON FRIDAY,  
FEBRUARY 3, 2023**

**2.7.23 BOS meeting Addendum to Order of Business**

**Number:**

Agenda 94/2023

**Department:**

Administrative Office

**Description:**

Staff is amending the order of business on the agenda as follows:

1) Item # 36 the hearing to rescind Ordinance 3483, the Paso Basin Land use Area Planting Ordinance will be heard as the first item of the day at 9:00 AM; 2) Item # 31 the storm update will be moved to the first item in the afternoon after the recess, and 3) Item #32 Hearing to consider compensation increases for Board of

Supervisors and approval of a resolution increasing the County contribution for Post-Employment Health benefits to Elected Department Heads and members of the Board of Supervisors will be heard as the last item of the day. All Districts.

**This means that the repeal of the Planting Ordinance will be heard as the first item of the day at 9:00 AM.**

Item 36 will now be the first item of the day.

**Note that the various items have been shuffled. Therefore the items numbers do not follow sequentially.**

**Item 36 - Request by the County of San Luis Obispo to 1) amend Title 8 and Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code and the Agriculture and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan to rescind Ordinance No. 3483, the Paso Basin Land Use Management Area (PBLUMA) Planting Ordinance, and re-enact and extend until January 1, 2028 the previously adopted Agricultural Offset Requirements for New or Expanded Irrigated Crop Production Using Water from the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin; and 2) decertify the Final Program Environmental Impact Report (FPEIR) for the PBLUMA Planting Ordinance. Exempt from CEQA. Districts 1, 2, and 4.** This Hearing to consider repeal of the PBLUMA was set at a Special Board meeting on Sunday, January 29, 2023, to ensure that the repeal is adopted prior to the actual date on which the PBLUMA was to have taken effect. See last week's special meeting details on page 18 below.

### **Why the Urgency?**

The Planting Ordinance is set to take effect on March 1, 2023. Its opponents want to make sure that it never happens. If it did take effect even for a short time, people might file applications and spend significant sums in reliance on the existence of the ordinance. Such a situation could cloud a future repeal process. Even more significantly, the repeal process would have to deal with the environmental impacts of repealing a live ordinance which actually restricts water use and sets up a series of CEQA mitigation requirements related to water use, CO2 reduction, dust, and other environmental impacts.

The PBLUMA ordinance was the long-awaited effort to remedy the water use Catch 22 to which a number of smaller farmers have been subjected in the Paso Basin. The Paso Basin water moratorium urgency ordinance was adopted in 2013. It was converted into a permanent ordinance in 2015. Its key operative provision is that new agricultural wells (generating increased acre-feet of water usage) cannot be approved unless an equal acre-foot offset can be proven.

The provision means that the prospective permittee must buy credits from someone else, fallow an equivalent amount elsewhere in the basin, or convert high water use crops to lower use crops. One of the premises of the ordinance is that the calculation of increased water use is based on a parcel's prior historic use (now called the look back period). For example, a parcel with a historic use of 400 acre-feet per year is entitled to keep pumping 400 acre-feet per year.

*Staff would like to clarify the time limits for the agricultural offset ordinance:*



- *Rolling 5-Year Lookback Period* The agricultural offset ordinance requires growers to apply for a clearance within 5 years after they stop irrigating (known as the "lookback period"), otherwise they lose the ability to resume irrigation while the ordinance remains in effect.

- *Agricultural Offset Clearance Expiration Date* Approved clearances (including those issued before March 1, 2023) are valid until the agricultural offset ordinance terminates. This change was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on November 5, 2019 when the ordinance was first extended.

*Therefore, if the agricultural offset ordinance is re-enacted and extended until January 1, 2028, approved clearances would have until January 1, 2028 to plant, regardless of clearance approval date*

An important question for the Planning Department is: What is the accumulative approved residual permit acre feet of clearances existing at this point. In other words, how much more pumping is possible under existing clearances each year between now and 2028?

How does this compare with the estimated maximum new pumping of 450 acre feet per year under the Planting Ordinance which is proposed to be rescinded?

**Trapped in the Moratorium:** One group of farmers, usually smaller units, who grew annual crops such as vegetables, hay, and flowers, had ceased planting in the years prior due to a multiyear drought. Their rationale had been that once the draught ended, they would resume planting and irrigating. When the drought ended, the County told them they could not resume pumping because they did not have a sufficiently current historic use. Some members of the Board and especially Supervisor Arnold have sought a means to amend the moratorium ordinance to allow those caught in the trap, and those who would use 25 acre-feet or less per year, to be allowed to resume pumping. The plan states in part:

*The proposed ordinance would allow planting per verified 25-AFY exemptions anytime while the ordinance remains in effect (until 2045) and allow an 18-month period to plant per an issued "water neutral" planting permit. The 18-month planting period for a "water neutral" planting permit would need to start within a six-year lookback period from the irrigation stop date for the crop(s) previously irrigated on site.*

**And**

*The planting permit time limits are depicted graphically in Figure 2 below. Planning staff would verify final planting with a site inspection and be authorized to conduct annual site inspections as need to verify continued compliance with the approved planting plan while the ordinance remains in effect.*

**Proponents of the repeal should answer in detail:**

If the ordinance is repealed by the Board of Supervisors, the question remains, how can a more equitable use of the water be established in the near term while the GSP phases in? If it cannot be accomplished by land use ordinance, what about amending the GSP to give a 450 max per acre-foot per year permitting preference to those who would use 25 acre-feet or less. Since everyone

seems to agree that there should be some equity, this would shift a little more of the burden to the existing grandfathered-in large users.

It would contain none of the burdens of the land use methodology under CEQA. The State might have some questions, but in the short term the GSP could be dovetailed to fit the situation and treat everyone equally.

**Background:** The ordinance was opposed by the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau, San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen’s Association, Grower Shippers of San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara, the Paso Robles Wine Alliance, Sierra Club, and a number of individuals.

The Farm Bureau submitted a 10-page legal brief in opposition, which outlined many reasons why the Bureau believes the ordinance revisions are illegal. A spokesman indicated that if the ordinance were to be approved, there would be a lawsuit.

The proposed amendments to the Paso Basin Water Moratorium are designed to allow smaller users (under 25 acre-feet per year) to apply for a permit to pump if they meet a set of rigorous conditions. These users are now capped at 5 acre-feet per year.

*PROJECT SUMMARY The attached ordinance (Attachments 1 and 2) and resolution (Attachment 3) would amend Title 8 and Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code and the Agriculture and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan to require “water neutral” ministerial planting permits for new and expanded crop production irrigated from groundwater wells within the Paso Basin Land Use Management Area from January 31, 2023 through January 31, 2045 (22 years), allowing a 25-acre-foot per year (“AFY”) exemption per site to continue to exercise the County’s land use authority to regulate irrigated crop planting and to allow farms to irrigate that have not been able to under the current agricultural offset requirements.*

The key objection is that the ordinance and its CEQA-proposed mitigations include a number of objectionable regulations. Even though these would pertain only to the individuals who apply for a permit, the expansion of regulation over agriculture could be precedent setting, and therefore any gains achieved now are not worth it in the big picture.

Table 1: Summary of Mitigation Measures, Applicability, and Monitoring Methods

Mitigation Measure	Required for Planting Permit and/or 25-AFY Exemption	Monitoring Methods	
		Application	Annual Site Inspections
<b>AQ-1 Construction Emissions Reduction</b> Dust control measures.	Both	Self-certification	Verify measures are in place
<b>BIO-1 Riparian and Wetland Habitat Setback</b> No planting within 50' of riparian or wetland vegetation unless planted when ordinance took effect.	Both	Show on site plan	Verify compliance with site plan
<b>GHG-1 Carbon Sequestration</b> Incorporate conservation practices to sequester carbon at 0.15 MT CO <sub>2</sub> e per acre of planting per CDFA Healthy Soils Program guidelines.	25-AFY Exemptions	Show in site plan and provide CDFA COMET calculations	Verify measures implemented per site plan
<b>UTIL-1 Well Metering and Reporting</b> Reporting monthly groundwater extraction.	Both	Identify well(s) in site plan	Verify participation in County GSA-approved groundwater extraction program or well meter installed during final planting inspection
<b>UTIL-2 Hydrology Report</b> Verification of no more than two feet of drawdown over five years in off-site groundwater wells within 750 feet.	25-AFY Exemptions	Submit with application as applicable	NA

Proponents of the ordinance argue that most of the water being used in the Basin is being consumed by large corporate vineyards, which will continue unfettered pumping until the SGMA plan bites in decades in the future.

Circumscribed by a scathing 430-page Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the Planning Commission unanimously recommended that the Board of Supervisors reject the proposed ordinance. Of course, this is highly controversial, since it was a Board of Supervisors majority that initiated the ordinance in the first place. They undertook the effort, as they felt that the 2013 moratorium was manifestly unfair to smaller users overlying the Basin.

**Commission Rejection:** The Commission unanimously determined to recommend that the Board of Supervisors reject the proposed ordinance. Some of the reasons cited in their recommended rejection include:

The ordinance is not needed, as the SGMA process is ramping up and should be used to manage the control of pumping.

The mitigations measures recommended by staff are harmful to agriculture - the fix is worse than the problem.

The ordinance is too complex, and as such, will render it expansive and difficult to administer. It results in 16 immitigable CEQA Class I impacts, which would have to be overridden by the Board of Supervisors in order to adopt the ordinance.

**Water Calculations:**

The most significant objection was that the ordinance would result in the potential use of 450 new acre-feet of water per year accumulatively over the life of the ordinance. Most of the rest of the impacts are bogus. However, with respect to water, the EIR states in part:

**Table 2 Estimated Reasonable Potential Increase in Water Use From Proposed Ordinance**

Estimated Existing Water Use for Irrigated Crops (per Individual Site)	Reasonable Potential Total Annual Increase in Water Use (1% of Maximum Potential Increase in Water Use from Step 4) (AFY)	Reasonable Potential Total Increase in Water Use, From January 31, 2023 to January 31, 2045 (Cumulative) (AFY)
0-25 AFY	68	1,496
No irrigated crops	382	8,404
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>9,900</b>

Note: This estimate does not account for future Paso Robles Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan management actions that may require area-specific pumping reductions.

If no SGMA plan were to be implemented, this would reach an estimated accumulative 9,900 acre-feet per year by 2045. Note that the footnote to the table above cautions that the estimate may be high, given that there will be pumping restrictions phased in as part of SGMA.

The EIR reiterates that the current deficit is 13,700 acre-feet per year. This must be eliminated under the SGMA plan by 2045.



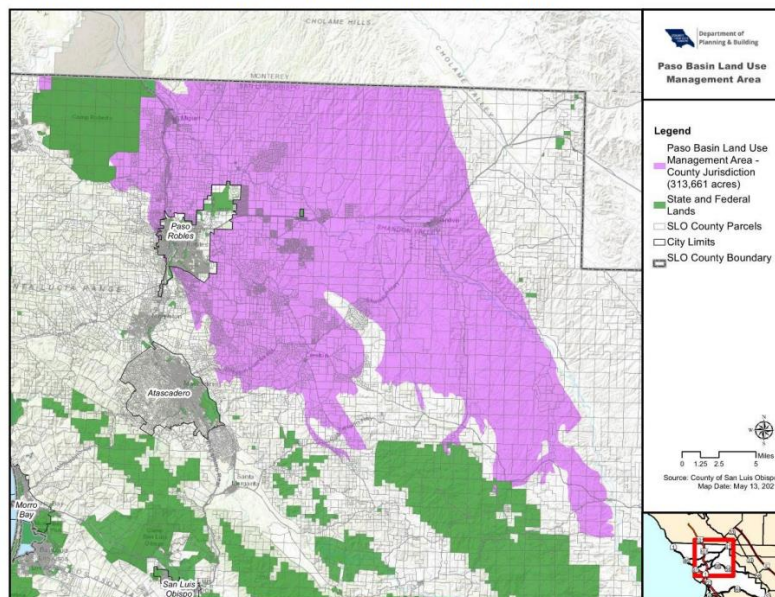
*The GSP projects a 13,700-acre-feet per year (AFY) deficit in groundwater storage in the Paso Robles Sub basin (i.e., each year, approximately 13,700 acre-feet [AF] more water exits the sub basin than is recharged to it). The Paso Robles Sub basin Water Year 2020 Annual Report prepared to meet SGMA reporting requirements estimates 90 percent of groundwater extractions are used for the agriculture sector.*

Accordingly, the EIR found that since the ordinance would add 450 acre-feet per year to the existing 13,700 ft., it is an immitigable Class I impact.

*18. Impact HYD-6: The proposed planting ordinance would allow increased groundwater extraction that would conflict with the GSP’s goal of sustainable groundwater Attachment 5 County of San Luis Obispo Paso Basin Land Use Management Area (PBLUMA) Planting Ordinance CEQA Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations Program Environmental Impact Report September 2022 management and with the GSP’s projections for groundwater extraction within the Paso Robles Sub basin.*

**Note:** COLAB has provided extensive additional review of the Planting Ordinance over the past months.

Figure 2-1 Paso Basin Land Use Management Area (PBLUMA)



**Item 30 - Legislative Platform - It is recommended that the Board consider and approve the County’s proposed 2023 State Legislative Platform.** The item is the County’s annual ritual recitation of the expanded funding and expanded programing that it recommends that the legislature adopt.

A key portion involves the continued operation of the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant as well as lengthy list of provisions related to its closure, whenever that may occur.

Most of the document suggests expansions of State programs and restructuring of some State programs, and for the most part, it demands increases in State funding of programs which the

County carries out on behalf of the State (many mandated) as well as other services in general. They range over the entire gamut, including mental health, social services, law and justice, fire and emergency services, water management, flood management, transportation, physical health, and on and on.

One problem is that the document exists in a vacuum as the requests would pertain to just about all 58 counties. While some are SLO specific, most have to be provided on a formulaic basis statewide. There is no analysis of how many additional billions of dollars would be required in the State Budget or where that would come from. Consequently, it is a PR document, most of which can never be fulfilled. This is misleading to the general public as well as specific constituencies and interest groups.

In the big picture the County is essentially advocating a much larger government sector at both the State and local level.

The 47-page program can be viewed at the link:

[Agenda item details - Provox IIP \(ca.gov\)](#)

**Item 33 - Closed Session/Supervisorial District Redistricting . CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - PENDING LITIGATION (Government Code section 54956.9.) It is the intention of the Board to meet in closed session concerning the following items: Existing Litigation (Gov. Code, section 54956.9(a)). (Formally initiated.): (3) SLO County Citizens for Good Government, Inc., Gomez, Maruska, Villa v. County of Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors, San Luis Obispo County Superior Court, Case No. 22CVP-0007.** As expected, the new Board majority directed County Counsel to seek settlement of the previously filed suit brought by a coalition of left progressive Democrats, including leaders of the County Democratic Party and the League of Women voters. We will see if County Counsel emerges and announces a settlement. It is rumored that they have determined to select a version known as Map B or a version known as the Chamber of Commerce map. The left preferred these maps during the adoption process to the current map, which is known as the Patten map.

**Background:** After the Board majority voted to reform the Supervisorial District boundaries, the Citizens for Good Government (the “Citizens”) was formed to sue the County to compel adoption of a different version. In February 2022, the Court refused to issue an injunction to prevent the use of the new districts, but did find that the plaintiff Citizens would be likely to prevail at trial on the grounds that the Board (majority at the time) did not consider evidence that the districts had been designed to favor Republicans.

Presumably, the new Board majority will settle the case by adopting a version more acceptable to the “Citizens.” The “Citizens” are Democratic Party activists. Although the new 2nd District was claimed to be especially favorable to the Republicans, Democrat Bruce Gibson still won with a 13-vote margin. In the prior 2nd district configuration, he usually won by a margin of 76%. The public will not know what is happening until the deal is done. Perhaps it already is, in ex-parte political discussions or illegal serial meetings, but we don’t know for sure.

## MATTERS AFTER 1:30 PM

**Item 34 - Rural Camping/Request to consider a resolution rendering a final determination and interpretation on Rural Recreation and Camping pursuant to Section 22.30.520 of the Land Use Ordinance (Title 22 of the County Code) and Section 23.08.072 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (Title 23 of the County Code). Exempt from CEQA. The approval of the Resolution would allow rural camping within certain bounds.** The owner would not charge the campers but would participate in programs such as Harvest Host. Benefits include attracting visitors to the County's rural areas. Often the campers purchase local products such as produce, honey, and wine.

The issue arose as Planning and Building began to suddenly enforce permitting requirements which contained all sorts of restrictions.

If the Board adopts the resolution, the Department will not apply the permit requirements and development standards of the Rural Recreation and Camping Ordinance to RV camping operations that meet the specified criteria. RV camping operations that do not meet the specified criteria will continue to be subject to the Rural Recreation and Camping Ordinance (including, but not limited to, setback and minimum site area requirements).

*On December 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Planning and Building Department (Department) to return to the Board on February 7, 2023 with an ordinance interpretation that limited recreational vehicle (RV) camping meeting the following criteria is not subject to the requirements of the Rural Recreation and Camping Ordinance (Land Use Ordinance Section 22.30.520 / Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.08.072):*

- 1. The RV camping is an ancillary use to a permitted visitor-serving use that is incidental to a primary agricultural use.*
- 2. The RV must be completely self-contained, with onboard sanitation facilities, and no external hookups are provided.*
- 3. No charge for overnight stays.*
- 4. Starting with a maximum of three overnight RV parking spots, tie the allowable number of RV spots to the size of the parking lot*



Rural camping has become a major part of the RV lifestyle. National membership services that provide previews of sites and reservation services have spread everywhere.

**Item 32 - Supervisors Salary Increases.** When the item was first introduced to be placed on the Hearing calendar, Supervisors Gibson, Ortiz-Legg , and Arnold supported it. Supervisor Peschong voted no. Supervisor Paulding voted no, stating that he did not want his first vote of his term on the board to be for a salary raise. Supervisor Arnold voted to agendize the item but said that did not mean she would support it in the end. She wants to hear the presentation and arguments pro and con. At this point, and given how she was so disrespectfully kicked off the Paso SGMA Coordinating Committee in favor of Bruce Gibson, she should vote “no.” In fact, and in general, all budget transfers, salary raise proposals, and new program initiation should be stopped cold.

COLAB originally supported the raises for the reasons detailed in the **Background** below. However at this point, and in light of the terrible leftist policy blitzkrieg being undertaken by the Board majority, there should be no cooperation on anything, and instead, as much activist resistance as possible.

**Background:** Per prior policy, the staff is recommending salary increases for the Board members. The basic principle is that they should make 25% more than their Legislative Aides. Applying this formula results in the schedule below:

In order to bring the Board of Supervisors annual salary to be 25% above the annual salary of Legislative Assistants and to address the market position, the attached ordinance proposes to increase the Board of Supervisors’ salary as follows:

- *Effective April 16, 2023: increase the annual salary from \$90,417.60 to \$103,979.20*
- *Effective June 25, 2023: increase the annual salary from \$103,979.20 to \$106,597.20*
- *Effective June 23, 2024: increase the annual salary from \$106,597.20 to \$109,241.60*
- *Subsequent to June 23, 2024, members of the Board of Supervisors shall receive the same percentage increase to their annual salary that is applied to the annual salary of the Legislative Assistant classification. This increase shall also be applied at the same time the increase is applied to the Legislative Assistant classification.*

**The Board members post-retirement health benefits are also being increased:**

*County employees participate in one of two post-employment health plans (PEHP), which are funded either through a direct contribution by the County or by employees through their accrued sick leave balances once they leave County employment. The PEHP funded through direct contribution by the County can be used to pay for qualified medical expenses not covered by health insurance after separation of service. The PEHP funded through employees’ accrued sick leave balances is an insurance premium reimbursement account, and can be used to reimburse for qualified health insurance premiums after separation of service.*

*Elected Department Heads and members of the Board of Supervisors participate in the PEHP that is funded through direct contribution by the County and which can be used to pay for*



*qualified medical expenses not covered by health insurance, subject to IRS limitations. The current County contribution is \$600 per year. It is recommended this contribution be increased from the current \$600 annual contribution to \$5,000 per full year of service, or a prorated amount for a partial year of service, as an elected official, up to a maximum County contribution of \$50,000, which will be available upon the termination of the Elected Department Head's or member of the Board of Supervisor's term in office.*

**The Board members are placed in the awkward position of having to vote for their own raises.**

For years Alameda County had a better system under which the salaries were made equal to that of a Superior Court Judge. In this way they were actually dependent on the Legislature. At some point a court ruled that the process was illegal.

In any case, the salaries are not extravagant given the time and preparation required for all the meetings, including the County Board, SLOCOG, APCD, and other committee and delegate Board assignments. This is compounded by ceremonial duties, community meetings, and political duties within their respective parties.

Our hope is that Board members will not be so enamored of staff (or perhaps afraid of them). This would mean asking hard questions in public and refusing to accept non-answers and diversionary answers. Being an elected representative is not a team sport. Elected officials are here to represent the voters and to hold the elaborate and permanent organization accountable. This requires maintenance of a degree of distance and uncomfortable tension. Some unanswered questions:

- Does COVID Vaccine predispose many people to cardiac arrest or other problems over time?
- How many businesses did the COVID lockdown destroy?
- Who was responsible for the \$10 million error in the Los Osos sewer collection system design, resulting in the legal settlement? If it was the design engineering firm, why didn't it pay?
- Why isn't the Paso Basin SGMA plan approved by the State yet?
- How much overtime is expended by each department and division within department per year and why?
- The County has 1,450 homeless people. How much is it expending per homeless person on average per year?
- Is the Oceano Dunes dust carcinogenic or not?
- How is the Los Osos Sewer Treatment Plan doing financially? Is it breaking even?
- What has been the impact of legalization of recreational cannabis on the Sheriff and police departments, Behavioral Health, education, job attendance, and social and health services?
- How many County employees continue to work from home?
- Did Adam Hill's widow get a pension? Or is it being considered?



**Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, February 9, 2023 (Scheduled)**

**Item 6 - Amendment of the Monarch Dunes Specific Plan.** The evolution of the County’s processing of this application perfectly illustrates how the State and County kill housing. After each meeting the Commissioners and staff think up new wickets. The staff report recommends new and expensive requirements for the Commission’s consideration. The Commission has considered the application at 2 prior hearings.

On January 12, 2023, the Planning Commission directed staff to provide additional information regarding the following items:

- *Item A – Affordable Housing*
- *Item B – Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction*
- *Item C – Design of Site #4 (Public Park Area)*
- *Item D – Village Center Uses*
- *Item E – Traffic Impacts (as it relates to the Village Center)*

**A. Deed Restricted ADUs.** *Direction was to explore [a] ensuring accessory dwelling units (ADU) be used as separate dwelling units, rather than as an extension of primary dwelling units, and [b] requiring a percentage (ranging from 3% to 10%) of the 162 primary dwelling units (net increase in number of dwelling units requested by applicant) be deed-restricted affordable dwelling units.*

*According to the County’s Framework for Planning (Inland), “specific plans are a tool for the systemic implementation of the general plan”; and since residential development is a primary component of the Specific Plan, it is appropriate to implement the Housing Element of the County’s General Plan through this amendment process, especially if the implementation would result in effective, impactful contributions towards the County’s housing objectives. Requiring a percentage of the 162 primary dwelling units to be deed restricted affordable dwelling units would be significantly more impactful in contributing towards the County’s housing objectives, especially since deed-restricted affordable dwelling units are guaranteed to be affordable for a certain number of years*

**Applicant rejects staff recommendations:** *According to the applicant’s response, no deed-restricted affordable dwelling units are proposed as a part of this project and requiring deed-restricted affordable dwelling units would result in significant economic hardship. The applicant provided analysis of various scenarios that consider percentage of deed-restricted dwelling units (3%, 5%, and 10%), income category (low-income and moderate-income), and housing type (common wall development dwelling units and village center condominiums). The applicant’s analysis shows that if 5% of the common wall development dwelling units (twin homes) are deed restricted to be affordable in the moderate-income category, **the applicant would experience a loss of \$2,671,800.***

**B. Extra Greenhouse Gas Reduction:** *Direction was to explore incorporating additional greenhouse gas reduction requirements above and beyond building code requirements and, more specifically, requiring photovoltaic battery storage systems.*

Even though the plan amendment will generate less CO<sub>2</sub> than the original plan, staff came up with a list of new costly additions for consideration by the Commission.

*For residential single-family, new homes are required to be ready for future Planning installation of battery storage systems (also referred to as “energy storage systems”).*

- *For residential multi-family, solar panels are required for low-rise and high-rise multifamily buildings and battery storage is required for high rise multi-family buildings.*

- *For nonresidential, solar panels and storage are required for the following: grocery, office, retail, school, warehouse, auditorium, convention center, hotel/motel, library, medical office building/clinic, restaurant, and theater.*

*The applicant was provided a list of options that would result in and/or contribute to greenhouse gas reductions above and beyond the new building code requirements. It was recommended that the applicant consider the list and incorporate the greatest number of options feasible. The list of options is as follows:*

- *Residential Single Family*
  - o *Require fully electrified buildings*

- o *Require Quality Insulation Installation (QII) Verification by HERS Rater*

- o *Higher EDR requirement*

- o *Add solar/storage capacity above code requirements*

- o *Require Passive House principals for construction to Provide EV Charging Stations and/or prewiring for all single-family dwellings*

- o *CalGreen Building Standards Tier 1 or Tier 2 Compliance – Including Energy Code*

- *Residential Multi-family*
  - o *Require fully electrified buildings*
  - o *Require Quality Insulation Installation (QII) Verification by HERS Rater*

- o *Higher TDV and Source Energy requirement*

- o *Add solar/storage capacity above code requirements*

- o *Require Passive House principals for construction*

- o *Provide EV charging for a percentage of parking spaces*

- o *CalGreen Building Standards Tier 1 or Tier 2 Compliance – Including Energy Code*

- *Nonresidential*
  - o *Require Commissioning from independent third party of all buildings sizes and systems prior to certificate of occupancy*

- o *Require fully electrified buildings*

- o *Higher TDV and Source Energy requirement*

- o *Add solar/storage capacity above code requirements*

- o Require Passive House principals for construction Planning Commission LRP2021-00003 – Monarch Dunes Specific Plan Amendment*
- o Provide EV charging for a percentage of parking spaces o CalGreen Building Standards Tier 1 or Tier 2 Compliance – Including Energy Code*

**Applicant Rejects Staff recommendation:** *However, the applicant indicated that no additional greenhouse gas reduction strategies (aside from those previously proposed) are proposed. Also, the applicant conducted a feasibility analysis relating to installation of photovoltaic battery storage systems and found that the cost to make a residence “battery ready” would be \$2,017 and cost for the battery would be \$11,111. The applicant indicated that the common wall development dwelling units (twin homes) will be “battery ready” (which is required for such dwelling units starting January 1, 2023) but will not install photovoltaic battery storage systems. To review the applicant’s full response and analysis, please see Attachment 2.*

**No Staff Recommendation:** *STAFF RECOMMENDATION Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider the analysis and information that staff provided in accordance with the Planning Commission’s direction and determine whether to Planning Commission LRP2021-00003 – Monarch Dunes Specific Plan Amendment Page 12 recommend to the Board of Supervisors to approve LRP2021-00003 to amend the Monarch Dunes Specific Plan based on the findings listed in Attachment 1 of the staff report for the Planning Commission hearing on October 13, 2022, and in accordance with the recommended modifications in Attachment 2 of the same staff report with the corrections indicated in staff’s presentation at the hearing on October 13, 2022.*

**The staff provides no recommendation but instead tells the Commission to determine what it will recommend to the Board of Supervisors. Why millions of dollars of professional have staff on the payroll and let them off the hook on the key question?**

**The proposed added requirements are emblematic of the larger problem in the State as a whole, as expert analyst Ed Ring pointed out on February 1, 2023:** <sup>1</sup>

*The economic destruction of California’s middle class is a product of legislation and court rulings that have made it practically impossible for private developers to build affordable homes while still making a profit. They have been driven out of a hostile state, thanks to a protracted approval process, inevitable and endless environmentalist litigation, exorbitant municipal permit fees, ridiculously overwritten building codes, zoning restrictions that drive up the price of whatever raw land remains available for building, the lack of available water, overpriced and scarce building materials, a labor shortage, and the unwillingness of cities and counties—unlike throughout previous decades—to share the burden of enabling streets and utility infrastructure.*

*As a result, the average home in California, even in this downturn, stands north of \$760,000. To make up for the shortage of private developers who can turn a profit and are therefore willing to develop housing without subsidies, an entire new class of developers and renters have emerged. The developer constructs low-income housing, taking advantage of tax incentives and government matching funds, which is then occupied by residents who have some or all of the rent paid for by the government.*

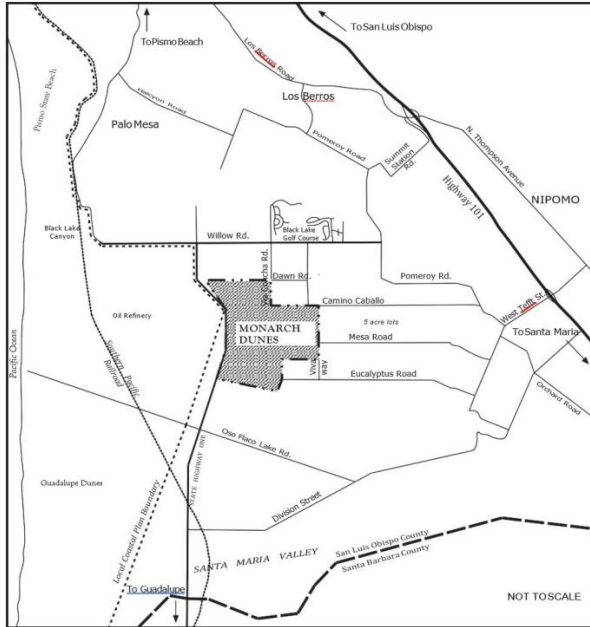
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<sup>1</sup> Ring, Edward: Gavin Newsom’s New Freedom State, American Greatness, February 1, 2023

There are a number of letters in the file from residents opposed to one or more aspects of the project and/or contain requests for specific amenities. The homeowners association and maintenance association support the project.

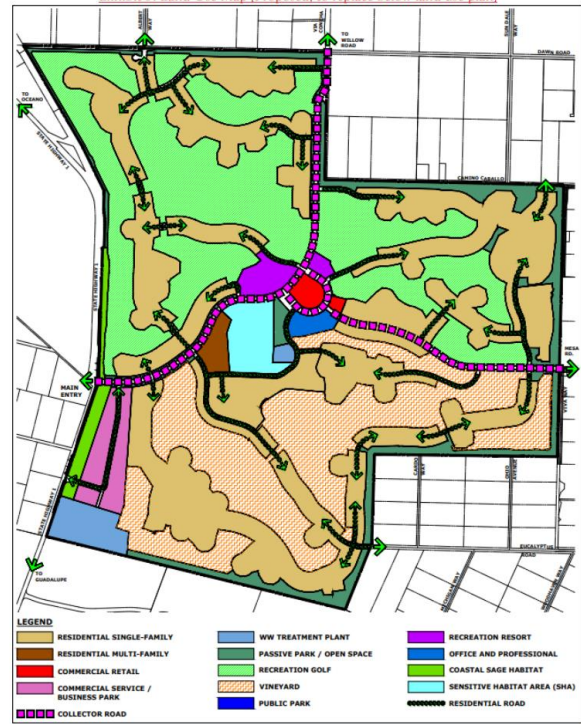


Exhibit 3: Land Use Map (Proposed, to replace below land use plan)



Vicinity Map

Exhibit 2





# LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

## Special Board of Supervisors Meeting of Sunday, January 29, 2023 (Completed) 10:00 AM

**Item 1 - Request to 1) introduce the attached amendments to Title 8 and Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code to rescind Ordinance No. 3483, the Paso Basin Land Use Management Area Planting Ordinance, and re-enact and extend until January 1, 2028 the previously adopted Agricultural Offset Requirements for New or Expanded Irrigated Crop Production Using Water from the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin; and 2) authorize the use of Alternative Publication Procedures for the attached amendments to Title 8 and Title 22 of the County Code. Exempt from CEQA. Hearing date set for February 7, 2023. Districts 1, 2, and 4.** The special Sunday meeting lasted 11 minutes. The Board set the repeal of the Planting Ordinance for Tuesday afternoon, February 7<sup>th</sup>. Supervisors Gibson, Ortiz-Legg, and Paulding voted to set the hearing. Supervisor Peschong dissented. Supervisor Arnold was absent at work.

**Background:** The new leftist Board majority scheduled the Sunday, January 29, 2023 special meeting to set February 7, 2023 as the date to repeal the Paso Basin Planting Ordinance. Their urgency is based on their desire to repeal the ordinance before it actually goes into effect on March 2023. The repeal would restore the original provisions of the Paso Basin Water Moratorium until 2028 and would eliminate the ability of small users to apply for up to 25 acre-feet of water.

Were the ordinance to go into effect, the repeal process would be more complicated, as the environmental impacts would have to be considered. Also, removing the ability of a class of small users to drill for water on their property in actuality would be a taking, since the land is worth much less or worthless without enough water for a crop. The Board leftist majority is keenly aware of these issues and therefore wants to eliminate them in this pre-emptive strike.

Date and Time of Special Meeting:	January 29, 2023, at 10:00 A.M.
Place of Special Meeting:	Board of Supervisors Chambers, 1055 Monterey Street San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
Business to be considered:	See agenda below

### 10:00 FLAG SALUTE

### PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT ITEMS ONLY

#### Items Set for Hearing:

- 1 Request to 1) introduce the attached amendments to Title 8 and Title 22 of the San Luis Obispo County Code to rescind Ordinance No. 3483, the Paso Basin Land Use Management Area Planting Ordinance, and re-enact and extend until January 1, 2028 the previously adopted Agricultural Offset Requirements for New or Expanded Irrigated Crop Production Using Water from the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin; and 2) authorize the use of Alternative Publication Procedures for the attached amendments to Title 8 and Title 22 of the County Code. Exempt from CEQA. Hearing date set for February 7, 2023. Districts 1, 2, and 4.



Consent Agenda - Administrative Office Items:

- 2 Request to amend the Board of Supervisors Rules of Procedure to allowing regular session meetings to be extended past 5:00 P.M. upon a vote of three Supervisors. All Districts.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Item 2 - Request to amend the Board of Supervisors Rules of Procedure to allowing regular session meetings to be extended past 5:00 P.M. upon a vote of three Supervisors. All Districts.** This item was approved on a 3/1/0 vote with Supervisor Peschong dissenting.

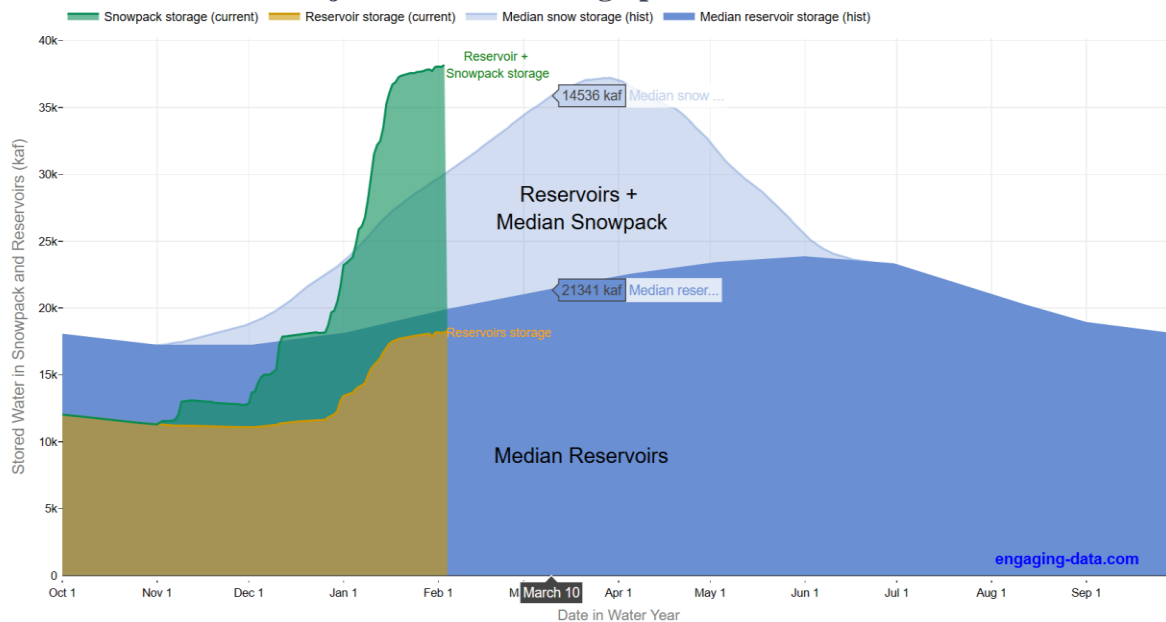
For whatever reason, the new board majority wants to make it easier to extend Board meetings past 5:00PM. Currently, their rules require a unanimous vote. It is proposed that it only would require consent of three (3). No doubt the new majority has a great deal of legislation to move forward and will pack the meetings with supporters. Another possibility is that this is a ploy to add more regular meetings. There are now 2 per month. If the Supervisors don't wish to stay longer than 5:00 PM, Gibson might propose adding a meeting. More meetings mean more opportunities to push policy, generate friction, promote advocacy, and spend money.

This will make them longer and will enable them to tire out any opposition. It is the Berkeley City Council technique of going until 2:00 AM. People who have real jobs can't stay all night.

**No Regular Board Meeting on Tuesday January 31, 2023 (Not Scheduled)**

**EMERGENT ISSUES**

**Item 1 - State Water Project reservoirs filling up.**

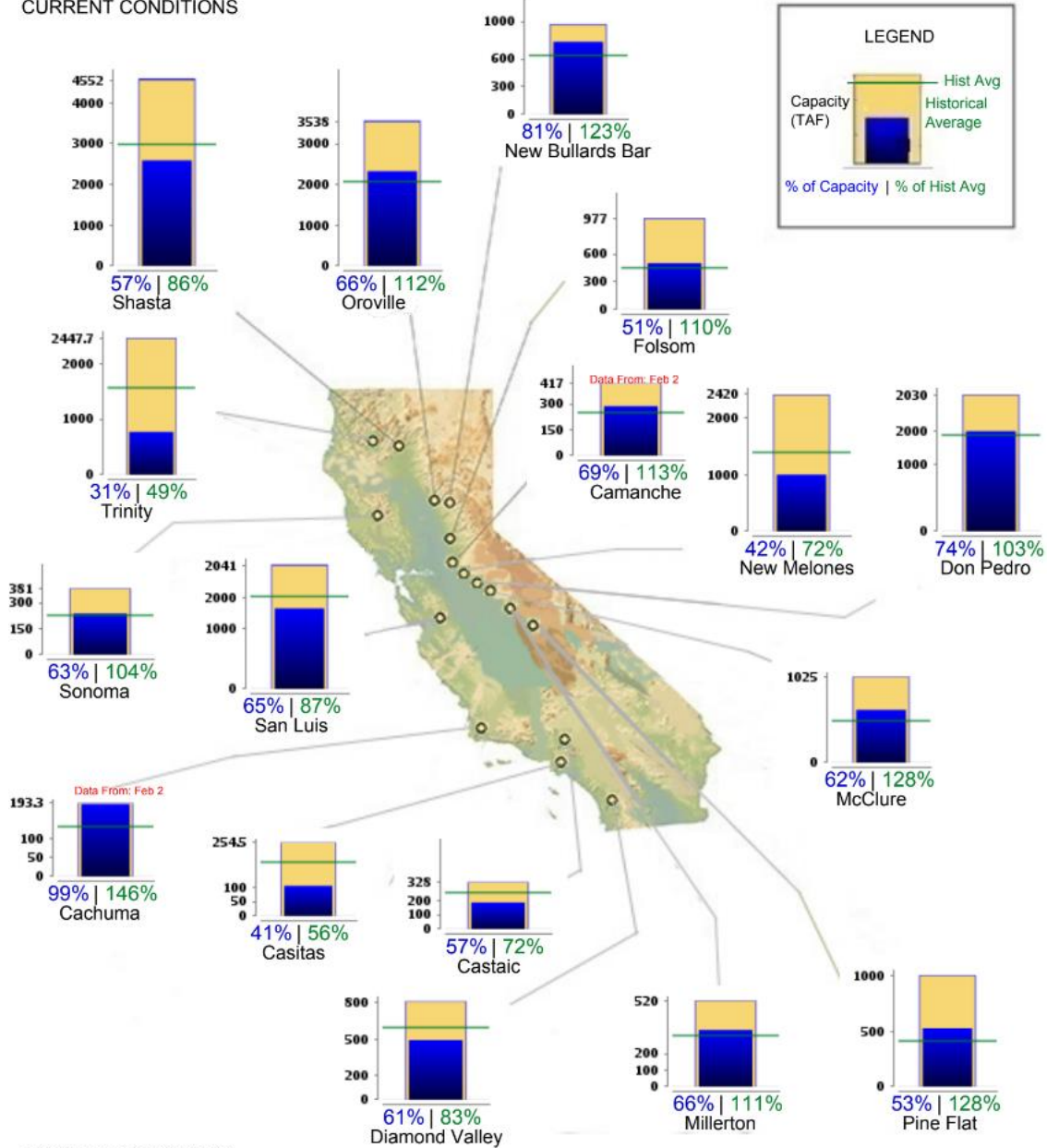


**THIS WEEK**



**CALIFORNIA MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS**  
CURRENT CONDITIONS

Midnight - February 3, 2023



Updated 02/04/2023 12:18 PM

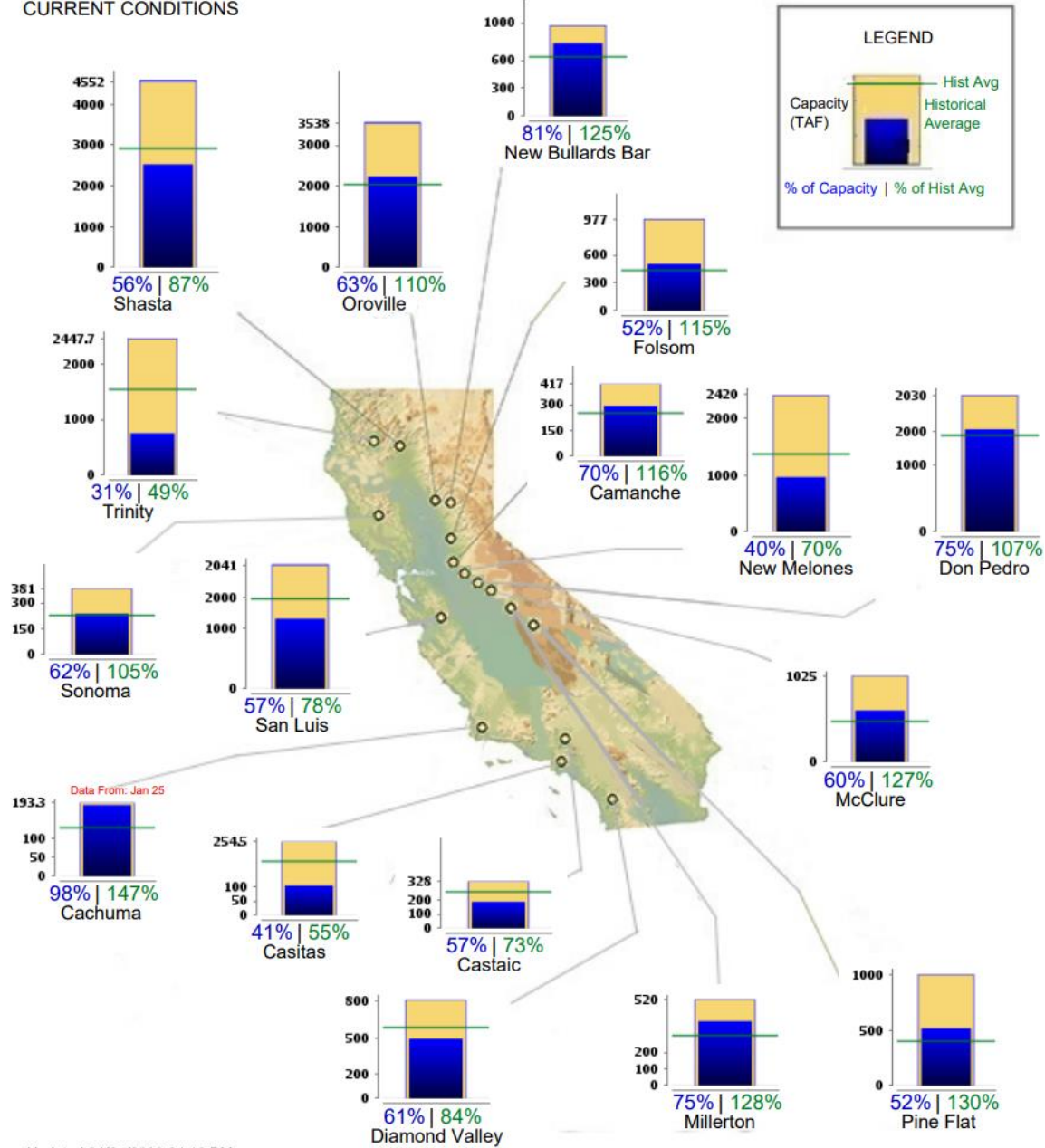
**LAST WEEK**



**CALIFORNIA MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS**

Midnight - January 26, 2023

**CURRENT CONDITIONS**



Updated 01/27/2023 04:18 PM

**Item 2 - From Congressman Kiley: Newsom Blunted on COVID Mandate.** The congressman issued the following bulletin:

## [A Momentous Win](#)

California's COVID vaccine mandate for K-12 students is being withdrawn, having never taken effect. To all the parents who joined together and fought back: We won. To Gavin Newsom: You lost.

Newsom, of course, originally wanted to force the mandate on schools last year. But he "delayed" it after we killed a similar bill at the State Capitol. At the time, I said the delay was just a face-saving maneuver and the mandate would ultimately be scrapped.

That has now happened. The Public Health Department just acknowledged that the end of the State of Emergency on February 28 will render Newsom's order null and void. This is why we fought so hard to terminate the emergency: all COVID mandates end with it.

What must not end is accountability. America needs to know what has happened to California. I gave [a speech on the House Floor](#) this week comparing the Newsom Nightmare with the much better outcomes of pro-freedom states during the COVID era.

Elsewhere at the U.S. Capitol this week, we had a House Judiciary Committee hearing on the Biden Border Crisis. I [took the opportunity](#) to expose California's unique contribution to that crisis: the Sanctuary State disaster.

My own Subcommittee on Workforce Protections will hold its first hearing soon. American workers have faced arbitrary lockdowns, unscientific mandates, and attacks on independent contracting. As Committee Chair, I'll fight to restore economic freedom.

We're winning big victories. And we've only just begun.

## **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**

## **COYOTE PARABLE SPELLS OUT PERFECTLY WHAT'S SO WRONG WITH CALIFORNIA**

*California's ridiculous policies speak for themselves*

**BY KATY GRIMES**

It has been said that the love of truth lies at the root of much humor. Biting, caustic, even sarcastic humor can make us uncomfortable when it points out weakness or odd proclivities.

So is humor truth?

A friend sent me the following parable comparing California and Texas in a very funny way.

### **The Coyote, a Parable**

**California:** The Governor of California is jogging with his dog along a nature trail.

A coyote jumps out and attacks the Governor's dog, killing it, then bites the Governor.

The Governor starts to intervene, but reflects upon the movie "Bambi" and then realizes he should stop because the coyote is only doing what is natural.

He calls animal control. Animal Control captures the coyote and bills the state \$200 testing it for diseases and \$500 for relocating it.

He calls a veterinarian. The vet collects the dead dog and bills the State \$200 testing it for diseases.

The Governor goes to hospital and spends \$3,500 getting checked for diseases from the coyote and on getting his bite wound bandaged.

The running trail gets shut down for 6 months while Fish & Game conducts a \$100,000 survey to make sure the area is now free of dangerous animals.

The Governor spends \$50,000 in state funds implementing a "coyote awareness program" for residents of the area.

The State Legislature spends \$2million to study how to better treat rabies and how to permanently eradicate the disease throughout the world.

The Governor's security agent is fired for not stopping the attack.

The state spends \$150,000 to hire and train a new agent with additional special training on the nature of coyotes.

PETA protests the coyote's relocation and files a \$5 million suit against the state.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Texas**

The Governor of Texas is jogging with his dog along a nature trail.

A coyote jumps out and attacks his dog.



The Governor shoots the coyote with his state-issued pistol and keeps jogging.

The Governor has spent \$0.50 on a .45 ACP hollow point cartridge.

The buzzards eat the dead coyote.

...And that is why California is broke and Texas is not.

Ha ha. Ha -Funny, sarcastic, wry mocking humor. But true. There's a reason it's called "Crazifornia."

Author Saul Bellow famously said, "California's like an artificial limb the rest of the country doesn't really need."

He was on to something. California's ridiculous policies speak for themselves:

- California banned Shark fin soup
- banned plastic straws
- banned fur products
- Saving death row murderers from the death penalty while passing a Constitutional Amendment to allow abortion up to and beyond the 9th month of pregnancy, as well as legalizing assisted suicide for the sick and elderly
- Legislating and mandating all-electric cars by 2030
- Enacting "World-Leading Plan" to Achieve 100 Percent Zero-Emission Vehicles by 2035 without having the electric grid to support it
- renewable energy mandate
- San Francisco reparations committee proposes to pay each multi-decade black resident of the City \$5 million
- Gov. Gavin Newsom's statewide Reparations Task Force has proposed an estimated \$569 billion to be paid by the state for reparations (that's two and a half times California's current state budget which already is running a deficit) to give to black-Americans living in California for past discriminatory practices and slavery, despite that California was never a slave state. Some of the recent proposals were simply cash payouts of \$350,000 to every African American and \$250,000 for every black-owned business to help close the "racial wealth gap," which is actually a social justice grievance, and not slavery.
- California is suffering under a plague of hundreds of thousands of homeless drug addicts living, pooping, peeing on the streets
- California has a serious spike in violent crime and theft
- highest-in-the-nation taxes and cost of living
- failing public schools
- a state-created water shortage
- Wildfire "season"
- Drought and floods at the same time
- hundreds of thousands of California businesses and residents fleeing to friendlier states
- California's questionable \$100 billion swing from Budget Surplus to Budget Deficit in One Year
- California \$100 billion+ High Speed Rail boondoggle

Friends across the country say when California sneezes, the rest of the country gets a cold, as an example of California's political influence across the country.

In California, Democrats have supermajority control of the state Legislature and the Governor's office. Yet Gov. Gavin Newsom lashes out and attacks the right, the GOP, and red states, as he did in his January inaugural address:

“They silence speech, fire teachers, kidnap migrants, subjugate women, attack the Special Olympics, and even demonize Mickey Mouse.”

“All camouflaged under a hijacking of the word ‘freedom.’”

“But what they really want is more control – intrusive government, command over your most intimate decisions – when to have a family, how you raise your kids, how you love.”

That last statement is really rich coming from the Governor who still clings to his Covid State of Emergency powers three years after the order, and ruling by fiat, locked down 40 million people during Covid, issued more than 70 executive orders containing 561 provisions, and killed off half of the businesses in the state.

“Intrusive government, command over your most intimate decisions...” these controls are exactly what Gov. Newsom and the state's Democrats impose and hold over the state's residents.

The coyote parable is accurate about California's policies and politicians.



Katy Grimes

*Katy Grimes, the Editor of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? This article first appeared in the California Globe of January 30, 2023.*

# ANARCHY, AMERICAN-STYLE

*The Left runs Oceania, and we work for their various bureaus.*

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

The 1960s revolution was both anarchic and nihilist. But it was waged against—not from—the establishment. Hippies and the Left either attacked institutions or, in Timothy Leary fashion, chose to “turn on, tune in, drop out” from them.

The current revolution is much different—and far more dangerous—for at least three reasons.

## **The Establishment Is the Revolution**

The current Left has no intention of “dropping out.” Why would it?

It now controls the very institutions of America that it once mocked and attacked—corporate boardrooms, Wall Street, state and local prosecuting attorneys, most big-city governments, the media, the Pentagon, network and most of cable news, professional sports, Hollywood, music, television, K-12 education, and academia.

In other words, the greatest levers of influence and power—money, education, entertainment, government, the news, and popular culture—are in the hands of the Left. They have transformed legitimate debate over gay marriage into a hate crime. Transgenderism went from a modern manifestation of ancient transvestism or gender dysphoria to a veritable litmus test of whether one was good or evil.

Students have no need to jam administrators’ offices because the latter, themselves, are as radical as the protestors and often lead them on in a top-down fashion. Had they not long ago demonstrated they were perfectly willing to subvert meritocracy, free expression, and equality under the law, they would not be occupying their present positions.

Apple, Google, Facebook, and other tech companies are not 1980s and 1990s “alternative” media geeks and hipsters creating neat gadgets for the people. They are not Steve Jobs and his pugnacious Apple battling the evil Microsoft or IBM, or the Macintosh commercial of 1984 depicting a maverick throwing a hammer into Big Brother’s screen. They *are* the Orwellian screen.

The current generation of techies is effectively Stalinist. Big Tech now colludes with the FBI, the Democratic Party, and the bureaucratic state to suppress free expression, warp balloting, and serve as contractors of government surveillance. Currently, the most totalitarian people in America are likely to wear flip flops, have a nose ring or pink hair, and disguise their fascism with ’60s-retread costumes.

There are no “armies of the night” marching on the Pentagon. Would-be demonstrators see no need, since radical identity politics, and gay, woke, and transgendered agendas are fast-tracked by the Department of Defense.

There are no protests against the Immigration and Customs Enforcement bureau or the “*La Migra*” anymore by advocates of illegal immigration, because the Left *owns* the border. And it has utterly destroyed it. There is no border, no border enforcement, and no meaningful immigration law. As many as 6 million illegal entries during the first two years of the Biden Administration are proof enough of that.

There are no cutting-edge Lenny Bruce’s or Mort Sails fighting state censorship because entertainers accept that 1) there are no impediments to vulgarity or pornographic expression, but 2) no comic or commentator dares to take on the diversity, equity, and inclusion woke industry because he assumes he would be crushed, and his career ruined.

Question the woke status quo, and one is not canonized in *Vanity Fair* or *Rolling Stone* as a fighter against the “uptight establishment” or “the man” as in the past, but now demonized as a racist purveyor of “hate speech” and enemy of the people.

The Left does not despise the FBI. It lauds it. And the bureau is no longer consumed with tracking down violent criminals and terrorists. Instead, it has become an enemy of parents worried about school indoctrination, or a retrieval service for lost first-family classified papers, laptops and diaries, or a Washington, D.C., cadre knee-deep in big money politics.

FBI agents are praised on left-wing media—given they have been activist conspirators who sought to destroy conservative candidates, deleted subpoenaed data, lied to federal investigators or committees while under oath, colluded with Russian oligarchs, doctored court evidence, and paid foreign nationals to compile campaign dirt on American citizens.

There are no longer calls for a “three strikes” solution to violent crime as in the past, or talk of adopting the successful, time-trying “broken windows” theories of law enforcement, because there is no enforcement to modulate. The debate is no longer over enforcing the law, because *de facto there is no law*.

The new legal establishment has replaced the old by simply nuking centuries of jurisprudence. Violent repeat criminal offenders injure and maim innocents in the morning and are released by noon to prey again—themselves baffled that the state is even crazier than they are.

Note in the 2020-2021 riots, almost no one temporarily arrested was tried, despite \$2 billion in damages, upwards of 40 violent deaths, the 1,500 injured law enforcement officers, and the torching of a courthouse, police precinct, and historic Washington, D.C., church. Instead, they were lauded by a mayor as participants in a “summer of love.” Seattle and Washington simply ceded city property to the violent protestors as if they occupied it by right of their superior morality.

The summation of the entire sordid summer was the CNN chyron assuring America that the protests on their screens were “mostly peaceful” as flames shot up to the sky in the background.

In the 1960s, rioters forced social welfare concessions—or else!—on the establishment. Today the establishment welcomes urban unrest as an excuse to implement agendas that in normal times would be unpalatable.

In sum, we are living in anarchy, as institutions themselves have become nihilistic and weapons of the revolution. The Left, in viral fashion, took over the DNA of America’s institutions, and used them to help destroy their creators.

If we are bewildered why Harvard law-graduate prosecutors let out violent criminal’s just hours after their arrests; or why hyper-rich, pampered athletes who live in near-apartheid enclaves insult the flag, ignore the National Anthem, and sloganeer woke platitudes, it is because they were taught to undermine the status quo by fundamentally becoming it.

In our present anarchy, \$7 a dozen eggs are affordable. Unaffordable gas prices become merely necessary “transitions” to fossil fuels. A “secure” border means there is none. Natural gas must be banned because it supposedly causes asthma. Tens of thousands of homeless defecate, urinate, inject, and fornicate in the increasingly vacant downtowns of Los Angeles and San Francisco, as the Golden Bear state, California, discusses reintroducing Grizzly bears.

Cars and yards are evil, elevators, high-rises, and buses *sacred*. There are 81 genders (and counting), with even more names for them. “Racist” is our exclamation point, fillip, a mere add-on emphatic. Everything from SAT tests to obesity to working out is racist. When little is racist, then everything must become racist.

Batter someone to a pulp and you are out of jail in six hours; claim an election was suspicious and you can be in there for six months or more. Proven merit is a pejorative. Grades are deemed useless by those who could never earn As. Boilerplate equity oaths are the best guide to hiring, retention, and admission. The ACLU or the Anti-Defamation League exist only to spot the incorrect kind of censorship and the wrong kind of antisemitism.

### **Macintosh Becomes Macbeth**

The second contribution to the present anarchy is big tech, which speeds up the revolution and spreads it broadly. Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was predicated not just on the Sovietization of the state, but the electronically ubiquitous and near instantaneous means by which the apparatus ensures its dominance. One of the strangest things about the Left is that it no longer warns of 1984 but emulates it.

How the Left became synonymous with the Internet, social media, mobile phones, pads, and laptops is a long story. But let it be said the Left, and not conservatives, have mastered them all. It has manipulated high tech to change the way we vote, access information, communicate, consume the news, buy, and sell, and express ourselves. In sum, they run Oceania and we work for their various bureaus.

Our tech complex has combined the ethos of the 19th-century monopoly with the Chinese Communist system of mass ideological manipulation. The result is that the old Twitter or Facebook mob can ruin a career in a nanosecond. Google can manipulate the order of search



results to render you a clueless Winston Smith bewildered by the alternate “reality” that pops up on your computer screen.

Wikipedia is pseudo-official falsification. Trotskization relied on scissors and paste; cancel culture can end you by a split-second use of the delete button—and erase you to 7 billion on the planet.

### **Big Money, Big Woke**

Globalization hollowed out the red-state interior and enriched the blue bicoastal elite. Wealth in mining, farming, construction, manufacturing, and assembly became dwarfed by riches of investment, high tech, social media, law, insurance, and real estate. The former were the up-by-the boot straps conservatives, the latter one day rich and the next moment through hype, investment, and venture capital, richer than anyone in the history of civilization.

The wealthiest ZIP codes and congressional districts are blue, not red. Most of the Fortune 400 billionaires are left-wing. So, there is no '60s-style talk about the evils of corporations and the supposedly idle rich, none of the old conspiracy theories about Anaconda Copper, ITT, or the Rockefellers.

The corporations *are* the Left and in service to it. Disney, American Airlines, and Nike are revolutionary icons, always ready to divest, cancel, fire, hire, and propagandize in service to woke commissars. That they are terrified by tiny bullies who have no constituencies is true, but then a Robespierre, Lenin, and Mao had initially no broad support either—at least before each mastered the use of terror and fright.

In our anarchy, “dark money” like Mark Zuckerberg’s \$419 million cash infusion into the 2020 balloting processes is now suddenly good, given it is almost all leftwing. Democrats outraise Republicans in campaign contributions by anywhere from three- to five-to-one. Bundling is noble.

Netflix can buy the brand name of the Obamas for \$100 million; George Soros can spend his pocket change of \$40 million to elect district attorneys to destroy the law and empower criminals. Jimmy Carter used to be the poor-man idol of the old Democratic Party. Today, there is hardly a Democratic president, ex-president, or presidential candidate who is not a multi-multimillionaire—most by leveraging their heightened political profile.

What anarchy we live in when the richest among us are the most radical and wish to destroy for all others what they enjoy.

John Kerry lectures us on climate change from his private jet. Your leaf blower, not his Gulfstream GIV-SP, is the global threat. Al Gore screams about the evils of carbon emissions—after pocketing \$100 million by selling his failed and worthless cable station to smoky and sooty Qatar, fronting for the anti-Semitic Al Jazeera.

The Clintons feel the pain of the poor all the way to their \$100 million fortune from shakedown lectures, Wall Street, “consulting,” and “foundation” contributions. Van Jones, CNN expert, the

object of Valerie Jarrett's oohing and awing, famous for his "whitelash" exegeses, and recipient of a \$100 million Bezos award, now lectures us that the five rogue black policemen in Memphis, who beat to death a black suspect, are still proof of white racism that accounts for blacks belittling the lives of blacks.

In our present anarchy, we take seriously the lectures on microaggressions from the **Duchess of Montecito**. The Obamas weigh in on the dangers of climate change and rising seas from their seaside, multimillion-dollar Martha's Vineyard estate, or Hawaii beachfront mansion that apparently has an invisible climate-change barrier on its beach. Kamala Harris is our border czar who assures us it is "secure," defined by 5 million illegal entries since she took office.

Nancy Pelosi works for the "children" and, after a life in politics, that selflessness ends up worth \$100 million from her husband's insider real estate deals and stock tips. It is almost as if socialist Bernie Sanders owned three homes, or anti-capitalist Elizabeth Warren was once a house flipper.

So, the current revolution is anarchy, utter confusion, pure chaos.

Every time one turns on a computer, there will be someone or something somewhere ideologically warping its use. Your vote means nothing when California cannot account for 10 million automatically, computer-guided mailed-out ballots. That state is still in a drought, defined by releasing most of the water to the ocean that the wettest winter in memory produced.

Stanford students talk revolution, Antifa, and Black Lives Matter, and want to forbid the use of "American." But from the look of their parking lots, they cannot decide whether Lexus, BMW, or Mercedes should be the most preferred campus car. Oprah and Whoopi suffer terribly from white supremacy. Jussie the foot soldier heroically took on one MAGA thug for each of his foot kicks.

"Don't take off your mask" at a California McDonald's means the man who ordered that edict is maskless at the French Laundry. "Don't get your hair done during the lockdown" means the architect of that fiat sneaks around her salon, which she has all to herself.

The common denominator to the anarchy? The hardcore Left is your FBI, CIA, and Justice Department all in one. It is *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It is our era's J. P. Morgan.

No wonder we are confused by the establishment anarchists and the anarchy they produce.

*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 January 29, 2023, *American Greatness*.*

## THE STATES POWER DOWN

*Ambitious renewables mandates by local governments are eroding the electric grid's reliability, with alarming consequences.*

BY STEVEN MALANGA

Vermont is one of the nation's most [environmentally friendly](#) states. But two years ago, the backers of a local wind-energy farm shelved the project after intense public opposition. An initiative supporter [noted](#) how the controversy reflected rising hostility to wind power. Whereas a decade ago, ambitious developers had planned a dozen renewable-energy projects in Vermont, by 2020, most had either folded or failed to win regulatory approval. "This is truly a sad state of affairs for Vermont," the CEO of a green-energy firm said, while pointing out that the state has mandated that 75 percent of its power should come from renewable energy within a decade.

Vermont isn't alone. Dozens of states have enacted renewable-energy standards, with some seeking to run completely on such fuel—a category encompassing hydroelectric-, solar-, and wind-generated power—within a few decades, despite the massive technological and infrastructure challenges that presents. Many ambitious mandates passed with only muted objections, partly because their consequences seem so far-off. When citizens have looked at the scale and type of projects necessary to retrofit the American power grid, though, resistance has exploded. Public campaigns have now held up hundreds of green projects around the country. In some states, the pushback is so fierce that legislatures are enacting laws that make it easier for communities to opt out of the projects. Combined with other obstacles, including lumbering state and federal regulatory bureaucracies and global supply-chain disruptions, the shifting political situation has slowed America's energy transition to a crawl.

Even as these delays worsen, the energy plants that supply America with most of its current power—especially fossil fuel and nuclear generators—are closing faster than anticipated. As states passed green-energy mandates, utilities moved rapidly to shut some traditional plants because of perceived regulatory hostility. Energy firms feared that the long-term investment needed to maintain generators would mean big losses if regulators forced their closure before the costs could be recouped.

This rapid decommissioning, together with a strain on worldwide energy supplies from the Ukraine war, is already hurting American consumers. Last summer, utilities in two dozen western, southern, and midwestern states [warned](#) of possible rolling blackouts and power failures, similar to those that California and Texas have had in recent years because of their weakening power grids. Meantime, energy prices have shot up, straining family budgets. Even so, some states keep rushing toward decarbonization, and green groups have fought any slowing of the grid's transformation.

Today, climate radicals publish kids' books depicting an apocalyptic future if humanity doesn't decarbonize rapidly, but consumers face a more imminent crisis. The power grid is one of humanity's greatest achievements, helping to boost prosperity and cut mortality rates. Now,

those benefits are at risk. Already in Europe, countries faced with the end of Russian energy imports because of the Ukraine war are imposing strict limits on energy use. In America—a nation sitting on hundreds of billions of barrels of untapped oil—power failures and the fading resilience of the energy grid are providing a reminder of what life would be like without abundant energy. “Climate change is real and we should seek to reduce carbon emissions,” the environmentalist Michael Shellenberger [told](#) a congressional committee recently. But, he added: “There is no scientific scenario for mass death from climate change. A far more immediate and dangerous threat is insufficient energy supplies due to U.S. government policies and actions aimed at reducing oil and gas production.”

The typical resident served by America’s 4 trillion-kilowatt power grid probably rarely, if ever, thinks about how few people in history have enjoyed the benefits of so miraculous an invention, sometimes [described](#) as “the world’s largest machine.” Our modern way of life, with electricity crucial to so much of what we do, dates only from the late nineteenth century. For decades, the grid’s benefits were available just to a wealthy few. As electrification spread, however, it supercharged the Industrial Revolution, massively boosting output and wealth in the United States. From the 1930s, when electrification projects expanded dramatically, through the 1980s, inflation-adjusted family income in America tripled.

The comforts that the power grid brought, including protection from the cold and relief from extreme heat, unleashed growth in areas of the country that had been nearly uninhabitable, such as the American Southwest. Electrification also spurred the rise of innovative technologies in medical and pharmaceutical research, driving huge gains in health and life spans. From the mid-1920s until the turn of the twentieth century, life expectancy in the U.S. increased by nearly one-third, to 76.5 years, thanks partly to the role that electrical power plays in human development.

Even today, most Americans may be [unaware](#) that some 1.5 billion people globally go without electricity entirely, and another 2.5 billion have very limited access. The absence of a power grid makes it extremely difficult for people in dozens of countries to raise their economic output, extend their lives, and escape poverty. Consider the United Nations Human Development Index, which tracks energy use. All the high-ranking places, including the United States, Germany, and Japan, have sophisticated energy grids. Places where energy availability is limited, including Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, are among those with the lowest levels of human development.

Yet one can also grasp the key role of electricity in our lives by looking at the way misguided energy policies have put well-being and wealth at risk in fully industrial countries, or in rich states like California and Texas. Germany faces a particularly acute crisis because it has bet heavily on renewable energy, despite local challenges to projects similar to those found in the United States. As it began shifting to renewables, the country decommissioned most of its nuclear plants, forcing it to rely extensively on Russian natural gas to power its formidable industrial economy.

As the Ukraine war disrupted supply, natural-gas prices have [spiked](#) more than tenfold over the last year. A summer survey found that 16 percent of industrial firms in Germany were reducing or suspending production because of the high prices. In August, one of the nation’s biggest manufacturers, BASF, said that it was cutting back production of ammonia—a crucial ingredient

in products like fertilizer and plastics—because of energy costs. As the country scrambled to fill gas reserves to meet winter demand, Germans began stockpiling firewood.

The European Union has urged its members to slash energy consumption 15 percent to get through winter, and some have responded with tough sanctions. Spain ordained last summer that office-building energy systems should be set no lower than 81 degrees Fahrenheit for cooling and, for winter, no higher than 66 degrees for heating. France decreed that stores must keep their doors closed to retain air-conditioning or heat, and the government [dimmed](#) the lights on the Eiffel Tower and other monuments in what officials call “energy sobriety.” Even with such policies, along with government subsidies, consumers are suffering. Energy costs for the average U.K. household, for example, have doubled, to about £2,000 a year.

American states should be in a far better position than Western Europe to weather such disruptions. The reason: fracking, which has unlocked vast stores of oil and gas. The U.S. is now the world’s [largest](#) natural-gas producer, extracting nearly one-third more than the next most productive country—Russia. America also leads in oil production, pumping about 1 million barrels a day more than second-place Russia. Thus, despite inflated worldwide energy prices, the price tag for natural gas—a crucial component in the cost of electricity in many places—remains far more affordable in the United States. On average, during heat waves last summer, gas [hit](#) \$55 per million thermal units in Europe; in the U.S., the cost was just \$6 for the same amount—a ninefold difference. America’s new stores of energy have also helped the country significantly lower its greenhouse gas emissions, as power provision shifts from coal to cleaner natural gas. Since a 2007 peak, greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. have dropped by roughly 20 percent. American emissions today are back to 1985 levels, though the country now uses about 42 percent more energy annually.

Even so, the energy bill varies widely in the U.S. by state, as does the mix of what sources utilities use to charge the grid. In 2021, for instance, residential energy prices ranged from about 10.5 cents per kilowatt hour in Kentucky and Utah to about 20 cents per kilowatt hour in California and Massachusetts. Some differences have to do with geographical factors, but state regulatory policies also play a part. California is particularly noteworthy. The Golden State has the fifth-largest oil reserves in the country, but its production has [fallen](#) by 25 percent in less than ten years, as officials moved to ban fracking and import energy from elsewhere. A law signed by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2022 goes further, prohibiting oil rigs within 3,600 feet of homes, hospitals, and other institutions. Environmentalists call the measure a necessary protection from toxic chemicals, but the oil industry [brands](#) it “a blatant attempt by the governor to shut down the oil and gas industry in California.”

Green-energy mandates affect the cost and, in some places, the very availability of energy. Iowa was the first state to create a renewables mandate, back in 1985, with a humble aim of generating 105 megawatts of electricity via these energy sources—a goal that it hit in 1999. Many subsequent mandates have been similarly [modest](#): Wisconsin has aimed to generate 15 percent of its energy from renewable sources, while Michigan, Montana, and Missouri have targeted 15 percent, and Pennsylvania 18 percent. But over the last half-decade, states have pushed more ambitious goals, which require subsidized construction projects. Today, eight states, including California, Nevada, Oregon, and Virginia, have a 100 percent renewables target, which they hope to hit between 2040 and 2050. The path will be easier in some locations, thanks to natural



resources. Maine, for instance, already derives 79 percent of its energy from renewables because one-third of its power is hydroelectric. Even so, the way forward for the Pine State remains complicated, after 60 percent of voters in a recent ballot initiative gave thumbs down to a \$1 billion hydroelectric project.

Grand projects in states lacking Maine's natural resources are even more doubtful, requiring big investments in solar and wind power. A recent Breakthrough Institute study [estimated](#) that it would cost some \$1.5 trillion to get the entire country to the point where it uses renewables for 70 percent of its energy. Replacing the current fossil-fuel- and nuclear-based energy grid would require building massive new transmission, distribution, and storage systems in every state. Both the expense and the intrusiveness of such projects make the task formidable. Public pushback can be intense. The Renewable Rejection Database, [compiled](#) by energy researcher Robert Bryce, lists more than 300 projects in the U.S. since 2015 spiked by public opposition.

Among the 42 solar projects rejected since 2017 are a 700-acre solar farm in rural Virginia, large-scale solar facilities in Kittitas County, Washington, and a 10-watt solar project in Niagara County, New York. In Missouri, a judge halted tax breaks for a 100-megawatt solar farm vigorously fought by residents. Transmission lines, like those for the defeated Maine hydroelectric project, are also becoming tougher to build. A federal judge blocked a Nebraska transmission project in 2020 on environmental grounds, and in Wisconsin, local political leaders and environmentalists have [sued](#) to stop a 100-mile transmission line designed to carry wind energy from rural renewable sites to cities. A transmission line that crosses state borders, meantime, can take more than a decade to win federal regulatory approval.

The irony of environmentalists fighting wind and solar projects highlights the disconnect between the desire for a carbon-free future and the reality of trying to build such a system. That disconnect has helped give us the absurd trend of state and local governments with renewables mandates nixing new energy projects. Iowa, for example, has forbidden the use of eminent domain to acquire land for building transmission lines. Since the Ohio legislature passed a measure, in late 2021, giving local governments the right to ban commercial wind and solar projects, ten counties have done so.

Though California has among the boldest green-energy mandates, its local governments have increasingly said: no electricity generation in our backyard. In 2019, San Bernardino banned projects if they export more than 50 percent of their energy out of the county, effectively making most of spacious San Bernardino County off-limits for California's renewables drive. Local hostility in New York has been so strong that the state recently [passed](#) a controversial law removing the ability of local residents to vote down energy projects that affect their communities. Few other state legislatures, though, have been willing to anger local voters with similar measures.

These obstacles have arisen even as mandates hasten plant closures—mostly coal plants. While that's a sensible long-term move, especially with the country's resources of cleaner natural gas, the shutdowns have taken place so fast that they have strained state energy systems. In the last two years alone, utilities have [shut](#) 54 coal-fired plants generating 18.7 gigawatts of power. An additional 92 coal-fired plants are scheduled to close in the next five years. And 125 more plants have closing dates from 2028 to 2045.

While some of these plants became commercially uncompetitive because of the availability of cheaper natural gas, regulations have also spurred earlier-than-expected shutterings. A 2015 edict, issued by the Obama-era Environmental Protection Agency, put tough new standards on coal plants that prompted some utilities to close them faster than planned, rather than spend money upgrading them. The Trump administration softened the rule, but one study estimated that the edict [reduced](#) the life of U.S. coal plants in the aggregate by 1,175 years.

States might have absorbed these closings better if nuclear plants hadn't also been going out of business. Politicians and environmentalists have continued to target nuclear plants, though they produce lots of power with no greenhouse gas emissions. Over the last decade, 12 plants, [representing](#) about 9.4 gigawatts of generating power, have closed. **Another seven plants, with 7.1 gigawatts of power, are scheduled to enter decommissioning by 2025, though the 2022 energy crisis has led California to [explore](#) ways to keep its Diablo Canyon plant open for several more years,** and Illinois has provided subsidies to keep its Byron and Dresden plants operating for five more years. The Golden State, one of the earliest adopters of nuclear energy, began moving away from it after Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island accident in 1979. It has [shuttered](#) four plants since 1989, including two in 2013 that produced more than 2 gigawatts of power and would have helped the state reduce carbon emissions.

Natural-gas plants in some states—demonized, along with coal, under the broader rubric of fossil fuel—have been closing, too, and utilities are finding it hard to gain approvals for new stations. Natural-gas facilities producing 3.7 gigawatts of power are set to [close](#) in California in the next few years, for example. Meanwhile, Glendale, California, has proposed building four new natural-gas facilities to replace an aging plant. Yet it has faced ferocious resistance from environmentalists and residents, even though there's no easy way for renewables to replace the power about to be lost. "Building any kind of new fossil fuel infrastructure at this late hour of the climate crisis is not OK," one uncompromising critic of the project noted.

Resistance in New York State [killed](#) two proposed natural-gas plants in late 2021. The plants would have helped to ensure that the grid has sufficient peak-time capacity. Capacity is a worsening problem. New York's grid operator warned last summer that the state's energy network had [reached](#) a "tipping point," when electricity generation becomes insufficient to meet demand. Opposition to peak-generation plants—often used to back up renewables like wind and solar—has eroded power-grid resilience in many states. That has led to rolling brownouts and, under the worst conditions, widespread outages, as California and Texas recently endured. "It's clear the risks are spreading," an executive at the North American Electric Reliability Corporation warned last spring. The failure to renew the energy grid is "out of sync with the underlying realities and the physics of the system," he added.

Indeed, an energy grid based entirely on renewable power is virtually a scientific impossibility. To account for the intermittent nature of wind and solar energy, with power generation depending on weather conditions, green-energy advocates bank on utilities building massive storage facilities, deploying huge numbers of lithium-ion batteries. The obstacles to this are extraordinary. An influential 2018 *MIT Technology Review* article [observes](#) that a national grid relying on 80 percent renewable power would necessitate a country-wide high-speed transmission system and battery-storage facilities, with a combined price tag of \$2.5 trillion. Manhattan Institute senior fellow Mark Mills [calculates](#) that the cost to provide just 12 hours of battery storage for the entire country would be \$1.5 trillion—if the crucial materials were even

available. “Ambitious climate action will bring significant demand for minerals,” the World Bank has said, including a 4,200 percent increase in mankind’s mining and use of lithium, a 2,500 percent boost in graphite, and a 1,900 percent increase in nickel. By contrast, backing up green energy with fuels like natural gas would require an investment of about \$100 billion, and keep the lights on for weeks at a time when renewables fail, Mills estimates.



Though California endured another energy crisis in the summer of 2020, with utilities cutting off power to millions of residents in rolling blackouts, subsequent reports suggested a cavalier attitude by state energy regulators toward grid resilience.

States have proceeded with their energy grid transformations, despite the alarming consequences. California experienced another in a series of energy crises in the summer of 2020, with utilities cutting off power to millions of residents in rolling blackouts. Subsequent reports suggested a shockingly cavalier attitude by state energy regulators toward grid resilience. Among other things, California was [relying](#) on significant energy supply from plants that had already closed or whose capacity was far below state estimates. Officials also wildly overestimated the amount of available hydroelectric power, a key renewable in California, because water levels had dropped. At least one of the external plants that was supposed to be supplying Californians with electricity was delivering its power elsewhere during the 2020 crisis.

Tellingly, the system failed, though temperatures that summer did not reach a record high and energy demands ran below previous periods. These missteps were disturbing in something as crucial as the power grid. “This is like brain surgery,” Robert McCullough, a utility industry consultant, told the press. “You don’t make mistakes. People actually die when you mess it up.”

The resilience of power supply has weakened in Texas, too. In winter 2021, natural-gas plants that hadn’t been winterized and wind turbines (which supply the state with more than one-fifth of its power) [froze](#) during severe storms. The result: widespread blackouts that left some 4.5 million

homes and businesses lacking power amid freezing cold and contributed to the deaths of some 246 people. The grid came dangerously close to complete failure. The state also suffered because its transmission lines, which deliver power from distant rural wind farms to urban areas, were overwhelmed.

These kinds of woes now risk becoming more common elsewhere. In mid-2022, power suppliers and energy-grid regulators from nearly two dozen states—ranging from Oregon, Washington, and Arizona in the West to Arkansas in the South and Illinois and Indiana in the Midwest—[warned](#) of the growing likelihood of rolling blackouts. The Midcontinent Independent System Operator, which administers the grid for that part of North America, attributed the imminent crisis partly to the closing of generating plants, which has cut margins of error during peak energy use in many places. More recently, ISO New England, which controls the grid in America’s Northeast, [warned](#) of risks of rolling winter blackouts because of shortages of gas supplies and declining grid reliability. At the same time, heating-oil wholesalers in the Northeast began [rationing](#) supplies to customers because of fears of panic buying, amid reported shortages. “Colorado residents who had installed the power company’s ‘smart’ thermostats found that it had locked the devices.”

Power companies have urged customers to reduce energy usage—and sometimes done more than urge. Utility customers in Colorado who had installed the power company’s “smart” thermostats found last summer that they couldn’t crank up their homes’ air-conditioning as the temperature rose: the firm had [locked](#) the devices. During an August heat wave, California utilities [asked](#) electric-car owners not to recharge their vehicles during peak hours—a week after state lawmakers voted to require that all new cars sold in the state be electric by 2035. California utilities started [sending out](#) energy bills marked with frowny faces for customers consuming more power on average than their neighbors, blaming them for problems actually caused by policymakers. As Bloomberg [noted](#): “California has aggressively closed natural-gas power plants in recent years, leaving the state increasingly dependent on solar farms that go dark late in the day just as electricity demand peaks.”

The warnings have led to some second thoughts. Along with California agreeing to keep the Diablo Canyon plant running for several more years, New Mexico regulators have [heeded](#) its major utility’s cautions about impending shortages and let several natural-gas plants scheduled for closure remain open temporarily. The Biden administration has also provided federal funds to help keep nuclear plants operating.

But it hasn’t been enough, as states keep [racing](#) headlong into the energy future by shutting fossil-fuel plants, and environmentalists keep [battling](#) nuclear power. And state and federal regulatory bureaucracies are still holding up major renewable-energy projects. More than four in ten projects [backlogged](#) for federal regulatory approval by the National Environmental Policy Act are renewable-energy ventures. The Biden administration and congressional Democrats have sent mixed messages, approving ever-growing subsidies for green-energy projects but [refusing](#) to endorse changes that would simplify the federal permitting process, after Biden overturned streamlining reforms that the Trump administration had introduced. The Biden administration has worked to [stymie](#) fossil-fuel projects and slow the leasing of federal lands for gas and oil exploration.

Back in 2007, the National Energy Technology Laboratory of the Department of Energy published a study [warning](#) that America’s energy grid, once the marvel of the world, was deteriorating, causing inefficiencies in the system that would raise prices and degrade reliability. Unless governments and utilities upgraded the grid, the report predicted, “cascading power outages” would ensue. Since then, states have embarked on a massive transformation of the country’s energy system, driven by renewables mandates that have accomplished the precise opposite of the upgrades that the report was urging, leading to reduced reliability at higher prices to the public. It’s hard to imagine a bigger policy failure on something so essential to modern life. [Unfortunately, without a quick shift in priorities, the worst is yet to come.](#)

*Steven Malanga is the senior editor of City Journal and the Institute. This article first appeared in the Winter 2023 edition of City Journal,*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### **Disaster Recovery Center / Local Assistance Center to Open in San Luis Obispo**

Author: County OES

Date: 1/23/2023 3:36:25 PM

A Disaster Recovery Center / Local Assistance Center will open Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at 12:00 PM in San Luis Obispo





San Luis Obispo, CA – On Tuesday, January 24 at 12:00 PM, a Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) and Local Assistance Center (LAC) will open in San Luis Obispo to provide resources to residents who were affected by the storms. The DRC/LAC is a partnership between the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), and County of San Luis Obispo.

The DRC/LAC will be open seven days a week, from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM at the Veterans Memorial Building, 801 Grand Ave in San Luis Obispo. Residents can get help applying for federal assistance and disaster loans, update applications, and learn about other resources that are available. Spanish and ASL interpreter services will be present. If you need transportation to the DRC/LAC, please call the County Office of Emergency Services at (805) 781-5678.

Information and services will be available from agencies such as: County Behavioral Health, Environmental Health, and Planning and Building; DMV, IRS, insurance services, Small Business Administration, legal assistance, and non-profits. Information from the Ag Commissioner, County Assessor and Clerk Recorder will also be available.

In addition to the Disaster Recovery Center, FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) teams are visiting neighborhoods impacted by the storms to help residents apply for FEMA assistance and answer questions about federal assistance. DSA teams wear FEMA attire and have federal photo identification badges.

To apply online for assistance, visit [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov). You may also use the [FEMA mobile app](#) or call 1-800-621-3362. The line is open every day from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET. Help is available in most languages.

If you have questions, call the County Office of Emergency Services at (805) 781-5678. Follow the County of San Luis Obispo Office of Emergency Services on [Twitter @slocountyoes](#) and [Facebook.com/SLOCountyOES](https://www.facebook.com/SLOCountyOES).

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Information and services will be available from agencies such as: County Health and Wellness, Environmental Health, and Planning and Construction; DMV, IRS, insurance services, Small Business Administration, legal aid and nonprofit organizations. Information from the Commissioner of Agriculture, County Appraiser, and Registrar of Records will also be available.

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[Twitter @slocountyoes](#) and [Facebook.com/SLOCountyOES](#).

Full press release in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

## GETTING DISASTER HELP FROM SBA

### INITIAL STEPS: Register with FEMA, Apply with SBA, and Visit a Disaster Recovery Center

- ◆ **Step 1:** Register with FEMA at [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov) -or- [www.disasterassistance.gov/es](http://www.disasterassistance.gov/es) (Spanish). This is the fastest way to register for help and you will receive a FEMA number unique to your application.
- ◆ **Step 2:** [Apply For A Disaster Loan \(sba.gov\) \[disasterloanassistance.sba.gov\]](http://Apply For A Disaster Loan (sba.gov) [disasterloanassistance.sba.gov). The section "What You Need to Know" provides information on the SBA federal low-interest disaster loans for **businesses of all sizes, most private nonprofit organizations (including places of worship), homeowners, and renters.**
- ◆ **Note:** Homeowners and renters should submit their SBA disaster loan application, even if they are not sure if they will need or want a loan. If SBA cannot approve your application, in most cases we refer the applicant to FEMA's Other Needs Assistance (ONA) program for possible additional assist.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ SBA offers federal low-interest disaster loans to **businesses of all sizes, most private nonprofit organizations, homeowners, and renters.**
- ◆ Businesses of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair and replace damaged property and working capital needs caused by the disaster.
- ◆ Small businesses, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private nonprofit organizations (including places of worship) may borrow up to \$2 million to repair and replace damaged property and working capital needs caused by the disaster.
- ◆ If over 50% of revenue is carried from agricultural, farming, and ranching business-contact your local United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) for available programs.
- ◆ If you are a homeowner or renter, FEMA may refer you to SBA.
- ◆ Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 to repair or replace their primary residence.
- ◆ Homeowners and renters may borrow up to \$40,000 to replace personal property, including vehicles.
- ◆ SBA Customer Service #: 1.800.659.2955
- ◆ FEMA Customer Service # 1.800.621.3362

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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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General Member: \$100 - \$249  \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Voting Member: \$250 - \$5,000  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

### MEMBER INFORMATION:

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