



**WEEKLY UPDATE JULY 30 - AUGUST 5, 2023**



***FALL MIXER 2023***

**SAVE THE DATE**

OCTOBER 4TH

5:30PM - 7:30PM

THOUSAND HILLS RANCH  
550 THOUSAND HILLS RD.  
PISMO BEACH, CA

FOOD & BEVERAGES WILL  
BE PROVIDED



**THIS WEEK  
SEE PAGE 2**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THIS WEEK**

**CAO LAUNCHES MAJOR PROCESS  
IMPROVEMENT EFFORT  
PLANNING AND BUILDING IS PILOT TEST SITE**

**LAST WEEK  
SEE PAGE 11**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LAST WEEK**

**PLANNING COMMISSION LIGHT**

**MOST OTHER AGENCIES OFF UNTIL SEPTEMBER  
SUPERVISORS AND COASTAL COMMISSION MEET WEEK OF AUGUST 6TH**

**EMERGENT ISSUES**

**SENATE DEMOCRATS SHOOT DOWN GOP  
AMENDMENT TO FLY ONLY THE AMERICAN  
FLAG OVER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS**

**STATEWIDE RENT CONTROL EXPANSION  
PROPOSITION GETS ENOUGH VERIFIED  
SIGNATURES FOR 2024 BALLOT**

**COLAB IN DEPTH  
SEE PAGE 13**

**GREEN TOTALITARIANISM: THEY'RE COMING  
FOR YOUR WATER HEATER NOW**

*Gov't banned gas automobiles, diesel trucks, gas stoves, BBQs,  
shower heads, water faucets, dishwashers, air conditioners and  
portable gas generators*

**BY KATY GRIMES**

**CALIFORNIA'S OPIOID DEATHS INCREASED BY 121%  
IN 3 YEARS. WHAT'S DRIVING THE CRISIS?**

**BY NIGEL DUARA, ERICA YEE, AND ANNA B. IBARRA**

**THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS**

**ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

**No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, August 1, 2023 (Not Scheduled)**

**The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 8, 2023.**

**County Administrator (CAO) Announces Process Improvement Program**

**County CAO John Nilon announced the County is about to embark on a process improvement project designed to measure and improve the velocity and quality of services. The Planning and Building Department will serve as a pilot. The County will use the well-known Six Sigma performance improvement tool to execute the project.**

The County news release states:

*The County of San Luis Obispo today unveiled a new program and strategy aimed at streamlining services, increasing efficiency, and eventually saving taxpayers money.*

*Supervisors Dawn Ortiz-Legg and Jimmy Paulding joined County Administrative Officer (CAO) John Nilon in unveiling the County's commitment to the Lean Six Sigma Program.*

*Lean Six Sigma is a program used by some of the most successful organizations in the private sector that uses statistical analysis to increase efficiency and reduce waste. The County will implement it within all departments. The Department of Planning and Building will serve as its champion and be the first to put it into action.*

*“Dozens of local governments over the past few years have begun to implement a Lean Six Sigma strategy to address the growing demand for scarce resources,” said CAO John Nilon. “This methodology can save organizations money, improve morale, boost performance, and elevate the services we provide to the people of San Luis Obispo County.”*

*A Lean Six “Master Black Belt” will serve as a consultant to help the County initiate and implement the program through all departments.*

*“Whether you’re in the public or private sector, the issues of service and customer satisfaction reign supreme,” said Supervisor Ortiz-Legg. “There’s no excuse for over-bureaucracy and poor performance and I’m confident this program will help us better serve our community.”*

*Nilon is well acquainted with Lean Six Sigma as he implemented it in Kern County when he served as CAO there prior to retiring to San Luis Obispo County. He credited it with saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in Kern County as well as increasing turn-around times for permitting processes within some departments from months to days.*

*“There is no better time than now to rethink and reformulate our County government to embrace and deliver smart changes,” said Supervisor Paulding. “With limited resources and growing demands, it’s critical that we find ways to streamline processes and improve efficiency. This is where the concept of Lean Government comes in.”*

## **What Are The Lean Six Sigma Principles?**

*Learn what the Lean Six Sigma Principles are and how they can help your organization create a culture of continuous process improvement*

*Lean Six Sigma is based on a set of principles that are a combination of Lean methodology and the Six Sigma approach. While Lean focuses mainly on eliminating wasteful activities, Six Sigma aims to improve quality by removing causes of defects.*

*Indeed, both approaches share similar methodologies, values, and tools, which is one of the main reasons why [Lean Six Sigma](#) was born.*

*Lean Six Sigma gets the best of the two worlds and provides a new way for organizational culture changes.*

*Let’s explore the ground principles of Lean Six Sigma.*

### **1. Focus on the customer.**

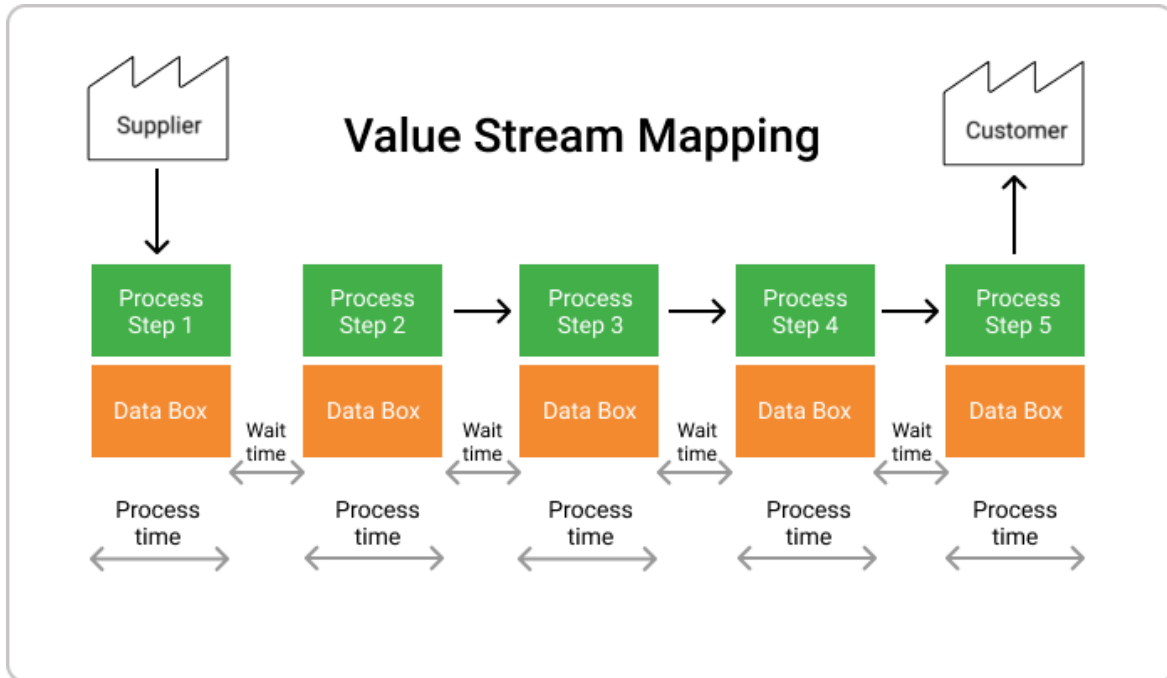
*The main purpose of every company is to offer a product or service that customers are willing to pay for. Here is why Lean Six Sigma advises that you put customers and their needs first. Before you do anything else, try to jump into your customer’s shoes and realize whether your product would match their expectations. Remember, successful companies deliver added value defined by their customers’ needs.*

*At the end of the day, it doesn't matter whether you came up with a great idea if the customer doesn't get any value from it.*

**COLAB Comment:** This one is particularly hard for government managers who have extensive training and socialization into their professions - public safety, environmental protection, urban planning, medicine, psychology, law, or whatever.

## **2. Map the value streams to understand the work process.**

*A value stream map displays all the steps in your work process necessary to deliver value to the customer. It represents the flow of work and resources from your organization to the end customer.*



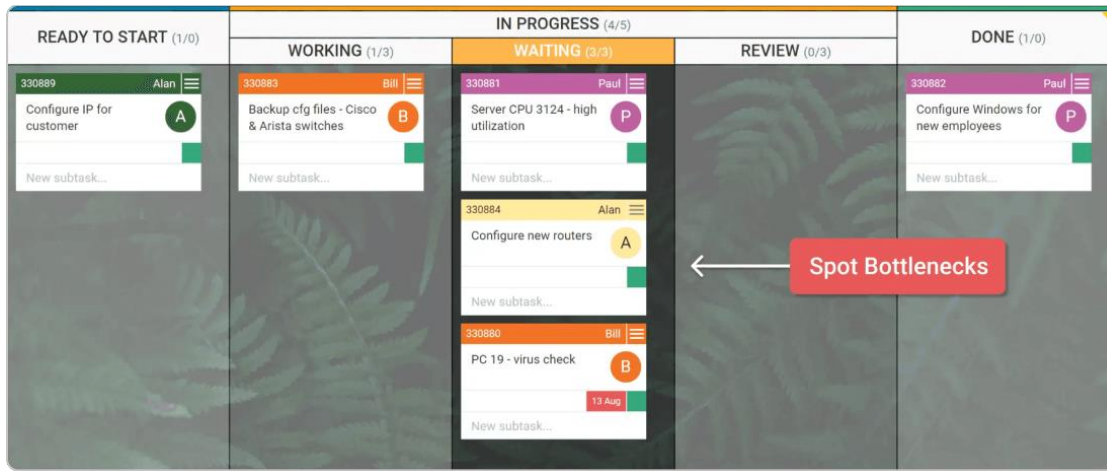
*Identifying and mapping your value streams is crucial for creating a successful company for the following reason: it helps you improve your work processes and become more effective.*

*Let's see how [value stream mapping](#) supports continuous process improvement.*

**COLAB Comment:** COLAB has been asking the County to do Step 2 for years, especially in Planning and Building and Behavioral Health.

## **3. Manage and improve the process flow.**

*Having your value streams mapped is not enough. It is just the beginning. From here, you can identify the problems in your workflow, discover process bottlenecks and investigate the root cause of all process issues.*



To uncover bottlenecks and resolve flow impediments, you can use different tools and techniques. For example, with a Kanban board, you can visualize your workflow, spot bottlenecks, and analyze where work gets stuck. Once you know where the issues are, you can use different techniques such as [5 Whys](#) analysis to find potential causes and resolve them.

**COLAB Comment:** COLAB has been asking for this one as well for 12 years.

#### 4. Remove non-value-added steps and waste.

The idea of eliminating waste originates from the Toyota Production System. Taiichi Ohno, who is considered one of the fathers of TPS, dedicated his career to building a solid and efficient work process.

In the world of Lean, waste means “non-value-added activity”. Mr. Ohno himself describes what Toyota does with the following sentence: "All we are doing is looking at the timeline, from the moment the customer gives us an order to the point when we collect the cash. And we are reducing that timeline by removing the non-value-added wastes."



Eliminating wasteful activities can help companies dramatically improve their operational efficiency, optimize resources and increase profitability.

There are [7 types of wastes](#):

- Waste of Transportation
- Waste of Inventory
- Waste of Motion



- Waste of Waiting
- Waste of Overproduction
- Waste of Over-processing
- Waste of Defects

*Before we move on, you have to remember to differentiate Necessary waste from Pure waste.*

***Necessary waste** – This is a non-value-adding activity, which, however, is essential to get things done in a quality manner—for example, testing, planning, etc.*

***Pure waste** – This is non-value-adding and unnecessary activity. It represents anything that doesn't produce customer value and can be removed from the process immediately.*

### **5. Manage by fact and reduce variation.**

*If there are two things that every organization strives to achieve, these are cost-efficiency and high customer satisfaction. This is why Lean Six Sigma preaches reduction of variation and standardization.*

*Reducing variation and increasing standardization makes it possible for companies to be more cost-efficient and have higher customer satisfaction.*

*To put this in perspective, let's see the following example:*

*You have a pizzeria. However, every employee puts a different amount of cheese on cheese on the pizza while preparing it. This creates variations. In other words, it is highly likely that different customers will have different customer experiences. Respectively, this can lead to customer dissatisfaction. You can avoid this by creating clear standards and process policies. For example, the amount of cheese that should be put on every pizza is 100 grams.*

*If you want to be sure that your organization makes the most of standardization, here are a few tips:*

- *Document your processes.*
- *Make sure that everyone knows and follows the same steps.*
- *Establish and share best practices.*
- *Provide adequate training to all employees.*
- 

### **6. Involve and equip people in the process.**

*Process improvement is an integral part of the Lean Six Sigma culture. However, to make the right decisions about what needs to be improved, you have to listen to the people involved in the process on a day-to-day basis. Have in mind that front-line employees are highly likely to have insightful feedback on how a process can be improved.*

*Also, Lean Six Sigma strongly advises you to have a dedicated process improvement team responsible for Six Sigma processes. This is because improvements don't occur occasionally but as a result of collective efforts and a shared vision. To support the team, your organization has to provide process improvement training and make sure employees are familiar with different [Lean Six Sigma tools](#) and measurement methods.*

### **7. Undertake improvement activity in a systematic way.**

*Lean Six Sigma requires a lot of change. You need to create a culture where employees are ready to embrace change. However, nobody likes random changes. This is why they should be backed up by data.*

***How does data help?***

*By using data-based arguments, you can show workers where a change comes from and how you made the decision. Furthermore, numbers make it much easier to explain the benefits of any change in the work process.*

*Lean Six Sigma offers highly scientific and systematic approaches and tools for collecting, quantifying, and analyzing data, such as the DMAIC, Kanban boards, 5S, and more.*

The idea of process improvement in government is not new.

Moses (about 1525-1405 BCE<sup>1 2</sup>) sped up the Pharaoh's project management system prior to his break with the government of Egypt.



In another example, King Solomon (@ 970-931 BCE) requested God to endow him with wisdom and discernment in managing the Kingdom of Israel.

### **Solomon's request to God – Old Testament from the First Book of Kings**

*At Gibeon God appeared in a dream to the ruler during the night, saying, "Ask what you would like me to give you." Solomon replied, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, David, who was faithful, righteous, and obedient to you. And you have generously maintained this constant love toward us and now you have appointed a successor to sit on the judgment seat this very day.*

*Give me, your servant, a discerning heart, so that I may distinguish good from evil to govern your people with wisdom." God was very pleased that Solomon requested what he said. So God said to Solomon, "Because this is what you asked for and not for a long life, or for wealth, or for the lives of your foes, but asked for discernment in administering justice, I grant your request. And I give you a heart so wise and so understanding that there has been no one like you before your time, nor will there be after your time.*

Today's public servants could think about this one.

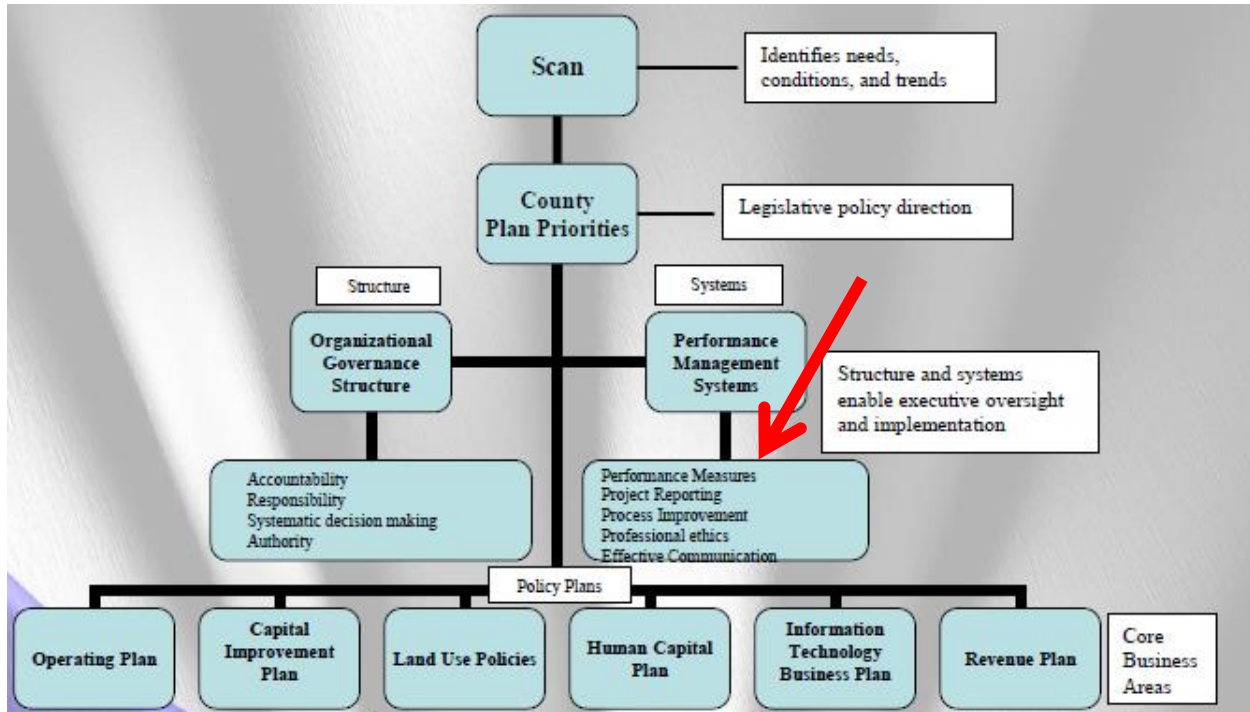
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<sup>1</sup> Yes, Moses is reputed to have lived to 120.

<sup>2</sup> *The Ten Commandments* is a 1956 American [epic religious drama film](#) produced, directed, and narrated by [Cecil B. DeMille](#),<sup>[5]</sup> shot in [VistaVision](#) (color by [Technicolor](#)), and released by [Paramount Pictures](#).



The 6 SIGMA tool can be incorporated into an entity's management system (sample chart below).

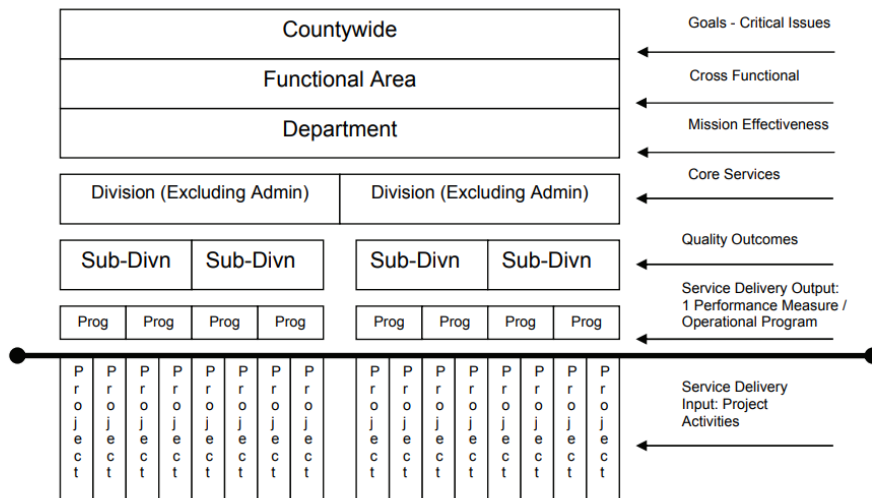


1. Rigor must be applied to both performance measures and project management.

2. What is the County's overall management system?

### Levels of Performance Reporting

The cascading levels of performance measures in County departments include: Countywide, Functional Area, Program Cost Center, and Individual Measures. These are illustrated in the following chart and each are then explained, in turn.



The County budgets at the division level, which does not provide sufficient managerial accountability for achieving performance levels. It is not known if this will be reformed as part of this project.

Below is a conceptual presentation of a sample hierarch of budget and performance measures at the program within division level.

### Countywide Measures

Certain measures, called countywide measures are reported for every department using identical language and calculations to ensure consistency among departments. Most countywide measures are gauges of department administrative effectiveness. These administrative effectiveness measures include Human Resources, Risk, and Finance. Future countywide measures will also include Capital Improvement Program "on time, on budget" measures. All of these measure descriptions are released in the budget instructions annually.

### Centrally Reported Countywide Measures for Each Department

- Financial Expenditure Variance – total actual expenditures / adjusted budget, Financial Information Network (FIN)
- Financial Revenue Variance – total revenue collected / adjusted budget, FIN
- Lost Time – total productive hours / total hours
- Worker Compensation Claims – total number of open claims / previous year actual claims
- General Liability Claims - total number of open claims / previous year actual claims
- Medical Malpractice Claims - total number of open claims / previous year actual claims
- Employee Performance Reviews – total EPRs completed by anniversary / total EPRs due (including probationary evaluations)

**Sample display of Budget, FTE's, and performance measures within a building inspection and code enforcement division of a planning department below. The following page displays the structure and data for a sample permitting division of a planning department.**

## Planning and Development Department

### Performance Measure Legend

Department-wide Effectiveness  
Performance Measure

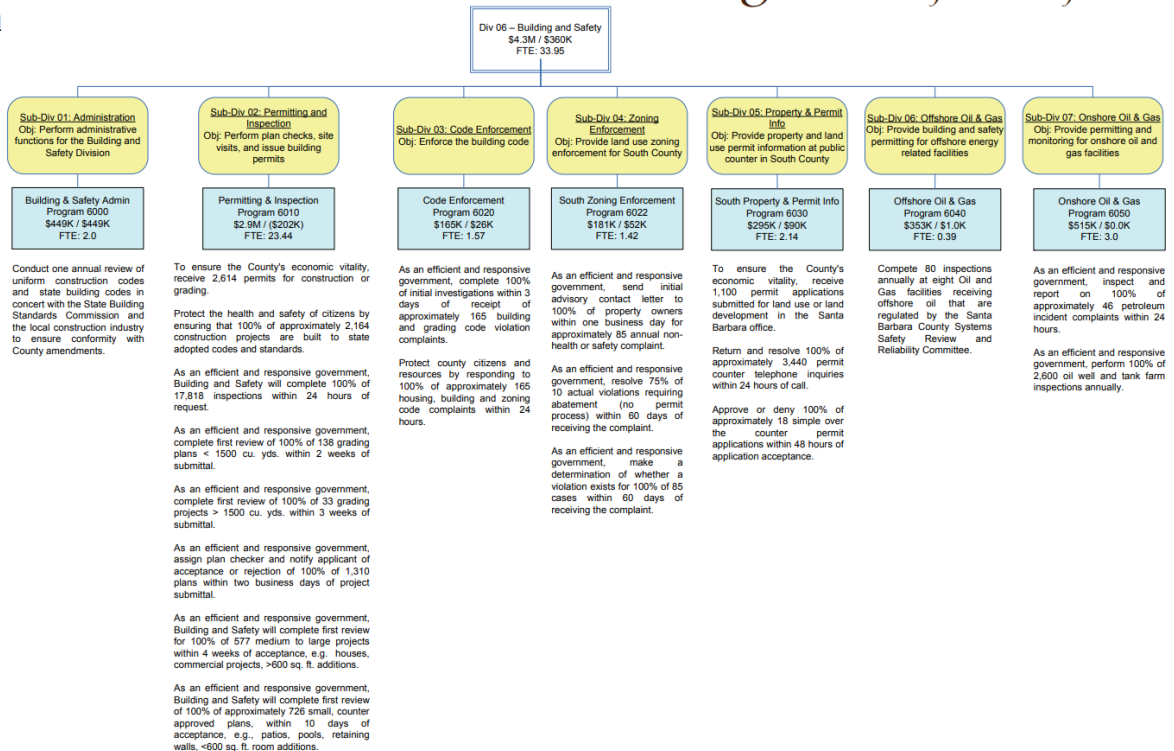
Change to Performance Measure  
Performance Measure to Delete  
New Performance Measure

Budgets shown in  
Millions (\$M) or Thousands (\$K)  
Program Budgets are \$Total Uses /  
\$Total General Fund Contribution

Division: # & Title from CCID  
Cost Center Report  
Budget/GFC from CCID  
(Financial Data by Cost Ctr)

Sub-Div: # & Name from  
Cost Center Report  
Obj: from CCID Inventory

Program: Title from CCID  
Number from CCID  
Budget/GFC from CCID  
(Financial Data by Prog)  
FTE: CCID



**Performance Measure Legend**

Department-wide Effectiveness  
Performance Measure

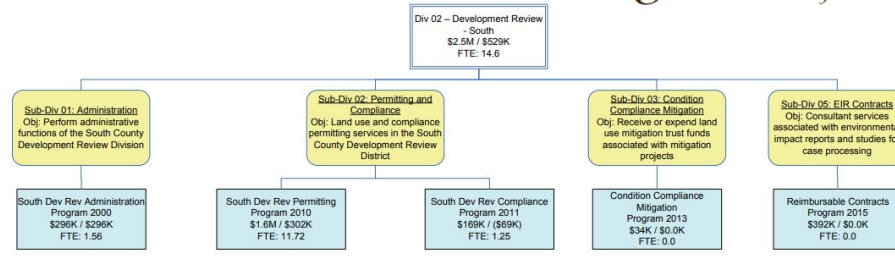
Change to Performance Measure  
Performance Measure to Delete  
New Performance Measure

Budgets shown in  
Millions (\$M) or Thousands (\$K)  
Program Budgets are \$Total Uses /  
\$Total General Fund Contribution

Division: # & Title from CCID  
Cost Center Report  
Budget/GFC from CCID  
(Financial Data by Cost Ctr)

Sub-Div: # & Name from  
Cost Center Report  
Obj: from CCID Inventory

Program: Title from CCID  
Number from CCID  
Budget/GFC from CCID  
(Financial Data by Prog)  
FTE: CCID



**Sub-Div 01: Administration**  
Obj: Perform administrative functions of the South County Development Review Division

**South Dev Rev Administration**  
Program 2000  
\$296K / \$296K  
FTE: 1.56

Ensure that staff processing or monitoring planning projects bill at least 70% of working hours to reimbursable projects.

**Sub-Div 02: Permitting and Compliance**  
Obj: Land use and compliance permitting services in the South County Development Review District

**South Dev Rev Permitting**  
Program 2010  
\$1.0M / \$302K  
FTE: 11.72

To ensure the County's economic vitality, process 245 discretionary and ministerial planning applications annually.

As an efficient and responsive government, conclude staff work on 80% of 45 ministerial permits subject to Architectural Review within two weeks of Preliminary BAR approval and one week from Final BAR for Zone Clearance where no associated discretionary permit is required.

As an efficient and responsive government, contact the applicant on 100% of 110 complex ministerial permit applications within 10 working days of receipt of the application with submittal needs and advisory information

As an efficient and responsive government, present to decision maker within 4 months of application completeness 95% of approximately 55 projects that require a CEQA exemption.

As an efficient and responsive government, present to decision maker within 6 months of application completeness 100% of approximately 15 projects requiring a Negative Declaration or addendum to Negative Declaration.

As an efficient and responsive government, issue complete or incomplete letters to 100% of approximately 150 annual discretionary Development Review project submittals within 30 days of submittal or resubmittal by the applicant.

**South Dev Rev Compliance**  
Program 2011  
\$169K / (\$69K)  
FTE: 1.25

As an efficient and responsive government, confirm compliance and release of performance securities on 85% of all projects within 5 working days of an applicant's requested date.

As an efficient and responsive government, conduct final inspections on 85% of 15 projects for sign-off on conditions of approval within 5 working days of an applicant's requested date.

As an efficient and responsive government, conduct preconstruction meeting on 85% of 15 projects requiring permit compliance monitoring within 5 working days of an applicant's requested date.

**Sub-Div 03: Condition Compliance Mitigation**  
Obj: Receive or expend land use mitigation trust funds associated with mitigation projects

**Condition Compliance Mitigation**  
Program 2013  
\$34K / \$0.0K  
FTE: 0.0

NOTE: This cost center is for fiscal tracking purposes only.

**Sub-Div 05: EIR Contracts**  
Obj: Consultant services associated with environmental impact reports and studies for case processing

**Reimbursable Contracts**  
Program 2015  
\$392K / \$0.0K  
FTE: 0.0

NOTE: This cost center is for fiscal tracking purposes only.

# LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

**No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 (Not Scheduled)**

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, August 8, 2023.

**Planning Commission of Thursday, July 27, 2023 (Completed)**

The agenda contained no major development proposals, policy document changes, or rezones.

# EMERGENT ISSUES

**Item 1 - Senate Democrats Shoot Down GOP Amendment to Fly Only the American Flag Over Government Buildings.** On Thursday, Senate Democrats voted against a Republican-introduced measure that would have forbidden the federal government from flying any flag other than the American flag over federal government buildings.

As [Fox News](#) reports, the measure in question was introduced by Senator Roger Marshall (R-Kansas) as an amendment to the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which would have instituted the ban for all public buildings, from federal office buildings and courthouses to post offices.

Although the measure did win a narrow majority, with 50 in favor and 49 against, it took 60 votes to approve the measure due to an agreement previously worked out by Senate leadership. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) was the sole Democrat to vote with the Republicans in favor of the amendment.

## **Item 2 - Statewide Rent Control Expansion Proposition Gets Enough Verified Signatures for 2024 Ballot.**

*2024 will be the third time rent control will be on the ballot following failures in 2018, 2020*

By [Evan Symon](#), July 28, 2023

California Secretary of State Shirley Weber announced on Thursday that [enough signatures have been verified to place a statewide rent control expansion bill on the November 2024 ballot](#). Currently, [only California and Oregon have statewide rent control laws on the books](#). California's law, [AB 1482](#), also known as the California Tenant Protection Act, was passed in 2019. Under current state law, rent can either go up 5% plus yearly inflation or 10%, whichever is lower. While some local rent control laws go even further, such as having yearly rises be limited to only 4% or less, the 5%/10% law has held firm.

However, there are also major exemptions to the statewide law. The largest of which, the [Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act](#), specifically prohibits rent control from being placed on single-family homes and apartments built after 1995, as well as prohibiting vacancy control and allowing landlords to reset rent to a different price once a renter moves out. For years, these limitations have irked rent control and affordable housing advocates, while proponents have said that the law is needed to help encourage new housing to be built.

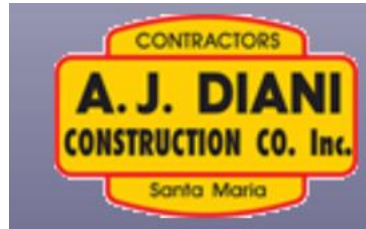
In the last decade, groups such as [Justice for Renters](#) have [tried and failed twice to repeal Costa-Hawkins and exempt virtually all rental properties in the state](#). The groups tried again this year with the aim of getting enough signatures approved in time for the 2024 general election, as a larger number of people going to the ballot box for the Presidential election is widely seen as an advantage to pass propositions or law changes that might have a tougher time in non-major election years.

On Thursday, the rent control expansion proposition was [announced to have enough valid signatures for the November 2024 ballot by Secretary Weber](#), with many proponents hoping that the third time will work.

The rent control proposition, which currently does not have a number assigned to it, [will specifically repeal the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act. In addition, the proposition will clarify that the state may not limit the right of cities and counties to maintain, enact, or expand rent control](#). However, the state would still keep statewide measures in place.

Michael Weinstein, the current head of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation who helped fund the latest ballot signature drive, said on Thursday that “The situation has gotten so extreme and dire and catastrophic. Rates of homelessness are going up. Where are people going to live? That’s the question.

## Sponsors

The logo for BLAZE 'N BEAR INSURANCE SERVICES, INC. features a circular emblem on the left containing a stylized bear's head in profile. To the right of the emblem, the company name "BLAZE 'N BEAR" is written in a large, bold, serif font, with "INSURANCE SERVICES, INC." in a smaller sans-serif font below it.

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NP #2533815

## 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**

## GREEN TOTALITARIANISM: THEY’RE COMING FOR YOUR WATER HEATER NOW

*Gov’t banned gas automobiles, diesel trucks, gas stoves, BBQs, shower heads, water faucets, dishwashers, air conditioners and portable gas generators*

**BY KATY GRIMES**

First they came for your internal combustion engine automobiles and diesel trucks. Next they came for your gas stoves and BBQs. Then they came for your shower heads, water faucets,



dishwashers, air conditioners and portable gas generators. Now the Biden Bolsheviks are coming for your water heaters.

I hope y'all like cold showers – or very expensive hot ones.

The Biden Administration is outlawing more appliances while the unelected appointees fly around the world in private jets, run dubious non-profits to line their pockets, benefit from insider trading, make deals with foreign enemies, live in safety and luxury, all while not having to submit to the Marxist demands they make on we common folk.

Think back to the good old days when avocado green and harvest gold household appliances actually washed and dried the dishes, thoroughly washed the clothes and dried them the first time; when the shower head delivered a powerful spray... before government meddled and regulated. Those appliances worked so well, we often had them professionally painted and refinished to go with the remodeled home, rather than replacing them.

The U.S. government's "Green Totalitarianism" has created a massive economic inefficiency with its energy-and-money-wasting, "high efficiency" appliances – government's "Green Totalitarianism" – a phrase I first heard from [Karen DeCoster at Lew Rockwell](#) in 2012 (it took some time to locate [her fabulous article](#) again).

We know that California is pushing to become **the first state to ban natural gas heaters, water heaters, and furnaces by 2030**, a policy of the California Air Resources Board, entirely made up of radicals appointed by the governor.

We also know the federal government wants to ban gas stoves, as [the Globe reported](#) in January. They claim "U.S. homes have a climate impact comparable to the annual carbon dioxide emissions of 500 000 cars." The Republican-led House [voted to block](#) the federal government from doing that in the future. [And in February](#), Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., introduced the "Gas Stove Protection and Freedom Act."

Berkeley was the first city in the United States to ban gas stoves, in 2019. This followed the 2018 passage of **Senate Bill 100** by then-Senator Kevin de Leon (D-Los Angeles), which established the 100 Percent Clean Energy Act of 2017 increasing the [2011 Renewables Portfolio Standard](#) requirement from 50 percent by 2030 to 60 percent, and created the policy of planning to meet all of the state's retail electricity supply with a mix of RPS-eligible and zero-carbon resources by December 31, 2045, for a total of 100 percent clean energy. SB 100 also established an ambitious target of 60 percent renewable electricity by 2030 and accelerates the current 50 percent target to 2026.

Fortunately, [in April a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals panel](#) overturned Berkeley's ban on natural gas piping in new buildings, finding it's preempted by federal conservation law. California has been agitating to become [the first state to ban natural gas heaters, water heaters, and furnaces by 2030](#), a policy of the California Air Resources Board, entirely made up of appointees by the governor. For now, California cities seeking to ban the use of natural gas have been warned by the Ninth Circuit.





Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm (Photo: energy.gov)

But that hasn't stopped U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm, one of the most incompetent appointees in the Biden Administration (bested only by Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg). "Today's actions—together with our industry partners and stakeholders—improve outdated efficiency standards for common household appliances, which is essential to slashing utility bills for American families and cutting harmful carbon emissions," [Granholm said in a press statement](#). "This proposal reinforces the trajectory of consumer savings that forms the key pillar of Bidenomics and builds on the unprecedented actions already taken by this Administration to lower energy costs for working families across the nation." "Consumer savings" and "Bidenomics" really should never be used in the same sentence. And "our industry partners and stakeholders" means government is first strong-arming and then colluding with corporate America.

While thoroughly incompetent, Granholm is a useful idiot of the government's green totalitarianism. She and the other Biden Marxists are saving us from ourselves, while trying to entice us with "consumer savings." Oh – it's supposed to be good for the environment too.

This really is more about destroying capitalism, since we know by their actions the appointees of the Biden Administration don't care at all about the environment.

**Read the entire DOE press statement about their latest Marxist grift:**

The U.S. Department of Energy on Friday proposed new energy efficiency standards to save consumers \$11.4 billion on their energy and water bills every year. The Congressionally-mandated proposed standards for residential water heaters align with recommendations from stakeholders, including two of the largest water heater manufacturers and the Consumer Federation of America. The proposal would require the most common-sized electric water heaters to achieve efficiency gains with heat pump technology and gas-fired instantaneous water heaters to achieve efficiency gains through condensing technology. These standards, which would take effect in 2029 if finalized, are expected to save Americans approximately \$198 billion and reduce 501 million metric tons of harmful carbon dioxide emissions cumulatively over 30 years—roughly equivalent to the combined annual emissions of 63 million homes, or approximately 50 percent of homes in the United States.

*Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief 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? Who Loses? This article first appeared in the July 23, California Globe.*



An evidence bag containing pills of synthetic fentanyl disguised as Oxycodone at a Fresno County Sheriff's Office press conference in 2020. Photo by Craig Kohlruss, The Fresno Bee via Reuters

## **CALIFORNIA'S OPIOID DEATHS INCREASED BY 121% IN 3 YEARS. WHAT'S DRIVING THE CRISIS?**

**BY NIGEL DUARA, ERICA YEE, AND ANNA B. IBARRA**

It is nearly impossible to escape reminders of today's boiling opioid epidemic — the billboard advertising Narcan on your commute, a local news story of a teen's accidental overdose, or the ever-growing public debate over how to best address it.

In just three years, between 2019 and 2021, California's [opioid-related deaths spiked 121%](#), according to the state's health department. The vast majority of these deaths were linked to fentanyl, an extremely potent synthetic opioid.

While pharmaceutical fentanyl has long been used to treat severe pain, say, after surgery, cheaply manufactured illicit fentanyl has become a growing threat in large cities, rural communities and suburban neighborhoods. Oftentimes the harm lies in counterfeit prescription pills and party drugs that, unbeknownst to the user, are laced with fentanyl. And drug trends are ever-changing. What in the 1990s was an epidemic driven largely by people abusing prescription opioids, today is one where fentanyl can be mixed with other substances like [xylazine](#), [commonly known as "tranq,"](#) a powerful sedative approved for veterinary use.

Citing the rise in overdose deaths and feeling the pressure to act, lawmakers introduced about three dozen proposals this legislative session and held special hearings. They want to answer the question: How can California prevent more overdose deaths?

## Why is fentanyl so dangerous?

Dubbed the “killer opioid,” fentanyl can come in liquid or powder form, or made to look like a prescription pill. It is known to be extremely potent: 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. That means even a very small amount can be lethal. During an overdose, people’s breathing may slow or stop altogether.

It is impossible to know just by looking at a drug if it has been tainted with fentanyl. That is why health experts and harm reduction advocates have been pushing for the wider distribution of fentanyl test strips, which can help users detect whether fentanyl is present in their supply. And while [some states ban these test strips](#) — based on the argument that this instigates drug use — California promotes and [distributes them for free](#).

### Visualizing fentanyl’s potency

Imagine this square represents one power unit of morphine.

M

Heroin is about twice as strong as morphine.

H = M

Fentanyl is up to 50 times stronger than heroin, and about 100 times stronger than morphine.

F = H = M

Fentanyl can kill at 2 milligrams, depending on a person's body size, tolerance and past usage. The national Drug Enforcement Agency has found counterfeit pills ranging from 0.02 to 5.1 milligrams of fentanyl per tablet.

*Lethal doses of Fentanyl relative to a pencil and penny:*



Source: [DEA](#)

### Tallying deaths and hospitalizations

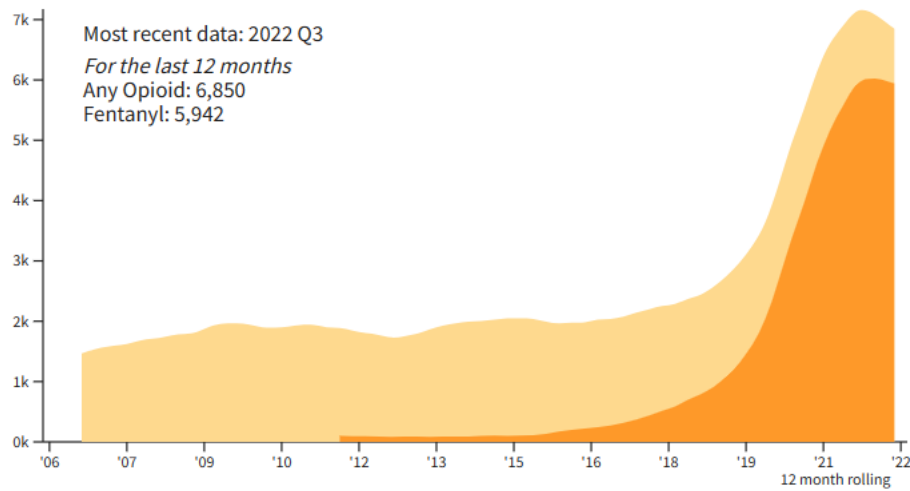
Deaths related to fentanyl began to rise exponentially around 2019. Between September 2021 and September 2022, the timeframe for the most recent state data, 5,942 people died after ingesting the synthetic opioid. That accounts for about 86% of all opioid-related deaths. And of the 21,000 emergency room visits related to opioids in this same time period, about a third were linked to fentanyl.

For some context: In 2021, more Californians died from fentanyl overdoses than [from car accidents](#). Males, Black and Native American Californians, and those 30 to 34 years old are disproportionately dying from fentanyl overdoses.

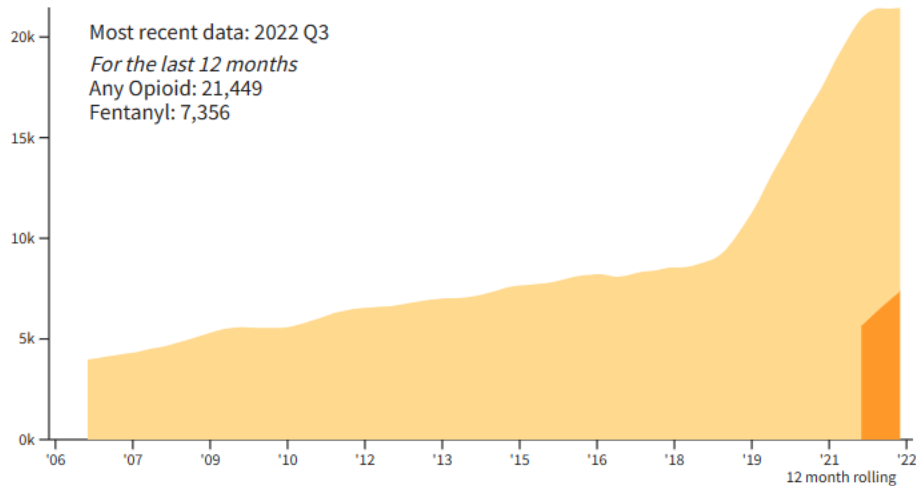
### Overdoses over time, statewide

■ Any Opioid
 ■ Fentanyl
 Total
Rate per 100k

#### Opioid-related overdose deaths



#### Opioid-related emergency department visits



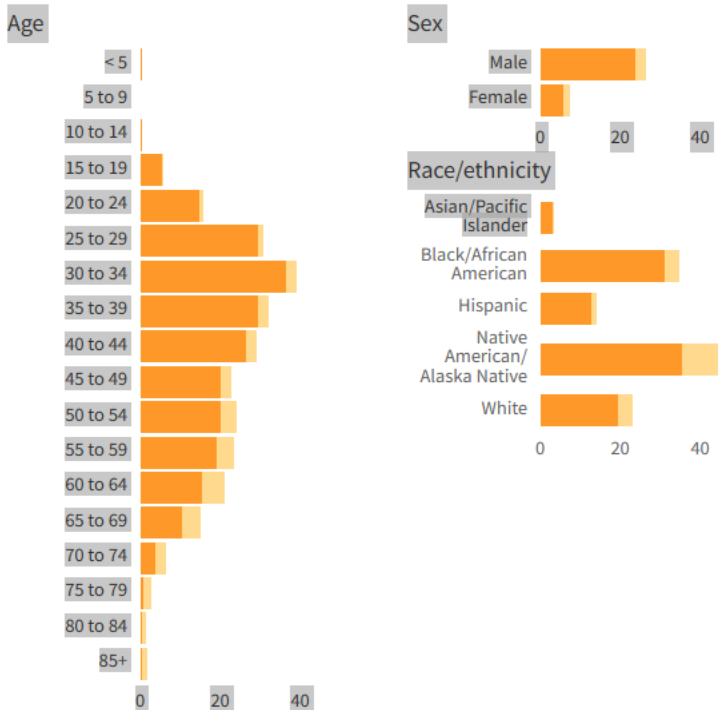
Note: Data for 2022 is preliminary. Fentanyl hospital data available starting 2021.

Source: [California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard](#)

## Overdoses by demographic, statewide

Any Opioid Fentanyl Deaths Emergency department visits

Charts show deaths per 100k residents.



Note: Data is preliminary for the last 12 months, as of 2022 Q3. Data combining demographic categories is unavailable due to state de-identification requirements.

Source: [California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard](#)

## \$1 billion against the opioid crisis

Since taking office, Gov. Gavin Newsom and his administration have spent more than \$1 billion in an attempt to reign in the opioid and fentanyl epidemic. About half of that money has come from the federal government, which provides money for prevention, treatment and recovery services. The state has allocated \$416 million from its own general fund, which has been primarily used for [medication-assisted treatments](#) for people with opioid use disorders and to purchase naloxone, according to the Department of Finance.

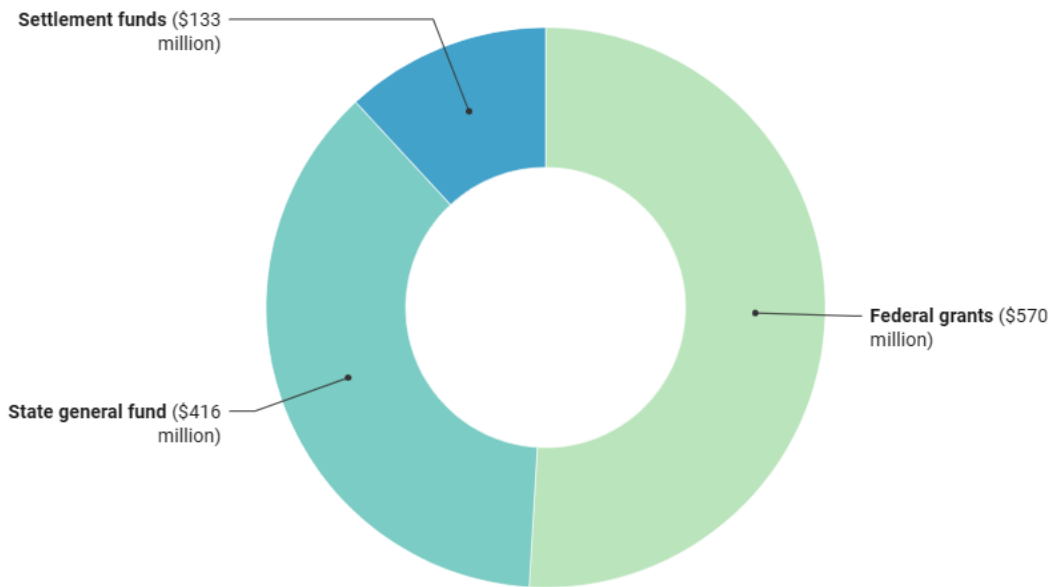
The remaining money — \$133 million — comes from opioid manufacturers, distributors and their partnering consulting firms as part of settlements for their participation in fueling the prescription opioid crisis. Perhaps most notably, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, owned by Johnson & Johnson, and three wholesale distributors agreed to pay \$26 billion to settle thousands of lawsuits brought by cities and counties nationwide. [California will receive just over \\$2 billion of that through 2028](#), with the majority of the money going directly to cities and counties.

California has also received millions from the consulting firm McKinsey & Company for its role in advising opioid companies, and from [generic opioid maker Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals](#). The state is awaiting settlement payouts from multiple other drug manufacturers and big box pharmacies.

Funds from opioid settlements are allocated to departments through the budget process and are [meant to be used for specific purposes](#), including: fentanyl education programs for youth, substance use disorder training for clinicians, naloxone purchase and distribution, and overdose data collection.

**\$1 billion:** About how much the Newsom administration has spent on the opioid crisis since the 2019-20 budget year.

This money does not include dollars going directly to cities and counties.



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## Overdose rates by county

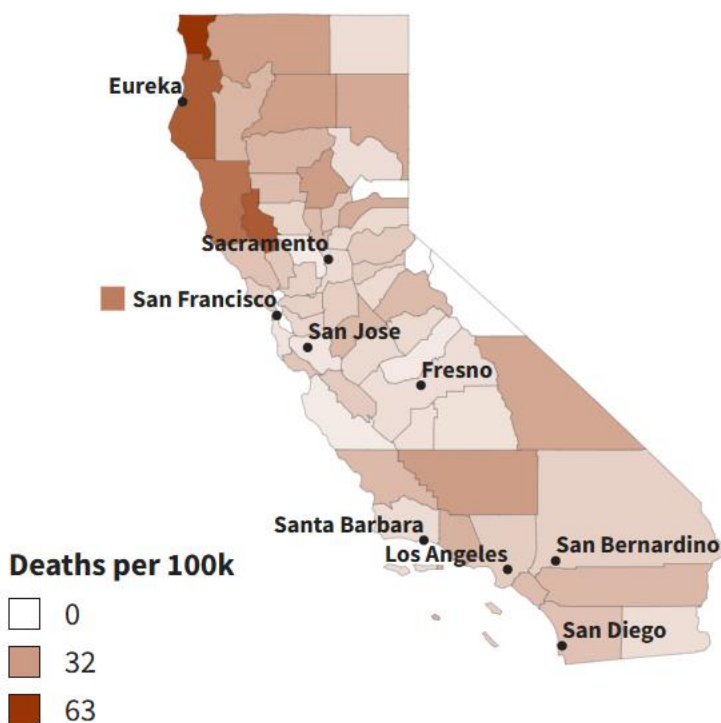
Opioid overdoses and deaths have reached almost every corner of California. Disproportionately affected are the rural north coast counties of Del Norte, Lake, Humboldt and Mendocino, which are seeing the highest rates of opioid-related mortality, according to preliminary state data.

But by and large, the most populous counties are burdened with the largest overall number of deaths from fentanyl and other opioids. These counties are also receiving the largest share of the more than \$200 million in opioid settlement funds distributed directly to local governments. (That money is separate from the millions received and spent by the state.) Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County and Riverside have recorded half of the state's opioid deaths and have received 42% of the opioid settlement money that has been distributed so far among counties and cities.

### Overdoses by county



*Hover/tap a county*



Note: Data is preliminary for the last 12 months, as of 2022 Q3. County is based on place of residence.

Sources: [California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard](#), [Dept. of Finance](#)

This article was prepared by the authors listed below and first appeared in the Calmatters of July 25, 2023.



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