COLAB San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

WEEKLY UPDATE JUNE 4 - 10, 2023

THIS WEEK

MORE TAXES, WATER PLOYS, COLUMBUS DUMPED, EVEN CHINESE WORRIED ABOUT US DEBT, & CA SENATE HONORS SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

APPOINTMENT OF SUPV'S ORTIZ-LEGG AND PAULDING TO 3CE POLICY BOARD – FOXES WATCHING THE MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR HEN HOUSE

SUPERVISOR GIBSON'S TRICKY "WATER EQUITY" PLOY

NATIVE AMERICAN DAY TO REPLACE COLUMBUS DAY

WILL PASO BASIN WATER BE CONTROLLED BY A SMALL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF LARGE WATER BANKING INVESTORS OR THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, WHICH REPRESENTS 8,000 OTHER USERS?
MORE FOXES WATCHING THE HEN HOUSE

NEW FIRE TAX IN WORKS
LACKS ESTIMATES FOR PER PARCEL COST

LAND USE CHANGES FOR MONARCH DUNES
A FEW MORE HOUSES & A HOTEL

SLOCOG

REGIONAL HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN (HIP)
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A SALES TAX INCREASE

NEW SALES TAX INCREASE FOR TRANSPORTATION
TAX DOLLARS BEING SPENT FOR PROMOTION

YOUR TAX DOLLARS TO PURCHASE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS FOR PRIVATE USE
ILLEGAL GIFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS?

PLANNING COMMISSION

MIXED RESIDENTIAL/COMMERICAL PROJECT IN AVILA

RESUSCITATED 33-UNIT AFFORDABLE PROJECT IN CAMBRIA

SOME NICE BIG HOMES NORTHEAST OF ARROYO GRANDE

COASTAL COMMISSION

NEW LIMITATION ON COASTAL COMMISSION PUBLIC COMMENT – YOU GET 1 PER MEETING/MONTH

NO MAJOR SLO COUNTY ISSUES THIS MONTH

LAST WEEK

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

APCD MEETING

FY 2023-24 PROPOSED BUDGET STAFFING LEVEL QUESTIONS

LEGAL SETTLEMENT QUESTIONS

EMERGENT ISSUES

THE UNITED STATES IS ADDICTED TO DEBT
EVEN THE CHINESE ARE WORRIED

CA SENATE HONORED THE SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE

STATE VACATION RENTAL TAX PROPOSED

COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 31

VMT REARS ITS UGLY HEAD AGAIN AS 'CONGESTION PRICING' IN LA
'The aim is to change commuter behavior with the charges while providing transit alternatives'

BY THOMAS BUCKLEY

AMERICA AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBALISM
Instead of setting an attractive example, inviting other nations to join a global civilization, America's elites are imposing a repugnant vision on the world. They must be stopped.

BY EDWARD RING

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, June 6, 2023 Scheduled)

Item 11 - Appointment of Supervisor Ortiz-Legg and Supervisor Paulding as the alternate to the Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) Policy Board). Surprise, Surprise! The County should actually appoint either Supervisor Peschong or Supervisor Arnold, either of whom would actually watchdog the Authority and ask some real questions. Ortiz-Legg and Paulding are in the tank for the scam.

# People	Description of Membership	Primary	Alternate
2	Central Coast Community Energy Policy Board	Dawn Ortiz-Legg	Jimmy Paulding

Item 24 - Acting as the Paso Basin – County of San Luis Obispo Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), 1) receive and file the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee Proposed Statement of Equity (Statement); and 2) authorize and direct the Director of Groundwater Sustainability, or designee, to incorporate the principles stated therein, in coordination with the other GSAs, into the next update of the Paso Basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to be presented for adoption by the GSA to the greatest extent practicable.

WARNING

This item should be trailed and considered in conjunction with **Item 54**, below, that contains reorganization of the governance structure of the Paso Water Basin.

The item requests the Board of Supervisors to adopt a document and principle entitled the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee Statement of Equity of April 28, 2023. The Board letter is ostensibly authored by Blaine Rely, the County's Water Sustainability Director. The actual Statement of equity was authored by Supervisor Gibson over several versions and shopped around by him to the member jurisdictions of the Paso Basin Water Management Cooperative Committee.

Process Problems

How Gibson caused a Department Head to disguise his proposed item and add it to the Board of Supervisors agenda is a serious question. How can one Supervisor command staff effort and cost on a policy matter that has not been introduced for assignment. Is Gibson giving direct orders to staff? How did this get through the agenda review meeting in this fashion?

Similarly, several observers of the Basin Cooperative Committee meeting on the day when this matter was considered have noted that it was not on the agenda in advance and thus violated open meeting law noticing requirements.

The Statement itself seems to be a list of truisms about the status and hydrology of the basin. It then asks the member jurisdictions to pledge to embrace equity in the regulation of the basin (distribution of the water) among the various types of users. The document and Board letter promise to respect the constitutional rights of the Basin overliers. In this very aspect, the meaning and practicality of equity falls apart, since the property overliers have superior water rights to the prescriptor municipalities and putative water districts. Neither SGMA nor a motion of the Board Supervisors may impinge or lessen these rights.

Also, in fact the Basin is almost adjudicated, and the Court has already determined that the overliers who filed a lawsuit to protect their primary rights do have those primary rights.

Prescriptors, the County of SLO, the City of Paso Robles, and the San Miguel Water District have already been awarded very little of the Basin's annual yield in acre feet.

It would seem that the proposed document is, at best, a piece of propaganda and, at worst, an illegal nullity.

Again, this should be considered against the background of Item 54, below, as it contains serious issues inimical to most of the farmers and homeowners overlying the Basin.

Aside from the substantive issues involved, the item and its generation again exhibit Gibson's growing dominance over the County organization and process.

Item 32 - Submittal of a resolution 1) removing Columbus Day as a paid county holiday and adding Native American Day as a paid county holiday for all county employees and allowing for employees on their initial probationary period to use personal leave; 2) approving corresponding amendments to the memoranda of understanding for all represented employee associations; and 3) approving amendments to the memoranda of understanding for the San Luis Obispo County Employee's Association regarding the Annual Leave program. The County is catching up with the City of Berkeley, which established Indigenous People's Day back in 1990, 40 years ago.

The item is presented as an effort to realign the holiday with the State Court systems' prior action of eliminating Columbus Day in favor of Native American Day, which occurs in September, verses October for Columbus Day.

In presenting the matter, the item is cast as a technical amendment to all the County's labor contracts to enable law enforcement and the courts to have the same holiday schooled. There is no analysis of the relative social and historical background. Apparently the action is supported by the County's unions, as it is reported that they all agree.

Background:

Native American Day is a holiday observed in several US states in celebration of Native American culture. In California and Nevada, the holiday is designated on the fourth Friday of September, whereas in South Dakota and Wisconsin, it falls on the second Monday of October.

Hundreds of Columbus statues have been beheaded across the country in recent years as part of the effort to equate his exploratory voyages with the later enslavement and atrocities committed by the various European colonizing powers. After all, Columbus was not Hernan Cortez and Abraham Lincoln was not Andrew Jackson. The conflict has recurred throughout history when one group of humans with more advanced technology encounters a group with less advanced technology. Cro-Magnons dominated Neanderthals, Romans dominated Celts, Islamic Caliphates dominated Medieval Europeans, and, perhaps in a few years, China will dominate whatever remains of western civilization.

Relatedly, instead of attacking China's history and monuments, China's Premier, Xi Jinping, is promoting them. A Chinese news report stated in part on Friday:

On Friday afternoon, Xi visited the Chinese Academy of History. He walked into the Chinese Archaeological Museum in the academy and toured exhibitions including one on the origins of civilization.

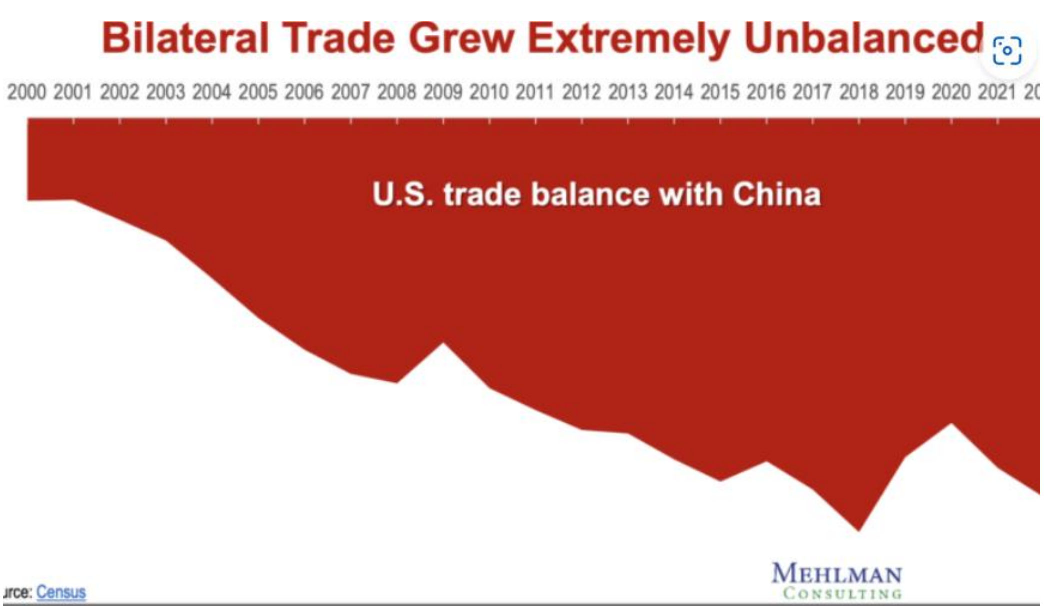
Xi highlighted the integral role of archaeology in deepening the understanding of the rich and profound Chinese culture. He emphasized the significance of conducting research and providing interpretations regarding the origins of Chinese civilization.

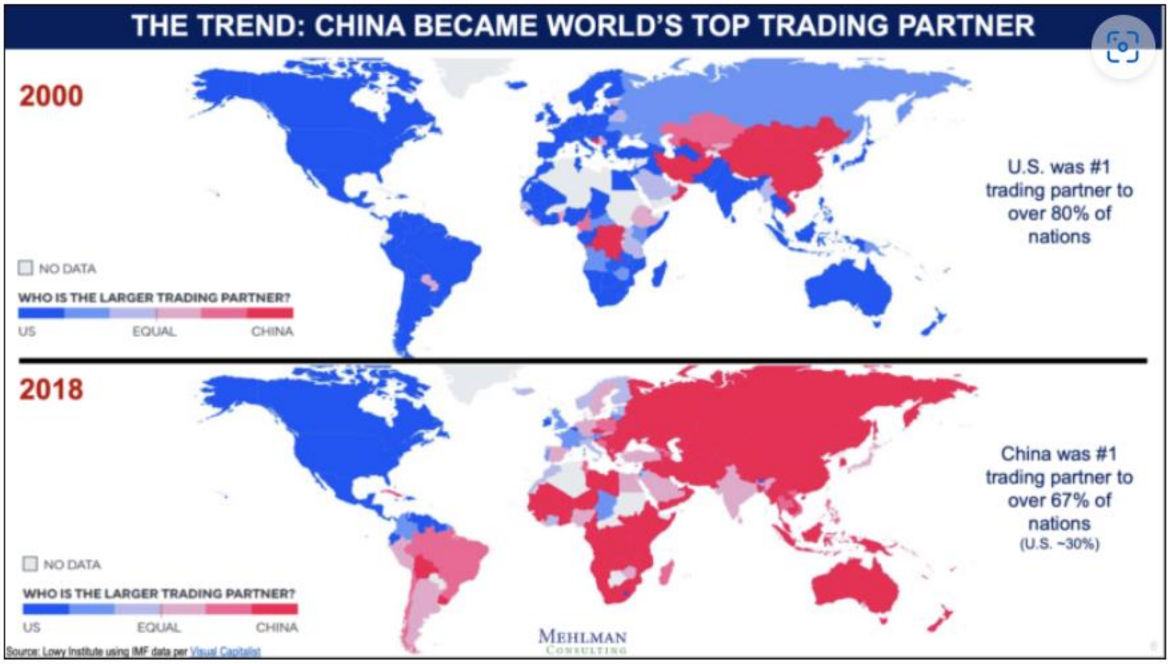
Xi conveyed his expectations that scholars would continue to enhance their research endeavors and contribute their wisdom and efforts to the advancement of Chinese modernization.

Subsequently, Xi participated in the meeting on cultural inheritance and development at the academy. After several professors and scholars spoke, he delivered an important speech.

Contrast this with our Woke idiots who are tearing down our monuments and cancelling important historical heroes on the basis of current political ideology.

As Steve Hayward points out in the 2 graphs below:





They are not celebrating Native Tribes day for the Uyghurs, Mongols, Tibetans, or anyone else[1], let alone DEI training.

Item 54 - Reorganization of the Paso Water Basin - Hearing to consider adoption of a resolution:

1) Withdrawing from serving as the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) within the Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD) service area through modification of the boundaries of the "Paso Basin – County of San Luis Obispo Groundwater Sustainability Agency";

2) Acceptance and approval of the "Addition of Party to Memorandum of Agreement regarding Preparation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin" signed by the EPCWD;

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[1] The Uyghurs, alternatively spelled Uighurs, Uygurs or Uigurs, are a Turkic ethnic group originating from and culturally affiliated with the general region of Central and East Asia. The Uyghurs are recognized as native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China.

3) Authorizing the Director of Groundwater Sustainability to take actions to effectuate the GSA boundary modification; and,

4) Find the project is exempt from Section 21000 et seq. of the California Public Resources Code (CEQA).

This is a major policy item that essentially determines whether the Paso Basin Water Policy will be controlled by a small special interest group of large water banking investors or the democratically elected Board of Supervisors, which represents about 8000 other users.

The fact that this item appears out of nowhere on a Board of Supervisors agenda, and in combination with **Item 24**, above (which purports to encourage “equity” in the distribution of the water) is in itself an admission and concrete example of the intent to do the exact opposite. Relatedly, the Board majority of Supervisors Gibson, Ortiz-Legg, and Paulding just two months ago repealed an ordinance intended to provide a small amount (up to 25-acre feet) to small users who were locked out by the County’s Paso Bain Moratorium until the full implementation of the SGMA Plan can become operative. This could take years or decades.

Again, we are confronted (as in Item 24 above) with an unsolicited complex staff report which has been developed by various county departments at considerable expense but without any initial approval by the Board of Supervisors. In other words, why on the basis of a request from the Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District (EPCWD) did the County Water Sustainability Director, assisted by their departments, undertake preparation of this report on his own?

Did Groundwater Sustainability Director Blaine Reely submit it on his own?

Did Interim County Administrative Officer John Nilon direct that the report be brought forward?

Who authorized the use of staff and budget to work on the report?

Did any Board member direct staff to prepare the report?

How did the report get onto the County agenda?

1. Issues at stake: The County staff ostensibly (was it staff or Supervisor Gibson?) proposes to reorganize the governance of the Paso Water Basin to negate the power of the democratically elected Board of Supervisors over the Basin and reduce the Board’s vote from 61% down to 32%.

Proposed Vote Allocation

City Member	15%
SMCSD Member	3%
HRCSD Member	1%
SSJWD Member	20%
County Member	32%
EPCWD Member	29%

Current Vote Allocation

City Member	15%
SMCSD Member	3%
HRCSD Member	1%
SSJWD Member	20%
County Member	61%

In turn the EPCWD and its sister SSJWD combined would have 49% of the vote.

2. Interlocking Interest Group: When considered together, the two water districts comprise the same alliance of interests that proposed the AB 2453 Water District back in 2016. That District proposal was rejected by 78% of the Basin voters. The current proposal to activate the EPCWD as a SGMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) is simply a ploy achieve what the voters already rejected in another form.

In 2016, those promoting the AB 2453 District formed a group called Calm the Basin. For the most part, Calm the Basin contained the same players as now serve on the Boards of the 2 water districts. For example:

The EPCWD board includes Dana Merrill, President; Hilary Graves, Vice President; and Jerry Reaugh, Secretary. The District Administrator is Laurie Gage, who has been involved for years.

The SSJWD board incudes Willy Cunha, Steve Sinton, Marshall Miller, and Matt Turrentine.

At the same time, several of these individuals were major campaign contributors to Supervisor Gibson during the last election.

Sample Political Contributions to Bruce Gibson

Name	Occupation	Date	Donation	Total
Jerome Lohr	J. Lohr Vineyards	02/02/2020	$4,500.00	
		03/13/2021	$5,000.00	
		04/22/2022	$5,000.00	
		08/02/2022	$5,000.00	
		10/22/2022	$5,000.00	$24,500.00
Matthew Turrentine	Grape Vine Capital	05/23/2021	$ 500.00	
		11/12/2021	$2,500.00	
		08/19/2022	$5,000.00	
		12/14/2022	$1,000.00	$ 9,000,00
Dana Merrill	Mesa Vineyards	04/01/2021	$1,000.00	
		04/22/2022	$ 500.00	$ 1,500.00
Kathleen Maas	Pear Valley Estate Wine	03/20/2022	$1,000.00	
		08/02/2022	$1,000.00	$ 2,000.00
Michael Baugh	Retired (CALM)	08/06/2021	$ 200.00	
		02/28/2022	$ 250.00	$ 450.00
Sue Luft	(PRO Water Equity)	02/09/2922	$ 100.00	
		07/18/2022	$ 150.00	
		09/18/2022	$ 60.00	
		10/16/2022	$ 50.00	$ 260.00
Dee Lacey	Retired (CALM)	07/26/2022	$ 198.00	
		09/02/2022	$ 99.00	
		10/21/2022	$ 99.00	
		11/09/2022	$ 99.00	$ 495.00

Hilary Graves	Farmer (CALM)	07/17/2022	$ 100.00	$ 100.00
Stephen Sinton	Rancher (PRAAGS)	08/07/2022	$1,000.00	
		10/26/2022	$1,000.00	$2,000.00
Andrea Pease	In Balance Green	07/31/2022	$1,500.00	$1,500.00

Political Contributions to Bruce Gibson (Continued)

Name	**Occupation**	**Date**	**Donation**	**Total**
Jerry Reaugh	Retired (PRAAGS)	10/10/2022	$ 300.00	$ 300.00
James Ledbetter	Vino Farms	09/28/2022	$3,000.00	$3,000.00
Bimmer Udsen	Castro Cellars	10/16/2022	$ 250.00	$ 250.00
Randy Heinzen	Vineyard Pro. Services	08/24/2022	$ 900.00	$ 900.00
Danie Daou	Daou Vineyards Wine Maker	06/02/2021	$1,000.00	
Georges Daou	Daou Vineyards Proprietor	06/02/2021	$1,000.00	
Neil Cassidy	Daou Vineyards (CFO)	09/15/2022	$3,000.00	$5,000.00

Total **$51,255.00**

Supervisor Gibson is certainly extremely responsive to this group. He asserts that he is supporting a very important industry. The industry is very important and constitutes a vast and highly attractive agricultural, experiential, and economic asset.

PASO ROBLES
WINE COUNTRY ALLIANCE

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE WINE AND WINEGRAPE INDUSTRY IN THE PASO ROBLES AVA AND SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

HIGHLIGHTS

$1.9 BILLION ^

	San Luis Obispo County *
Total Jobs **	13,627
Wages Paid	$388 Million
% of County Jobs	11.5%
Winery Revenue from SLO County Wine	$732 Million
Cases of Wine Produced	8.58 Million
Winegrape Bearing Acres	44,700
SLO County Wine Grape Crop Size 2015	127,367 Tons
Value of Winegrape Crop	$297 Million
Total Tourism Visits to Wineries	1.56 Million
Wine Related Tourism Expenditures	$194 million
Wine Related Tourism Percentage Demand for Hotel Accommodations	28%
Percentage of Gross Regional Product for San Luis Obispo County	6.5%
Total Property Tax Assessments to Vineyards and Wineries	$44.8 Million (28% of total SLO Co.)
Total 2015 CA Sales Tax revenue collected from Vineyard and Wineries	$54.9 Million (10% of total SLO Co.)

^ Including direct, indirect, and induced economic impact.
* Including Paso Robles AVA
** Including vineyard, winery, and supporting industries

The Paso Robles AVA accounts for 87 percent of SLO County wine industry output and economic impact with 40,000 vineyard acres and more than 200 wineries, 95 percent of which are small production, family owned businesses.

Report prepared by University of California Agricultural Issues Center for the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance. Data based on the 2015 harvest year. Any use or reproduction of this publication must be approved by the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance.

But does this mean that it should have the predominant power to regulate the use of water in the basin just because it is the largest user? Agriculture is by far the largest user and wine grapes constitute by far the largest component of agricultural use.

Table 6. Total Groundwater Extractions

Water Year	Groundwater Extractions by Water Use Sector			Total (AF)
	Municipal PWS[1] (AF)	Small PWS and Rural Domestic (AF)	Agriculture (AF)	
2017	1,626	5,060	64,100	**70,800**
2018	1,677	5,060	75,500	**82,200**
2019	1,729	5,060	55,800	**62,600**
2020	1,509	5,060	59,200	**65,800**
2021	1,553	5,060	75,500	**82,100**
2022	1,982	5,060	80,200	**87,200**
Method of Measure:	Metered	2016 Groundwater Model	Soil-Water Balance Model, OpenET (2022 only)	–
Level of Accuracy:	high	low-medium	medium	–

Source 2022 Draft Paso Basin SGMA Report to the State Department of Water Resources

Notice the Ag growth over the past 6 years: 64,100 to 80,200 AF is 16, 000 in spite of the moratorium.

It is somewhat equivalent to having the Coastal Commission allow coastal property owners to form special districts to manage their sectors under the Coastal Act. That Commission doesn't even allow the cities to have much discretion.

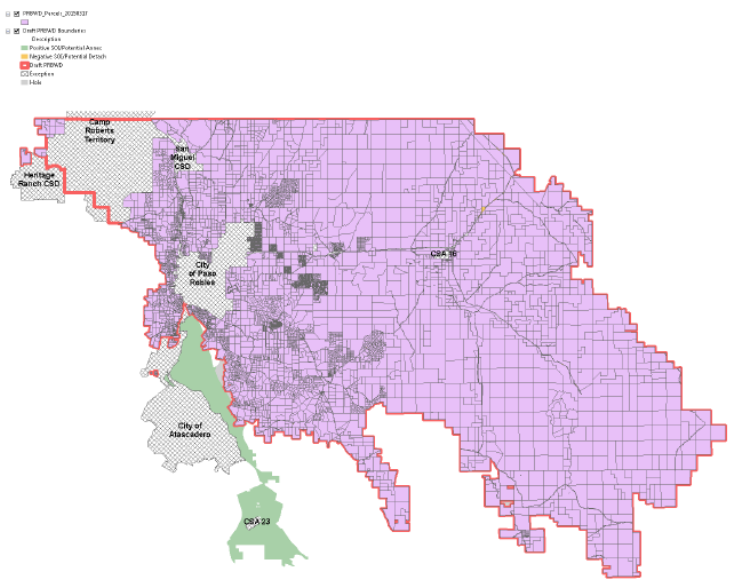
Isn't covering the Paso Basin with industry controlled districts tantamount to the foxes watching the hen house, especially since ag pumping has increased enormously?

Have the larger entities been overpumping to establish a larger threshold for reductions when SGMA regulations finally bite in?

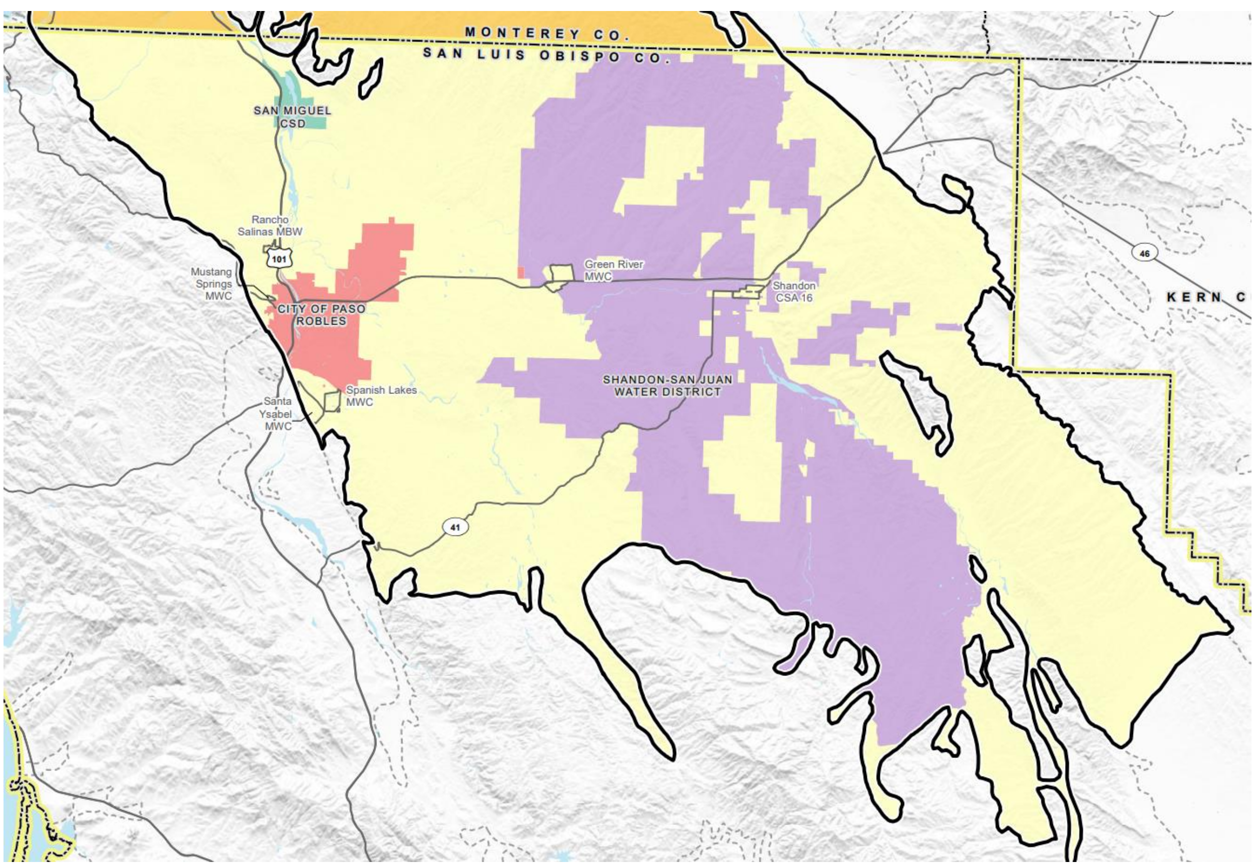
3. The proposed, and ultimately defeated AB 2453 district, the existing EPCWD, and the existing Shandon San Juan Water District were all originally approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The legality of all 3 districts was and continues to be highly questionable.

a. The Voter Rejected AB 2453 district: In 2016, Supervisors Gibson, Hill, and Meacham rammed the district though the Legislature, the Board of Supervisors, and LAFCO. It was only stopped by the voters in the Basin. There were severe legal and process questions which were simply papered over by County Counsel and LAFCO counsel.

Attachment C – Proposed Water District Boundary Map



b. The LAFCO Approved Shandon-San Juan Water District. The district was approved and ultimately confirmed as a SGMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA). As of its May financial report, it has $404,000 in cash. It is not known if it has contributed any funding to the preparation of the Paso Basin SGMA Ground Water Sustainability Plan (GSP). That plan seems to have been largely financed by State grants obtained by the County. Other than paying for its organizational costs, the proposed FY 2023-24 budget seems to be for various hydrological studies. The overall public benefit is not too clear.



c. The Estrella-El Pomar- Creston Water District. This one is, of course, the subject of the push to revise its status to become a SGMA ground water sustainability agency (GSA) and for it to take over the County GSA functions in its territory. Its approval as a “water district” by LAFCO in the first place is highly suspicious in that it is a checkerboard of interested landowners, as opposed to a contiguous compact entity as required by the Cortes-Knox Act (which governs LAFCO criteria for formation of new entities). In a political reach, a prior LAFCO administration claimed to find an obscure clause to the effect that a water district need not be contiguous as long as the parcels are within 2 miles of each other.

One problem is that the clause pertains to water irrigation districts, not water sustainability districts. The whole entity is illegal in the first place. It has no canals, pumps, reservoirs, or any of the facilities of an irrigation district.

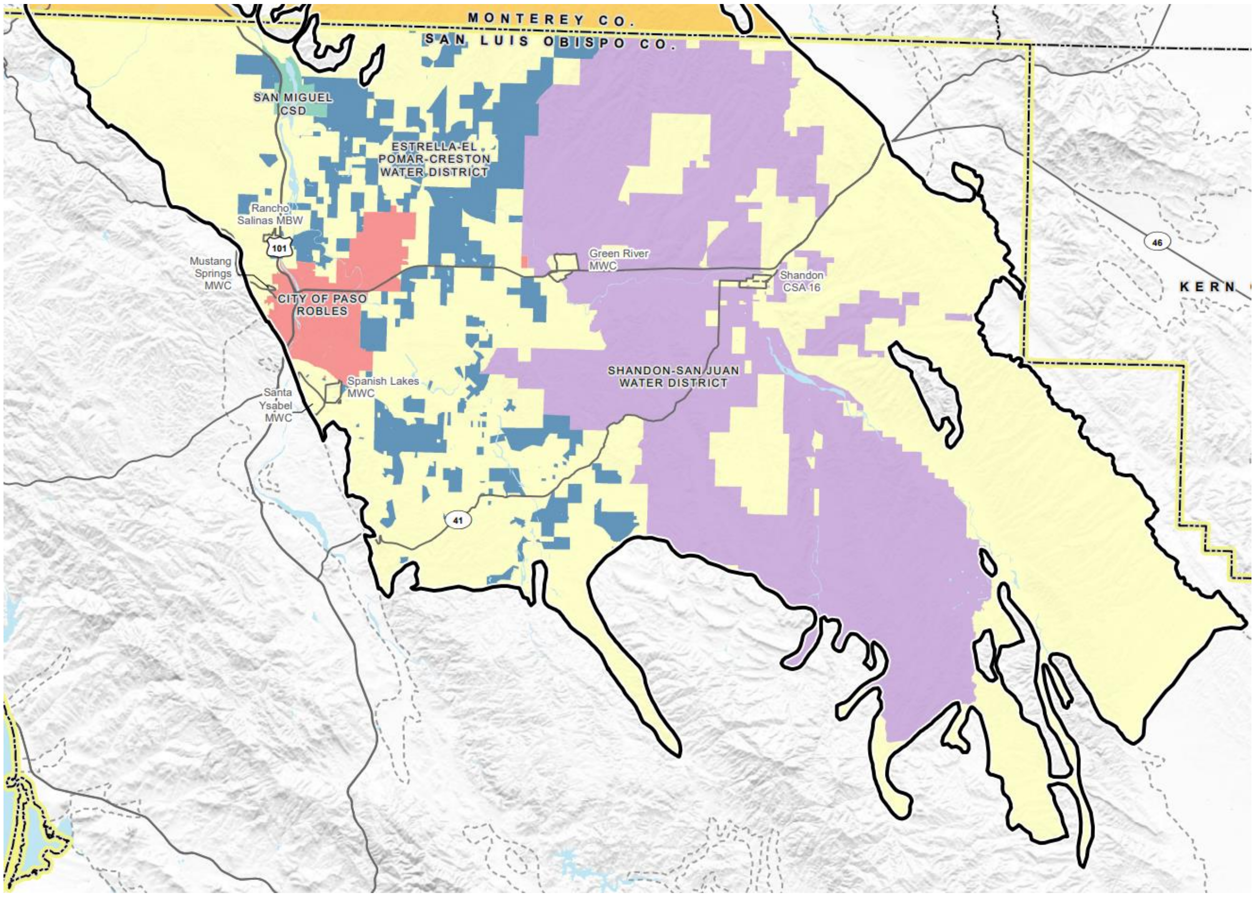
We could not find any financial report or proposed 2023-24 budget for the District on its website. Its heretofore main function seems to be recruiting and retaining members and lobbying to become a GSA. It seems very strange that a district with a spread-out checkerboard pattern could actually manage water sustainability as a practical matter.

For this District to become a SGMA GSA, the County Supervisors would have to vote to relinquish its authority as the current GSA serving the areas under the District. LAFCO would need to conduct an analysis of the costs and benefits. It would also have to determine the prospective costs of the district deploying and managing its own Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP).

The current Board agenda item is not clear about which entity (the County or the EPCD) would prepare and pay for processing the application for the County to cede its authority and the EPCD to become GSA. In the case of the putative AB 2453 Water District, the County paid for the processing. Article 3 of the proposed Resolution directs County staff to prepare and process the applications necessary for the County to cede its water regulatory authority over the EPCD portions of the Basin.

3) Authorizing the Director of Groundwater Sustainability to take actions to effectuate the GSA boundary modification; and,

By adopting the Resolution and directing staff to proceed, the Board is flying blind. They have no idea what the process will cost.



d. Opposition: The opposition of the San Miguel Community Service District dooms the idea of the EPCD serving on the Basin Cooperative Committee from the outset. Each member of the current committee must approve the addition of new members. LAFCO cannot approve the creation of the district as a GSA unless it can become a member of the Cooperative Committee as well. See the letter below:

Separately, and perhaps to comport with its illegal formation as an irrigation district, the District has sought acquisition of City of Paso tertiary treated sewer water. Reportedly, the City has sent the District a letter rejecting that request, which has not been disclosed by staff as an attachment to this agenda item.

Please see the letter on the next page:

Board of Directors

President
Vacant

Vice President
Raynette Gregory

Board Members
Anthony Kalvans
Owen Davis
Rod Smiley

General Manager
Kelly Dodds

Fire Chief
Scott Young

Mission Statement

The San Miguel Community Services District was formed and remains committed to efficiently serving the community with fire protection, water, wastewater, streetlighting/landscaping and solid waste services in San Miguel

P.O. Box 180

San Miguel, CA 93451

Tel.
Fax 805-467-9212

May 31, 2023

County Board of Supervisors

The Estrella-El Pomar Creston Water District (EPC) is requesting that the County of San Luis Obispo relinquish the EPC area from the County GSA area creating the EPC GSA.

The San Miguel CSD GSA Board of Directors discussed this possibility at their regular April meeting.

The San Miguel CSD GSA Board would like the Board of Supervisors to vote against the relinquishment of GSA area to the EPC.

The San Miguel CSD Board believes that the EPC becoming a GSA and taking voting percentage away from the County will have a negative effect on the representation of the property owners of the unincorporated areas of the County within the Basin.

Additionally, although it is recognized that the EPC has made efforts to better understand the groundwater within their District, the creation of another predominately Agriculture GSA will likely hamper the ability of the PBCC or its successor agencies from implementing restrictive irrigation measures in the future to prevent further degradation of the basin resulting in the loss of water to rural property owners.

Thank you for your consideration in denial of the request for the EPC to form as a GSA.

On behalf of the San Miguel Community Services District Board of Directors.

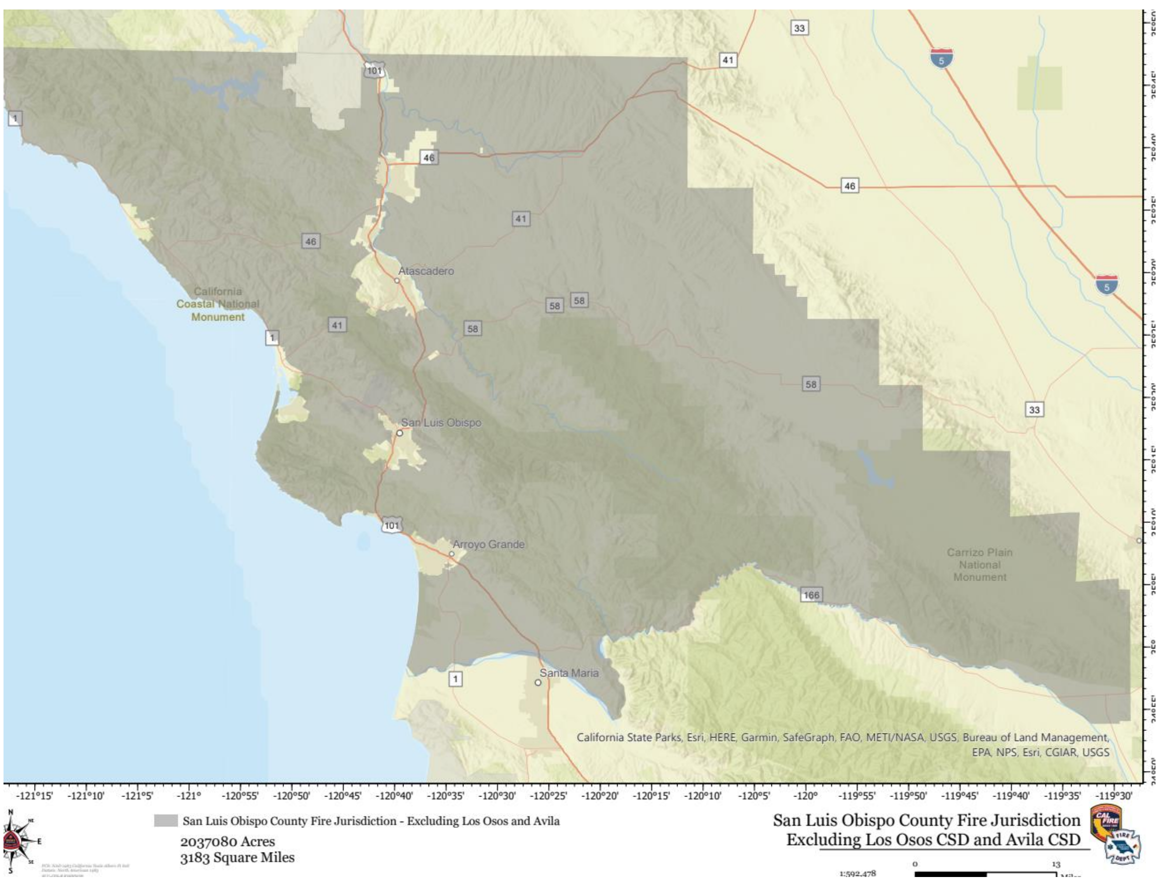
Kelly Dodds
General Manager
San Miguel Community Services District

Item 58 - Formation of a Special Taxing District to Upgrade Fire, Medical and All Hazard Emergency Services Request to: 1) approve submittal of an application for Change of Organization to Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for formation of a new County Service Area; 2) adopt a resolution of application for the initiation of proceedings

for formation of a new County Services Area for the unincorporated area of San Luis Obispo County; 3) find that the proposed activity is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) because adopting a resolution to submit an application to LAFCO is not a project as defined by Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; and 4) authorize a corresponding budget adjustment in the amount of $14,721 from FC 115 - General Fund contingencies to FC 140 - County Fire to provide allocation for fees associated with the formation process of the County Service Area, by 4/5 vote.

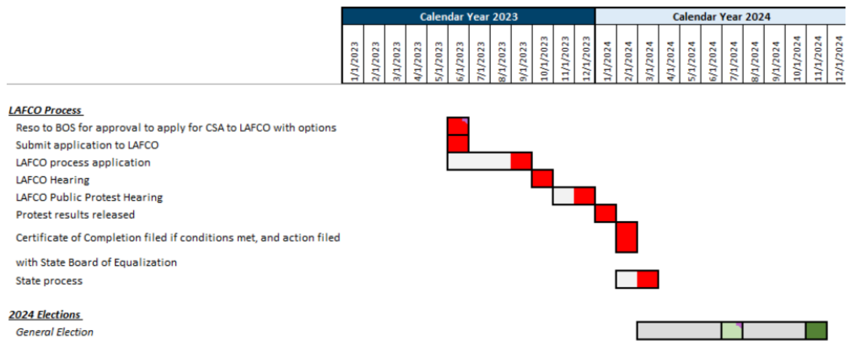
The write-up summarizes the history:

On January 24, 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted the 2022 County Fire Strategic Plan (Plan) (attachment 5) that provided strategies to determine appropriate and improve upon service levels for communities of differing demographics and fire protection demand. In alignment with the identified strategies, the Plan includes recommendations which are intended to improve service delivery. The recommendations address management and operations of County Fire, Emergency Medical Services, response service levels, facilities, finance, and administration. At the time of preparing the Plan, costs associated with recommendations were: $46.2 million for Capital Improvement Projects, $4.5 million for Equipment Costs, and $17.6 million for additional annual operational costs. Since plan development, operational cost estimates have increased to $19.8 million, for a total estimated $70.4 million.



Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Process:

Initiation of the LAFCO process requires submittal of an application and Resolution of Application.



Unfortunately the write up does not provide any estimates of the per occupancy cost of the new tax. It is no possible for the Board and the public to gage whether to ignite this process without some idea of the tax parameters. In the end, an election will have to be held to reject or approve the tax. However . it would be prudent to have some estimates at this point.

MATTERS AFTER 1 30 PM

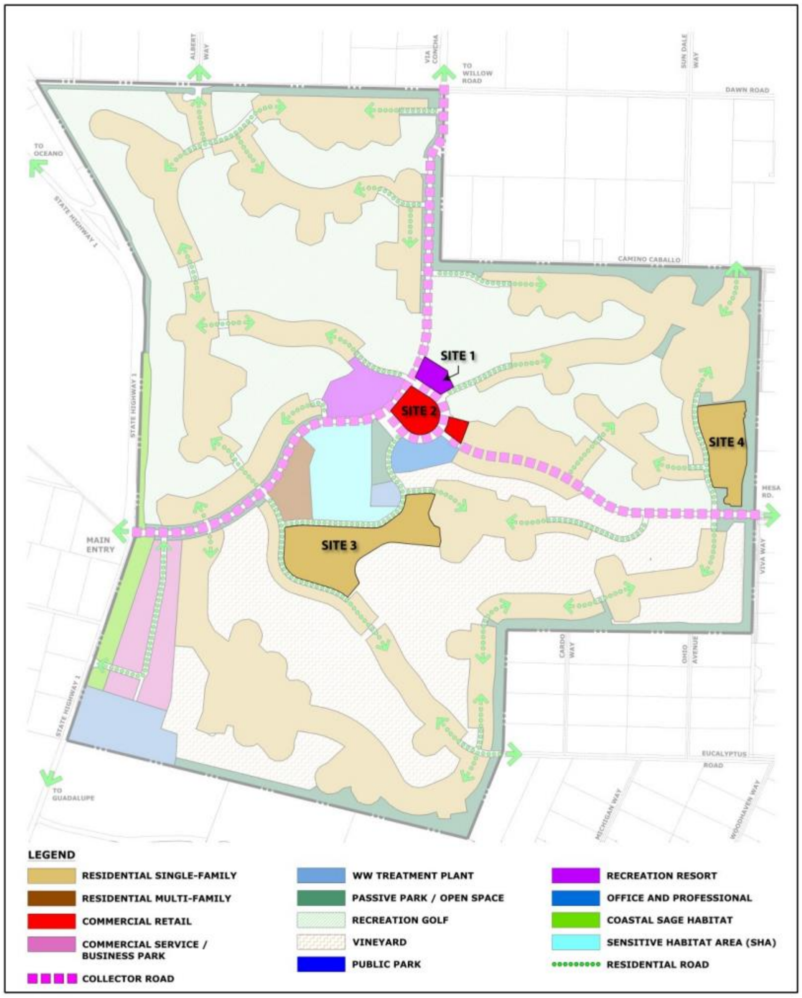
Item 62 - Revisions to the Monarch Dunes Planned Community Specific Plan - Hearing to consider a request by Monarch Dunes LLC to: 1) amend the Monarch Dunes Specific Plan (LRP2021-00003) to modify the allowable land uses of four sites within the Monarch Dunes Specific Plan area; 2) consider the attached resolution to amend the Growth Management Ordinance, Title 26 of the County Code, to amend the Woodlands Specific Plan Area standards (LRP2022-00010) to be consistent with the phasing plan for the proposed Specific Plan amendments.

The Monarch Dunes Specific Plan area is located on the Nipomo Mesa, approximately two miles west of the community of Nipomo, east of Highway 1, and approximately half a mile south of Willow Road.

The write-up summarizes the current plan and proposed changes as follows:

The Monarch Dunes Specific Plan Area is substantially built out, except for the Village Center, Resort Site, and Public Park Site. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment would change the allowable land uses and development types for these four "Phase 3" sites. Future development of these sites will continue to be subject to subsequent land use, subdivision, grading, and building permit approvals, as applicable. (See the map below for orientation)

Figure 1: Map of Proposed Land Use and Sites with Corresponding Numbers



Proposed Specific Plan Amendment In March 2021, Monarch Dunes LLC (Applicant) submitted an application (LRP2021-00003) to amend the Monarch Dunes Specific Plan to modify the allowable land uses of four sites within the Specific Plan area. Development of these four sites will be Phase 3 of the Specific Plan. The Board of Supervisors authorized processing of this amendment on August 11, 2021. Below are the requested changes to each numbered site (see Figure 1):

• Site #1 (Village Center, shown in purple in Figure 1) is proposed to be redesignated from Commercial Retail land use to Recreation-Resort land use, to support up to 65 hotel rooms (a reduction and relocation from the allowable 400-room hotel planned for Site #3).

• Site #2 (Village Center) is proposed to retain the Commercial Retail land use designation, but would be modified to support up to 40 condominium residential dwelling units on the second floor (above commercial retail spaces) and to decrease the maximum allowable floor area for commercial uses from 140,000 square feet to 38,500 square feet.

• Site #3 (the former 400-room hotel site) is proposed to be redesignated from Recreation-Resort land use to Residential Single-Family land use, to support up to 76 residential dwelling units in the form of 38 common wall developments.

• Site #4 (Future Public Park site) is proposed to be redesignated from Public Park land use to Residential SingleFamily land use, to support 46 residential dwelling units in the form of 23 common wall developments

Table 1: Summary of Net Changes Resulting of Proposed Project

Development Type	Existing Monarch Dunes Specific Plan	Proposed Specific Plan Amendment	Net Change
Residential dwelling units	1,320 dwelling units	1,482 dwelling units	162 dwelling units increase
Commercial retail use	140,000 square feet	38,500 square feet	101,500 square feet decrease
Hotel rooms	400 hotel rooms	65 hotel rooms	335 hotel room decrease
Public Park (active use)	1 planned active use public park	0 planned active use public park	Removal of the planned active-use public park

There is some opposition to the revisions as well as some support. The project, among other features, completes the planned trail system, which has generated some support.

It will be interesting to see where Supervisor Paulding comes down on this one – more housing or restricting development.

San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Meeting of Wednesday, June 7, 2023 (Scheduled)

F.3 - LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A SALES TAX INCREASE Regional Housing & Infrastructure Plan (HIP). The effort was begun back in 2018 but delayed as a result of COVID diverting staff to emergency work, COVID lockdowns, and vacant staff positions. The County had originally taken the lead, with former County Administrator Wade Horton marshalling the County staff and city managers. For whatever reason it was subsequently determined to put SLOCOG in charge of the project. At this point it appears that they have identified about $1 billion in capital needs for water projects and transportation projects, which they believe must be completed to allow the development of more housing. There are apparently appendices to this report that contain the detailed information, but they do not seem to be provided as online attachments to this agenda item. It is therefore hard to know what the detail is for the capital projects. Also, the funding strategies detail is not provided.

The staff recommendation concludes with the notion that the County and cities will review the matter over the summer and then provide "guidance." Thus, what had been conceived of as a worthwhile project is likely to die in the doldrums of collaboration, lack of leadership, commitment, and process.

The HIP is the first of its kind, and it is intended to be a living document. For the last five years, collaboration has continued to build, and these incremental steps have allowed the region to make progress in addressing the monumental challenges of the housing and infrastructure shortage. Next steps to follow stakeholder guidance during Summer 2023 Outreach.

The write-up is general:

The Regional Housing & Infrastructure Plan (HIP) is a collaborative action plan between nine local jurisdictions in response to the San Luis Obispo region's growing housing and infrastructure shortage. The HIP is intended to help accelerate housing development where it makes the most sense given regional conditions and readiness. The HIP inventories infrastructure barriers to housing, identifies funding to implement infrastructure needs, and develops foundational information for the future 2027 Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

The County, seven Cities, and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) approved the first major milestone of the HIP - the San Luis Obispo Countywide Regional Compact. The Regional Compact is an aspirational document that sets the tone and goals for future recommended plans and actions among the local agencies. It establishes a united regional framework to unlock the potential to develop an adequate supply of housing and resilient infrastructure that support our economic prosperity. It recognizes that people, water, transportation, connectivity, and housing form the foundation of the San Luis Obispo region's healthy, livable communities and thriving economic opportunity.

Figure 1: HIP Elements

HIP Element	Informs
Data and Project Inventory	Infrastructure barriers to housing
Housing Efficiency Analysis	Housing Efficient Areas in HIP
Infrastructure Prioritization	Region's highest priority projects to unlock housing
HIP Mapping Tool	Living strategic analysis tool used to show the interrelation between housing and infrastructure
Affordable-by-Design Study	Menu of possible policies to increase housing attainability
Funding Strategies Assessment	Funding the region could pursue for priority infrastructure
Housing Highlights	Communication tool: Understanding the need for housing, affordability, and opportunities

There were 440 infrastructure projects collected as part of the data inventory. Of those, 18% (80 projects) were located within Housing Efficient Areas. The 80 projects were ranked using a three-tiered prioritization process based on potential new housing units served. The estimated cost for all 80 HIP projects is over one billion dollars. About one quarter of the HIP projects are water related with the remaining being transportation improvements.

Figure 2: Draft HIP Priority Projects Summary

	Estimate ($ Millions)	Projects
Estimate for all HIP Projects	**$ 1,015**	**80**
High	$ 348	54
Medium	$ 385	10
Low	$ 281	16

F-4 - NEW SALES TAX INCREASE FOR TRANSPORTATION TAX DOLLARS BEING SPENT FOR PROMMOTION - Supplemental Funding: Polling Results and Next for a Sales Tax for Transportation.

The purpose of this staff report, and the polling results, is to determine whether or not to take another step toward becoming a Self-Help County – a designation that is only achieved if voters have an opportunity to vote on, and 2/3rds support, a future ballot measure. This step would *increase engagement efforts to identify the public's specific needs, develop focus groups, gather new poll results, and report to the Board. Many more steps would be required prior to considering the option to submit a new measure to the voters, including the development of a Transportation Expenditure Plan and safeguards (oversight committee, maintenance of effort, etc.*

This poll was completed in April 2023. Top of mind issues may have included: income tax filing day, high fuel prices, high inflation, Ukraine/Russia war, several small bank failures, and the recent pandemic. Conditions and top of mind issues may change in a future election cycle .

SLOCOG Past Polling Results Comparison:

	2011	2015	2016	2023
½ cent 30 years	57%	-	-	-
½ cent 25 years following engagement	-	-	63%	-
½ cent 20 years pre-engagement	60%	44%	-	63%
½ cent 10 years	-	56%	-	-
Election (J-16): ½ cent for 9 years	-	-	66.3%	-

Notes: %s above represent highest % from each survey.
Measure J-16 results by Supervisorial District - 1: 59%; 2: 71%, 3: 71%, 4: 66%, 5: 63%

The staff now recommends that the Board approve a new $116,000 for its campaign consultant to undertake the research below to promote a sales tax measure. This is blatant use of your tax dollars to promote a tax being placed on the ballot. Simply read, the plain language below spells it out:

1. Public Engagement and Outreach ($30,000): Staff and its engagement consultant(s) seek to engage with groups and organizations (as many as possible) at the community level. This would initiate a conversation with key stakeholders and voters to identify local needs, issues, and concerns. These meetings would serve to raise awareness, identify benefits, build trust, and more. Key results of this effort are to inform the development of a future poll, Expenditure Plan, safeguards, and possibly, proposed measure. This effort would initiate in June, with most meetings would be completed between July and early September. Results would be shared with TNR/sub consultant. (Draft Contract link)

2. *Focus Groups ($10,000): One engagement consultant will recruit and moderate a series of four (4) total focus groups with registered voters in the San Luis Obispo region. These groups will be conducted in the Five Cities area, San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles/Atascadero, and Morro Bay/Cambria. This consultant will recruit respondents for each group to seat 8 to 10 for each group, and report results to TNR/sub consultant.*

3. Technical Advice ($40,000): TNR/sub consultant(s) will be involved peripherally to assure integration of all components. The consultant will provide critiques and suggestions for the website, engagement activities and tools, focus groups, and poll questionnaire during each components preparation as well as identifying key outputs for their collection and review. Additionally, this effort will expand upon grass-roots meetings by preparing/purchasing digital media to connect public to a website to collect their input as well. Results of engagement efforts will be assimilated and distilled to key results, takeaways, alternatives to inform a tracking poll and to inform a possible Expenditure Plan as well. Staff will work with TNR to identify a suitable sub consultant for this effort.

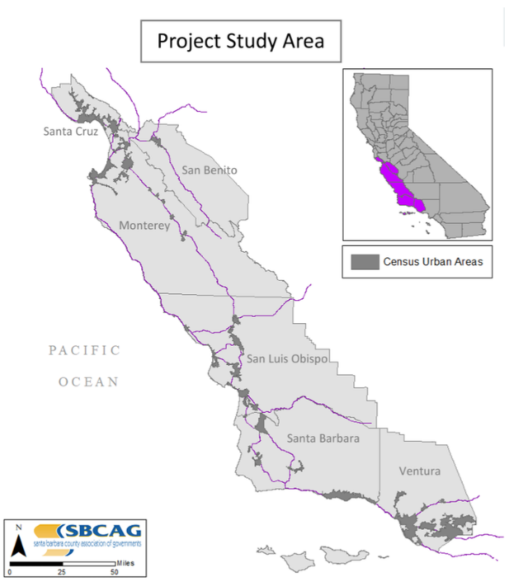
4. Polling ($36,500): TNR will perform a full-size tracking poll, again, aiming at 1,000 responses through a statistically valid methodology. This poll will test success of recent public engagement efforts and public concern about transportation and awareness of needs; test support for transportation-related issues and quality of life investments; test support for a new tax, and related issues, such as taxpayer safeguards; and assess support for overall goals of a local sales tax plan. Top lines will be produced and presented to the SLOCOG Board and a final report prepared. (Amended Contract link) SLOCOG Staff Efforts: Staff will work with the c

Proposed Schedule(s):

Task	Option 1	Option 2
Prepare materials, website, online tools, presentations, scheduling	June	June
Begin engagement with in person meetings	July	July-Sept.
Digital Marketing Outreach	July	September
Board Meeting Update / Direction	Aug. 2	Aug. 2
Focus Groups	August	September
Polling	August	October
Board Review of Results and Materials	October	December
……..more steps and meetings……….		
Possible Ballot Measure	Mar. '24	Nov. '24

F-5 Draft Central Coast Emissions Strategy. SLO County, Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, San Benito County, and Monterey County have developed a joint plan to promote the use of electric vehicle charging stations and are now eligible to submit a grant application to receive funding to acquire and install them. The item is deficient in that it does not state how much they will cost, who will operate them, and who will pay for the maintenance and repairs, once they are installed.

SBCAG will submit an application on behalf of the Central Coast for $15-$20millioni in hopes of being awarded funding to install a number of electric vehicle chargers throughout the Central Coast region. There is no local match commitment required from SLOCOG or the County of San Luis Obispo fort his grant application.

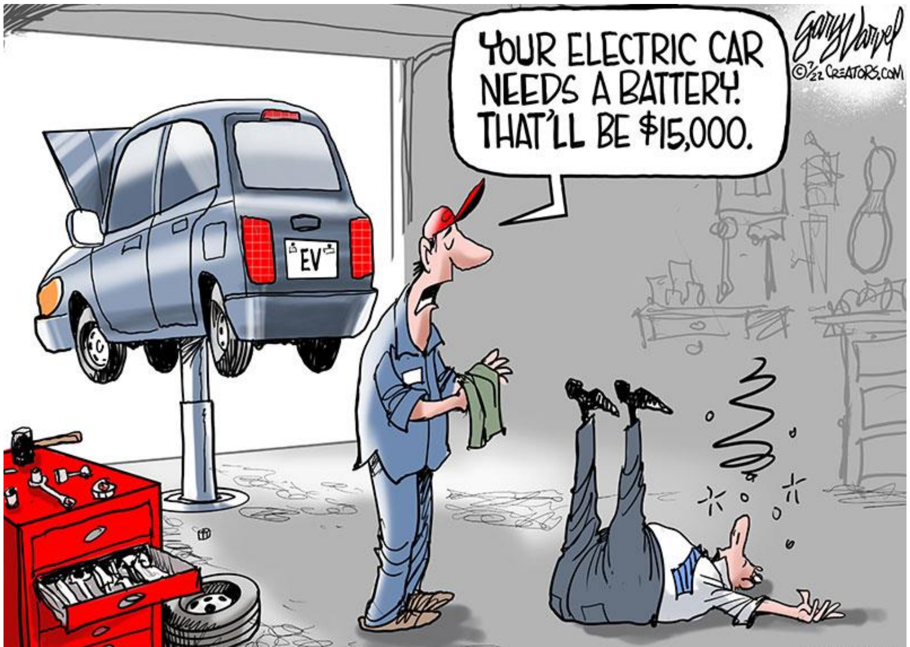


Project Study Area

The project study area is the California Central Coast region of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. The study will include improving ZEV access among rural and disadvantaged communities, including Native American Tribal Governments, within the study area.

The project has an estimated completion date of May 2023.

The poor sucker lemmings who are buying the over- priced, slow charging, and under ranged EV's will sadly learn the truth when the grid collapses and they are trapped.



Item G - SLCOG State Lobbyist Report on Transportation, Carbon Reduction, and Housing related bills under consideration in Sacramento. Some of these illustrate the extreme lunacy and hysteria now predominant among our leadership class.

3) **AB 9 Muratsuchi (D)** – California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: emissions limit ***(Recommendation: Watch)***
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB9

5) **AB 463 Hart (D)** – Electricity: prioritization of service: public transit vehicles ***(Recommendation: Support)***
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB463

7) **AB 610 Holden (D)** – Youth Transit Pass Pilot Program: free youth transit passes ***(Recommendation: Watch)***
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB610

11) **AB 1335 Zbur (D)** – Local government: transportation planning and land use: sustainable communities strategy ***(Recommendation: Oppose)***
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1335

17) **SB 670 Allen (D)** – Vehicle miles traveled: maps ***(Recommendation: Watch)***
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB670

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, June 8, 2023 (Scheduled)

In General: There are no major policy issues. The agenda consists of requests for permits for several single home projects. It also contains requests for permits for several smaller size multi-family projects and a small subdivision. The latter include:

Item 5 - Hearing to consider a request by John Gardner for a Tentative Tract Map (C-SUB2022-00001/Tract No. 3189) and a Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit to construct a mixed-use commercial and residential development project on a vacant, approximately 6,000 sq. ft. Site, and the subdivision of two, approximately 3,000 sq. ft. parcels into eight air-space condominium units. The three-level, 25-foot-tall mixed-use building will consist of: approximately 4,944 sq. ft. ground floor (Front Street) commercial floor level (containing up to four commercial units); 4,464 sq. ft. second floor (containing four residential units); 5,497 sq. ft. Basement level containing parking garage, storage, waste facilities and circulation; and 3,665 sq. private residential roof deck area with mechanical equipment storage and screening. The project includes a request to establish up to four residential vacation rentals within the residential condominium units. The project will be served by an existing 20-foot-wide private access driveway and will provide six dedicated on-site parking spaces for the residential units.

The proposed project is within the Commercial Retail land use category and is located at 490 and 498 Front Street, within the community of Avila Beach (Front Street Commercial District).

The staff seems to recommend approval of the project, although the Avila Valley Advisory Council has a number of objections and requests for design revisions.

West (Corner Side) Elevation

Item 6 - Hearing to consider a request by Peoples' Self-Help Housing for a Development Plan/Coastal Development Permit (C-DRC2023-00018) to allow the construction of 33 deed-restricted apartments located within seven buildings with a total floor area of 34,850 square feet, a community services building of 2,880 square feet and related site improvements. The project includes requests for setback waivers and height concessions pursuant to the State Density Bonus Law Section 65915(d)(2).

The project is in the Residential Multi-family land use category and is located at 2845 Schoolhouse Lane, within the community of Cambria. The site is in the North Coast Planning Area.

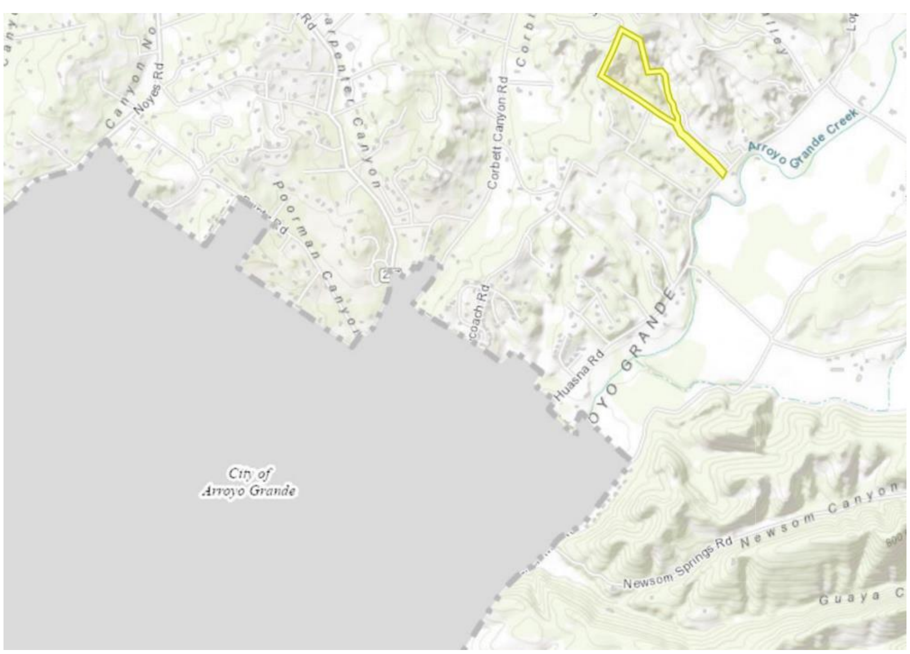
Figure 2 – Proposed Modifications

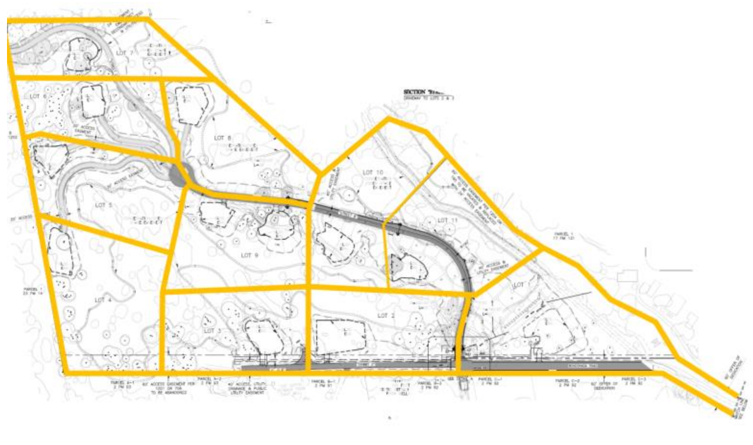
Figure 3: Rendering – Building Types A and B

There does not appear to be any opposition at this time. The project was approved back in 2019 and was ultimately appealed to the Coastal Commission. In the end the Commission approved the project, but the process took so long that it was never started. The applicant is now resubmitting. And people wonder why even subsidized affordable housing is not affordable.

Item 8 - Hearing to consider a request by Mid-State Properties for a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (Tract 2383) and Variance to subdivide a 37-acre parcel into 11 new residential parcels, ranging in size from 2.5 acres to 4.56 acres. A building envelope is proposed on each parcel ranging in size from 6,620 square feet (sf) to 15,850 sf. The project would require 51,000 cubic yards of cut and 51,000 cubic yards of fill (102,000 total cubic yards of earthwork) and would result in 12.5 acres of site disturbance as a result of grading for road and utility improvements, vegetation removal, recontouring of the former quarry, and grading of future building pads.

The project site is located in the Residential Suburban land use category, on the northeast side of Hondonada Road, approximately 1,500 feet north of Lopez Drive, northeast of the City of Arroyo Grande.





Custom homes here should sell for millions.

California Coastal Commission Meeting of Wednesday, June 7, Thursday, June 8, and Friday, June 9 2023 (Scheduled)

New Limitation on Coastal Commission general public comment. The Commission schedules separate 3-day meetings each month with separate agendas segregated by regions of the coast (North, Central, and South). Notwithstanding the Open Meeting Law, the Commission will allow an individual to speak on only one day and one topic per month for 2 minutes.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT. *Public comments that are not related to any of the items specifically listed on the agenda will be heard at approximately 9:00 am, for no more than one hour. At the discretion of the Chair, speakers may be given up to 2 minutes. Due to the transition to a virtual meeting platform, the Coastal Commission at this time will not allow for the ceding of time from one speaker to another speaker. Note: You may address the Commission on a specific topic one time only each month. Please submit a request to speak by 5:00 pm the day before the hearing to assist with meeting management sign up. We will stop taking speaker requests by 8:30 am on each day of the meeting. Please see the Coastal Commission's Virtual Hearing Procedures memo for submitting a request to speak.*

This month's meetings: There do not appear to be any significant policy topics pertaining to San Luis Obispo County or its coastal communities.

Unfortunately the write-up does not provide any estimates of the cost per occupancy and/or parcel of the new tax. It is difficult for the Board and the public to gage whether to ignite this process without some idea of the tax parameters. In the end an election will have to be held to reject or approve the tax. However, it would be prudent to have some estimates at this point.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors meeting on May 30, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

SLO County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Meeting of Thursday, June 1, 2023 (Completed)

Item B-2: Submission of the Proposed FY 2023-24 Budget. There are 3 questions about this proposed budget. These pertain to the expenditure section that is presented below the Revenue section.

REVENUES	BUDGET 2022-23	ESTIMATED 2022-23	REQUESTED 2023-24
Property Taxes	$ 431,656	$ 452,811	$ 454,736
Operating & Authority to Construct Permits	1,596,000	1,657,295	1,800,000
Other District Fees (Asbestos, Environ Assess, Burn Fees)	278,304	347,072	323,304
Mutual Settlements	75,000	135,000	80,000
Interest Revenue	20,000	51,045	50,000
DMV Air Fees	1,080,000	1,086,998	1,080,000
State & Federal Aid	816,233	756,547	311,350
Other Govt Aid	16,355	16,355	0
Other Sales & Miscellaneous Revenues	15,203	15,982	15,353
Cancelled Reserves & Designations	0	0	240,407
Fund Balance From Prior Year	1,611,377	1,611,377	1,226,249
Encumbrance Reserve From Prior Year	33,051	33,051	0
TOTAL FINANCING	**$ 5,973,179**	**$ 6,163,533**	**$ 5,581,399**

EXPENDITURES	BUDGET 2022-23	ESTIMATED 2022-23	REQUESTED 2023-24
Salaries, Benefits, & Taxes	$ 4,326,593	$ 3,857,987	$ 4,304,399
Communications - Phones, Mail	33,440	29,102	34,440
Computers, Software, & Support	149,400	95,510	153,370
County Services (excluding Computer Support)	92,235	87,107	112,087
Insurance	67,000	65,500	71,000
Leases & Rents	7,600	3,600	4,000
Maintenance - Equipment & Facilities	175,509	127,408	159,370
Office Supplies & Copies	33,786	15,336	39,836
Other Department Expenses	20,390	36,337	20,570
Professional Services	421,939	230,709	261,300
Public Outreach & Education	54,100	42,600	46,500
Training & Travel	55,442	30,545	51,442
Utilities	21,410	18,107	21,500
Vehicles - Maintenance & Fuel	24,400	21,106	24,400
Subtotal - Services & Supplies	1,156,651	802,967	999,815
Other Charges / Contributions to Other Agencies	6,000	1,000	2,000
Fixed Assets	213,261	159,362	98,200
Contingencies	154,706	0	162,132
Increased Reserves & Designations	115,968	115,968	14,853
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**5,973,179**	**4,937,284**	**5,581,399**
Net District Cost	**$ -**	**$ (1,226,249)**	**$ -**

Questions:

1. The agency underran its salary account by $468,606 in the current FY 2022-23. Why do they need to build it back to $4,303,399?

The write-up states in part:

FY 2023-2024 beginning FBA is estimated at approximately $1,226,249, which is $385,128 (-24%) lower than the FY 2022-2023 beginning FBA that was available to fund operations. This FBA will result from salary savings in FY 2022-2023 due to staff vacancies, unexpended services and supplies budget, unused contingencies, and higher than anticipated State Aid and reimbursements for services.

There are no indicia in the program descriptions and work goals that the staff vacancies resulted in programs experiencing problems or work being deferred. The Board should test whether they can run next fiscal year at the current year staffing level.

2. The Agency lost a legal case, and the Court required that it must pay legal costs of $126,000 to the Friends of the Dunes. This payment does not appear in either fiscal year. What is the status? Did the APCD appeal or what?

3. The line item for District Legal Counsel services is $45,000. How much are they spending this current fiscal year? How much existing litigation is on tap? How much is expected next year?

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AVILA
TRAFFIC SAFETY

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - State Vacation Rental Tax Proposed. The tax will be on top of current city and county taxes. Cal Matters reported:

California lawmakers are considering a measure this session that would tax short-term rentals to fund affordable housing projects, a proposal that has revived dormant tensions at the state Capitol over the rise of companies like Airbnb and Vrbo and their responsibility for the state's constrained housing supply.

Senate Bill 584 by state Sen. Monique Limón, a Santa Barbara Democrat, would impose a 15% tax on short-term rentals — the homes and rooms that owners rent out like hotels for 30 days or less at a time — starting in 2025. This statewide surcharge, an addition to the local transient occupancy taxes that most communities already require, could generate an estimated $150 million annually to build or rehabilitate low- and middle-income housing.

"One of the things that I get asked very often by my local cities and counties is: 'Where is the money to build the housing?'" Limón told CalMatters. "I see this bill really saying everyone has a role to play."

The Senate passed the measure today, with the bare minimum of 27 votes needed and sent it to the Assembly.

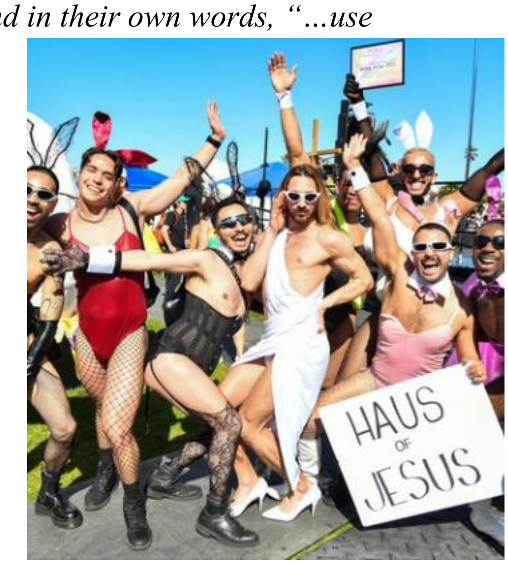
Item 2 - CA Senate Honoring The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in LGBTQ Recognition Ceremony. Katie Grimes in her California Globe article pointed out:

Most of the state's Democrat politicians have been driven to distraction by social and emotional causes, rather than governing and policymaking.

Yes, that Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence group, recently embroiled in controversy with the Los Angeles Dodgers. "The Dodgers invited The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence to receive an award in an on-field ceremony at Pride Night and that did not sit well with many—especially the more conservative members of the Catholic Church," the Globe reported. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is a drag queen group who dress as Catholic nuns, and in their own words, "...use humor and irreverent wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and guilt that chain the human spirit."

"Roma also co-hosts an online talk show, The Tim and Roma Show, that focuses on gay pornographic movies and the LGBT community."

The LA Dodgers invited the Sisters, disinvited them after public outcry, then reinvited them, resulting in the pro-baseball team earning the title, "Bud Light of Baseball."



According to the American Council Quorum, a public policy group for the faith community, "The Sisters of Perpetual

Indulgence self-identity as an Order of queer and trans nuns, but they are really a Catholic hate group who mocks Christian figures, beliefs, and doctrines in sexualized dances, photo-ops, and events. In a recent video that surfaced online, this group of trans-men featured a kinky drag-queen Jesus in a thong along with drag nuns, defiling a sincere Christian image."

Item 3 - The United States is addicted to debt. The excerpt below comes from China Daily, which is described as "*Scholars have described China Daily as effectively controlled by the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party.*[1][2][3] *Ideologically, it tends to adopt similar perspectives to the People's Daily.*[20] *According to its 2014 annual report, China Daily is formally managed by the State Council Information Office (SCIO), which was formed from the Central Propaganda Department in 1991*. Accordingly, even the Chinese communists are commenting on our debt.

With its federal deficit persistently above $1 trillion a year, US debt is growing by leaps and bounds, nearing $32 trillion. Ten years ago, when former US president Barack Obama fought with Republicans to raise the debt ceiling, the debt stood at $16 trillion. In other words, it doubled in just 10 years.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, at the current spending rate the debt is poised to surpass $46 trillion by 2033 which is almost half of today's global GDP. Economic historian Niall Ferguson once said "if you really want to see when an empire is getting vulnerable, the big giveaway is when the costs of serving the debt exceed the cost of the defense budget". The Congressional Budget Office projects that the interest rate on US debt will surpass $1.4 trillion, about the size of today's federal deficit and almost twice today's defense spending. [2]

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

VMT REARS ITS UGLY HEAD AGAIN AS 'CONGESTION PRICING' IN LA

'The aim is to change commuter behavior with the charges while providing transit alternatives'

BY THOMAS BUCKLEY

[2] This is an excerpt from "**US' rising debt is mother of all debt traps"** by Gal Luft that first appeared in the China Daily of June 2, 2023.

By Thomas Buckley, May 30, 2023 2:04 pm
So the Los Angeles Times ran a story today all about possible "congestion pricing" schemes coming soon to certain roads in the LA area soon.

While the article lauds the social engineering aspect of the concept – even quoting one expert saying "LA needs to stop pandering to automobile drivers" – the Times story literally never mentions either the downsides or how congestion pricing or vehicle miles traveled (VMT) taxes work in practicality.

Here is the story. If you hit the paywall, it's almost worth signing up for the dollar-a-month digital promo to be able to read the exact opposite of a proper news story.
Due to that egregious oversight, we at the Globe thought it would be a good idea to let the public know what the idea actually entails.

First, the basics. A VMT involves charging a driver a fee when they drive on a particular street, or in a particular area, or at a particular time of day – or all three combined (for an in depth look at the possibilities, **see HERE**).

LA Metro is reportedly looking at pilot programs that would charge drivers on the 10 from downtown to Santa Monica, people driving around downtown, and folks going up and over the hills to get to the Valley. There are no set fees at this time, but these three zones embody each of the three main concepts – downtown would be the particular area, or "cordon," the 10 would be the particular road, and to and from the Valley could be a combination of all three.
For example, the much touted "cordon" pricing systems in London and Stockholm charge a fee when you enter a certain part (that part keeps growing for some reason) of the city. In London, it's about $18 to drive around in the city center between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. on a weekday. Also, if you happen to *not* have an "Ultra Low Emission" vehicle (ULE's are currently defined, if its gas powered, as being built relatively recently though it is more detailed than that) you will get dinged **an additional $15 for the day** and that applies in an area much larger than the congestion price. And the zone will expand in August, which is a typical feature of VMTs – they start small but metastasize over time.

In Stockholm, the system pings a car each time it enters or leaves the downtown area and charges a time-dependent amount. For those who get charged multiple times, it does have a daily cap of about $12.

New York City is about to institute a similar cordon program, potentially soon charging between $10 and $15 if you want to drive below 60th Street in Manhattan. The justifications include reducing traffic, cleaning the air, and, of course, "Promoting equity by providing expanded access to the transit system."

All of these fees – and the potential LA fee – use the revenue earned – IN THEORY – to improve public transit options so people will not have to drive as much and, therefore, the roads will be less congested and safer. As we all know, you can drive a regulatory truck through anything in the name of "safety."
Stockholm – and Singapore, which also has a system – have seen some rise in public transit usage since the imposition of the fee, a fact used by proponents to tout the concept.

What local proponents fail to mention is that neither Stockholm nor Singapore's public transit systems are dangerous, crime-ridden, rolling shelters for the homeless, the addicted, and/or the mentally ill that make other riders fear for their lives – hence the steep drop in ridership.
Short of assigning every Metro passenger their own bodyguard – or giving them pepper spray or at least a stick or something – LA transit ridership will not increase any time soon.
All of that makes this statement from a Times editorial about two weeks ago in support of the idea even more delusional:

However, a toll can quickly change behaviors and traffic patterns. The price can make people reevaluate the trip. Is there an alternative, like taking the bus or train? Is it possible to travel in off-peak hours or avoid the trip altogether? It takes just a small percentage reduction in the number of cars to ease congestion.

It is also noted that not everyone will be paying the same fee in LA, as "low income" discounts are an integral part of the program in order to not "price out" poorer residents with no alternatives means of transport.

How this will be accomplished – will Metro have to coordinate with the IRS? *Shudder* – or will another metric be used to determine who qualifies for the discount is unclear.

As to those people who live in a cordon, it is unknown yet if they will be able to drive around their own neighborhood without having to pay a fee or, like in London, will they also be given a discount? The discount is high – 90% – but it still means paying extra to live in a neighborhood; how that will impact businesses and housing opportunities in the potential downtown cordon area, for example, is unclear.

Also unclear – the report will be out in August, though! – is how any fee will be charged. The most logical idea is to put transponders in people's cars that will track where and when they drive to accurately calculate the fee (could be a monthly statement, the transponder could be linked to a debit card, etc.)

That idea – the government tracking you every time you get in the car – is a civil rights and privacy nightmare and so far has been one of the biggest political stumbling blocks to implementation in the United States. Even the LA Times article admits any VMT would face political hurdles, but it does not say what they are or why they might be publicly problematic.
So to encapsulate the political issues – most people don't want to pay more to drive, most people do not trust the government to do what they say they will with the money, and almost no one wants every trip they take to be recorded by a government agency.
These are not mere "political" issues as the Times sniffily dismisses them – they are at the core of the bedrock American ideal of being able to travel freely without government intervention.

Already, in San Diego County, pro-VMT elected have been tossed from office and even the regional planning agency there had to cut the idea from its future projections (but they maybe didn't really even though the board told them to but that's another story.)

But that does not seem to matter, as the story states quite simply – not an expert quote or anything, simply a statement of "the sky is blue" fact – that "The aim is to change commuter behavior with the charges while providing transit alternatives."

In case you were wondering, the state is also very on board with the concept. This is an excerpt from the "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Implementation – Reimagining Highway Investments Sub Working Group, (April, 2022) Kickoff Meeting Agenda:"

- Recent policy and planning have allowed us to really think about how we are investing in our highway systems in terms of climate and equity goals that provide benefits and reduce harm for disadvantaged communities to Improve travel and accessibility
- Shift away from single occupant vehicle use by providing competitive alternatives to driving
- A big question to think about is how do we maximize benefits while advancing equity, environmental, climate, health, and safety goals? **Building new lanes or adding on to highway systems is more of a last resort strategy – instead we are focusing on developing more creative strategies that aim to improve travel and promote multi-modal approaches** (emphasis added.)

You can find the **entire report HERE**.

Another issue with a larger VMT (local, area specific pilot programs are merely the first step) is borders, if it is expanded to cover everyone everywhere as a "revenue-neutral replacement" (I do public relations work and even I have no idea how that lie is going to be sold to the public) for the current taxes people pay at the pump.
For example, if California has a statewide VMT, how do drivers from Nevada, which may not have a statewide VMT, pay a tax? Conversely, what happens when you drive to Vegas and need to use your last $37 dollars to buy gas there for the trip home?
Luckily, the Biden administration may have already passed a solution for that pesky problem. From this **recent article** on the development:

In the Biden infrastructure bill signed last year, a relatively obscure bit calls for all new cars built after 2026 to have a "kill switch." Sold as a way to combat drunk driving, the system would involve various unclear-at-the-present technologies (no blowy tubes so, yes, your car will have to be able to literally watch and presumably smell you) to detect whether or not you could be impaired and if the car determines that to be that case then the car won't start.

Per usual, the proponents of the bill claim that no nefarious future actions are possible. From an AP story dispelling the myth of the "kill switch" (serious water carrying there) Robert Strassburger, president and CEO of the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety, said any information collected will "never leave the vehicle."

In other words, it's not really a "kill switch" and safe drivers really don't have to worry ever and we're doing this for your own good and anyone who thinks this device will ever be used in any other way by any government agency is nuts and bad and crazy and might be a domestic terrorist.

We've seen this movie before.

What proponents do not care to emphasize is the fact that the car must "passively" monitor the vehicle and driver and that the system will have at least one port of entry for someone (or something) outside the vehicle to access the system, a port of entry that will be perfect for the imposition of a national, borderless VMT.

The Biden administration also has other pilot programs in the works regarding congestion and/or VMT taxing concepts.

So, in case anyone asks you about the Times story, feel free to show them this.

You can't say we're not trying.

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AMERICA AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBALISM

Instead of setting an attractive example, inviting other nations to join a global civilization, America's elites are imposing a repugnant vision on the world. They must be stopped.

BY EDWARD RING

If globalization is the economic integration of nations in a world where technology has all but erased once formidable barriers to long-distance communication and transportation, globalism is its cultural and ideological counterpart. In theory, the same dynamics might apply. As economies merge, cultures merge as well. As we move deeper into the 21st century, a global melting pot blends everything and everyone together. A planetary civilization marches united into a future of peaceful coexistence, ecological restoration, human life extension, and galactic exploration.

If people were saints and reality utopia, this idealized version of globalism could be embraced without reservation. Globalism, like communism or neoliberalism, is beautiful when described in these abstract terms and not rooted in the real world. And there is a legitimate moral imperative for us to try to come to terms with what civilization will look like as technology continues to shrink the world. Technology makes globalization, in some ways, inevitable. But what ideology regulates globalization is a choice.

This is the lens through which to view the identity struggle that currently grips the United States and other Western nations. It clarifies what is at stake and points to the consequences of getting it wrong. Unfortunately, for reasons that are not hard to explain, people are not saints and reality is not utopian. Thus, the institutions currently defining policy in America are doing almost everything wrong. Their malpractice is pushing America into decline at the same time as it is alienating allies and empowering malevolent regimes. It must be corrected.

In two fundamental areas, the consensus of America's elites, relentlessly escalated in policies imposed both by unelected administrators and elected officials, is horrifically wrong. The first of these concerns energy in particular, and more generally, environmentalism. These policies, which nations elsewhere on earth will not accept—to the point of being willing to go to war to stop them, if necessary—are going to strip Americans of freedom and prosperity if we continue to pursue them. That process is well underway.

In the name of saving the planet, Americans are being denied access to affordable energy, despite the fact that "renewables" are not only incapable of replacing oil, gas, coal, hydro, and nuclear power, but are even more destructive to the environment. In an attempt to reduce "greenhouse gas" emissions, Americans are being driven out of rural areas and into cities. In turn, America's cities are prevented from expanding outward in order to prevent "sprawl." Instead, people evicted from rural areas, along with millions of migrants from foreign nations, are packed via "infill" into multifamily, high-density apartments.

To express the scope of this transformation would require volumes. It is designed to eliminate America's middle class and destroy small businesses. It extends into every economic sector—energy, water, food, transportation, housing, media, medicine. It is regulatory tyranny that only billionaire individuals and multibillion-dollar corporations can navigate. It centralizes power and cannot be administered without monitoring and micromanaging individual behavior. It is a dystopian nightmare, and it is quietly and systematically smothering what remains of free and economically independent Americans.

The other fundamental mistake America's elites are promoting is the destruction of the meritocracy that, perhaps more than anything else, made America great. In the name of eliminating racism, sexism, and disproportionate outcomes for people with other identifiable group characteristics, merit and qualifications are being replaced by identity quotas. This, too, is rolling its way through America's institutions.

Meritocracy, in the broadest sense of the word, is closely related to normality. It is normal to want the best-qualified people to fill positions. It is normal for social organizations, including businesses and government agencies, to best cohere when everyone is not only chosen for their competence, but for their acceptance of shared values and behaviors. Replacing normality with a celebration of abnormality, and replacing competence with quotas, as America's institutions are doing, undermines the efficiency and the happiness of everyone involved. What's left are implacable bureaucracies, vast and empty organizations without souls.

These mistakes are going to kill America. Energy poverty, environmentalist tyranny, "equity" over competence; these choices are fatal. But these are merely surface phenomena. The bigger problem is that there is a collective soul that has defined western civilization, developed over millennia, and now warped and abandoned by America's elites. It is dismissed as an anachronism and an impediment. But it is the source of America's greatness and restoring it is the only solution to America's current misdirection.

A recent essay by Cauf Skiviers—a provocative writer who was recently banned by *Medium* (you've been warned)—includes a paragraph that describes the foundations of Western civilization. For brevity, it's as good as any. He writes:

The foundations of the West are anchored in the triad of Christianity, Greek philosophy, and Roman law. These pillars were not erected by a single, all-directing force, but rather were forged out of disagreement, wars, jealousy, and love. None of the elements necessitating any particular racial impetus. Much to the contrary. Christianity dispelled the notion of a 'chosen people,' extending salvation indiscriminately through faith. Rome, too, was built upon the bedrock of the Rule of Law, applicable to all. Greek philosophy was not concerned with the 'lived experience' of Athenians or the 'spoken truth' of Milesians, but rather with universal values.

The relevance of this paragraph is in its appeal to *everyone*, everywhere in the world. Salvation indiscriminately through faith. The rule of law applicable to all. Universal values. What this heritage gave rise to was a nation that even now remains an inspiration. A nation where individuals enjoy personal and economic freedom. A nation where the government does not intrude on where people live or how they develop their property. A nation where private enterprise and private ownership are respected and protected.

But our values—our piety, our idealism, our respect for individuality—have brought us to the present struggle to define our identity. We no longer agree on what's normal. We no longer agree on what's fair. Every right and every traditional value we cherish is threatened.

Fixing the surface phenomena—the orchestrated abolition of affordable energy and meritocracy—is conceptually easy. The most powerful coalition of special interests in American history must be opposed with equal resolve by an American people united against the tyranny that must govern a society that's economically broken and indifferent to competence.

Fixing the foundations of the West, however, is a harder job. The goal, and the opposition, is harder to define. Will we settle on values that restore a healthy society? Can we overcome woke hysteria without overreacting our way into a version of repression that is just as dark as the tyranny it displaces? Can we recognize enough of the enlightened and evolving values of this century without succumbing to decadence and decay? If we can do this, we offer the foundations of a world civilization.

How America resolves its own identity struggle will largely determine what kind of culture we live in centuries from now. To say, probably accurately, that no nation on earth is trying with more integrity than America to figure out how we should live in a way that is sustainable and equitable while preserving individual freedom and economic independence is discouraging but also must be an inspiration. We have to get this right.

Whether nations eventually merge together or remain separate members of a community of sovereign states depends on how globalism is ultimately defined. America's elites offer a future of green poverty and woke decadence. In doing so, they are squandering the greatness that other nations once admired and emulated. Instead of setting an attractive example, inviting other nations to join a global civilization, America's elites are imposing a repugnant vision on the world. They must be stopped. There are alternatives. It is not too late.

Edward Ring is a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. He is also a contributing editor and senior fellow with the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. Ring is the author of Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism (2021) and The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California (2022).This article first appeared in the American Greatness of May 3, 2023.

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