



WEEKLY UPDATE OCTOBER 8-14, 2023

CAN CONSERVATIVES STILL WIN?



*Ultimately, what cannot go on will not go on. The current ruling-class nihilism that has resulted in seven million illegal aliens crashing through a wide-open border; a hundred thousand Americans dead each year due to Mexican-cartel imported fentanyl; massive police defunding and prosecutorial nullification of the criminal codes; \$33 trillion in national debt; a politically weaponized but otherwise ineffectual FBI; a rogue Department of Justice; an underfunded, politicized, and increasingly neutered Pentagon; and an ideologically asymmetrical application of the laws that is not sustainable. Those who voted for the politicians who created these destructive policies are beginning to realize the resultant dangers looming over their very way of life, and as a result are looking to their erstwhile opponents to offer remedies.*¹ - Victor Davis Hanson.

Control click on the link below to read the full article.

<https://newcriterion.com/issues/2023/10/can-conservatives-still-win>

**THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 4**

¹ This quote is an excerpt from an article that originally appeared in *The New Criterion*, Volume 42 Number 2, on page 10. Copyright © 2023 The New Criterion. Victor Davis Hanson is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and the author of *The Second World Wars* (Basic Books). He is *The New Criterion's* Visiting Critic for the 2021–22 seasons and the 2018 recipient of the Edmund Burke award.

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

NO TELLING WHAT'S BEING LOCKED AND LOADED FOR OCT. 17



CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY (3CE) OPERATIONS BOARD

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT ADS COST PRESSURE

**3CE ENERGY SUPPLIERS BEHIND SCHEDULE & MORE COSTLY
JUST LIKE HIGH SPEED RAIL**

PLANNING COMMISSION CANCELLED

**DANA RESERVE HOMES COMING UP ON OCTOBER 23RD & 24TH
MARK YOUR CALENDAR IN ADVANCE – SUPPORT MORE HOMES**

COASTAL COMMISSION MEETING

**PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY TO DREDGE 70,000
CUBIC YARDS OF SEDIMENT FROM
THE DIABLO CANYON POWER PLANT INTAKE COVE
IF NOT APPROVED THEY WILL HAVE TO SHUT THE PLANT DOWN
STAFF RECOMMENDS APPROVAL - WHO KNOWS ABOUT THE COMMISSION?**

APCD HEARING BOARD MEETING

**REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE WITH DUNES DUST
MANAGEMENT ORDER
AS OF FRIDAY, OCT. 6 NO WRITTEN MATERIAL PROVIDED
IF NOT CURED BY 72 HOURS PRIOR – WILL BE BROWN ACT VIOALTION**

**LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 8**

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

SLOCOG MEETING

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PUSHING SALES TAX INCREASE

**EMERGENT ISSUES
SEE PAGE 11**

**IF WIND AND SOLAR GET ANY CHEAPER,
WE'LL ALL GO BROKE**

BIDEN'S ATTACK ON ELECTRICITY

**PAYMENTS ON NATIONAL DEBT WILL SAVAGE
THE FEDERAL BUDGET & THE ECONOMY IN GENERAL**

**ENVIRONMENTALISTS SUFFER ANOTHER
SETBACK IN FIGHT TO SHUTTER CALIFORNIA'S
LAST NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

**COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 18**

CALIFORNIA, THE GREAT DESTROYER
THE CURRENT DISASTER HAS MANY PARENTS
BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

POLITIQUEROS VERSUS THE PEOPLE
HOW PAID CAMPAIGN WORKERS STEAL VOTES
BY LLOYD BILLINGSLEY

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

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, October 10, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

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

Central Coast Community Energy Operations Board Meeting of Wednesday, October 11, 2023 (Scheduled) 10:30 AM

Item 3 - Receive Regulatory Update. This report seems to be a standing item included in each month's agenda. The State regulatory environment is even hostile to the State's favored green energy programs. Some excerpts provide concrete examples:

Resource Adequacy (RA)

Issue The Resource Adequacy (RA) program is the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) main grid reliability planning program. All load serving entities (LSEs) under the CPUC's jurisdiction, including CCAs, must demonstrate purchase of a specified amount of eligible RA generation capacity each month and year to comply with RA program requirements. **Increasing demand for and a decreasing supply of eligible RA capacity over the past five years have resulted in sharply increased prices and unprecedented difficulty procuring sufficient RA to achieve compliance. Over the past year the CPUC has also sought to tie RA compliance to other, unrelated functions such as CCA expansion into new communities.**

Note: SLO County, unfortunately, slid under the closing door on this one.

Status On June 29th the CPUC passed a Decision setting new rules for the RA program. CCAs seeking to expand service into new communities must now be RA compliant for at least two calendar years first. The CPUC also closed the RA proceeding and there will be no new RA policymaking until at least early 2024.

Integrated Resource Planning (IRP)

Issue Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) is the CPUC's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction planning program. LSEs must submit IRPs every two years demonstrating that planned future procurement will produce GHG emissions below an assigned benchmark while contributing to a resource fleet that meets sectorwide GHG targets while maintaining grid reliability. LSEs

submitted their most recent IRPs in November 2022, and previous IRP cycles have produced the three procurement mandates 3CE must comply with.

Status This proceeding has three major developments scheduled for Q3-Q4 2023. First, the CPUC will release its analysis of the aggregated 2022 IRPs, which will end the current IRP cycle and may result in another procurement mandate. Second, it will rule on two stakeholder petitions to modify aspects of the current procurement mandates. Third, CPUC staff will release for comment a proposed long-term procurement framework that would replace the ad hoc mandate structure used so far.

Note: The CPUC is attempting to force the CCAs, including 3CE, to be more honest in their use of non-CO₂ generating sources. This also puts financial pressure on them.

Item 8 - Approve and authorize the CEO to execute an amended and restated power purchase agreement with San Luis West Solar LLC, and any necessary ancillary documents, in an amount not to exceed \$115,000,000. Apropos of the CPUC requiring more real green energy and reliability (an oxymoron in itself), the 3CE has had to scramble around to procure enough future energy. Many projects are behind or going out of business. The write-up attempts to put the best face on it, but cannot conceal the problem. Check out the excerpts from the item write-up below:

The Original PPA was jointly negotiated with Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE) after the project was selected as part of a competitive solicitation. 3CE's share is for a 62.5 MW solar generation and 15.625 MW (4-hour discharge) battery energy storage systems. The Original PPA would meet roughly 3% of 3CE's total load and was for a term of 15 years and a notional value not to exceed \$74 million.

The renewable energy industry has seen an unprecedented number of challenges in bringing clean and renewable projects online because of a combination of factors, including supply chain constraints, COVID, tariff impacts on foreign manufacturing, increases in raw material costs, and general inflationary pressures.

3CE and SVCE have worked collaboratively with Origis Energy to determine a project structure that would preserve value to our customers, allow for regulatory compliance, and provide greater certainty that the project will achieve commercial operations.

The adjusted MTR Mandate due dates provide some relief but remain challenging, if not infeasible for new projects, given the time it takes to move through the interconnection process has more than doubled. Rather than the 2–3-year interconnection timing typical of a few years ago, it now takes a new project 5 to 8 years to interconnect.

The A&R PPA reflects adjusted pricing and includes a provision to allow short-term replacement RPS (Renewable Portfolio Standard) compliance products to be delivered to cover the 2-year delay period, increasing 3CE's ability to meet the state's long-term RPS contracting obligation and avoid noncompliance penalties.

The story seems to have echoes of other large government owned projects, such as high speed rail – behind schedule, over budget, less juice.

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, October 12, 2023 (Cancelled)

The posted notice stated:

THE OCTOBER 12, 2023, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING IS CANCELLED

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on October 26, 2023. Meetings are held in the Katcho Achadjian County Government Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers located at 1055 Monterey Street, Room D-170, San Luis Obispo.

The Planning Commission will hold a two-day hearing for the Dana Reserve Specific Plan on October 23 and 24, 2023. For additional information, please visit Dana Reserve Specific Plan - County of San Luis Obispo (ca.gov)

The Dana Reserve project is an acid test for the Planning Commission and ultimately the Board of Supervisors on whether they actually support more housing.

Air Pollution Control District Hearing Board Meeting of Friday, October 13, 2023 (Scheduled)

Item 5 - Progress report activities called out in Stipulated Order of Abatement (Case No.17-01): In the Matter of California Department of Parks and Recreation - Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division – Oceano Dunes State Recreation Area. No action required. Includes review and workshop addressing Provisionally Approved Annual Report and Work Plan and Advisory Group Recommendations.

- a. Introduction by SLO County APCO.**
- b. Presentation by California State Parks.**
- c. Presentation by the Scientific Advisory Group.**
- d. Presentation by SLO County APCD.**
- e. Accept public comment.**
- f. Board member questions or comments.**

As of Friday, October 6, 2023, there were no written backups, PowerPoints, or copies of the reports to be presented as required by the Brown Act. Unless these are posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, the APCD should continue the meeting to a date and time certain by which the material can be posted in advance. It is not known if the Hearing Board will take into account the testimony of Dr. Lynn Russell before the APCD Board 2 weeks ago. The Hearing Board should request the same presentation.

The purpose of the Board is:

The APCD Hearing Board is a five member quasi-judicial body whose purpose is to decide on matters of conflict between the Air District and industry and to act at the time of an air pollution emergency resulting from an upset or breakdown. The Hearing Board is an independent body, appointed at-large by the APCD Board and consists of an attorney practicing law in California, a registered professional engineer, a member of the medical profession, and two public members.

Members of the Hearing Board are:

Member Name	Member Position	Alternate Name	Alternate Position
William Johnson - Chair	Public Member	<i>Vacant</i>	Public Alternate
Charles "Chuck" Anders	Public Member	James Fitzgerald	Public Alternate
Dr. Robert Lapidus	Medical Member	<i>Vacant</i>	Medical Alternate
Robert Vessely	Engineering Member	<i>Vacant</i>	Engineering Alternate
Paul Ready	Attorney Member	<i>Vacant</i>	Attorney Alternate

Various members of the public who want the dunes shut down have provided public comment advocating for the shutdown.

California Coastal Commission Meeting of Friday, October 13, 2023 (Scheduled)

Item 8 - An 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 the project 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.

No one knows how the Commissioners may react. The ability to withhold the permit gives them considerable leverage to bargain for other things statewide. Even the Governor, who ostensibly supports extension of the Diablo permits, could be impacted.

See the photo diagrams on the next page:



LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

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 (SLOCOG) meeting of Wednesday, October 4, 2023 (Scheduled) - (9:30 AM)

Item IVa - Executive Director's Report. The Executive Director brought up the issue of the proposed sales tax increase for transportation. He stated that they are shooting for a ballot measure in 2024. Commissioner Fred Strong pointed out that some jurisdictions already had measures in effect or pending. He cautioned that some jurisdictions may be approaching the statutory limit. The Executive Director, by way of refuting Strong's concern, noted that the County could seek legislation to exceed the limit.

Sales Tax for Transportation



“Outreach” or advocacy using our tax dollars to promote the tax?

- Public Outreach underway
- Focus groups: North, Central, South, Coast
- Draft Investment Plan: early 2024
- Next polling: April 2024
- Decision time: May 2024 if proceed to Nov. '24 ballot

Item D-1 Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Mitigation Contract. The Board unanimously awarded the contract on the consent calendar 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 consulting firm, Kimley-Horn is a large national multi-specialty firm which has undertaken many major projects. They seem to specialize in stack-and-pack. There are many pictures of it on their website. They have 7,000 staffers, 100 offices across the US, and revenue of \$1.5 billion.



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.

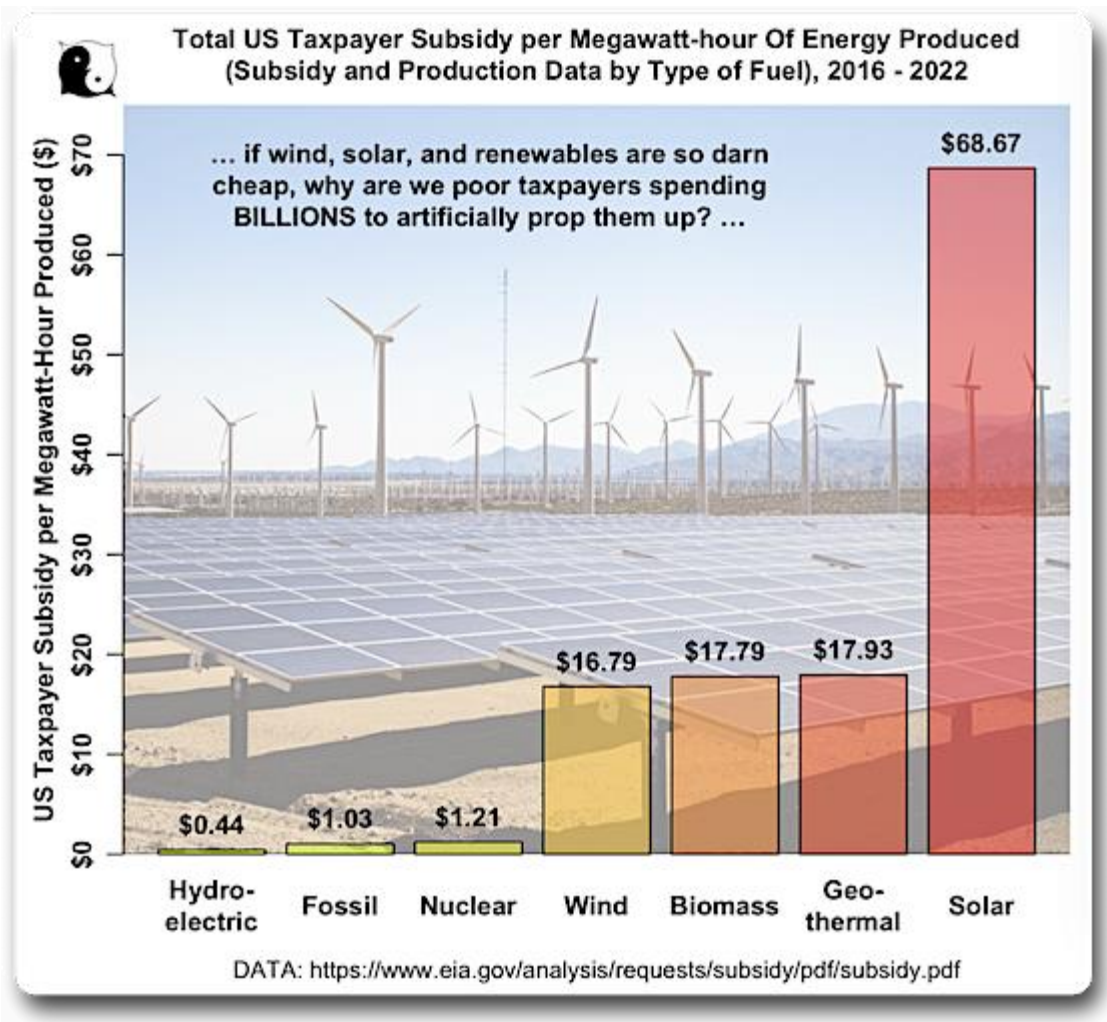
EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 – Wind and solar receive huge subsidies.

IF WIND AND SOLAR GET ANY CHEAPER, WE’LL ALL GO BROKE POSTED ON OCTOBER 3, 2023 BY JOHN HINDERAKER IN POWERLINE

One of the most laughable assertions of today’s debased era is the claim that wind and solar energy are “cheap.” Hey, wind and sunshine are free, right? So, sure, if you don’t count any of the costs, wind and solar are really cheap. So why is electricity costs rising rapidly?

Actually, it could be worse. If solar and wind were not heavily subsidized, and the full cost of those mostly-futile energy sources were being charged to the ratepayer, electricity prices would be through the roof. This chart by Willis Eschenbach at Watts Up With That?, from the Energy Information Administration, makes the point graphically:



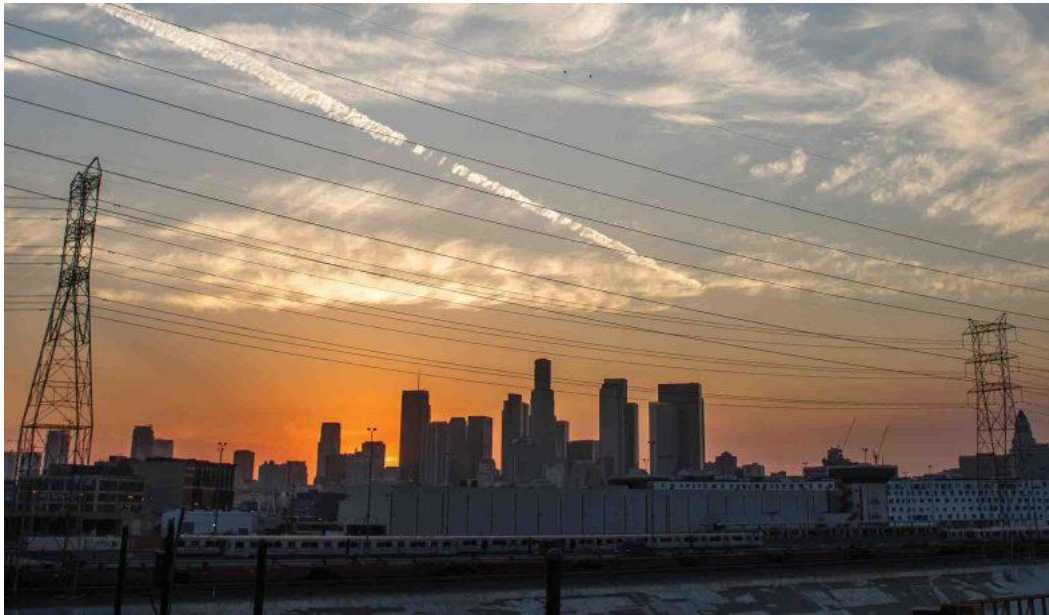
Eschenbach adds this:

Note that the subsidy for solar is about 50% higher than the electricity purchase price paid by most US utilities ... so the solar scammers make money no matter what.

Remember when the federal government used to pay farmers not to farm? It occurs to me that we would be better off if the government paid solar and wind energy companies, as well as utilities, not to build or install wind turbines or solar panels. Just give them the subsidies and let them walk away. It would save us a lot of money in the end.

Item 2 – Biden’s Attack on Electricity.

By MARIO LOYOLA NATIONAL REVIEW, OCTOBER 4, 2023.



A blackout in Los Angeles, August 16, 2020(Apu Gomes/Getty Images)

MARXISM had many trappings of a religion. But fortunately, its major claims were of this world and could be falsified. Karl Marx argued that under capitalism, the living conditions of workers deteriorate and that only by seizing the means of production can they improve their lot. After a few generations of communism, nobody in Europe believed that anymore.

With climate change, we are told, living conditions will deteriorate, and only by decarbonizing the economy can we avoid those losses. It may take several more generations to convince people one way or the other, but in the meantime there is a quick way to discredit the claim, and that is for government to implement a policy that is so costly and catastrophic in the near term that people generally start wondering whether climate *policies* might not be considerably more dangerous than climate change.

The climate-change movement has a similar vulnerability. Its religious trappings are plain enough: the attribution of natural catastrophes to human wickedness, revelations of the apocalypse, persecution of heretics. But at the end of the day its claims are material — and falsifiable.

Such is the thin silver lining on President Biden’s latest round of climate policies, by far the most

West Virginia v. EPA that the Clean Air Act does not give the EPA power to require utilities to switch to different kinds of power plants; the same principle should apply to the engines in our automobiles.

The power-plant rule is on even thinner ice. The EPA claims that the efficacies of carbon capture and green hydrogen are “adequately demonstrated,” as the Clean Air Act requires. But in fact, neither technology has demonstrated its viability at the scale and for the purpose that the EPA proposes. All of the EPA’s cited examples are of much smaller carbon-capture-and-storage operations; and in no example has CCS reached the 90 percent carbon-emissions reduction that the EPA proposes to require. The proposal is full of accounting tricks, such as subtracting the amount of federal renewable subsidies from its compliance-cost estimates, as if costs disappear when you push them onto taxpayers.

Each rule would be ruinous on its own. But an EV mandate that suddenly increases grid-capacity requirements, on top of a power-plant rule that suddenly diminished grid capacity, would be a societal disaster. Ultimately, it couldn’t work, and in any case the next Republican administration would certainly rescind the rules. But if President Biden wins reelection and proceeds with the simultaneous implementation of both rules, it will have a catastrophic effect on America’s electricity grid, ushering in an era of painful scarcity, renewed inflation, and job losses for America’s families and industries.

WITH the new federal subsidies, the Edison Electric Institute had previously estimated that there would be 26 million EVs by 2030. That would require an extra 100 terawatt-hours (TWh) of electricity, or about 2.5 percent of what the U.S. grid produces now. The EPA estimates that under its vehicle rule, 67 percent of all vehicles produced in the U.S. will be EVs by 2032. Sometime later that decade, two-thirds of the perhaps 400 million vehicles on American roads would be EVs. That would require on the order of 1,000 TWh more electricity, an increase of 25 percent of what the U.S. grid currently produces, which in turn would require a doubling or tripling of installed capacity, since the rated output of renewable plants is much lower than their nameplate capacity.

The basic problem here, as with other aggressive climate policies, is that if you throttle fossil energy before renewable substitutes are available at a similar price, all you’ve done is constrict the supply of things that people can’t do without. If the production or sales of EVs fall short of EPA projections, the result will be far fewer new cars available, leading to a massive increase in the demand for, and the cost of, used gasoline-powered cars. If the number of charging stations, transmission lines, or power plants fails to keep pace with demand for electrical capacity, the result will be “scarcity pricing” for electricity, meaning a small reduction in supply sends prices soaring.

The benefits would be meager indeed. Extracting critical minerals from the 100,000 pounds of ore that need to be mined to build a single EV battery is an energy-intensive process. Combining that use of fuel with the energy required to charge a battery throughout its life cycle means that the upstream carbon emissions of EV batteries are far from zero. They are likely at least half the carbon emissions of regular vehicles and could prove to be higher than that, depending on how the grid manages the chaotic transition to renewables that Biden has in store.

The ultimate purpose of the new EPA rules is to force a countrywide shift to renewable energy. Standing in the way of that goal are at least two virtually insurmountable obstacles.

The first is a suffocating amount of red tape. Most studies estimate that the U.S. needs to deploy about 500 gigawatts of solar power by 2035 to achieve Biden's clean-electricity goals. That's on the order of 1,000 utility-scale solar plants, which would cover an area the size of New Jersey. Most of the bigger projects would have to be built on Bureau of Land Management land in the western states, where the sun shines all day and all year. Each of those would need its own permit in time to build and go operational before 2035. So in order to reach Biden's clean-electricity goals, the BLM would have to issue hundreds of solar permits in the next seven or eight years, to leave enough time for construction. But the permit-review process consumes so much in agency resources that the BLM can issue at most two or three solar-project permits each year, and that's operating at full tilt. The permitting bottleneck alone makes Biden's green dream a sheer fantasy.

The second obstacle is that, even if you could get all the permits you needed, there is a physical limit to how much solar and wind you can put on the grid and still keep it stable. Solar and wind are intermittent sources, with output that is highly variable throughout the day, whereas demand follows a much more stable "duck-shaped" curve, with demand highest in the morning and early evening. So when solar power or wind power unexpectedly drops off, you need to be able to dial up what we call a "dispatchable" source. And right now that means coal, natural gas, or nuclear.

If climate activists were serious about the climate, they would be putting all their energy into a massive push for nuclear power, the one source that can get us to net zero without endangering grid reliability or affordability. The U.S. would need to double or triple its current nuclear fleet of about 100 reactors. Alas, federal regulations have made it basically impossible to build any nuclear plant in America, dramatically pushing up capital costs with a Homeric regulatory odyssey that takes at least 15 years to navigate. Only a small handful of new reactors have been built since 1980. And when you try to fix that problem, you face a familiar obstacle, namely the environmental Left. If there is one thing Senator Bernie Sanders has always hated more than the Vietnam War, it's nuclear power.

It would be virtually impossible for the grid to accommodate the EV mandate and simultaneously undertake a renewable-energy transition even without the EPA's power-plant rule. Ironically, that rule would make it even harder and more expensive for grid capacity to increase and could lead to an overall reduction. Utilities are already expecting to shutter a lot of current grid capacity in response to regulations designed to kill coal plants. The new rule will make large new combined-cycle natural-gas plants prohibitively risky and expensive for many utilities, just when new capacity will be most needed. With nowhere to turn, utilities will have to institute scarcity pricing to choke off demand.

Capacity is already insufficient to meet demand in California, where 800,000 customers experienced blackouts in the summer of 2020; a repeat was avoided in 2022 only by Governor Newsom's begging Californians not to charge EVs or use appliances. California's grid woes, and those that caused the deadly Texas power crash of 2021, are purely the results of too much intermittent solar and wind power thrown onto the grid without enough "dispatchable" capacity to back it up. In other words, the deployment of more solar and wind requires the deployment of more natural gas or coal at an equal rate, but the enviros can't bring themselves to admit it, perhaps because they hate fossil fuels more than they love renewable energy. **Meanwhile, with 30 percent of their state's power coming from renewable sources, Californians have electricity bills that are twice the national average and three times what Texans pay.**

According to data from the National Energy Technology Laboratory, requiring existing coal plants and new natural-gas plants to adopt carbon capture and storage, as the EPA proposes to do, would roughly double the cost of producing electricity at the source, in part because carbon capture is an energy-intensive process that reduces power output by as much as 30 percent. That doesn't take into account the cost of building and operating the massive carbon transport and storage infrastructure that would be needed outside of the power plants, which the Princeton Net-Zero America study has estimated at perhaps 70,000 miles of new CO2 pipelines. The EPA's other option, replacing natural gas with green hydrogen, could triple the cost of electricity, but nobody knows because the technology barely exists even in pilot demonstrations.

The International Energy Agency, which has joined the ranks of climate activists, warned in its 2022 World Energy Outlook: "If supply were to transition faster than demand, with a drop in fossil fuel investment preceding a surge in clean technologies, this would lead to much higher prices — possibly for a prolonged period." Sure enough, both gasoline and electricity prices are soaring again.

CLIMATE activists think that by taxing or otherwise restricting production, they are hurting fossil-fuel companies. But when you take a commodity for which demand is inelastic, such as oil, and restrict the supply even a little, the price will go through the roof. That is what OPEC does for a living.

Besides creating huge windfall profits for oil companies, the most immediate consequence of limiting production is to make people very angry at you, and you haven't significantly reduced oil supply. Environmental regulations are supposed to make sure that polluters internalize the social costs of their pollution, but pushing fossil energy to the "must have" part of society's hierarchy of needs is less likely to "end oil" than to end your political career. France's "yellow vest" protests were a warning to climate-minded elected officials everywhere.

Restricting fossil energy so that renewable sources become more competitive can't work if renewable substitutes are not available. That is why the Clean Air Act requires new technologies to be adequately demonstrated before the EPA can require their implementation. The EPA's insistence on pushing ahead anyway means that dire consequences will not take long to materialize. Like Marxists, climate advocates often seem at war with human nature. This spells doom for the movement in the long run, once people have suffered enough.

Item – 3 Payments On National Debt Will Savage The Federal Budget And The Economy In General.

Unsustainable

Interest rates aren't falling, and with the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio projected to reach 115 percent over the next decade, the situation becomes more dire.

By Allison Schrager, Oct. 04 2023/

We were so naive just four years ago. That was when Olivier Blanchard, one of this generation's preeminent macroeconomists, gave the presidential address at the American Economic Association meeting. Covering the topic of "[public debt and low interest rates](#)," Blanchard argued that because interest rates were so low, developed economies did not need to worry too much about debt. So long as the economy grew at a faster pace than real interest rates, which were then about zero, governments could spend more. There was little need for austerity.

Financial economists in the room gasped in horror (at least I did). We care about risk; Blanchard was assuming the stability of variables—interest rates and GDP growth—that change over time and in unpredictable ways. Odds are that rates would not stay at zero forever; yet we'd be stuck with the debt for decades. To be fair, Blanchard raised this concern in passing. But his ultimate recommendation was to spend more and worry less.

A few years later, Blanchard has joined the ranks of economists who believe that interest rates may not return to pre-pandemic levels. The 0 percent rates that we saw in the decade after the financial crisis may have been a fluke, the result of decades of low and predictable inflation, as well as unlimited demand for U.S. bonds relative to their supply. Neither circumstance obtains today.

Even if the Federal Reserve starts cutting rates soon, real ten-year rates may settle at 2 percent or 3 percent going forward. And if inflation sits at around 2.5 percent to 3 percent, that means nominal yields will be a steeper 5 or 6 percent—well above their manageable 3 percent when Blanchard made his speech.

Unfortunately, politicians kept ramping up spending on the mistaken assumption that rates would remain low. Even before the pandemic, the Trump administration ran up large deficits for its unfunded tax cuts. But the real spending bonanza came during the pandemic. Spending when the economy was at a standstill could be justified: many people were out of work and losing income. But the size and scope of the government stimulus, which continued even as the economy recovered and began running hot again, suggests that politicians believed that such outlays were free.

Deficits as a share of GDP now stand at levels normally reserved for recessions or wars. The Congressional Budget Office projects the debt to grow to 115 percent of GDP in the next ten years. And that's before unfunded entitlements hit the budget over the next decade, bringing debt to a projected 181 percent of GDP by 2053. Net interest payments on debt are expected to become one of the biggest sources of spending, representing 6.7 percent of GDP by 2053—more than all discretionary spending, consuming two-thirds of all income-tax revenues. Even this bleak scenario assumes that interest rates will fall from where they are now and then rise only gradually to 4.1 percent.

Policymakers were convinced that rates would not go up. As a consequence, the government financed most of its debt by issuing short-term bills. This is like taking on a variable-rate mortgage when mortgage rates are at record lows: it may be a reasonable decision if you think rates will remain steady or fall, but it will prove extremely shortsighted if rates rise. Yes, the effective maturity of U.S. debt increased by about two years last decade, as the government locked in some of the rates—meaning that the bill is not due immediately. But the effective maturity is still just above five years, and about one-third of outstanding debt matures in the next year. Governments cannot dodge the problem for long. And any benefit of extending the government's debt maturity was largely undone by quantitative easing, in which the Federal Reserve bought long-term debt by issuing short-term liabilities to banks.

Now the taxpayer faces exposure to interest-rate risk. The Congressional Budget Office projects that every percentage point of higher rates will increase projected deficits by \$30 trillion over 20 years. High rates can become a vicious circle, as a hike in rates further increases debt, which pushes rates up even higher as more debt gets issued.

My colleague Brian Riedl [argues persuasively that this dynamic is not sustainable](#). More money to pay off debt means less capital to invest in the economy. Growth will suffer as a result—and if higher debt ends up undermining productivity, then deficits will grow further as tax revenue falls. Monetary policymakers, too, will face a new set of challenges. High debt levels can make the public nervous about inflation—creating another vicious circle, as higher expected inflation pushes up interest rates and puts pressure on the Fed to be more hawkish. Once the government feels more fiscal pressure, it will have less space to keep the economy afloat during the next crisis.

It may be tempting to blame one speech, like Blanchard’s, or another fad, such as the enthusiasm for modern monetary theory, for our current predicament. But there’s lots of blame to go around. Politicians will always take the opportunity to spend, especially if they’re not worried about paying for it. Low interest rates for such a long period enabled many bad financial decisions. The government-spending bonanza was just one of them, but it may prove the most consequential.

Allison Schrager is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a contributing editor of City Journal, and host of the [Risk Talking](#) podcast.

Item 4 – Environmentalists Suffer Another Setback In Fight To Shutter California’s Last Nuclear Power Plant.

BY MICHAEL R. BLOOD
October 4, 2023

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Federal regulators Wednesday rejected a request from two environmental groups to immediately shut down one of two reactors at California’s last nuclear power plant.

Friends of the Earth and Mothers for Peace said in a petition [filed last month](#) with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that long-postponed tests needed to be conducted on critical machinery at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, located midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. They argued the equipment could fail and cause a catastrophe.

In an order dated Tuesday, the NRC took no action on the request to immediately shut down the Unit 1 reactor and instead asked agency staff to review it.

The NRC also rejected a request to convene a hearing to reconsider a 2003 decision by staff to extend the testing schedule for the Unit 1 pressure vessel until 2025. The vessels [are thick steel containers](#) that hold nuclear fuel and cooling water in the reactors.

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CALIFORNIA, THE GREAT DESTROYER
THE CURRENT DISASTER HAS MANY PARENTS
BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

In 1996, the California legislature created the high speed rail authority.

In 2008, voters passed a \$33 billion bond to build an envisioned 800 mile project eventually to link Sacramento with San Diego.

Fifteen years later, a scaled-down plan from Bakersfield to Merced remains not even half finished. Yet the envisioned costs will exceed that of the original estimate for the entire project.

The rail authority now estimates that just the modest 178 mile route—only about a fifth of the authorized distance—will not be completed at least until 2030. Past high speed estimates of both time and cost targets have been widely wrong and perhaps deliberately misleading.

Total costs for the entire project are now estimated at nearly \$130 billion. Many expect that figure to double in the next quarter-century. Planners also concede there will likely not be much high speed rider demand from San Joaquin Valley residents willing to pay \$86 to travel at a supposed 200 mph from Bakersfield to Merced.

Nine years ago voters amid drought and water shortages also passed a state water bond, authorizing \$7.5 billion in new water projects and initiatives.

Some \$2.7 billion was targeted for new dams and reservoirs. The current water storage system had not been enlarged since the early 1980s, when the state population was 15 million fewer residents.

So far not a single dam or new reservoir has been built. And Californians expect more water rationing statewide anytime the state experiences a modest drought.

In 2017, a \$15 billion bond authorized a complete remodeling of Los Angeles International Airport—recognized as one of the more congested, disorganized, and unpleasant airports in America.

Now the cost to complete the project has grown to an estimated \$30 billion, with a proposed finish date of 2028—11 years after the project was authorized.

And the ongoing LAX remake is considered one of California's more successful public construction projects.

In 2002, California began construction on the eastern span replacement of the iconic San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge—less than half of the bridge's total length.

It was scheduled to be finished in five years at a cost of \$250 million.

The job in fact took 11 years. And it cost \$6.5 billion—a 2,500 percent increase over the estimate.

In contrast, original construction of the entire Bay Bridge began in 1933, at the height of the Great Depression. Yet the job was completed in a little more than three years.

The list of such delayed, canceled, or prolonged projects could be expanded, from the proposed widening of the state's overcrowded, antiquated, and dangerous north-to-south “freeways” to the now inert Peripheral Canal project that would have allowed the California aqueduct to transfer needed water southward by precluding the present inefficient pumping into and out of the San Francisco delta.

So what happened to the can-do California of former governors Pat Brown, Ronald Reagan, George Deukmejian, and Pete Wilson? They had bequeathed to the Baby Boomer generation a well-run state, renowned for its state-of-the-art infrastructure.

All four governors, a Democrat and Republicans, had ensured the nation's most sophisticated higher education system, iconic freeways, and model water transference systems.

The current disaster has many parents.

A coastal culture of globally rich elites began passing some of the most stringent environmental and zoning regulations in the nation. Such Byzantine roadblocks deliberately stalled construction and skyrocketed costs—all of little concern to the “not-in-my-backyard” wealthy in their secluded coastal enclaves who had ensured the virtual end of infrastructure investments.

The state's public unions and bloated bureaucracies guaranteed Soviet-style overhead, incompetence, and unaccountability. The more California raised its income taxes—currently the nation's highest topping out at 13.3 percent—the more it borrowed, spent, and ran up huge annual budget deficits.

The nation's highest gasoline taxes along with steep sales and property taxes—coupled with unaffordable fuel and housing, a homeless epidemic, dismal public schools, out-of-control crime, and mass, illegal immigration—soon all led to a bifurcated state of rich and poor.

The middle class either became poor or fled.

Indeed, businesses and millions of the middle class hightailed it out of California over the last three decades in one of the greatest state population exoduses in our nation's history. But they also took with them the very prior experience, expertise, and capital that had once made California the nation's envy.

In contrast, millions of impoverished illegal immigrants arrived over the last 30 years without legality, English, or high school diplomas.

And thus millions were immediately in dire need of costly state-supplied health, education, housing, and food subsidies. Currently well over half of all California births are paid for by Medi-Cal. Well over a third of the resident population depends on the state to provide all their health care needs.

Twenty-seven percent of California's resident population was not born in the United States. That reality created a vast challenge of civic education to ensure assimilation and integration. Unfortunately, millions entered California at precisely the time of a new tribalism and racial essentialism that has taken hold of the state's government, media, schools, and universities. Tribalism, not the melting-pot, is California's paradigm.

California is a one-party state. There are no statewide Republican elected officeholders. Progressive Democrats also enjoy a supermajority in both houses of the legislature. Only 12 of 52 congressional seats are held by Republicans. And almost all of California leftwing politicians are funded or influenced by Silicon Valley—the richest corridor in civilizational history, with \$9 trillion in market capitalization.

In sum, a now broke California became a medieval society of Leftwing ultra-rich and Leftwing ultra-poor. On one end, there was no longer the skill or expertise to modernize the state. And on the other, elite became more interested in dreaming of heaven on earth for itself as it ensured a veritable hell for others.

There is one thing, however, that California does quite well: demolition.

Currently it is destroying four dams on the Klamath River that had provided clean hydroelectrical power, water storage, flood control, and recreation. The media, the bureaucracy, and the politicians acted with unaccustomed dispatch to obliterate the dams and thus supposedly to liberate salmon to swim better upstream.

And the state is blowing up these dams partly by directing hundreds of millions of dollars voters had allotted for reservoir construction—adding insult to the injury of state voters.

A haughty green California also regulated timber companies out of business. It ceased traditional selective logging and clearing of brush from its forests.

It also limited cattle grazing of grasses and shrubs. And it embraced new “natural” forestry initiatives that postulated that rotting dead trees, dense brush, and tall summer grasses—dry kindling for devastating forest fires—created a rich “sustainable” ecosystem for wildlife. Letting nature be would prompt occasional “natural” corrective fires as in the nineteenth-century past.

The predictable results were massive, destructive—and once preventable—forest fires in the Sierra Nevada mountains and foothills. During California summers, their vast plumes of soot and smoke have

polluted the skies for months and sickened residents, destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses, and wiped out billions of dollars in valuable timber even as lumber prices soared.

And California's lesson for the nation?

If you want to topple a statue, re-label an historically named street, burn up millions of pine and fir trees, blow up a dam, turn parks and the public square into dangerous and toxic squatter cities, then the state can do all of that and in record time.

But try building something to ensure Californians can travel quickly and in safety, or have affordable power, homes, and fuel, and assured water?

All that is simply beyond the current state's comprehension, ability, and desire. So like modern Vandals or Goths, contemporary Californians are far better destroying the work of others than creating anything of their own.

And what is next? We await the 2024 national elections, when a few California politicians may run for our highest offices, no doubt with the campaign promise, "I can do to America what I did to California."

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 American Greatness on October 2, 2023

POLITQUEROS VERSUS THE PEOPLE

HOW PAID CAMPAIGN WORKERS STEAL VOTES

BY LLOYD BILLINGSLEY

The term doubtless draws a blank from most Americans, but politiqueros have been around for a long time. Back in 2015, for example, National Public Radio explained that the politiqueros were all about.

"In Rio Grande Valley, [Some Campaign Workers Are Paid To Harvest Votes](#)," NPR's Morning Edition explained. Politiqueros, or politiqueras means "campaign worker," and these workers are involved in "vote stealing." That is against the law, and the authorities were looking into it.

As Assistant U.S. Attorney James Sturgis explained, the politiqueros "are being paid to then go and essentially round up voters and have them vote a certain way." In one town, five politiqueras pleaded guilty to election fraud. Voters were bribed with "cigarettes, beer or dime bags of cocaine."

In Cameron County, nine politiqueras were charged with manipulating mail-in ballots, and one campaign paid \$3,000 a week for 15 politiqueras to work the mail-in ballots in a local race. In Brownsville, candidates hired politiqueras, and once in office gave jobs and contracts to friends and family members.” According to NPR, this not a new activity.

Politiquera Herminia Becerra had been doing it for 60 years, and she proudly [holds up pictures of Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and John Kennedy. That explains the “certain way” people were coerced to vote in most of the cases.](#) Politiqueros [were also active in Starr County, where dead people cast votes and non-citizens were illegally registered.](#)

“Anytime you have a system where you have ballots floating around in mailboxes, you’re [creating the circumstances for fraud](#),” noted County District Attorney Omar Escobar, in 2018. Illegal voting is difficult to measure, Escobar explained, and was a “nation-wide problem.”

One of the worst gangs in in the Bronx, according to attorney Ramon Jimenez, is “[Los Politiqueros](#),” which amassed an empire by controlling “a small group of elected officials.” Clearly, the threat of violence can get people to vote “a certain way.”

The politiqueros are strongest in California where the state’s “motor voter” program automatically registers illegals to vote when they get driver’s licenses. In 2015, Secretary of State Alex Padilla [told the Los Angeles Times](#), “at the latest, for the 2018 election cycle, I expect millions of new voters on the rolls in the state of California.”

By March 2018, the DMV had given licenses to [more than one million illegals](#). Padilla wouldn’t say how many of the illegals actually voted in 2018, but his previous reference to “millions” provides a ballpark figure. The motor voter program has never been independently audited and after the 2016 election, Padilla refused to cooperate with a federal probe of voter fraud.

Now in the U.S. Senate, Padilla is the replacement for Kamala Harris, who [got her start under Willie Brown](#), and was Biden’s running mate in 2020. Ten years earlier when Harris ran for California attorney general, Harris, was so lightly regarded that the Sacramento Bee endorsed her Republican opponent Steve Cooley. He was the clear winner on election night but after three weeks Harris moved ahead by less than one percent.

Roll Call ran a piece headlined, “[When Kamala Harris lost on election night but won three weeks later](#).” If anybody thought the politiqueros put Harris over the line it would be hard to blame them.

When he was vice president, Joe Biden said, “You know, 11 million people live in the shadows. I believe [they’re already American citizens](#).” According to the Delaware Democrat, 11 million undocumented aliens “are already Americans, in my view.” As he had to know, they aren’t, and the number is also wrong.

More than 22 million people are illegally present in the United States, according to a 2021 study by [scholars at MIT and Yale](#). Pew Research pegged the figure at 11 million, and for years it stood as the official count. Eleven million is more like the number illegally present in California alone. When he announced a lawsuit against the Trump administration in 2019, attorney general Xavier Becerra displayed a sign claiming [10 million “immigrants”](#) in California.

Since early 2021, notes Victor Davis Hanson, “we have witnessed somewhere [between 7 and 8 million illegal entries across](#) the now nonexistent U.S. southern border.” For the most part, they came in “without background checks, vaccinations and health audits, legality, high-school diplomas, English-facility, skill sets, or capital.” They bring the count to some 30 million,

Joe Biden, who believes they are “already Americans,” wants to [issue them ID cards](#). For all but the willfully blind, the so-called “migrants” are actually permanent settlers, an imported electorate. Sen. Padilla wants the Treasury Department to register voters at federally [funded tax-preparation centers](#) for those with limited English, an expansion of the motor-voter concept.

Mail ballots now abound, and as district attorney Omar Escobar noted, ballots floating around in mailboxes create “circumstances for fraud.” Under Joe Biden, the disenfranchisement of legitimate citizens and legal immigrants proceeds apace.

Lloyd Billingsley is the author of Hollywood Party and other books including Bill of Rights and Barack ‘em Up: A Literary Investigation. His journalism has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, the Spectator (London) and many other publications. Billingsley serves as a policy fellow with the Independent Institute.



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