



WEEKLY UPDATE OCTOBER 1-7, 2023

CALL US QUICK - YOU CAN STILL COME – ENJOY PRIZE ANGUS BULLS, WILD TURKEYS (the birds), WINE, BEER, AND A GREAT PROGRAM



**FALL
FORUM**

**Wednesday, October 4th
5:30—7:30 PM
Thousand Hills Ranch
550 Thousand Hills Rd.
Pismo Beach, CA**

Thousand Hills Rd. is off of Price Canyon. Please use caution, as the road is somewhat hidden around a bend in the road and it comes up on you suddenly. Once on Thousand Hills Road, follow the road for approximately one mile to the red roofed barn on right!

Featuring:

**TRUCKS, HOMES, AND FOOD
– HOW WE CAN DEFEND
THESE VITAL ESSENTIALS IN
AN AGE OF REGRESSIVE
SUPPRESSION.**

**HEAR FROM OUR INDUSTRY
EXPERTS, BRENT
BURCHETT EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR SLO COUNTY
FARM BUREAU, LINDY
HATCHER EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR HOME BUILDERS
ASSOC OF THE CENTRAL
COAST AND JOEL DE LA
CERDA FROM CENTRAL
COAST TRUCK CENTER**



**BEER, LOCAL FINE WINES, AND
HOT & COLD APPETIZERS
WILL BE SERVED**

Kindly RSVP by September 27th — there is no charge for this informative event!

Email: colabslo@gmail.com or call (805) 548-0340

IT'S THIS WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4TH

**THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 4**

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

SLOCOG MEETING

**CONSULTANT CONTRACT TO DEVELOP WAYS TO MITIGATE
VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT) REQUIREMENTS
STATE MANDATES MORE STACK-AND-PACK --- LESS MOBILITY**

COASTAL COMMISSION MEETING

**PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY TO DREDGE 70,000
CUBIC YARDS OF SEDIMENT FROM
THE DIABLO CANYON POWER PLANT INTAKE COVE**

**LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 7**

SLO COUNTY PENSION TRUST

**INVESTMENT RETURNS IN DOLDRUMS
LONG TERM UNFUNDED LIABILITY PROJECTIONS IN LA LA LAND¹**



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

¹ *La La Land*, courtesy of 20th Century Fox, 2016

**SCREWY MATH IN DA'S REAL ESTATE FRAUD PROGRAM
TRANSPOSITION ERROR?**

**MORE CANNABIS PLEASE, SINCE WE ARE LOSING MONEY
THE ILLEGAL MARKET IS ALIVE AND WELL
STAFF DIRECTED TO PREPARE FOR RETAIL OUTLETS**

**STATE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM UPDATE
NO LONGER INCLUDES PROTECTION OF 2/3 TAX VOTE
BOS MAJORITY CHIPPING AWAY**

**COUNTY ENDED FY 2022-23 IN BLACK
BUT HAD TO HIT RESERVES TO FUND SALARY AND BENEFIT RAISES
BOARD HAD NO QUESTIONS – SEEMED IN TORPOR²**

**VERY PRELIMINARY BUDGET FORECAST FOR 2024-25
\$21 MILLION REVENUE EXPENDITURE SHORTFALL
SHOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM IN A \$900 MILLION BUDGET
(UNLESS A DEPRESSION HITS)**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISOR REQUESTS AND MOTIONS FOR
MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

SLO APCD

**GAVE OUR TAX DOLLARS TO SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE
BUSINESSES FOR MEANINGLESS CO₂ & NO₂ REDUCTIONS
SOME GAVE BIG CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LEFTISTS**

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**WORKSHOP ON DANA RESERVE PROJECT
5.5 HOUR MEETING – COMMISSION KNOWS IT'S AN ACID HOUSING TEST**

² A state of physical or mental inactivity; lethargy. Peschong said “they were stunned into silence.”

EMERGENT ISSUES
SEE PAGE 20

\$33,000,000,000,000

A KINDER, GENTLER DEI?

OIL RESERVES AT ALL TIME LOW

COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 26

SLOUCHING TOWARDS 1984

*Orwell could not have imagined the swiftness in which the Left has
exerted control over our body politic*

BY JEFFREY KELTZ

FINDING UNITY IN A DIVIDED AMERICA

*The hardships endured by Americans offer clarity for those seeking
Office of Presidency*

BY EDWARD RING

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, October 17, 2023.

**San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments meeting of Wednesday, October 4, 2023
(Scheduled) - (9:30 AM)**

Item D-1 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Contract. The item, if approved, would award a contract to a consultant, Kimley-Horn, for \$296,000 to develop a “framework” for a VMT mitigation program. The State is requiring that the traffic impacts and CO2 impacts be assessed on the new miles traveled generated by a new housing, commercial, or industrial project. Jurisdictions will be required to modify or deny projects that exceed standards and are not mitigated.

This study seeks to develop a series of mitigation measures to be ultimately adopted by the cities and the County.

The write-up states in part:

Senate Bill 743 changes the process in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) used by local jurisdictions to measure the environmental impacts of projects by measuring how many new miles of car travel the project's residents, visitors, shoppers and employees will produce. Measuring vehicle miles traveled (VMT) considers whether a new development is located close to jobs, businesses and services that enable short trips and travel choices besides driving alone. VMT changes transportation analysis from measuring the impact of a proposed project on drivers, to measuring the impact of driving on the community. The SLO Regional VMT Mitigation Program is a response to Senate Bill 743, not Senate Bill 339, the vehicle road usage charge pilot program

Stack-and-pack homes next to mass transit will be given preference.

The overall underlying premise is that travel generated by new development is generating CO₂, which must be offset before a project can be approved. Of course, the economic and liberty aspects of this law are devastating and one more step to restrict development and curtail individual liberty.



Chinese style green housing project.

California Coastal Commission Meeting of Friday, October 15, 2023 (Scheduled)

Item 8-a Application by Pacific Gas & Electric Company to dredge approximately 70,000 cu. yds. of sediment from the Diablo Canyon Power Plant Intake Cove, approximately six miles north of the City of Avila Beach, and place dredged sediment approx. 2000 ft. offshore of Morro Bay State Park sandspit, San Luis Obispo County. The staff recommends approval with many detailed conditions. The write-up summarizes in part:

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) proposes to dredge approximately 70,000 cubic yards (cy) of shoaled sediment from the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) seawater intake cove. This will be the first dredging episode to maintain the intake system since the DCPP went into operation in 1985. PG&E has determined that sediment buildup in the intake cove poses a substantial risk in the near term to the operations of the DCPP's seawater intake equipment which cycles 2.5 billion gallons of seawater each day for cooling. PG&E has observed sediment in equipment and increased kelp and algal growth in the intake cove, which it is concerned increases the risk of an inadvertent shutdown and interferes with divers performing critical maintenance of the intake structure.





LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

SLO County Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, September 25, 2023 (Completed)

Item 11- Monthly Investment Report for August 2023. The doldrums-like stock markets continued in August. September (not yet reported) has ended with a \$1000 drop in the Dow since August.

	August	Year to Date 2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total Trust Investments (\$ millions)	\$1,657		\$1,614 year end	\$1,775 year end	\$1,552 year end	\$1,446 year end	\$1,285 year end
Total Fund Return	-1.0% Gross	+6.1% Gross	-8.0% Gross	15.2% Gross	8.9 % Gross	16.3 % Gross	-3.2 % Gross
Policy Index Return (r)	-1.3%	+6.0%	-9.7%	12.8%	10.0 %	16.4 %	-3.2 %

Item 21 - Funding Policy Projections. The unfunded actuarial liability will continue for many years, placing pressure on the County budget.

The following graph excerpted from the 2023 Actuarial Valuation shows the baseline forecast for the ADC to fund the Plan –



The report states in part:

This is an informational presentation for the Board of Trustees on the topic of managing pension contributions rates over the next 20 years as the Plan reaches full funding.

At the planned culmination of the current funding policy the Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL) is expected to approach \$0 – or a 100% funded ratio – in approximately 2040-2042. At that point, the Actuarially Determined Contribution Rate (ADC) to fund the Plan “falls off a cliff” as projected.

(\$ millions)	2023 Valuation	2032 Forecast*	2041 Forecast*
Actuarial Liability	\$2,622	\$3,427	\$4,288
Actuarial Value of Assets	1,680	2,633	4,304
UAL	\$ 943	\$ 794	(\$ 16)
Funded Ratio	64%	77%	100%
Contribution Rates:			
Normal Cost + Admin.	22.25%	20.60%	19.66%
UAL Amortization	30.56%	33.57%	5.75%
Total ADC	52.81%	54.17%	25.41%



They have about as much chance of achieving this forecast as you have of winning the Powerball. Meanwhile, even under their own projections, the rates to the County and employees will reach nearly 55% and remain high for years. The taxpayers pay for most of the contribution.

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, September 26, 2023 (Completed)

Item 16 - Submittal of the FY 2022-23 Annual Report of the Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Program as required per Government Code Section 27388(d). Departmental staff appeared

at the meeting and explained that the screwy math was some sort of transposition error. The explanation itself was confusing. The Board accepted the explanation and approved the report.

The State provides District Attorney offices with an annual grant to prosecute real estate fraud. By law the funds must be expended for this purpose and accounted for in a separate trust fund.

The table below indicates that the Fiscal Year began with a \$460,198 balance, received a new \$625,042 grant, and expended \$238,515, which should have left an \$846,723 balance, not \$386,572.

ACCOUNTING

Figure 1 Real Estate Fraud Prosecution Program Trust Fund Revenues and Expenditures (FY 2022-23)				
	Trust Fund Beginning Balance	Trust Fund Revenues	Trust Fund Expenditures	Trust Fund Ending Balance
San Luis Obispo County	\$460,196	\$625,042	\$238,515	\$386,527

The DA’s Budget for FY 2023-24 shows about \$8,067,000 in intergovernmental revenue. Could \$846,723 have been counted outside of the trust fund?

Item 39 - Request to receive and file an update on State Legislative activities by Paul Yoder of Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange. Mr. Yoder appeared and provided a concise professional report. Peschong and Arnold proposed that the Board reconsider its prior meeting action removing the 2/3’s Proposition 13 voting plank from its legislative program. This was defeated 3/2 with Gibson, Ortiz-Legg, and Paulding dissenting. Gibson did his "I’m disgusted” act and complained that bringing the issue up was a waste of the Board’s time.

Gibson also took pains to disparage the members of the audience who were there to support the restoration of the plank.

Paulding kept insisting that he supports Proposition 13 (but, apparently, not the 2/3rds vote requirement).

The report indicated that the proposed Constitutional amendments, which undermine Proposition 13, had passed the Legislature and is on the Governor’s desk for approval. When he signs, these will be placed on the ballot for November 2024. Paul Yoder pointed out some nuances about how Assembly Constitutional Amendments work. Apparently, ACA 1 does not need the Governors’ signature to go on the ballot but ACA 13 does.

- ACA 1 (Aguiar-Curry): This constitutional amendment, subject to voter approval, allows a city, county, or special district, with 55% voter approval, to incur bonded indebtedness or impose specified special taxes to fund projects for affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, or public infrastructure, as specified.

ACA 13 (Ward): Requires an initiative constitutional amendment to comply with any increased voter approval threshold that it seeks to impose on future ballot measures. Guarantees in the state constitution the ability of local governments to submit advisory questions to voters.

A number of bills promoting leftist policies are either on the Governor's desk or pending final approval, including:

Wind Energy

SB 286 (McGuire) will consolidate permitting for offshore wind's onshore facilities. County staff participated in conversations with the author's office and Coastal Commission staff to evaluate the process by which county concerns would be elevated during the consolidated coastal permit process and received assurances from Commission staff that permits would not be issued without extensive consultation with the County. Should the measure be signed (the Department of Finance (DOF) opposes this bill due to costs), it is worth the board's consideration to have a public conversation with the Commission staff to further memorialize the process the Commission will undertake during permitting to ensure county impacts are fully mitigated

AB 1373 (Garcia) authorizes the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to develop a central procurement entity that will be the "backstop" purchaser of power generated from offshore wind and lithium-derived energy. Offshore wind developers signaled to the administration that they needed to assure "buyers" of the power to secure financing and investment planning for development. Biomass was purposefully excluded from this procurement.

AB 1373 puts the risk on State taxpayers.

More Labor Pork

AB 1484 (Zbur): Amends the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) to require inclusion of temporary employees in the same bargaining unit as permanent employees.

Looking Ahead

Deficit: *Unfortunately, it appears certain that the State will suffer another significant budget deficit in 2024-25. Fiscally, this will constrain actions by the Governor and the Legislature. As mentioned above, bonding for various purposes will continue to be front and center in terms of generating money for various projects around the State.*

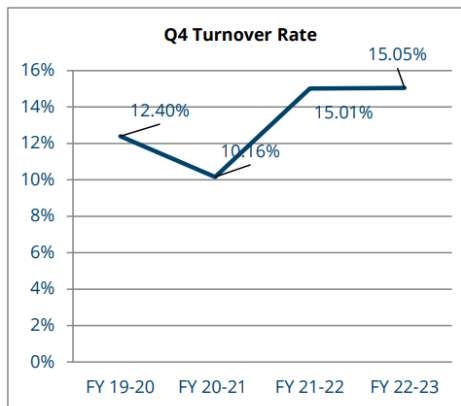
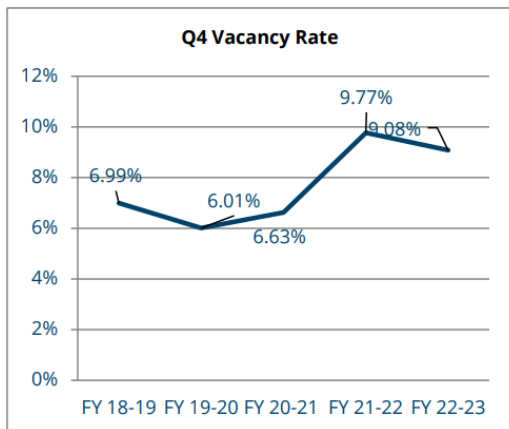
AB 504 Reyes: *This bill would provide, except as specified, that it is not unlawful or a cause for discipline or other adverse action against a public employee for that public employee to refuse to enter property that is the site of a primary strike, perform work for a public employer involved in a primary strike, or go through or work behind a primary strike line. The bill would prohibit a public employer from directing a public employee to take those actions. The bill would authorize a recognized employee organization to inform employees of these rights and encourage them to exercise those rights. The bill would also state that a provision in a public employer policy or collective bargaining agreement that purports to limit or waive the rights set forth in this*

provision shall be void against public policy, except that the bill would require the parties to negotiate over the bill's provisions if the bill is in conflict with a collective bargaining agreement entered into before January 1, 2024, as prescribed. The bill would exempt certain public employees of fire departments and certain peace officers from these provisions. The bill would include related legislative findings.

SB 704 Min D: This bill would prohibit new or expanded oil and gas development from being considered a coastal-dependent industrial facility, as provided, and would permit those developments only if they are found to be consistent with all applicable provisions of the Act and certain conditions are met. The bill would authorize the repair and maintenance of existing oil and gas facilities to be permitted in accordance with the requirements for coastal-dependent industrial facilities, but would authorize that permitting only if the repair or maintenance does not result in expansion of capacity of the facility and the same conditions are met. This bill other related provisions and other existing laws.

Item 40 - Submittal of the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Year-End Financial Status Report. One of the CAO Budget Analysts presented a PowerPoint which she largely read. The Board had no questions or comments. John Peschong quipped, “we have been stunned into silence.”

This is the full financial report for FY 2022-23. In the end the fiscal year closed in the black. In fact the County substantially underspent the adopted Budget, due to employee vacancies and capital projects that lapsed over into the FY 2023-24 fiscal year. In fact, the County ended up with higher fund balances than were even projected last Spring.



Soon the County will reach 3000 funded positions but with a vacancy rate of 10%. 300 of these will be vacant, on average, over the course of the year. Again, the County should publish a report that lists which positions are vacant, how long they have been vacant, which ones are general fund, and how much salary savings has been accumulated over each pay period.

SUMMARY OF POSITION ALLOCATION CHANGES

FY 2022-23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarter Start	2,932.00	2,958.25	2,965.25	2,969.25
FTE Additions	53.00	27.00	8.00	13.00
FTE Deletions	26.75	20.00	4.00	6.00
Quarter End	2,958.25	2,965.25	2,969.25	2,976.25
Net Change	26.25	7.00	4.00	7.00
% Change	0.90%	0.24%	0.13%	0.24%

The County continues to not budget for expected and currently underway labor negotiations, but instead relies on fund balance and departmental savings to bail out departments that run over. In the larger picture, this means the County is budgeting less precisely, which in turn limits the Board’s ability to prioritize its program of service (whether one agrees with it or not).

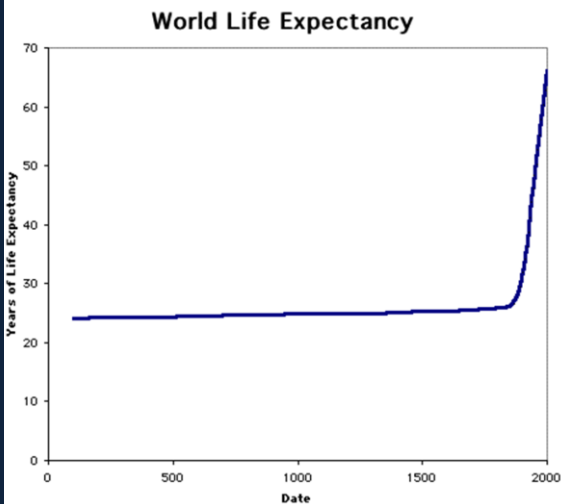
Item 41 - It is recommended that the Board 1) approve a resolution adopting final appropriations, reserves, designations, and contingencies for FY 2023-24 pursuant to direction given in Board Resolution No. 2023-159 and relative to the determination of the June 30, 2023, final fund balances, by 4/5 vote and 2) receive and file FY 2024-25 initial look/partial preliminary forecast. This item recommended some clean up issues to close out the FY 2022-23 fiscal year. These included a few minor corrections and allocation of higher than anticipated fund balance to reserves.

The item also provided a very preliminary list of the issues that will present challenges in balancing the FY 2024-25 budget. At this point, taking all the increased revenues, accounting for expenditures funded by one-time revenues as well as known unfunded salary and bandit increases, a possible \$21 million problem is projected. Given that the overall operations budget is approaching \$900 million, this should not be much of a problem by the time they get down to real budget making next Spring.

Caution: This would be not true if the country suffers a severe financial depression, widespread civil unrest by either the socialist left, the increasingly populist right, or both; or the spread of the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, or the far East, and/or some combination of all three.

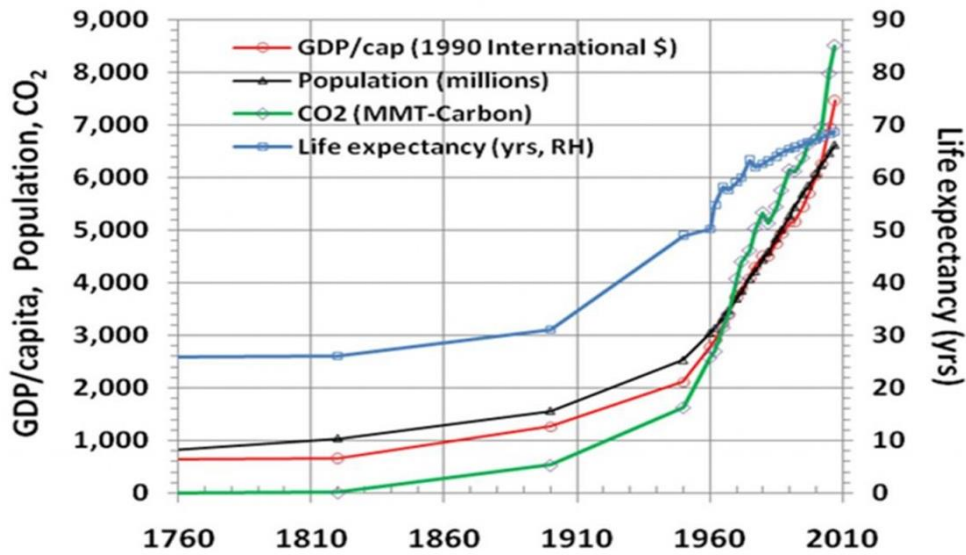
Additionally, the California economy could be especially vulnerable, due to the increasingly radical agenda of the State and some local governments that are imposing restrictions on the economy and citizen mobility, and undermining public safety and public health. At some time, a tipping point will be reached where the current zones of crime, filth, and abandonment will spread to the degree that citizens will take

matters into their own hands as the established governments lose their authority and legitimacy.



REQUISITES OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY (PRECONDIONS)

- Rule of Law** (property rights, freedom from corruption);
- Limited government** (fiscal freedom, government spending);
- Regulatory efficiency** (business freedom, labor freedom, monetary freedom); and
- Open markets** (trade freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom).



Item 44 - Receive and file a presentation on the County's Cannabis Program and provide staff direction, as necessary. The Board directed staff to return with ordinance amendments as outlined below in the Background section. The vote was 4/1 with Arnold dissenting.

As demonstrated by the table below, San Luis Obispo County's experiment with legalized recreational cannabis has been a resounding failure. It costs more to permit, regulate, and police it than it generates in revenue.

Please see the table on the next page.

GFS means General Fund subsidy

Program Component	FY 2022-23 Actuals			FY 2023-24 Budget		
	Revenue	Expenditures	GFS	Revenue	Expenditures	GFS
Legal Cannabis						
Land Use Ordinance Development	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Land Use Permitting (not including Appeals or PRAs)	\$48,575	\$225,961	\$177,386	\$198,661	\$198,661	\$0
Appeals	\$0	\$23,203	\$23,203	\$1,700	\$13,754	\$12,054
Public Records Act (PRA) Requests and other Public Information Requests	\$0	\$1,073	\$1,073	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,000
Business Licensing and Background Checks	\$185,277	\$581,758	\$396,482	\$516,844	\$1,209,359	\$692,515
Compliance Monitoring	\$217,875	\$425,216	\$207,342	\$460,975	\$885,420	\$424,445
Total	\$451,726	\$1,257,211	\$805,485	\$1,178,180	\$2,308,194	\$1,130,014
Illegal Cannabis						
Civil	\$76,756	\$203,152	\$126,396	\$0	\$132,587	\$132,857
Criminal	\$0	\$66,808	\$66,808	\$0	\$132,587	\$132,857
Total Illegal Cannabis	\$76,756	\$269,960	\$193,204	\$0	\$265,173	\$265,713
Cannabis Business Tax						
Cannabis Business Tax	\$597,747	\$0	(\$597,747)	\$387,000*	\$0	(\$387,000)
Total Cannabis Business Tax	\$597,747	\$0	(\$597,747)	\$387,000	\$0	(\$387,000)
Total Legal and Illegal Cannabis (Including Tax)	\$1,126,229	\$1,527,171	\$400,942	\$1,565,180	\$2,573,907	\$1,008,727

*Adjusts for Board action to reduce the Cannabis Business Tax rate to 6% of gross receipts

Background: This Board item presented a cafeteria of revisions to the County’s Cannabis program and Ordinances for consideration by the Board.

Items of Consideration

- 1. Land use cannabis permit expiration.**
 - County Code Section 22.40.050.B.1 Land use permit expiration.
"All land use permits issued for cannabis cultivation shall expire in five years from the approval date..."
 - Due to the complexity of cannabis regulations- applications are taking a few years to complete Conditions of Approval.
 - The requested change would allow cannabis permits to expire in five years from the date of when the project becomes operational instead from the date of the project's approval.

Items of Consideration

- 2. Mobile Dispensary Hours of Operation**
 - County Code Section 22.40.090.D.3
"Dispensaries may operate from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. daily..."
 - The State allows mobile dispensaries to operate up until 10 p.m.
 - Consider expanding the hours of operation to be consistent with State policy.

Items of Consideration

- 3. Storefront Retail Dispensaries**
 - Currently, the Cannabis Ordinance does not allow for storefront retail dispensaries.
 - This change would allow brick-and-mortar cannabis dispensaries in the unincorporated areas of the County.
 - The Planning Department will collaborate with other stakeholders to understand the implication of the change to address health, safety, and neighborhood compatibility concerns.

What has been the impact of recreational cannabis to date? Before authoring such a project, the Board should have requested a combined written and live presentation on the impacts of recreational cannabis so far. The expertise of the Behavioral Health Department, the Clinical Health Department, and the County Superintendent of Schools, The District Attorney, the County Sheriff, and a representative of the County Police Chiefs Association should be included. An independent consultant should supervise the report design and preparation.

In other words, is it good or bad for children, education and job attendance, cognitive ability, mental and physical health public safety, and the society in general? For example, what has been the impact on homelessness, school attendance, and crime?

There appeared to be no interest, and there was no discussion of the idea.

Why expend a million dollars on the ordinance revisions below, when no one knows whether the impact has been harmful or not. The left is always yammering about the precautionary principle. What about here? It’s only our kids’ future at stake.

Steps Required for Ordinance Amendment

1. Authorization from the Board of Supervisors.
2. Research
3. Develop and update the Ordinance Framework
4. Staff will develop an administrative draft ordinance
5. Public Review Draft Ordinance
6. Agency and stakeholder outreach
7. Tribal Consultation
8. Planning Commission to review draft ordinance
9. Board of Supervisor for adoption

Item 35 - Any Supervisor may ask a question for clarification, make an announcement, or report briefly on his or her activities. In addition, Supervisors may request staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter or may request that staff place a matter of business on a future agenda. Any request to place a matter of business for consideration on a future agenda requires the majority vote of the Board.

Peschong proposed that one of the social service not-for-profits be considered for a grant. Gibson objected on procedural grounds, saying the matter should be taken up as part of the normal not-for-profit funding cycle.

SLO Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Meeting of Wednesday, September 27, 2023 (Completed)

Item B-8: Report on emission reduction projects funded through APCD grant programs during Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The staff rejected the logic below on the grounds that the program is focused on NO_x (of which Nitrogen dioxide - NO₂ is a component), as opposed to CO₂. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is a gaseous air pollutant composed of nitrogen and oxygen that forms when fossil fuels such as coal, oil, methane gas (natural gas) or diesel are burned at high temperatures.

NO₂ does not seem to be a problem in SLO County. Again, this seems to be an expensive symbolic program.

The APCD receives State and Federal grants, which in turn are used to fund incentive programs for businesses and individuals to trade out old engines and equipment for newer versions that generate less CO₂.

1. SLO County Clean Air Incentive Program: One focus of the SLO County Clean Air Incentive Program is to reduce emissions by replacing existing older diesel engines with new low-emission engines and electric motors. The program also continues with the retirement of older light-duty vehicles and the support of local infrastructure for alternative fuel and zero emission vehicles. The specific project categories include:

- *Off-road Equipment Replacement Program (ERP): Clean replacements for old tractors and construction equipment.*

- *Off-road Equipment Repowers: Clean replacements for old diesel engines in tractors, irrigation engines, and construction equipment.*
- *Marine Engine Repowers: Clean replacements for old diesel engines in commercial harbor craft, including commercial fishing vessels.*
- *School Bus Replacements: Provides zero or near zero-emission replacements for public school buses.*
 - *Old Car Buy Back: Provides payments to county residents for retiring a light-duty car or truck in our old car buyback program.*
- *Alternative Fuel/Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure: Provides funding for alternative fuel or ZEV infrastructure projects, such as electric vehicle chargers.*

Here is a list of this fiscal year’s awardees.

Table 5. FY 22-23 Project Expenditure Summary

Organized by Expenditure Category & Project Number

Category	Project ID	Company	Project Award
	CM20/21-05	E. & J. Gallo Winery (formerly Denner Vineyards)	\$ 46,260
	CM21/22-04	J. Lohr Vineyards	\$ 54,180
	CM21/22-05	J Lohr Vineyards	\$ 54,180
	CM21/22-06	J Lohr Vineyards	\$ 55,440
	CM21/22-07	Dugan Kelly	\$ 26,930
	AB617-1920-18	San Miguel Vineyards	\$ 50,710
	FARMER4-1	Cagliero Vineyards, Inc.	\$ 231,160
	FARMER4-2	Twisselman Grain & Cattle	\$ 300,000
	FARMER4-5	Mesa View Produce, Inc.	\$ 71,720
	FARMER4-6	Talley Vineyards	\$ 19,760

FARMER4-8	MarketSphere, Inc.	\$ 42,330
FARMER4-10	Vineyard Professional Services	\$ 53,630
FARMER4-11	Red Dog Management, Inc.	\$ 58,480
FARMER4-13	Oscar Buddy Acres	\$ 13,360
FARMER4-14	Benchmark Vineyard Management, Inc.	\$ 46,140
FARMER4-15	Turley Wine Cellars, Inc.	\$ 31,950
FARMER4-19	Humberto Ponce	\$ 49,130
FARMER4-20	John Sonne	\$ 92,940
FARMERS-2	Neal Springs Vineyard LLC	\$ 53,110
FARMERS-3	Brandon Spain	\$ 32,580
FARMERS-4	Dave Spurr	\$ 100,000
FARMERS-10	Grafted LLC	\$ 39,240

EV Charging	CM20/21SR-01	North County Hospitality Group	\$ 51,883
	AB617-1819-01	SLO RTA	\$ 519,650
Wood Burning Device Change Out	Local Mitigation Funds	SLO County Residents	\$ 6,000
Old Car Buyback	AB923-VAVR10-12	SLO County Residents	\$ 48,000
Marine Vessel Repower	CM21/22-01	Casey's Central Coast Charter, Inc.	\$ 226,480
	CM21/22-12	Sub-Sea Tours LLC	\$ 24,162
	CM22/23-02	Endeavor Sports, LLC	\$ 65,000
Total FY 22-23 Project Expenditures			\$2,464,405

Government patronage is spread all over in various ways. The write-up states that this effort reduced 59 tons of emissions, or \$41,769 per ton. This is an outrageous use of public tax money.

See the chart below on the next page of political contributions from J Lohr, who received three large grants, not a bad return on investment.

04/13/2022	Ortiz-Legg for Supervisor 2024	\$2,500.00	S497	F497P1	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
04/13/2022	Ortiz-Legg for Supervisor 2024	\$2,500.00	RCPT	A	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
04/22/2022	Bruce Gibson for Supervisor 2022	\$5,000.00	S497	F497P1	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
04/22/2022	Bruce Gibson for Supervisor 2022	\$5,000.00	RCPT	A	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
08/02/2022	Bruce Gibson for Supervisor 2022	\$5,000.00	S497	F497P1	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
08/02/2022	Bruce Gibson for Supervisor 2022	\$5,000.00	RCPT	A	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
10/22/2022	Bruce Gibson for Supervisor 2022	\$5,000.00	S497	F497P1	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070
10/22/2022	Bruce Gibson for Supervisor 2022	\$5,000.00	RCPT	A	Jerome Lohr	Saratoga, CA 95070

Science Fiction



It was not a bad investment for J Lohr. Why is our tax money being given to successful private entities to subsidize meaningless CO₂ reductions? Of course Gibson is a huge supporter of the APCD and anything it can do to close the Dunes.

Item C-1: Presentation by Lynn Russell, PhD, of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography. Dr. Russell is one of the nation's top experts on sand and dust, including particles such as PM₁₀ and PM₂, which are the sources of the controversy at the ocean Dunes. Dr. Russel has published a peer reviewed paper, which reveals that that most of the dust coming from the dunes is not stirred up by the off-

road vehicles but is the natural results of prevailing ocean winds blowing in from the sea. Only 14 percent of the dust is from the dunes.

Leftist Sleaze Factor Out In Force:

The leftists on the APCD Board first attempted to not allow Dr. Russel to be invited in the first place. Let by Gibson, Pauling, and SLO City Councilor Jan Marx, the leftists badgered her throughout her presentation. The knowledgeable and engaging scientist did not waiver and answered every question with patience and impressive statistics, slides, and reference to publications.

Paulding asked her if she thought there was a conflict of interest because State Parks, which operates the Dunes Park, had hired the Scripps Institute to study the issue. Dr. Russell explained that actually the Scripps contract specifically required that the study be independent. Later, when Dr. Russell asked Paulding if he was accusing her of a conflict, he bizarrely said “no”.

Councilwoman Marx basically indicated that Dr. Russell’s testimony was irrelevant because the APCD and CARB have already decided that the dust is a problem.

Gibson had to point out that he is a scientist too with a PhD in Geo Physics

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, September 28, 2023 (Completed)

Item 3 - Dana Reserve Specific Plan Study Session. The Commission conducted a 5.5 hour workshop covering most aspects of the proposed project. There were both opponents and proponents in the audience. Some of these spoke at the end. The hearing will take place on October 23 and 24. The actual recommendations to the Board of Supervisors could be determined at that hearing.

Background: The original 2-day hearing for consideration of the project was postponed. There is considerable public opposition. Supervisor Jimmy Paulding requested that the Commission allow more time for public review (read: organize opposition). The write-up states in part:

The purpose of the study session is to inform the Planning Commission and public about the project, including its objectives, public benefits, and environmental impacts. At the conclusion of the study session, the Commission will scope key issues for Planning and Building Department staff to consider when then they present again to the Planning Commission at the hearing on October 23 and 24, 2023. The Commission did not deliberate or decide on the project during the study session. Members did, however, make suggestions for changes and more alternatives. They also requested more analysis of various issues, especially involving traffic, income levels/affordability, and public safety.

The proposed project is located near the intersection of Highway 101 and Willow Road in Nipomo. It contains the largest proposal for new homes (about 1430) in the unincorporated County in decades. It also includes commercial and retail sections.



Architecture connects to the area history, while providing indoor/outdoor community spaces.



A variety of residential home types/sizes creates expanded opportunities for home ownership and apartments.



This plan will be an acid test for officials who claim to support more homes when it returns for actual votes in late October.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - \$ 33, 000,000,000 US DEBT MARK

\$33,000,000,000,000

09/21/2023 [Robert Aro](#)

Only three months ago, the US debt crossed the \$32 trillion mark. Here we are again, this week passing \$33 trillion, with still no end in sight. As usual, Democrats are blaming Republicans, Republicans are blaming Democrats, as the political circus in Washington perpetuates a never-ending debt ceiling crisis.

The *New York Times* attempts to shed light on some of the reasons behind this relentless debt growth.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 was previously estimated to cost about \$400 billion over a decade, but according to estimates it could cost more than \$1 trillion thanks to strong demand for the law's generous clean energy tax credits.

Connecting clean energy tax credits with inflation reduction remains a rather vague proposition; and trillion-dollar spending programs are notorious for blowing through budgets.

It's bad enough the State forces taxation upon the People; but, the inability to spend within an annual multi-trillion-dollar budget only adds insult to injury.

The *New York Times* highlights another troubling issue:

In late 2022, the I.R.S. delayed by one year a new tax policy that would require users of digital wallets and e-commerce platforms to start reporting small transactions to the agency. The policy was projected to raise about \$8 billion in additional tax revenue over a decade.

Now, picture being \$33 trillion in debt while looking for new and innovative ways to tax private citizens on their crypto wallets to "raise" \$8 billion over a 10-year period. It's evident taxation alone will never sufficiently address the fiscal challenges in Washington.

Also explained:

A Treasury Department report last week showed that the deficit — the gap between what the United States spends and what it collects through taxes and other revenue — was \$1.5 trillion for the first 11 months of the fiscal year, a 61 percent increase from the same period a year ago. The feasibility of extracting an extra \$1.5 trillion in annual tax revenue must be questioned. Barring significantly increasing the wealth confiscation of the masses, making up for this annual shortfall by simply taxing more will never suffice. Even if higher taxes were the solution, we shouldn't be surprised if deficits persist.

Amidst this alarming \$33 trillion milestone, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen appears unfazed by the debt level, appearing on *CNBC*, addressing the nation with a straight face saying:

The statistic or metric that I look at most often to judge our fiscal course is net interest as a share of GDP.

By the same logic, should the government borrow and spend \$10 trillion at 1% on make-work projects, this would be okay as the trillion-dollar interest expense pales in comparison to the boost in GDP. If so, it rings true that debt doesn't matter, so long as taking on new debt services the old debt.

The causal nature of the Federal Reserve is seldom made. But we must keep in mind that the Fed's ability to buy government debt makes the US Government's ability to spend money it doesn't have that much easier. It's true the Fed does not own all the US debt. But if it weren't for the Fed, we wouldn't be \$33 trillion in debt as it is.

This article first appeared in the *Mises Wire* of September 21, 2023.

Item 2 - A Kinder, Gentler DEI?

By Abe Greenwald

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion fad is on the ropes. Multitudes of state lawmakers are attempting to limit or ban DEI training at state-funded institutions. And in at least six states, anti-DEI bills have been signed into law. At the same time, conservative legal groups are increasingly taking aim at corporate diversity programs. Amazon and Starbucks both face discrimination lawsuits over their diversity initiatives. Comcast has already settled a suit of its own.

With DEI in ever-worse odor, a psychologist and a sociologist, both of whom specialize in bias and diversity, have taken to the **Wall Street Journal** to explain what DEI training gets wrong and how to fix it. Mahzarin Banaji and Frank Dobbin write that DEI programs fail because they tend to “shame trainees for holding stereotypes” and “seek to solve the problem of bias by invoking the law to scare people.” As a result, they say, “people often leave diversity training feeling angry and with **greater** animosity toward other groups.”

So the authors recommend a different approach. First, DEI trainers should introduce their ideas with humility. Second, they should “give managers a way to counter biases—namely, training in strategies for cultural inclusion.” With these fixes in place, they say, “implicit-bias education can alert students to the fact that people committed to equality nonetheless hold biases.”

Perhaps Banaji and Dobbin should consider this: No implicit-bias training will ever work because free adults rightfully resent being “trained” by academics in how to treat other human beings. People leave DEI sessions feeling angry because the very notion of wise and good consultants trying to improve your character at the workplace is infuriating.

Think about the premise of it. Until the office trainers get ahold of you, you’re assumed to be morally defective, unfit for mixed company. (Never mind that the classroom trainers have already had a crack at you.) It’s a sweeping insult. Your parents, your faith, your spouse, your friends, your education, your own introspection and personal exploration—all failures. You need the folks with the quizzes and pamphlets and roleplaying sessions to sort you out and make you a good person.

It would be bad enough if DEI training was aimed strictly at altering your superficial behavior. But, as we see above, the key concept here is “implicit bias.” The trainers are there to introduce you to your inner bigot and show you how to tame him.

Besides the very real possibility that you might not have an inner bigot, what business is it of anyone’s if you do? There’s no law against thinking cruel and stupid thoughts. There are laws against acts of discrimination, and they should be invoked wherever applicable. It’s not for no reason that fighting “pre-crime” is the stuff of dystopian science fiction. What stays in your head is yours to do with as you please. Period.

If people leave DEI training with “**greater** animosity toward other groups,” maybe that’s because they had managed to keep the darkest parts of their subconscious healthily buried until someone with a human-resources-related degree tried to drag it out into their conscious awareness.

DEI is failing and under legal attack because it’s a bad idea. Not because real DEI has never been tried. I don’t doubt that many of its champions mean well. But, as with cruel ideas, compassionate ones don’t count until they’re executed. DEI is now doing real-world harm. And there are laws against that.

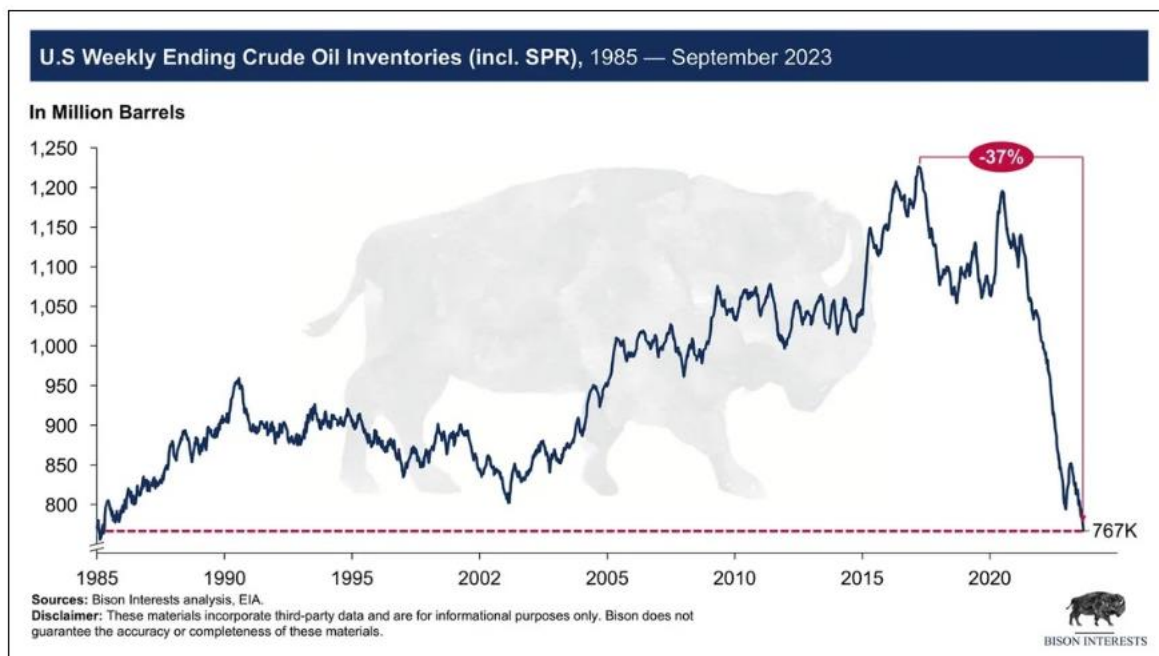
Abe Greenwald is executive editor of *Commentary*. This article first appeared in the *Commentary* of September 27, 2023.

Item 3 – Oil Reserves at All Time Low

BY STEVEN HAYWARD

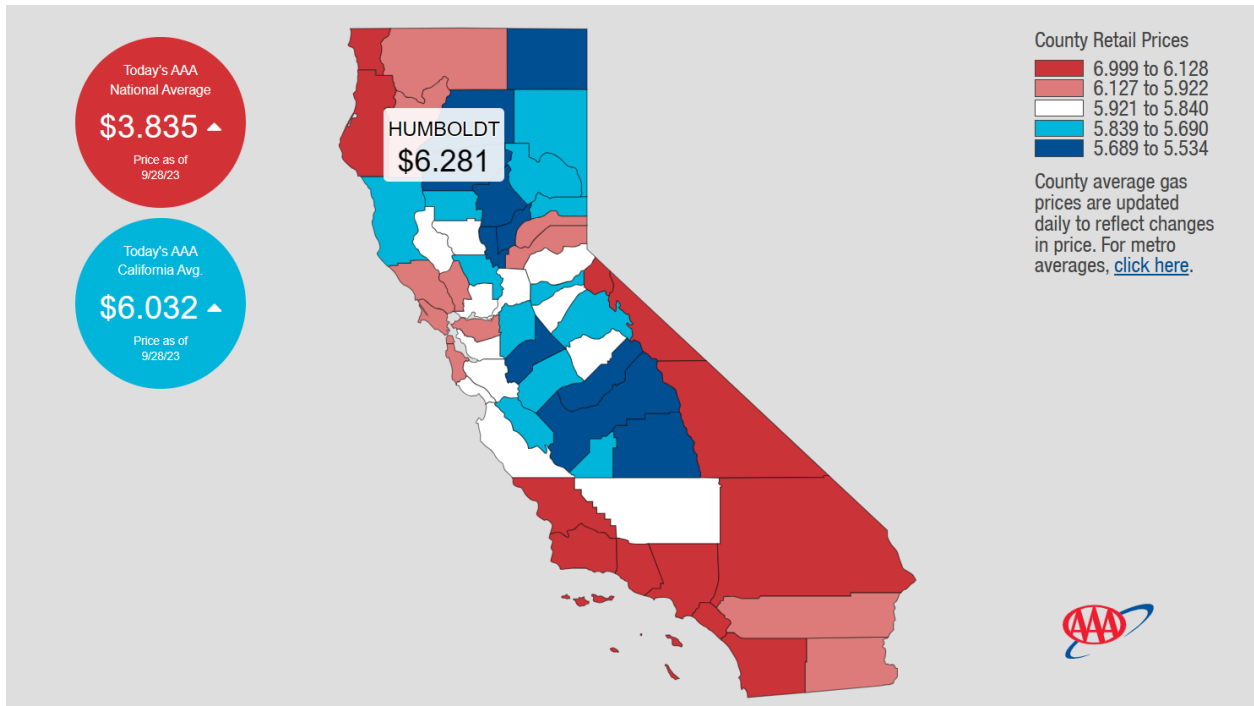
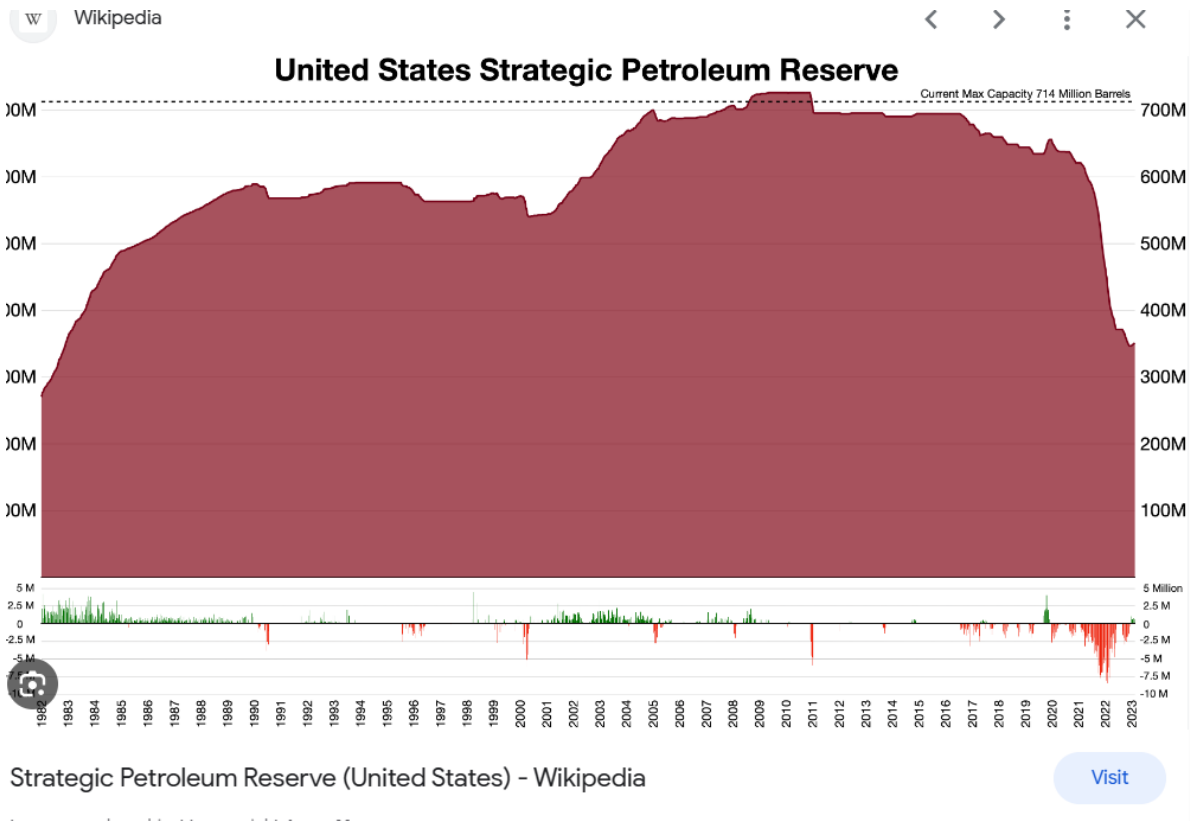
THE DAILY CHART: BIDEN’S STRATEGIC INCOMPETENCE

Oil prices are spiking right now, which is somewhat odd since the European economy is slowing along with China, and America’s economy is sluggish. The chief reason is thought to be discipline by Saudi Arabia and some other producers (Russia?), but one factor that should be included is Joe Biden’s relentless hostility to domestic oil production. This hasn’t stopped the domestic oil industry from achieving near record production just now (mostly on private and state lands beyond the reach of Biden’s predators, it should be noted), but think of how much more latitude we’d have to stare down market manipulations by the Saudis if Biden hadn’t canceled the Keystone pipeline and closed off other public lands.



Powerline , September 28, 2023.


Some More Charts





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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

SLOUCHING TOWARDS 1984

Orwell could not have imagined the swiftness in which the Left has exerted control over our body politic

BY JEFFREY KELTZ

In George Orwell's dystopian novel "1984," he portrays English society – renamed Oceania – as a futuristic version of the 1940s Soviet Union. In this invented society that Orwell calls IngSoc – English Socialism – the populace has even less freedom than the Soviets permitted its citizens and life consists only of drudgery, loneliness and hideousness. The novel grips the reader with fear and loathing of a totalitarian future enabled by technological advances and prompts one with the question: "Can it, will it happen here?"

It goes without saying that the United States in 2023 bears little resemblance to 1984 Oceania. In Oceania, the state had total control over the language, economy, science, history, personal possessions, personal thoughts, music, art and literature. In the U.S. today, however, it is not difficult to see how government intrusion and control reduces freedom, creates fear and confusion, reduces economic opportunity and prosperity, distorts history and science and creates unnecessary interpersonal conflict.

One of the ways Big Brother, Oceania's leader, exerted total control was by subverting language. This reduced the capacity to think thoughts not approved by the state. "Newspeak," as Orwell coined it, consisted only of words that expressed permitted thoughts.

"Thoughtcrime," another Orwellism, punished illicit thoughts. Illicit action therefore became literally unthinkable. Truth is what Big Brother declared it to be at any given moment: $2+2=5$ yesterday and $2+2=4$ today. History was constantly and literally rewritten in order to satisfy the "truths" that Big Brother was currently promulgating.

The most nefarious aspect of Big Brother's rule was of course his brutally enforced elimination of freedom, which he accomplished by suppressing the truth and promulgating lies.

In all eras, in all states, in all political parties, leaders tell lies. The danger arises when the state and state co-opted institutions suppress, eliminate and punish unapproved ideas. Big Brother had the power to ensure that his lies were the only "facts" that were knowable. As one would expect,

dissent was rare and not tolerated. Disagreement and belief in objective reality and a persistent past was punishable by torture, work camps and usually, death.

Is it a stretch to see hints of this control today, when scientists are censored for sharing findings that the establishment disagrees with; when college students fear they may receive a poor grade for presenting an alternative viewpoint; when employees submit unwillingly to racist diversity training; when government agencies and colleges require diversity oaths for employment; and when government reduces wealth and freedom by shutting down businesses deemed unnecessary?

Orwell intended his novel to serve as a warning (not a guidebook) to Great Britain: that socialists and central planners running an all-powerful state can and likely would use their power for pernicious ends.

Sadly, in the U.S. both political parties have contributed to the growth of the surveillance and controlling state. Here are some examples:

- The PATRIOT Act permitted increased government surveillance over individuals in response to an unprecedented terrorist attack on the U.S. homeland.
- Joe Biden tried but failed to institute a Disinformation Governance Board. His administration also pressured social media companies to restrict access to posts it deemed untruthful or otherwise harmful. One wonders, why after almost 250 years without such a board, this became necessary. In the 1990s, internet-based news sources led to a vast increase in the availability of information, significantly more than had been available when partisan daily newspapers dominated the information landscape. Philosophers and Supreme Court Justices alike agree that the solution to bad speech is more speech. But according to the Left, now that we have more news sources than ever before, this no longer holds true. Only their approved sources should be allowed a platform.
- Various levels of government mandated mask wearing and vaccinations as well as mandatory business closures that created increased dependency on government largesse.
- Leftist high-density gatherings were encouraged during Covid's peak while conservative gatherings were prohibited for reasons of public safety.
- Particular scientific theories are deemed settled, while scientists with opposing views are defunded and ridiculed despite having ample evidence backing up their claims. Some scientific theories have become sacred and "science" has been transformed into a dogmatic state-run religion.
- The 2022 federal budget replaced the word "mothers" with "birthing people." The NIH suggests "pregnant people." Teachers, politicians and scientists tell us that people that are born as men may become women if they choose to do so (and vice versa) and may switch back at will.

- Obama’s “Dear Colleague” letter to colleges replaced standard judicial practices with almost inquisition-like tactics for addressing sexual harassment complaints.
- College campuses have instituted speech codes. Stanford University even considered banning the use of standard words but following ridicule it withdrew this proposal.
- Publishing houses have changed classic literature in order to satisfy approved mores. Affected authors include Roald Dahl, Ian Fleming and Hugh Lofting. In Orwell’s novel, the affected authors included Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron and Dickens.
- Government agencies and publicly traded companies conduct diversity training in order to indoctrinate employees in a particular way of thinking. Opposing views are impermissible and the resistant are ridiculed and worse. While not quite Orwell’s “Two Minutes of Hate” (directed towards the enemy state), intersectionality, which is a component of critical race theory, directs hatred toward particular groups of people based on their immutable characteristics.
- “Anti-racism” which is promoted by government agencies and public companies, posits that all white people are suspected beneficiaries of a racist system – that only whites can be racist and that race explains most economic and social outcomes in society. Somehow this is deemed not to be racist, whereas “color blind” behavior and recognizing people as individuals is now considered racist.
- Antifa rioters are lawful demonstrators, while Catholic high school students (see Covington Catholic incident) and parents who protest at school board meetings are a threat to public safety.
- Defunding the police makes citizens safer.
- The unfounded claims of the “1619 Project” are taught as truth to school children.

In “1984,” Oceania is always at war with one of the two other surviving states. Orwell writes that the reason for this warfare was “to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world. Goods must be produced, but they must not be distributed. War is a way of shattering to pieces, or pouring into the stratosphere, or sinking in the depths of the sea, materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent.”

Leftists seek to decarbonize the worldwide energy system – thus intentionally destroying a highly effective, proven, and safe energy production and distribution system that has lifted millions around the world out of poverty. This system was refined and incrementally improved over time. The Left wants to replace this system with technologies that are neither currently effective, proven, nor safe and although inchoate are expected to emerge fully formed – meaning that once implemented technological advancement will be more difficult and expensive.

The U.S. already spends billions in order to end up further behind where we are now from an energy, industrial output and standard of living perspective. The planners are talking about required reductions in energy consumption, automotive miles traveled, airplane miles traveled

and consumption of energy intensive foodstuffs – thus destroying our wealth and reducing the quality of life.

As Orwell writes:

“In principle the war effort is always so planned ... with the result that there is a chronic shortage of half the necessities of life; but this is looked on as an advantage. It is deliberate policy to keep even the favoured groups somewhere near the brink of hardship, because a general state of scarcity increases the importance of small privileges and thus magnifies the distinction between one group and another.

War, it will be seen, accomplishes the necessary destruction, but accomplishes it in a psychologically acceptable way. What is concerned here is... the morale of the Party itself. Even the humblest Party member is expected to be ... a credulous and ignorant fanatic whose prevailing moods are fear, hatred, adulation, and orgiastic triumph. In other words it is necessary that he should have the mentality appropriate to a state of war.”

Leftists view the effort to stave off the “Climate Catastrophe” as a war. This of course requires sacrifices for most Americans while the elites will continue to fly in private jets and travel the seas on luxurious yachts. Climate hysteria empowers the government to control the economy and therefore our lives. Scarcity pits group against group.

Big Brother’s method of control is itself logically consistent: control the language, control the truth, control history, control employment, and control the populace.

Leftist politicians have learned that they can successively add to their power, one mandate at a time, while eliminating freedom for everyone else. While these power seeking politicians are likely unknowingly following the Orwellian design of language, truth and history control, these are the logical steps required to attain greater authority over the American people incrementally — boiling the frog. Achieving one enables the possibility of achieving the next one.

It seems rather ironic that the Left is constantly calling the Right the party of fascism, yet not even George Orwell could have imagined the level of control that the Democratic Party has tried and (arguably has succeeded) in exerting over the body politic in such a short period of time.

Jeffrey Keltz is a retired Information Technology professional and now spends his time cycling and studying politics, history and economics. American Greatness, September 27, 2023.

FINDING UNITY IN A DIVIDED AMERICA

*The hardships endured by Americans offer clarity for those seeking
Office of Presidency*

BY EDWARD RING

We are in the middle of a national identity crisis. Faith, patriotism and hard work have disappeared. Wokeness, gender ideology, and the climate cult have taken their place. We spend so much time celebrating our diversity that we forget the values that bind us together. And I believe deep in my bones that those values still exist. We can take our country back.

– Vivek Ramaswamy, candidate for GOP nomination for U.S. President

Before writing off one of the most interesting candidates to jump onto the national political stage in years, merely because he happens to be saying literally everything you want to hear, peruse what his actual ideological opponents are saying about him. From [Vox](#), [an attack piece](#) with an incoherent theme that might best be exemplified by this excerpt: “At the root of Ramaswamy’s appeal is the pernicious ‘model minority’ stereotype — a story about self-sufficiency and innate talent woven around the creation of an Asian American professional class in the 1960s — that has since been used to dismantle civil rights, divide communities of color, and perpetuate the myth of America as colorblind.”

According to [Vox](#), and by extension, the American Left, the story of an individual achieving success is divisive. No surprise there. The political currency of the Left, spent lavishly and to dreadful effect, is resentment and fear. America is racist. Capitalism is oppressive. A climate catastrophe is upon us. The blame falls squarely on the shoulders of heterosexual white men, and Vivek Ramaswamy is their stooge.

Leftist attacks on politicians and influencers like Ramaswamy aren’t anything new. Every time a conservative “of color” surfaces, they’re marginalized. [Larry Elder](#), also running for the GOP presidential nomination, has been dubbed “[the black face of white supremacy](#).” But despite coordinated smear campaigns from the Left, increasing numbers of [black](#) and [Latino](#) politicians are moving right of center. And Ramaswamy’s core message – that we are in the middle of a national identity crisis – is directly on target. Until a new coalition forms, transcending ethnicity, income, and geography, and wielding landslide, supermajority electoral dominance, American culture will remain divided and adrift.

During the final decade of the Cold War in 1984, President Ronald Reagan was reelected by a landslide. His “big tent” approach brought together fiscal conservatives, Neocons, and conservative Christians. Scarcely a generation later, in 2004, George W. Bush also won a decisive victory by unifying these same factions. But the model that worked then will not work today. Fiscal conservatives have to answer for a bipartisan debt binge that started in 1980 and has gotten progressively worse. Neocons have to answer for a foreign policy that has, among other things, destabilized the Middle East, created a surveillance state at home, and is supporting a horrific war in Ukraine with no exit strategy. As for conservative Christians, the Left has unfairly but successfully defined them as anti-woman, anti-gay, and anti-“trans,” and is using them to stereotype conservatives as dangerous extremists.

Restoring a positive, powerful and widely shared American identity will require assembling a new coalition, and there are plenty of new approaches that will bring Americans together again. Ramaswamy offers one avenue – a hyper-articulate messenger who is too good to be true for white conservatives, and authentic enough to attract nonwhite voters who never heard a conservative speak to them so directly. Ramaswamy embodies the colorblind essence of American values, and knows how to express them with clarity and without compromise. His presence, and the presence of politicians like him, will bring millions of ethnic voters into the conservative coalition.

Another avenue towards realignment is being trailblazed by Donald Trump, who instead of participating in this week's GOP primary candidate debate, plans to speak to an audience of striking auto workers. The audacity of this decision is historic. Republicans never presumed to stand before thousands of striking workers, but as a populist conservative, Trump seizes the opportunity. Expect him to talk about the stupidity of trying to force EVs onto American drivers before the technology is ready. Expect him to defend conventional energy and conventional automotive technology. Expect him to tell the truth about immigration – when it is unregulated and absent merit-based criteria, it is nothing but an economic drain on the nation. Trump recognizes something the leftist leadership of these unions deny – the vast majority of autoworkers love America, believe in traditional values, and want politicians who will first protect them, before prioritizing economic refugees that arrive illegally by the millions.

What desperate leftist media institutions call “far right” are in fact common sense reforms that most Americans support. Politicians like Trump and Ramaswamy, along with hundreds of other prominent national politicians in the U.S. Congress, are promoting a pathway to restoring American greatness and a shared national identity. Joining this common sense crusade that crosses lines of ethnicity and income are not only members of minority groups and members of trade unions, but civil engineering companies that want to build infrastructure that makes economic sense, and academic reformers that want to return K-12 education to the basics and return higher education to uplifting Western values and issuing marketable degrees.

The common sense crusade can also include members of law enforcement and the judiciary, along with social workers and other public bureaucrats who have the integrity to recognize and reject the special interest capture of public institutions, resulting in rising crime along with a host of other failed public policies. Included in this cohort would be so-called Blue Dog Democrats and independent voters, tired of watching every American institution fail, one after another, always spending more and delivering less. Even disaffected environmentalists will join the common sense crusade, as they realize that environmentalism has been hijacked by financial special interests and is now doing more harm than good to the environment.

With all this potential for unity, and with this deep American reservoir of common sense, who is left? Only the scourge of civilization, that propensity for the powerful to want more power, the timeless reality that power disproportionately appeals to the corrupt, the sad erosion of checks and balances that America's founders thoughtfully constructed in history's finest attempt to preserve a nation that respects and nurtures individual freedoms. America's business and political elite share a vision that abandons normal citizens. A donor fed uniparty, dominated by special interests for whom profit and power is acquired because of failing bureaucracies,

punitive regulations, scarce and expensive commodities, a massive dependent class of citizens and noncitizen permanent residents, and corporate consolidation of wealth.

Americans see this reality. The hardships they're enduring offer clarity, suggesting obvious solutions. Drill for oil. Develop nuclear power. Build roads, bridges, and buses before spending countless billions on "light rail" and "bullet trains" that hardly anyone will ever ride. Replace 100 percent EV mandates with incentives to build advanced hybrids, with no technological possibilities excluded. Bring manufacturing back onshore. Preserve cash and reject digital IDs and digital currencies. Replace ridiculous energy efficiency mandates – that merely guarantee planned obsolescence and poor performance – with reasonable innovations that deliver genuine value to consumers. End the war on housing. Restore responsible logging to lower the price of lumber, create jobs, and prevent forest fires. Protect the environment but without sacrificing the obligation to preserve opportunities for Americans to afford homes and a pleasant quality of life. Restrict immigration to merit based entry, and prioritize the patient millions who have been waiting years to come in the front door. Put criminals in prison. Compel addicts and alcoholics to get treatment; compel homeless people to go to cost effective shelters. Implement school choice, and rescue public schools from the woke mafia. And so on.

These are practical, common sense policies that Americans are ready to support. They represent a consensus that defies and transcends the stereotypical notions of Right and Left, or even Democrat and Republican. They are pro-capitalist but anti-monopoly. They embrace publicly funded infrastructure, if it is practical and yields long term economic benefits, but reject welfare dependency. They support merit-based immigration but reject open borders. They believe in meritocracy but abhor racism. They support free speech, while condemning yet permitting hate speech. They support the Second Amendment but demand the deterrent effect of strict law enforcement. They defend traditional culture and want to return it to the mainstream, but reject prejudice and bigotry.

If the candidates that offer these solutions can do so without compromise, and leaven their delivery with firm but friendly optimism, they will get elected. If they keep their promises, they will be reelected. And the new supermajority that will elect them will be impossible to stop, because apart from those members of the elite that remain recalcitrant – few in number, wielding a narrative that has been utterly discredited – everyone will be part of it.

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). September 27, 2024 American Greatness.



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Email: colabslo@gmail.com / Website: colabslo.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

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

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

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

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

MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio Internet Public Hearing Friend

COLAB Member(s) / Sponsor(s): _____

NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

For those who choose not to join as a member but would like to support COLAB via a contribution/donation.
I would like to contribute \$ _____ to COLAB and my check or credit card information is enclosed/provided.

Donations/Contributions do not require membership though it is encouraged in order to provide updates and information.
Memberships and donation will be kept confidential if that is your preference.
Confidential Donation/Contribution/Membership

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check Visa MasterCard Discover Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Exp Date: ___/___ Billing Zip Code: _____ CVV: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____