



WEEKLY UPDATE - MAY 7 - 13, 2023

THIS WEEK

NO BOS MEETING

3CE TO ISSUE BONDED DEBT

PLANNING COMMISSION LIGHT

**COASTAL COMMISSION TO CONSIDER ITS
OFFSHORE WIND AGENDA**

**CONSOLIDATED PERMIT PROCESSING FOR AVILA BEACH/PORT
SAN LUIS INDUSTRIAL FACILITY
COUNTY OBLIVIOUS**

LAST WEEK

**INTERIM CAO TO RECEIVE \$300,742 IN SALARY
ANNUALIZED + \$450/ MO. CAR ALLOWANCE + \$1,475 PER
MONTH TOWARD HEALTH INSURANCE + HE IS ALREADY
RETIRED ON A \$200,000/ YEAR PENSION**

**REFUSE RATES UP @ \$20 PER MONTH IN
URBAN AND RURAL SANTA MARGARITA, CRESTON, RURAL
TEMPLETON AREA, POZO, LA PANZA, PARK HILL, HUER HUERO,
SIMMLER, AND ATASCADERO FRINGE AREA**

**MILLIONS IN STORM DAMAGE ROAD REPAIRS SET -
RESERVES WILL BE USED
FEMA REIBURSEMENT SOUGHT**

**TROUBLED COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH
FACILITY (PHF) PRIVATIZED**

**CLOSED SESSION - EVALUATION OF INTERIM CAO
HUH? & MORE HUH?
HE HADN'T STARTED YET – HOW COULD THEY EVALUATE HIS
PERFORMANCE? AFTERWARDS THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T
TAKE ANY REPORTABLE ACTION**

**MAJOR REPORT ON HOMELESS STRATEGY
PROGRESS TO DATE, NEXT STEPS, AND A WARNING**

EMERGENT ISSUES

CARB RULE FOR TRUCK FLEETS APPROVED

**COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 17**

**EV MANDATES ARE TAKING CALIFORNIANS
FOR A RIDE**

*DUBIOUS BENEFITS DON'T DETER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FROM
DISTORTING THE MARKET FOR ELECTRIC CARS*

BY DAVID R. HENDERSON

**DO WE EVEN KNOW WE ARE ALL SOCIALISTS NOW?
*In the end, perhaps the best definition of socialism is simply “The endless war
against merit”***

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

The next meeting is on Tuesday May 16, 2023. It will include an item to raise the Supervisors' salaries. Expect a major update on the status of the current FY 2022-23 Budget and updated projections for the proposed FY 2030-24 Budget.

Central Coast Community Energy Authority Operations Board Meeting of Wednesday, May 10, 2023 (Scheduled)

Item 3 - Receive an Update on a Prepay Financing Transaction and Recommend Policy Board's Approval and Authorization of the CEO to Execute a Clean Energy Purchase Contract with California Community Choice Financing Authority and Ancillary Documents and Agreements to Effectuate the Prepay Financing Transaction. This appears to be a form of debt issuance that is approved by the CCE Board, not the voters in the CCE service area. In this regard, it seems somewhat similar to Certificates Of Participation (COPs) and Pension Obligation Bonds currently issued by cities and counties go get around normal bond approval requirements. It is also much more complicated.

The basic theory seems to be:

1. 3CE has long term energy purchase contracts - 20 to 30 years.
2. By prepaying some of these contracts, 3CE would derive rate discounts estimated to be from 7% to 10%.
3. To obtain the funding to prepay the suppliers, 3CE would indirectly issue tax exempt bonds (debt).
4. The bonds would be issued by an intermediary agency, the California Community Choice Financing Authority (CCCFA) so that a group of community choice aggregators including 3CE could pool their debt.

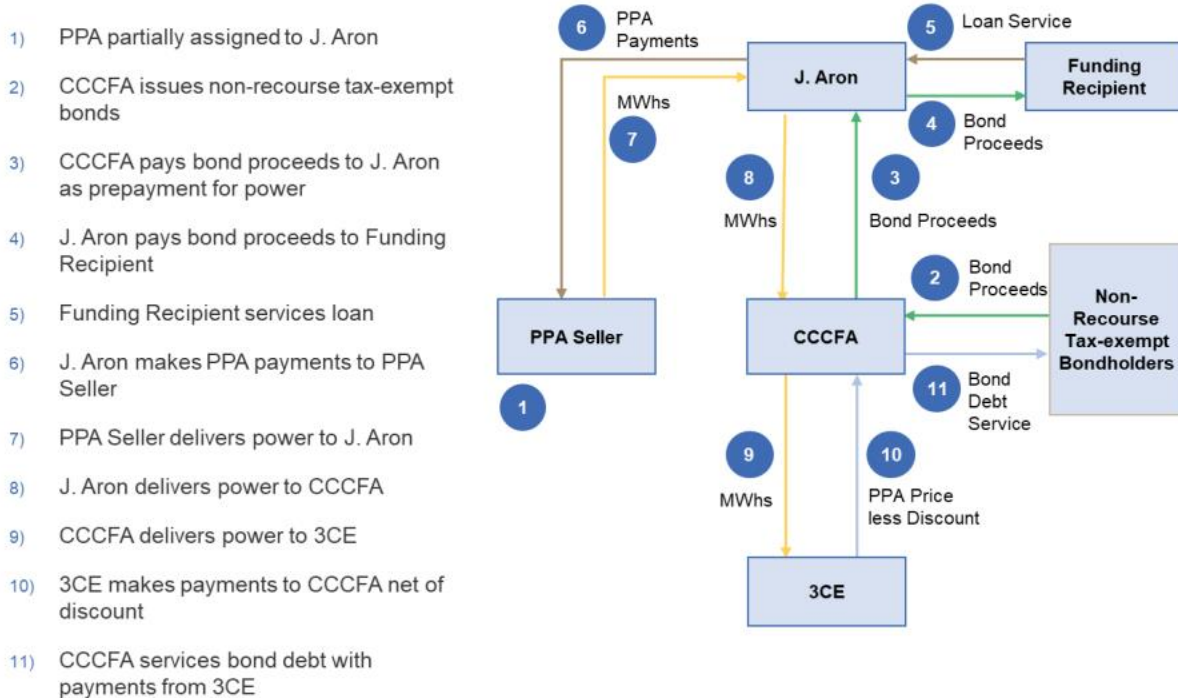
The write-up states in part:

Prepay Deal Structure: If approved, 3CE will become the fifth CCA to execute a prepay transaction for the benefit of its customers. Following nearly a year of negotiations, 3CE's proposed prepay transaction involves a series of agreements between 3CE, a set of its PPA seller partners, a facilitating banking partner (J. Aron), the California Community Choice Financing Authority ("CCCFA") (a JPA founded by 3CE, East Bay Community Energy, Marin Clean Energy, Silicon Valley Clean Energy, and Clean Power Alliance), and a funding recipient to be selected by 3CE through a competitive process.

CCCFA issues non-recourse, tax-exempt bonds, the proceeds of which are used to prepay for electric power delivered under assigned PPAs at the terms originally negotiated by 3CE. CCCFA provides the bond proceeds to J. Aron, who loans them to the funding recipient, then uses debt service of that funding to make regular payments to the PPA sellers and deliver the power to CCCFA. CCCFA provides that power to 3CE at a discount from the original PPA price and uses those payments to service the bonds.

A “simplified” diagram of the flow of funds and power is presented below:

Summary of Energy Prepayment Structure Mechanics



J Aron is a subsidiary of Goldman Sachs.

CCCFA

The California Community Choice Financing Authority (CCCFA) was established in 2021 with the goal to reduce the cost of power purchases for member community choice aggregators (CCAs) through pre-payment structures. The founding members of CCCFA include Central Coast Community Energy, East Bay Community Energy, Marin Clean Energy, and Silicon Valley Clean Energy. CCCFA is a Joint Powers Authority which can help member CCAs save up to 10% or more on power purchase agreements, helping reduce costs for ratepayers and increase available funding for local programs.

The CCCFA Board consists of 4 Directors. Tom Habashi, who just restored as 3CE’s CEO, is one of the Directors.

Some questions:

1. How much debt is 3CE going to issue?

2. What is the interest rate?
3. In what denominations will the bonds be issued?
4. Shouldn't 3CE customers get first crack at them?
5. Does this bonded debt count as accumulated overlying debt of government agencies in the 3CE service area? Would SLO County's member agencies have to disclose their proportionate shares it on their CAFRs?
6. What happens, as in the case of the pension obligation bonds, if the 3CE does not achieve the savings over time to cover the interest and principal on the bonds? Will the member jurisdictions have to pony up or will the 3CE customers be forced to pay higher rates?

No matter what, the whole scheme is paradise for investment bankers, bond counsel, consultants, etc.

FIRM	ROLE
PFM Financial Advisors LLC (PFM)	Municipal Finance Advisor ("FA"): Advise 3CE in negotiations; required by Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board
Nixon Peabody	Bond, Disclosure, Issuer, and Tax Counsel: Represent 3CE and CCCFA; provide tax opinion on the transaction
Hall Energy Law	Special Counsel to 3CE; review and negotiate primary and ancillary documents
Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth	Special Counsel to 3CE; review and negotiate primary and ancillary documents

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, May 11, 2023 (Scheduled)

The Commission agenda is light, containing only two items. One is a 24-unit residential subdivision in Nipomo. The other is a 7 large lot subdivision northeast of Arroyo Grande.

California Coastal Commission Meeting of Thursday, May 11, 2023 (Scheduled)

Item Th4 - Informational Briefing on Offshore Wind Agenda. There is no write-up. It appears to be a presentation by a number of interest groups, wind energy companies, and environmental consultants. Detecting the attitude of the Commissioners will be important for future developments in SLO County. There does not appear to be any representation of local government among the presenters. The County should place this issue on a public agenda soon. It has done nothing so far to represent its citizens. We were told that the County sent a letter regarding SB 286, but the County Counsel says no such letter exists. The bill essentially preempts local control on offshore wind projects and gives that control to the Coastal Commission and State Lands Commission, even though there will be huge impacts in places such as Avila Beach if Port San Luis is selected as the construction base and servicing center.



Windmill Leases.

INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING ON OFFSHORE WIND AGENDA

Introduction

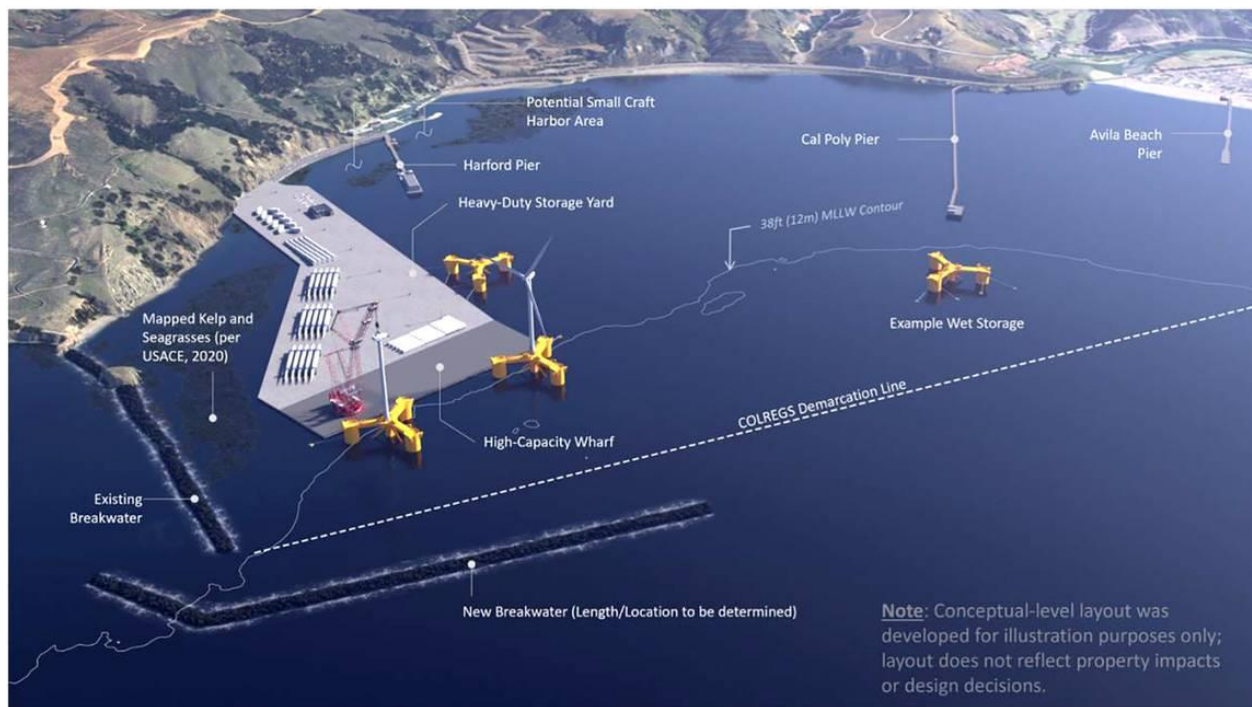
- Wade Crowfoot, Secretary for Natural Resources
- David Hochschild, Chair of the California Energy Commission

Regulatory and Planning Status Update & Introduction to California's Lessees

- Holly Wyer, Senior Environmental Scientist, California Coastal Commission
- Geri Edens, Director of Permitting, California North Floating
- Kelly Boyd Momoh, Director: Policy Development and Regulatory, West Coast US, Equinor
- Tyler Studts, Chief Executive Officer, Golden State Wind
- Kristen Hislop, Senior Manager, Environmental Compliance and Strategy, Invenergy

Offshore Wind: Current Science and Gaps

- Dr. Benjamin Ruttenberg, Associate Professor in Biological Sciences and Director, Center for Coastal Marine Sciences, Cal Poly – San Luis Obispo
 - Presentation: Potential environmental impacts of offshore wind energy deployment – knowledge gaps and the importance of proxies, modeling, and monitoring
- Dr. Grace Chang, Senior Science Advisor and Technical Director, Integral Consulting
 - Presentation: Potential Effects of Offshore Wind Farms on California Upwelling



- Dr. Brandon Southall, President and Chief Scientist, Southall Environmental Associates, Inc.
 - Presentation: New risk assessment methods to understand vulnerability of marine mammals and sea turtles to offshore sustainable energy development
- Dr. Josh Adams, Research Wildlife Biologist, Western Ecological Research Center, USGS
 - Presentation: Marine birds of the California current and studies to inform offshore renewable energy

Environmental Considerations & State Research

- Jenn Eckerle, Deputy Secretary for Oceans and Coastal Policy for Natural Resources, and Executive Director of the Ocean Protection Council

Fishing Impacts and Perspective

- Steve Scheiblaue, Marine Alliances Consulting

Tribal Perspective and Environmental Justice Perspective

- Violet Sage Walker, Chairwoman, Northern Chumash Tribal Council
- Sarah Xu, Senior Policy Associate, Brightline Defense Project

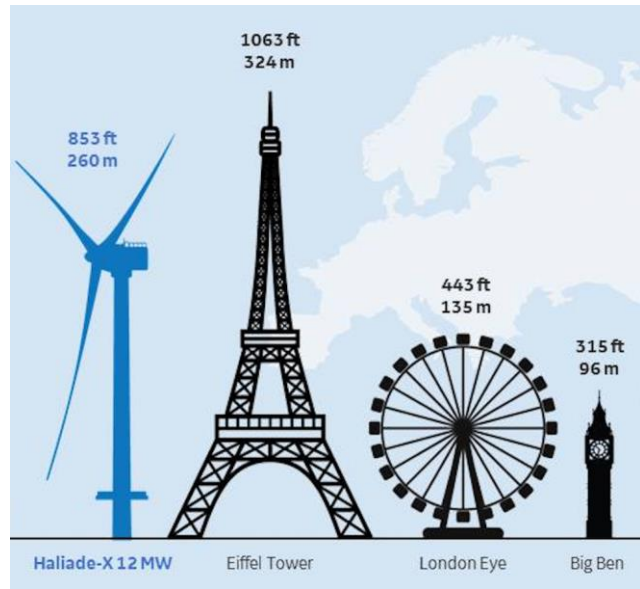
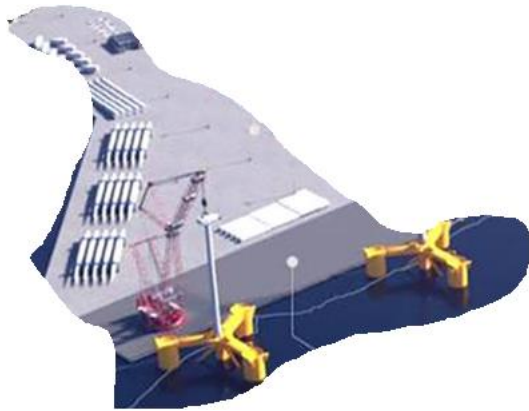
Port Considerations

- Jennifer Lucchesi, Executive Officer, California State Lands Commission

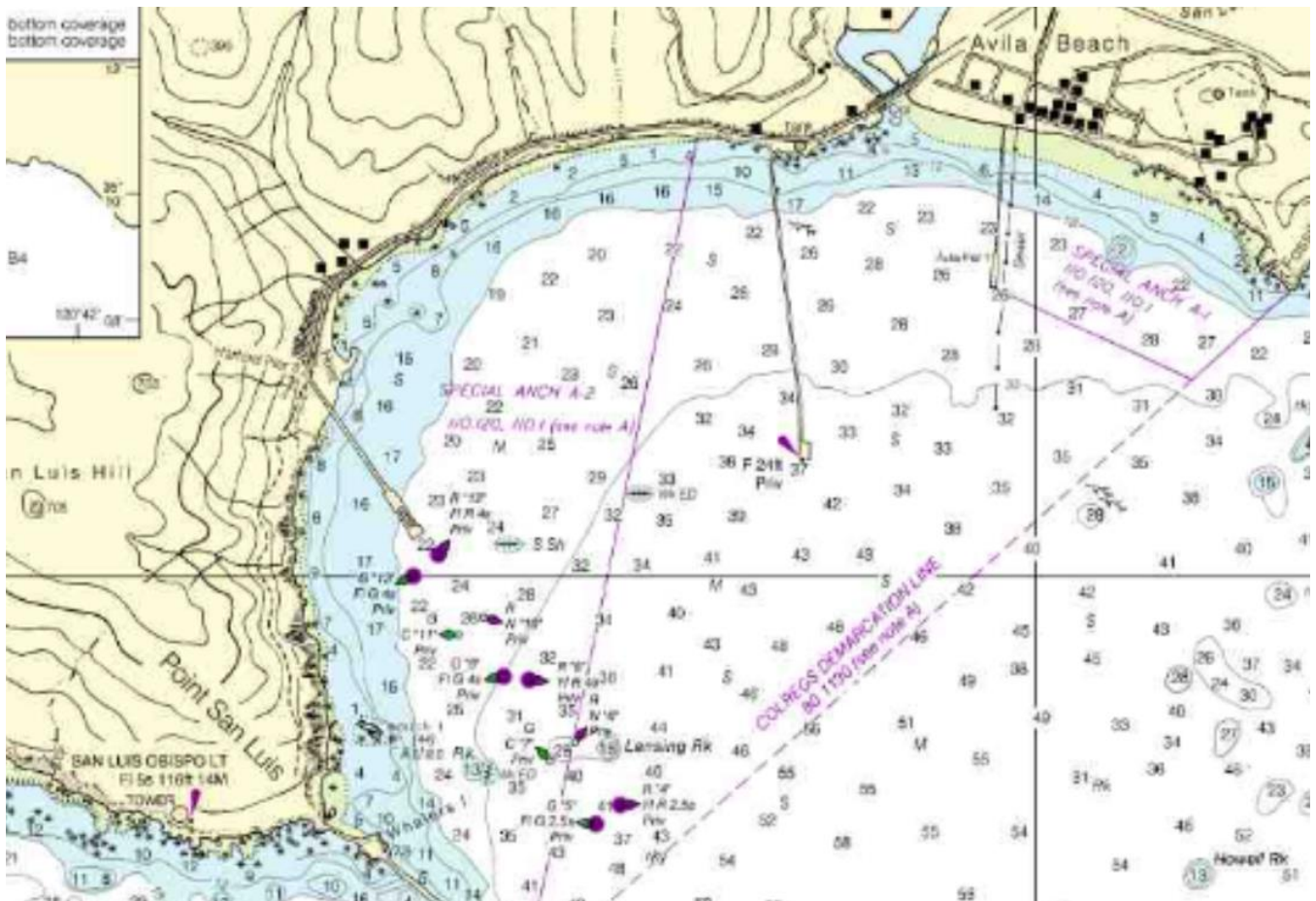
Commissioner Questions

Public Comment





The major port facility would impact residential values and tourism by the large industrial pier facility, cranes, lighting, etc. It will be located about where the arrows end. The towers could be almost as tall as the Eiffel Tower when fully built.



Is it deep enough for the large barges, ocean going tugs, and the huge tower platforms, etc.?

The Coastal Commission will not allow people to fix the stairs from their house to the beach, but this is no problem? So called green energy trumps everything!

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, May 2, 2023 (Completed)

Item 15 - Request to approve an employment agreement with Catherine Manning to serve as the Health Agency Deputy Director. This is a promotion from within created due to a retirement. It was approved on the consent calendar.

Ms. Manning has been working in the Health Agency for the past 13 years. She joined the Health Agency fiscal team as a Mental Health Accountant in 2010, eventually working as Public Health Administrative Services Manager and Health Agency Fiscal Department Administrator. Ms. Manning completed her Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Loyola Marymount University in Southern California. While pursuing her MBA she received her Certified Public Accountant license and went on to work in public accounting in Santa Monica, California for over 15 years. She and her family moved to San Luis Obispo in 2004.

The salary is \$159,702 per year. With benefits the cost is about \$207,612 all in.

Item 18 - Request to approve an Employment Agreement with John Nilon to serve as County Administrative Officer (“CAO”) on an interim basis. The appointment was approved 4/1 with Supervisor Arnold dissenting. She had no problem with Nilon per se, but didn’t like the process, cost, or the lack of consideration for existing employees.

Public speakers were quick to point out that the Board actually appointed Nilon during the closed session of April 19, 2023, but County Counsel came out of closed session and stated that “the Board took no reportable action.” Nevertheless, a few days later the County issued a formal press release announcing the appointment. Since the coronation of the new Board majority, Brown Act violations have become frequent.

Nilon himself appears to be an open, engaged, and warm seasoned professional.

Background: This item was the ratification of the Board’s appointment of an interim County Administrator. Apparently, the Board intends to conduct a national recruitment for a “permanent” CAO. When the Board emerged from the closed session on the matter back on April 19, 2023, the County Counsel reported that the Board had not taken a reportable action. Actually they had voted to appoint Nilon. This looks like yet another Brown Act violation.

Nilon was a long-term Kern County career employee (35 years) who rose through the ranks to ultimately become the CAO, a position in which he served for 8 years. He retired to his vacation home in Cambria in 2016 and has served on several local civic boards. He also served as Interim Director of the Kern County Health System. It is not known if he was recruited or if he simply responded to an ad. It appears he is a qualified professional who has led a large complex County with an annual Budget which is now in excess of \$2 billion.

He will receive compensation of \$11,576 biweekly, which is the equivalent of \$300,742 per year plus a car allowance of \$450 per month and a monthly stipend of \$1,475 per month in lieu of health insurance. He will not receive the full county benefit package. In 2021 his Kern pension

was reported to be \$198,533 per year. After several years of COLAs, it is likely to be in excess of \$208,000 currently.

It was an interesting pick, in that Kern County’s primary general local revenues come from the property tax on oil. Presumably Nilon supported the fossil fuel industry over the course of his career and especially as a County leader. Now that he has escaped the grit and heat of Kern for the pines of Cambria, will he support the SLO Board’s suicidal energy policies or tell the Board and public the truth?

The total 2022 compensation and benefits package for the current SLO County Deputy CAO, Rebecca Campbell, was reported as \$331,000. They could have saved a lot by just having her serve in the position. She is a former Kings County CAO.

Item 21 - Request to approve the proposed rate increase of 32.06% and the temporary rate increase due to delayed rate implementation that expires on December 31, 2023 of 27.82% for solid waste collection services provided by Mid-State Solid Waste & Recycling Services, Inc., in unincorporated areas of the County of San Luis Obispo, retroactively effective on May 1, 2023. Refuse rate increases in unincorporated areas of the County, including urban and rural Santa Margarita, Creston, rural Templeton area, Pozo, La Panza, Park Hill, Huer Huero, Simmler, and Atascadero fringe area were approved on the consent calendar. Surprisingly, there was no public objection.

Container Service Size	Current Rate 5/1/2021	2022 Base & 2023 Interim Years Increase*	Temporary Delayed Rate Increase**	Proposed Rate on 5/1/2023	Proposed Rate after 12/31/2023
Urban Residential: Santa Margarita, Garden Farms, and the fringe area of Atascadero					
32 Gallons	\$ 36.89	\$ 11.83	\$ 10.26	\$ 58.98	\$ 48.72
64 Gallons	\$ 54.00	\$ 17.31	\$ 15.02	\$ 86.33	\$ 71.31
96 Gallons	\$ 71.06	\$ 22.78	\$ 19.77	\$ 113.61	\$ 93.84
Rural Residential: Creston, Rural Templeton, Pozo, La Panza, Park Hill, Huer Huero, and Simmler					
32 Gallons	\$ 38.21	\$ 12.25	\$ 10.63	\$ 61.09	\$ 50.46
64 Gallons	\$ 55.62	\$ 17.83	\$ 15.47	\$ 88.92	\$ 73.45
96 Gallons	\$ 73.04	\$ 23.42	\$ 20.32	\$ 116.78	\$ 96.46

* The proposed rate increase combines both 2022 Base Year and 2023 Interim Year CPI requests

** The proposed temporary short-term rate increase will expire on December 31, 2023.

Item 33 - Hearing to discuss the contracting out of non-medical inpatient psychiatric services at the County of San Luis Obispo Psychiatric Health Facility (PHF). The County approved the contract for non-medical psychiatric services at the PHF. The PHF is a locked facility for patients who are too sick to be free and/or who are awaiting placement in a mental hospital. It is not clear how some of these services are categorized as “non-medical.”

- Provide safe, therapeutic and/or rehabilitative inpatient services at the PHF for eligible individuals where they can receive assessment and treatment related to mental health disorders.
- Serve adults who require acute inpatient psychiatric care due to being suicidal and/or homicidal and/or gravely disabled.
- Serve adults who are Medi-Cal, or Medi-Cal/Medi-Care beneficiaries as well as those who are indigent and without benefits.
- Meet the needs of individuals requiring voluntary and involuntary PHF inpatient services.
- Serve the increased volume of individuals presenting at local Emergency Departments, the SLO Crisis Stabilization Unit, and other referral sources.

- *Facilitate throughput from local Emergency Departments to enhance care for eligible individuals who require psychiatric inpatient care*

History: In past years the County suffered problems at the PHF, including admissions, treatment gaps, and communications. Jail medical services were privatized several years ago. The trend of privatization of government services will continue as the costs of the unionized civil service model of delivery becomes more and more expensive and obsolescent. The contractor is Crestwood Behavioral Services, which provides services throughout the State.

Crestwood Behavioral Health's Annual Revenue: \$280.0 Million

Crestwood Behavioral Health revenue is \$280 million annually. After extensive research and analysis, COLAB learned that Crestwood Behavioral Health has 3,000 employees, and the revenue per employee ratio is \$93,333.

The Board item does not include information on the annual cost of the contract, but infers that the costs will be about the same as the current in-house staffing mode. The item also fails to state that cost as.

Item 34 - Request to 1) receive a presentation by staff regarding road damage from the Winter 2023 Storms and provide direction to staff on how to proceed; and 2) submittal of a resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center 405-Public Works, by deleting a 1.00 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Environmental Specialist I/II/III; adding 1.00 FTE Principal Environmental Specialist; adding a 1.00 FTE Limited Term Project Manager I/II; adding 1.00 FTE Limited Term Civil Engineering Technician Aide/I/II/III; and adding 1.00 FTE Limited Term Environmental Specialist I/II/III; 3) adopt a resolution A) declaring the conditions of emergency consistent with the use of the General Fund General Reserve and B) authorizing the appropriation of \$6,000,000 from the General Fund General Reserve. The report was comprehensive and complete. It reflected the prudence of the Public Works Department in scrupulously documenting all the emergency work that it has undertaken to date, as well as its plan to document further work.

Background: This year's rainy season damaged the already underfunded and under-maintained roads of the County. As the write-up states:

As presented to your Board February 2, 2021, State of Good Repair road maintenance needs, which are those activities which sustain the County roadway network to present day conditions, typically outpace available funding by \$5 to \$7 Million.

Keep in mind that the new Board Majority dropped roads from the Budget priority list and substituted homeless services.

The \$6 million requested here is in addition to \$4 million authorized in March. The estimated requirement is displayed below:

FY 22/23: \$11.6 M FY 23/24: \$8.4 M FY 24/25: \$4M FY 25/26: \$4M FY 26/27: \$4M

Up to 75% could be reimbursed by FEMA over the years.

The item contains a request for five additional engineering and project manager types to expedite the process. Instead, what if the County went out to the private sector and requested proposals for a combined management and construction package from large, multi-specialty contractors?



The report also contains a review of the extraordinary effort undertaken by the County as the storms progressed and the damage occurred. The Board “rewarded” the organization by canning the CAO.

More rain arrived during the night of May 3-4, 2023.

Item 35 - County Counsel - (Government Code section 54957.) It is the intention of the Board to meet in closed session to: Consider Public Employee Evaluation of Interim County Administrative Officer. This one seems strange. As noted in **Item 18**, the new interim CAO is just starting this week. What are they going to evaluate?

When we asked the question, the Deputy County Counsel stated that they were going to discuss their expectations. You would think that would have been done during the hiring process. Again, if they gave him policy direction, it could be a Brown Act violation. Is it possible that they reached an agreement on Board communications with the administrative organization? Will these go through the CAO, or will some members be giving orders on the side?

Background: The Brown Act allows the Board to meet in closed session to evaluate or discipline a public employee, but there is nothing yet to evaluate. He hasn’t had time to bother anyone on the staff. Is the purpose of their meeting to give forward looking direction? Or are they going to discuss problems of other executives, or what? If they are going to propose general policy direction, organizational culture, a systemic review of the organization, or whatever, it should be agendaized and done in open session.

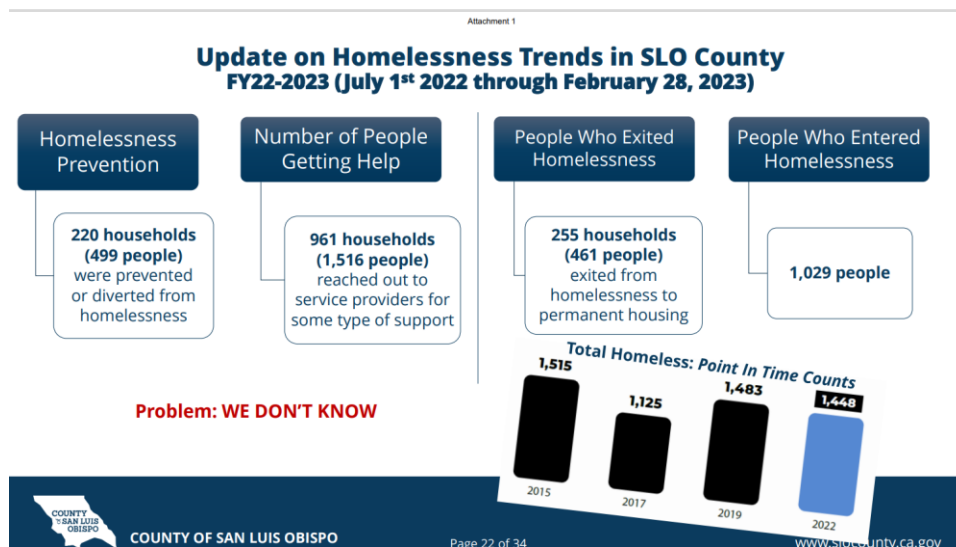
Item 36 - Request to receive, file, and provide direction as deemed necessary updates on 1) the progress in pursuing the phased priorities of the Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness; 2) the update on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) business case; 3) the update on Oklahoma Avenue parking operations; and 4)

the 2023-24 budget recommendations in support of the Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness. The Board received the excellent report and pretty much agreed with everything.

This was a major policy item to review the entire problem, progress to date, and future actions and costs, specifically:

- 1) *The progress in pursuing the phased priorities of the Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness;*
- 2) *The update on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) business case;*
- 3) *The update on Oklahoma Avenue parking operations; and*
- 4) *The 2023-24 budget recommendations in support of the Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness.*

This was an impressive report accompanied by an equally impressive PowerPoint summary. It exhibits an analytical approach to problem solving backed up by data. It further exhibits that the developing program is supported by serious and competent project management. The staff has executed the program as scheduled so far and has not over promised. Nevertheless, homelessness seems to average around 1450 people each year. Some cease to be homeless and others become homeless or arrive as homeless from elsewhere.



A great slide!

The problems faced by the staff will become increasingly overwhelming due to the failure of political leadership at all levels to actually adopt policies that will reduce the underlying causes of homelessness at the national, state, and local levels. The staff is being directed to end homelessness without having the power to do so.

1. The anti-family policies of the Federal government and the State are a key cause driving the breakdown of society.
2. Value relativism, including the decline of traditional religions, acceptance of aberrant behavior, lack of standards, and abolition of merit have all contributed to the problem.
3. The government promotion of drugs is further exacerbating the problem.

4. **Item 2** and **Item 3** above are extolled by the government, education, media, entertainment, and woke elite which are running the nation and especially California.

5. Homeless prevention and remediation has become a huge industry with jobs, contracts, political patronage, construction projects, and endless revenue. It is too valuable to succeed.

6. The current species of justice that treats vagrancy, hoboing, aberrant behavior, stealing, and harassing ordinary citizens as remediable social justice diseases, as opposed to pathologic behavior, is undermining the society. Drug courts, schemes of restorative justice, leftist DAs, and over-powered public defenders all contribute to the social decay.

7. The problem will become much larger as the economy and standard of living collapses under the pressures of growing socialist policies, international crises, terrorism at home, inflation, overregulation, higher taxes, underfunded infrastructure, and government union control of governments in which they represent employees. As things get worse, more and more people will drop out of the bottom of civilized society.



8. Unrestricted immigration of millions of uneducated illegal immigrants, largely from rural and poor societies, will further add costs and devolution.

9. A significant number of the homeless individuals are mentally ill, and/or addicted to alcohol and narcotics to the point where they cannot function. Few will ever recover. They must be housed in locked facilities for their own well-being as well as that of the greater society, even though they may technically not be adjudicated criminals.

10. Not all the homeless are helpless nor do they want to be housed.

Funding: The staff proposes increasing the general fund contribution to homeless programs from \$2.8 million this year to \$7.6 million next year, a \$4.8 million increase. Will Gibson and company pull this out of roads and public safety?

Overall, the staff estimates that the County will be spending about \$158 million on homelessness next year. Most of this is actually State and Federal funding from transfer payments for welfare, food stamps, Medi-Cal, and housing programs.

With about 1450 homeless people on average, that is about \$108,395 per person per year.

4. County Funding towards Homelessness and the Homeless Services Division Budget for Service Programs

In Fiscal Year 2022-23, the County of San Luis Obispo administered \$191M across 3 departments through 23 programs that were intended to either directly or potentially impact homelessness in some way.

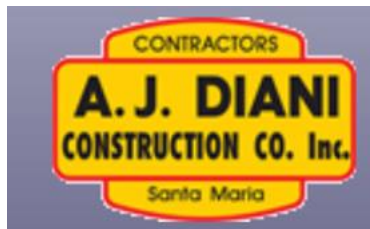
Figure 3. County Funding Towards Homelessness (Directly and Indirectly) FY 2022-23


Source of Funding	Estimated/Approximate Funding in FY 2022-23
Direct Support to Homelessness Countywide:	\$ 11,300,291
Estimated County General Fund	\$ 2,799,601
Estimated State/Federal	\$ 7,960,184
Other Related Health and Human Services Countywide:	\$ 180,159,984
Estimated County General Fund	\$ 30,947,411
Estimated State/Federal/Other	\$ 149,212,573
Total	\$ 191,460,275
Estimated County General Fund	\$ 33,747,012
Estimated State/Federal	\$ 157,172,757

Figure 4. County Funding Towards Homelessness (Directly and Indirectly) FY 2023-24

Source of Funding	Estimated/Approximate Funding in FY 2023-24
Direct Support to Homelessness Countywide:	\$ 16,716,777
Estimated County General Fund	\$ 7,555,334
Estimated State/Federal	\$ 9,236,832
Other Related Health and Human Services Countywide:	\$ 178,141,083
Estimated County General Fund	\$ 28,912,526
Estimated State/Federal/Other	\$ 149,228,557
Total	\$ 194,857,860
Estimated County General Fund	\$ 36,467,860
Estimated State/Federal	\$ 158,465,389

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EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - CARB RULE FOR TRUCK FLEETS APPROVED. Last week, the California Air Resources Board unanimously approved ending the sale of new medium-duty and heavy-duty trucks in California starting in 2036. Large trucking companies must also convert to electric or hydrogen models by 2042. The rules would apply to all vehicles between heavy-duty pickups through freight-hauling tractor-trailers in fleets of 50 or more. Zero emission vehicles are to be phased in within a 10-to-20-year timeframe. Despite a rulemaking process that stretched several years and included over 500 stakeholder meetings, fleet owners, trucking associations, and stakeholder groups view the rules as rushed and unworkable, given the limited number of current vehicles and the limited charging infrastructure available.

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

EV MANDATES ARE TAKING CALIFORNIANS FOR A RIDE

DUBIOUS BENEFITS DON'T DETER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES FROM DISTORTING THE MARKET FOR ELECTRIC CARS

BY DAVID R. HENDERSON



Last year, the California Air Resources Board (CARB), an unelected agency, issued a regulation requiring all cars sold in California in 2035 and later to be electric vehicles (EVs). Even sales of non-plug-in hybrids such as traditional Priuses would be banned. Last month, President Biden's Environmental Protection Agency proposed regulations on tailpipe emissions. Although the regulations do not specify a particular percent of vehicles that would have to be EV, the [EPA itself estimates](#) that achieving the mandated emissions reductions would require 60 percent of new cars sold in 2030 to be EVs. To put that in perspective, only [5.8 percent of new cars sold](#) in the United States in calendar year 2022 were EVs. The justification that both CARB and the EPA give for the regulations is that they would reduce harmful pollutants and fuel usage, thus reducing global warming.

The way that the advocates of these regulations justify them reminds me of the old joke about economists. A chemist, a physicist, and an economist are stuck in the wilderness with a can of food but no can opener. The chemist suggests that they add acid on top of the can, but the other two point out that the acid might leak through and ruin the food. The physicist suggests that they puncture the can with a rock, but the other two point out that that could make the can explode so that the food would fly all over the place. Then the economist gives his solution: assume a can opener.

The reason the joke is slightly funny is that it points to the common view that economists assume away a problem. I'm not sure that we economists do it that much, but I will tell you who does do it: people who propose electric vehicle (EV) mandates. They start by assuming that an EV already exists. That's how they figure that EVs would use less fossil fuel, be less polluting, and be cheaper in the long run. Once you delve into the life cycle of electric vehicles, though, starting with production, you can reasonably conclude that all three of these views are questionable. EVs will use less or more of fossil fuels, will lead to less or more pollution, and will be cheaper or more expensive in the long run. We just don't know. And that in itself is enough reason to oppose mandates. Moreover, there's another way that advocates of EV mandates are like the economist who assumes the can opener: they assume away actual humans.

The Life Cycle of Cars

If you start with the assumption that EVs already exist, then yes, you can easily show that with normal usage of EVs and gasoline-power cars, EVs do better on fuel usage. But EVs, to exist, must be produced. And that, right away, raises two problems. First, because the batteries for EVs are so heavy, [manufacturers are using more aluminum](#) for the car's body, and aluminum is lighter than the usual materials used to make cars. But the production of aluminum is heavily energy intensive. That's why it tends to be produced where there is ample hydroelectric power: hydro tends to be cheaper than electric power produced from fossil fuels. If we were to have over half of our cars be EVs, which is what the CARB and EPA-proposed regulations would require, that would require a massive increase in the amount of aluminum used. It isn't clear that there would be enough hydro power to do that. If so, then there would be more demand for power produced with fossil fuels. Of course, nuclear energy could solve that problem. But regulation by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has made it very difficult to produce new nuclear power facilities at a low cost.

The second problem is the batteries themselves. Although the cost of producing batteries has come down substantially since 2010, producing them is still resource intensive, which translates into being energy intensive.

The EPA's Bart Simpson Justification

Comparing pollutants generated by EVs and gasoline-powered cars over the life cycle also leads to ambiguous results. Of course, EVs produce zero pollution but they do use electricity, and electricity production causes pollution. How does the EPA take account of this? It doesn't. Go to page 203 of the EPA's [728-page proposal](#) for its new regulation and you will see this statement:

EPA is proposing to make the current treatment of PEVs [plug-in electric vehicles] and FCEVs [fuel cell electric vehicles] through MY [model year] 2026 permanent. EPA proposes to include only emissions measured directly from the vehicle in the vehicle GHG [greenhouse gases] program for MYs 2027 and later (or until EPA changes the regulations through future rulemaking) consistent with the treatment of all other vehicles. Electric vehicle operation would therefore continue to be counted as 0 g/mile, based on tailpipe emissions only.

In short, the EPA assumes something it knows to be false, namely that emissions from producing electricity to power EVs are zero. I'm tempted to call this the EPA's "non-smoking gun."

How could the EPA justify such an extreme assumption? On the same page, it attempts to do so, writing, "The program has now been in place for a decade, since MY 2012, with no upstream accounting and has functioned as intended, encouraging the continued development and introduction of electric vehicle technology."

Did you catch that? The EPA justifies its explicit bias against gasoline-powered vehicles and in favor of EVs by arguing that doing so will encourage the continued development of EVs. Well, yes, just as ignoring the cost of anything will justify more of that thing. Call it the EPA's new frontier in cost/benefit analysis. Or maybe call it the [Bart Simpson](#) justification: "I only lied because it was the easiest way to get what I wanted."

Based on its assumption that the electricity used by EVs is produced with zero pollution, do you care to bet about whether the EPA even bothers to estimate the pollution from actual production of EVs? I doubt it. Doing so might not encourage "the continued development of electric vehicle technology."

On page 524, the EPA presents an interesting estimate of the value of the health benefits from the large switch to EVs. What's interesting is how low they are. They range from \$5.1 billion to \$15 billion annually. I'll explain shortly why that's low.

Assume Actual Humans: Will This Scale?

Have you ever run into someone who tells you that some way of living should work for you because it works for him? Sometimes that's true, of course, but it's often false because the person has failed to take account of you and your circumstances.

Think of one thing that everyone who has bought an EV has in common: they *chose* it even though they could have chosen a gasoline-powered vehicle. That tells you that in comparing the options, they found an EV to be the best option. What does that not tell you? Whether that will be the best option for you.

I strongly suspect that people who have EVs tend to have relatively short commutes and driveways handy in which they park and plug in. What that leaves out is a huge percent of the population. While it's true that most people have short commutes that can easily be covered round trip by an EV on one charge, that's not true for everyone. In California, for example, we often hear about people who have an eighty-mile or more commute. If they fear getting stuck in traffic, they might not relax while driving home, especially if they were stuck in traffic on the way to work.

Moreover, a large percent of people live in apartments and have to find a different parking place every night. That was true of my daughter when she lived near downtown San Francisco. Can we really assume that a large percent of those parking places will have EV chargers and that a large percent of those chargers will work? I don't think so.

People choose what they think is most appropriate for them. And that's why EV usage is unlikely to scale to anything close to 50 percent, let alone 60 percent.

EVs will be particularly difficult for people in colder climates. As [Chantel Wakefield points out](#) on the Kelley Blue Book site, they can lose up to 30 percent of their range and can take twice as long to charge. That fact may well explain why EV sales as a percent of overall sales are so much lower in northern states such as Wyoming, Montana, and North Dakota than in California.

The Value of Time

I noted earlier the EPA's estimate that a massive reduction in tailpipe emissions brought about by an order of magnitude increase in EVs would create annual health benefits worth between \$5.1 billion and \$15 billion. That might sound large. But let's consider one large negative from EVs: the time cost. Let's say conservatively that sometime in the next decade forty million Americans will own EVs. Let's also say conservatively that their time is worth only \$25 an hour. If charging their vehicles costs them an extra hour per week over fifty weeks, that's an annual time cost of \$1,250. Multiply that by forty million and you get a total time cost of \$50 billion annually, which is a multiple of the upper range of the health benefits.

The Grid

One thing many of us Californians learned during the recent rainy weather is that we can't depend on the grid. The rain loosened up the soil and then the wind blew trees over on power lines, resulting in power outages that sometimes lasted for days. Between December 10, when we had the first big power outage, and early April, my wife and I went without power for a total of well over one week, that is, 168 hours. It was not fun. It seems like common sense not to mandate that we must depend on the grid even more, which is what an EV mandate would do. It's true that neighbors who had EVs could use them to power their houses—for a while. But they couldn't use them to do that and still drive them.

Effect on Global Temperatures

What would be the effect on global warming of the massive shift to EVs envisioned by both CARB and Biden's EPA? It would be hard to detect. In recent [written testimony](#) before the US Senate Committee on the Budget, energy economist Benjamin Zycher, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, noted, based on the EPA's climate model, that even reaching net zero *today* would cause the temperature by 2100 to be only 0.173 degree Celsius lower than otherwise. And of course, these proposals won't get us to net zero even by 2050, so the drop would be substantially less. Zycher points out that the standard deviation of temperature is about 0.11 degree Celsius. Thus his conclusion that these measures, even if they caused a massive shift in sales of EVs, would not detectably change world temperatures.

Some Good News: They Won't Do It

I'll end with some good news: as we get closer to the relevant years, these proposals will not be implemented. Peter Van Doren, editor of *Regulation* magazine, recently [noted](#) many instances where regulators put in place ambitious regulations on people's behavior and then retreated when people didn't come close to attaining, or liking, the regulators' goals. One instance is particularly striking in this context. Van Doren wrote:

Under rare circumstances unrealistic policies proceed far enough to alienate voters and receive direct congressional attention. 1974 model year automobiles were required to have electronics that prevented automobiles from being started unless the seatbelts were in use. Motorists revolted and in October 1974 Congress [enacted](#) (pp. 180–81) [legislation](#) (pp. 21, 42–43) prohibiting the use of that technology or any seat belt warning buzzer that sounded for more than eight seconds.

We'll know well beforehand whether I'm right because California is the canary in the coal mine, pun not intended. By 2027, [CARB will require](#) that 43 percent of new vehicles sold in California be either zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) or plug-in hybrids (PHEVs). It's conceivable that car producers could meet that goal, but they would likely do it in two ways: produce a lot of PHEVs relative to ZEVs and price gasoline-powered cars very high in order to discourage their sales. That, in turn, would lead to a consumer revolt. Hundreds of thousands of people would show up in Sacramento to protest. It's possible that I'm wrong. But if I'm wrong, the protest would happen in 2028, when the target is 51 percent. By then the legislature, even a Democratic-dominated legislature, would tell CARB to back off.

There's another piece of good news. *Reason* science writer [Ron Bailey notes](#) that the main models of future temperature have over-predicted temperature increases for the past few decades by about 50 percent. According to the models, global temperatures should have been increasing by about 0.28 to 0.29 degrees Celsius per decade and instead are increasing by about 0.18 to 0.19 degrees Celsius. At that rate, he notes, we won't reach another 1 to 1.6 degrees Celsius until 2100. This is [unlikely to be catastrophic](#). We have lots of time.

David R. Henderson is a research fellow with the Hoover Institution. He is also a professor of economics at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Henderson's writing focuses on public policy. His specialty is in making economic issues and analyses clear and interesting to general audiences. Two themes emerge from his writing: (1) that the unintended consequences of government regulation and spending are usually worse than

the problems they are supposed to solve and (2) that freedom and free markets work to solve people's problems.

David Henderson is the editor of The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics (Warner Books, 2007), a book that communicates to a general audience what and how economists think. The Wall Street Journal commented, "His brainchild is a tribute to the power of the short, declarative sentence." The encyclopedia went through three printings and was translated into Spanish and Portuguese. It is now online at the Library of Economics and Liberty. He coauthored Making Great Decisions in Business and Life (2006). Henderson's book, The Joy of Freedom: An Economist's Odyssey (Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2001), has been translated into Russian. Henderson also writes frequently for the Wall Street Journal and Fortune and, from 1997 to 2000, was a monthly columnist with Red Herring, an information technology magazine. He currently serves as an adviser to LifeSharers, a nonprofit network of organ and tissue donors. This article first appeared in the Hoover Institution Daily Update of May 4, 2023.

DO WE EVEN KNOW WE ARE ALL SOCIALISTS NOW?

*In the end, perhaps the best definition of socialism is simply "The
endless war against merit"*

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Sometimes when you are in the midst of a revolution, you do not even know it.

I doubt all the Germans who voted in National Socialism quite foresaw what quickly was to come. Those who overthrew the Bourbons or the Romanoffs had no real idea that they had sown the wind and were soon to reap the Jacobin and Bolshevik whirlwind.

Socialism With a Whimper

So it is with our "woke"—a euphemism for the socialist revolution we are in and do not fully appreciate or even understand.

Socialism is variously defined. The Merriam-Webster dictionary emphasizes the role of the state in near-communist terms: "Any of various egalitarian economic and political theories or movements advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods."

The Cambridge Dictionary more accurately notes that socialism is "the set of beliefs that states that all people are equal and should share equally in a country's money, or the political systems based on these beliefs."

The latter definition perhaps best sums up much of the operative ideology of the new Democratic Party, the Biden Administration, and its subordinates, both elected and administrative.

But perhaps socialism in America 2023 is even better described as something like “the doctrine of enforced ‘equity’ by government redistribution of money and power from one ‘oppressive’ group to another ‘oppressed,’ with the caveat that the elite redistributors have the right to supersede the law based on their own self-professed superior morality, and the assurance that they will never be subject to the baleful consequences of their own unnatural ideology.”

We have been drifting into such a socialist system for decades, but it was accelerated by the eight years of the Obama Administration and has arrived at near fruition with the Biden Administration. Note first that the more socialist we become, the greater the resistance grows, and the more desperate and cruel the socialists become to force down the throats of the public something they otherwise would vomit up.

Under the woke socialist model there are no longer any absolutes, laws, or customs. We are left instead with mere constructs deemed illegitimate and arbitrary, in need of systematic dismantling in the interest of the proverbial people.

Such redistributionist, compensatory and reparative efforts to make us equal on the backside have in common a war against all meritocracy and indeed any accomplishment deemed singular and beyond the abilities of the masses.

The Surrender of the Campuses

Socialism has become not just economic, but political, cultural, social, and even military. Take universities. Most are dropping the SAT and ACT entrance exams not because they fail to calibrate both past achievement and the likelihood of future aptitude, but because too many do too poorly and thus find themselves unequal to those fewer who do too well.

Grade point averages are losing significance, since the achievers succeed supposedly only by advantage and not by hard work, preparation, and talent. Free speech is nonexistent; racist and hate speech is protected if voiced by the “marginalized.”

University admissions increasingly have little to do with talent. Or rather talent is described not so much as the ability to think analytically and computationally, to have mastery of language, spoken and oral, or some acquaintance with the referents, historical, scientific, and literary, of our civilization. Instead, qualifications are becoming more a matter of “life experiences,” or “community service,” or “activities,” or commitments to hopey-and-changey “diversity, equity, and inclusion” as the traditional one-third of the application packet absorbed the other two-thirds of grades and test scores.

Under academic socialism, entrance, of course, is merely the first step.

Courses are watered down, grades inflated.

The D and F grades have all but disappeared. The A? It's become inflationary to the point of being utterly meaningless, like a German mark circa 1923.

Everyone knows that current courses on comic books, movies, and social media, interspersed with the proper adjectives, black, queer, and feminist, promulgate not just for ideological reasons of indoctrinating impressionable teen fodder, but to ensure that almost anyone admitted to university can pass such "courses."

In socialist campuses, graduation is almost assured upon and indeed equivalent to admission. "Flunking out" is an anachronism.

A Stanford, Yale, or Harvard Law degree is not synonymous with mastery of American jurisprudence—a fact as known to all as it is out of politeness unspoken.

In the Biden years, the elite socialist universities have done the near impossible: they 1) made it almost impossible for working class white males to go to top schools based on their proven achievement, 2) have taken us back to the anti-Jewish quota years of the 1920s and '30s by radically and deliberately curtailing the presence of high-achieving American Jews on Ivy League campuses, and 3) have reinstated an entire neo-Confederate, unconstitutional set of discriminatory rules to accommodate those admitted without competitive test scores and grades, from racially segregated graduations, dorms, safe spaces, and workshops to one-drop, one-sixteenth Old South notions of racial purity.

From Taxes to Voting

The tax code is socialist. About one percent of households pay 50 percent of federal income taxes—and are damned as greedy for it. That asymmetry is true of most state income tax schedules as well. The antithesis of Reagan's "Starve the Beast"—limiting revenues to force cuts in superfluous spending—is now "Gorge the beast": spend so much indiscriminately, run up such astronomical multitrillion budget deficits, and inflate debt to GDP to over 130 percent, that redistributionist higher and higher taxes become perpetually necessary.

Voting is now socialist inspired. The old idea that each citizen chooses or not to participate in democracy by showing up to vote and presenting identification is considered discriminatory. The socialist answer in many states is to require no identification, and fast-track same-day voter registration, automatically mailed out ballots, and ballot harvesting and curing. The common theme is that if not enough of those deemed oppressed, victimized, and marginalized choose to vote, then the system must be warped to ensure somehow with minimum or no effort their ballots are cast.

Equity Jurisprudence

The law is socialist, or worse in the sense of Lavrentiy Beria's "show me the man, and I'll find the crime." It now operates on the "critical legal theory" idea that most American laws are the manifestations of the powerful and wealthy.

What is illegal is only so because the wealthy never need to break such laws. So why not steal—or rather redistribute—a hair dryer or smartphone that a rich man never does, but makes illegal?

Thus smash-and-grab, looting, shoplifting, and even violent assault increasingly either do not lead to arrest, or to indictment or to conviction or to incarceration. The socialist mind insists laws do not represent natural and ancient ideas of morality—such as thievery is always wrong and assault endangers society—but simply a particular value system of the oppressive rich and increasingly in America the so-called rich white population.

The idea of deterrence is taboo. Socialists do not believe law, order, and calm exist because those who would disrupt them fear the consequences more than the advantage of taking what you want or hurting whom you please.

We talk about “George Soros” public prosecutors. But the nihilist Soros’ genius is always to be one step ahead of the game, applying what made him an outlaw in France to our popular culture.

No one anticipated that he would quietly flood rather obscure big-city prosecutorial races with hundreds of millions of dollars to elect hard socialists who were to use their ensuing power to engage in lawfare against conservatives and the prominent and make laws and target enemies that legislatures could not. Without a Soros-funded Letitia James, Alvin Bragg, and Fani Willis, the nation would now be reduced to speculating whether former president Donald Trump’s two-year unauthorized storage of some classified documents at a secure Mar-a-Lago was a worse infraction than former Vice President Joe Biden’s unauthorized storage of classified documents at three locations, including his garage, for six years.

Defunding the police is based on the implicit assumption that greater criminality and violence, mostly directed against the most vulnerable, is a small price to pay, given a) the stigmatized criminal is given exemption, and b) the architects of defunding have mechanisms to ensure they are exposed to inevitable spiraling crime rates.

Ditto gun control. The socialist point of neutering the Second Amendment is not just to disarm the populace, much less to prevent shootings. Rather, the aim is to ensure the government has a complete monopoly on arms, so that it can calibrate both the degree and nature of law enforcement, and thus render the citizen compliant and obsequious in order to ensure his protection from both criminals *and* the state.

Socialist Corruption

One key element of socialism we often forget is its innate corruption. The Castro family, the Chavezes of Venezuela, or the Ortegas of Nicaragua all became rich by taking large bites out of the transfer of money from the rich to the poor, taking bribes from the rich to win exemptions, or doling out concessions of the “people’s resources.” In other words, they were self-appointed gatekeepers. Socialists are often the very rich or at least become the wealthy when they achieve power; paradoxically, they despise those who make money legally apart from the mechanisms of the state.

Not a moment goes by that Joe Biden does not demagogue about “those who don’t pay their fair share”—even as the Biden syndicate is emerging as one of the most corrupt political families in U.S. history, specifically in gathering millions of dollars that apparently were not reported to the IRS. The family leveraged Biden’s vice presidency and future likely presidency to win lucrative payoffs from foreign governments, the majority of them hostile to the United States. Just as

Hillary Clinton sent soon-to-be National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to push the phony “Russian collusion” hoax among the media and deep state, so the Bidens enlisted soon-to-be Secretary of State Antony Blinken to contact former CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell to round up 50 former intelligence cronies to lie that the incriminating Hunter Biden laptop was “Russian disinformation.” Neither has nor will face consequences for attempting to warp two elections, given they are designated among the “good people.”

In fact, socialism has now almost permeated every aspect of our lives, disguised as it is by the rhetoric of “marginalized people” or “people of color” or particular interests who justify their war on rules, customs, meritocracy, and achievement by claiming the greater victimhood, past or present.

Tidbit Socialism

In California, a bill passed the Assembly mandating that power bills be massaged by income levels. The initial—but by no means the final—rewards and punishments schedule seeks to add a flat fee onto energy users, based on their income. The idea came from the power companies themselves both to ingratiate themselves to left-wing California legislators but also to find cash to cover their massive losses incurred by forced adherence to madcap wind and solar mandates. In sum, the more one is liable not to pay for the energy he uses, the cheaper the power bill, regardless how much power he consumes. Fail in business, get cheaper electricity; succeed and pay more.

Indeed, the unelected are the most effective socialists since they can achieve by administrative fiat what a legislator would have to otherwise enact by open debate, media scrutiny, and voter approval. On May 1, new rules governing home loans will go into effect that were advanced by the bureaucrats at the quasi-public Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae lending agencies. The Federal Housing Finance Agency is punishing would be homebuyers with excellent credit ratings by forcing them to pay higher mortgage rates and fees.

These surcharges supposedly will subsidize those with bad credit ratings who will pay less per month on their home loans.

Note the socialist ahistorical logic. Aside from the fact that no socialist regime has ever worked, we in America have the 2008 subprime meltdown to warn us what happens when massive home loans are taken out by those without the means or the track record to pay them back. That shock almost destroyed the U.S. economy and wrecked millions of American lives as we went into recession for a near decade. No matter, socialists must break eggs to achieve their supposedly perfect omelets.

Popular culture from publishing to Hollywood to awards are now T-ball socialist in nature. Thousands of gifted authors are denied book contracts because they are deemed a part of the oppressive white male class. Ditto movies as well. Few believe that the Tonys, the Oscars, the Emmys, or the Pulitzers reward the most talented achievement, but are rather predicated on spreading the awards around to the underrepresented and do not necessarily represent the merit of a song, play, film, or book.

Note how socialism despises unauthorized excellence. In our sick world, that means any singular individual who is not committed to the principles of the woke revolution. He is giving hundreds of millions of dollars worth of free Starlink satellite internet to the Ukrainians, without which they certainly would lose the war. His Teslas sparked the entire notion of a potentially viable electric car. His space projects, not NASA's, are America's best chance to obtain parity with the Chinese in space. He lost \$40 billion to reboot Twitter into something the 1980s American Civil Liberties Union would have applauded. And yet he is despised as a leftist apostate, a crime greater than the sum of all his good left-wing deeds.

Any talent who is deemed an enemy of the socialist project by any evidence of apostasy—a Tom Brady, J.K. Rowling, or Matt Taibbi—is transmogrified from hero or genius to Leon Trotsky in a nanosecond.

A final note: the Orwellian police state is central to socialism, since the ideology is contrary to innate human nature and when fully implemented quickly ruins all that it touches and is commensurately despised in its fruition. So to force compliance is a 360 degree, 24/7 project that transcends all our institutions and culture.

That is why the woke FBI goes after counter-revolutionary parents at school board meetings or traditionalist Catholics rather than Pentagon leakers or Islamic terrorists.

That is why the FBI and the CIA respectively tried to warp the 2016 election with the phony Steele dossier and in 2020 probably did so by suppressing the truth about the “bombshell” evidence found on wayward Hunter Biden's laptop.

That is why news disappears off Facebook and the old Twitter. That is why the order of Google search results seems bizarre. That is why Disney or Budweiser suddenly virtue signal their nihilist politics, or why Nike makes the mediocrity Colin Kaepernick a multimillionaire, or Stanford University attempts to purge vocabulary such as “citizen,” “immigrant,” and “American.”

Once socialism takes hold, every mediocrity, every ossified bureaucracy, every constipated careerist, every hack writer and nobody actor, comes out of the woodwork to find his socialist “fair share” of what he lacked in talent or accomplishment.

In the end, perhaps the best definition of socialism is simply “The endless war against merit.”

Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush. Hanson is also a farmer (growing raisin grapes on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author most recently of [The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won](#), [The Case for Trump](#) and the recently released [The Dying Citizen](#). This article first appeared in the April 23, 2023 American Greatness.



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