



WEEKLY UPDATE SEPTEMBER 3 - 9, 2023

COLAB
San Luis Obispo County



FALL MIXER 2023

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 4TH

5:30PM - 7:30PM

THOUSAND HILLS RANCH

550 THOUSAND HILLS RD.

PISMO BEACH, CA

FOOD & BEVERAGES WILL
BE PROVIDED



THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 4

**PLANNING COMMISSION DIABLO CLOSURE
WORKSHOP**
THE EIR IS FATALLY FLAWED
IT FAILED TO STUDY THE AVAILABILTY OF REPLACEMENT ENERGY

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

NO SLOCOG IN SEPTEMBER

LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 8

SLO COUNTY PENSION UNFUNDED LIABILITY
CAL COAST NEWS AND PUBLIC AGHAST AT PENSION DEBT
ALL IN WITH PENSION LIABILITY, UNFUNDED RETIREE HEALTH, AND
PENSION DEBT BONDS – IT'S \$1 BILLION AND \$80 MILLION IN CHANGE

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
THE NEXT ONE IS ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION OF AUGUST 30 & 31, 2023
DANA RESERVE SPECIFIC PLAN HEARING PUNTED
HEARING CONTINUED TO OCTOBER 23 & 24TH
OPPOSITION WANTS MORE TIME TO ORGANIZE – PAULDING AGREED

EMERGENT ISSUES
SEE PAGE 17

**THE UNWELCOME RETURN OF COVID
RESTRICTIONS AND LOCKDOWNS**

**INVENT YOUR OWN GENDER - GOVERNOR
GAVIN NEWSOM ENCOURAGES YOUTH WITH
MILLIONS IN TAXPAYER SUPPORT**

*“You’re on a gender journey” – California K-12 schools teach
students that genders are limitless*

**COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 27**

**THE UPLIFTING POTENTIAL OF PRACTICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE CHOICES
BY EDWARD RING**

**THE GREAT CLIMATE CHANGE CON ISN’T
RESONATING WITH NORMAL PEOPLE
‘Eco-guilt is a first-world luxury’
BY KATY GRIMES**

THIS WEEK’S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, September 5, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

The next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, September 12, 2023.

Planning Commission Meeting of Tuesday, September 5, 2023 (Scheduled)

Item 1 - A study session regarding the Diablo Canyon Power Plant Decommissioning Project, and the Draft Environmental Impact Report. The Applicant, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), is seeking a Development Plan/Coastal Development Permit/Conditional Use Permit (DP/CDP/CUP) to allow for decommissioning of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP). The decommissioning project would proceed in two phases extending over approximately 15 years: Phase 1 (2024 -2031) includes pre-planning, decontamination, and dismantling activities; and Phase 2 (2032 - 2039) includes soil testing, additional soil remediation and final site restoration. The project site is located approximately 7 miles northwest of the community of Avila Beach, within the San Luis Bay Coastal and the San Luis Bay Inland Sub Area North Planning Areas.

A PUBLIC POLICY DISASTER¹

1. PG&E is proceeding on parallel paths with respect to the Plant's future. The first path is to process a permit application with SLO County to shut down the Plant in 2024 and 2025 and then dismantle it over a period of years. This is probably the most complex permit ever reviewed by the County. It covers demolishing large industrial structures, transportation and disposal of demolition debris, and on-site storage of decaying nuclear fuel for an indefinite period. As noted below at **point 3**, the EIR fails to adequately analyze the societal energy impacts of the shutdown.

The second path is to seek relicensing of the Plant for 5 years or perhaps longer, assisted by government subsidies, as the state and the PG&E service area lack sufficient power, at least in the near term years, absent the Plant's 2,240 MGW of 24/7 constant power.

The subject of the study session is the status of path one.

2. For a decade PG&E sought to relicense the Plant and but was opposed at every juncture by both SLO County and Santa Barbara County leftist Boards of Supervisors and the usual coterie of environmental luddites. It wasn't until 2016, when the SLO County Board achieved a conservative majority, that the County switched policy and sought to retain the Plant. Santa Barbara County has never advocated for retention of the Plant. Hysterical fears of the Plant being inundated by a tidal wave similar to the Fukushima Japan disaster were fanned relentlessly. Of course the Fukushima Plant sits at sea level, while the Diablo Plant is situated on top of an 85-foot-high bluff.

Additionally, the State imposed the community choice aggregation (CCA) program, which allowed the creation of new tax-free government entities to compete against PG&E, utilizing long term energy contracts and tax-exempt status. Meanwhile, PG&E was forced to serve those areas opting into the CCA programs while maintaining its massive infrastructure to transmit power. Further compounding the problem, PG&E was compelled to fund a wide variety of energy saving grants to individuals and governments. Over the years, the company determined to abandon the energy generation portion of its business. In 2016 it announced that it would cease seeking approval for relicensing Diablo.

¹ This is not PG&E's fault. The State of California has forced PG&E into this series of events as outlined herein.

3. The EIR fails to analyze the adequacy and legality of the replacement energy required.

Unlike most EIRs, which generate multiple reasons to deny projects, the Diablo Closure EIR approaches the issue narrowly by focusing on the short-term temporary impacts of the de-construction project and the debris disposal. In terms of the societal energy impact of the project, it deliberately avoids any discussion of the loss of energy capacity to the customers and the state. Rather, it focuses on the energy required to execute the demolition project. Section 4.7.4 actually states in part:

Because the decommissioning of DCCP would be a consequence of PG&E's prior decision to not pursue renewal of the existing licenses to operate the DCCP reactors, this analysis focuses on the energy use that could occur during decommissioning activities themselves. See Impact EN-2 for a discussion of the effects of procuring replacement power.

The referenced impact of Section EN-2 essentially states that the CUPC conditions for closure issued in 2018 have already solved the problem of replacing Diablo's CO₂ free energy.

CPUC's 2021 order for statewide electric system reliability specifically establishes the emissions profile for the replacement capacity for DCCP's retirement to require procurement of 2,500 MW from firm, zero-emitting resources by 2024. The order assigned the procurement responsibility to all load-serving entities based on their share of peak demand (CPUC, 2021). These requirements ensure that the replacement power for DCCP retirement would be procured in a manner that is consistent with statewide plans for promoting renewable energy.

Two CPUC Diablo Shutdown footnotes emphasize the point:

CPUC D. 21-06-035, June 24, 2021 (p.44): *"Nonetheless, to ensure no ambiguity, we will require that at least 2,500 MW of the resources procured by the LSEs [load-serving entities] collectively, between 2023 and 2025, be from zero-emission resources that generate electricity, or generation resources paired with storage, to replace Diablo Canyon."*

The CPUC defined "firm" resources as "resources must be able to deliver firm power (with a capacity factor of at least 80 percent). This means that the resource must not be subject to use limitations or be weather dependent. The resource must be a generating resource, not storage, able to generate when needed, for as long as needed. In addition, the resource may not have any on-site emissions, except if the resource otherwise qualifies under the RPS program eligibility requirements." D.21-06-035 at p. 36

Obviously, solar (after dark) and wind (on calm days) are totally weather dependent.

The EIR has determined that the CPUC's decision solved this problem. Were the Planning Commission and ultimately the Board of Supervisors to accept this "reasoning," they would be grossly deficient in performing their duty.

The Planning Commission should carefully examine staff, PG&E, Central Coast Community Energy, and the California Independent System Operator on the egregious failure of this EIR to accurately analyze this issue.

The assertion that the CPUC 2018 decision covers the issue is patently not true. As we have noted, the State has extended deadlines for the closure of existing gas plants, has warned Central Coast Community Energy that it is in violation of proven reserve resource adequacy requirements, is allowing importation of large tranches of energy from coal and nuclear powered Arizona Public Service at night, and is now actively promoting the retention of Diablo.

Table 4.7-2. Electricity Consumption for Load Served by PG&E (GWh per year)

Customer Sector	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Ag & Water Pump	6,692	5,100	5,832	4,567	6,638
Commercial Building	30,661	30,753	30,148	30,069	26,247
Commercial Other	4,546	4,353	4,266	4,424	3,949
Industry	10,619	10,515	10,519	9,877	9,814
Mining & Construction	1,909	1,765	1,594	1,670	1,748
Residential	28,625	29,138	27,700	27,485	29,834
Streetlight	355	321	311	298	290
PG&E Total Usage	83,408	81,945	80,369	78,390	78,519

Source: CEC, 2021b.

¹ Usage expressed in gigawatt-hours (GWh); one GWh equals one million kilowatt-hours.

Just exactly how is this level of energy going to be provided when the Plant closes?

4. The EIR fails to analyze the Greenhouse gas generation impact of closing the Plant.

Again, similarly to Section 3, above, the EIR only analyzes the greenhouse gas generation for demolition and debris transportation aspects of the decommissioning project itself. It totally ignores the generation of CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses necessary to the replace CO₂ free energy from the plant. This will mostly be provided by gas, coal, and oil when the nuclear generation ceases. Diablo offsets 7 million metric tonnes of CO₂ per year when compared with energy generated by natural gas, coal, and oil. The EIR contains no analysis of this impact whatsoever. Just how much CO₂ free energy will be available beginning in 2024 to replace Diablo’s 2240 MGW over the next 5 and 10 year periods?

Again, the EIR simply relies on the 2018 CPUC approval conditions of the Plant closure. The Planning Commission would be derelict in its duty to not require an analysis of the current situation, which is out of compliance with the CPUC stipulated conditions.

5. The EIR fails to disclose the negative economic impacts and resulting public safety impacts caused by the closure of the Plant. The EIR does inadvertently provide a forecast of the decline of employment resulting from the Plant closure as part of its traffic and transportation analysis.

Table 4.16-2. Project Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Generation

VMT Generator	Existing Conditions	Phase 1	Phase 2
DCPP			
Number of DCPP Employees	1,157	864	268
DCPP Employment VMT per Working Day (miles)	56,080	41,612	12,880

It is not clear where the figure 1,157 comes from, since many other sources report the plant’s staffing of PG&E employees and others to be around 1,700. For example, the County’s 2022

Annual Financial Report pegs it at 1,700. The jobs which remain will primarily be the temporary construction jobs involved in the demolition and transportation of the demolition materials off site. These are not the \$141,000 per year professional, engineering, technical, and skilled trade jobs, which are now permanent.

What is the economic impact? We thought that the County had determined to require an economic impact report on major projects. None is present here. One was required for the Dana Specific Plan.

**County of San Luis Obispo
Principal Employers
Current Year and Ten Years Ago
(UNAUDITED)**

Employer	2022			2013		
	Number of Employees	Rank	Percentage of Total County Employment	Number of Employees	Rank	Percentage of Total County Employment
County of San Luis Obispo*	2,847	1	2.04%	2,800	1	1.88%
Atascadero State Hospital	2,300	2	1.67%	2,300	3	1.55%
California Men's Colony	2,000	3	1.45%	2,000	4	1.35%
Cal Poly State University, SLO	1,912	4	1.39%	2,573	2	1.73%
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	1,700	5	1.23%	1,700	5	1.14%
Tenet Healthcare	1,312	6	0.95%	1,200	6	0.81%
Lucia Mar Unified School District	1,070	7	0.78%	1,000	7	0.67%
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County	942	8	0.68%	-	-	-
Paso Robles Public Schools	935	9	0.68%	935	8	0.63%
Cuesta College	854	10	0.62%	-	-	-
San Luis Coastal Unified School District	-	-	-	902	10	0.61%
Cal Poly Corporation	-	-	-	906	9	0.61%
Total Employment Labor Force	137,800			148,600		

Sources:

Pacific Coast Business Times
State of California Employment Development Department
2012-13 San Luis Obispo County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report
2021-22 County Budget Report*

It represents about \$26 million in property taxes per year to a school district, the County, and other agencies.

**County of San Luis Obispo
Principal Property Taxpayers
Current Year and Ten Years Ago
(In Thousands)
(UNAUDITED)**

Taxpayer	Industry	Fiscal Year 2021-22			Fiscal Year 2012-13		
		Assessed Value	Rank	Percentage of Total County Assessed Value	Assessed Value	Rank	Percentage of Total County Assessed Value
Pacific Gas & Electric Co.	Utility	\$ 1,482,778	1	2.31%	\$ 2,641,186	1	6.32%
High Plans Ranch II LLC	Solar Ranch	762,251	2	1.19%	-	-	-
Southern California Gas Co.	Utility	154,628	3	0.24%	63,866	7	0.15%
Jamestown Premier	Commercial	153,163	4	0.24%	-	-	-
Phillips 66 Company	Oil Refinery	139,218	5	0.22%	-	-	-
E&J Gallo Winery/Vineyards	Winery	98,162	6	0.15%	-	-	-
CAP VIII - Mustang Village LLC	Apartments	98,068	7	0.15%	76,800	5	0.18%
Firestone Walker LLC	Brewery	91,595	8	0.14%	-	-	-
Treasury Wine Estates	Winery	89,935	9	0.14%	-	-	-
Sierra Vista Hospital	Hospital	84,246	10	0.13%	55,004	10	0.13%
TOSCO Corp	Petroleum & Gas	-	-	-	144,966	2	0.35%
Plains Exploration & Prod Co	Petroleum & Gas	-	-	-	81,401	4	0.19%
Beringer Wine Estates Company	Winery	-	-	-	89,873	3	0.22%
Pacific Bell Telephone Co	Communications	-	-	-	71,897	6	0.17%
Martin Hotel Management	Hotel	-	-	-	62,521	8	0.15%
Pasquini Charles Jr Tre Etal	Private	-	-	-	55,665	9	0.13%
Total		\$ 3,154,044		4.91%	\$ 3,343,179		8.00%
Total County Assessed Value		\$ 64,252,963			\$ 41,796,284		

Sources:

County Property Tax System
2012-13 San Luis Obispo County Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

6. The costs of remedying the above gaps in the EIR should not be charged to PG&E, as they are the result of the County staff failure to properly manage the project in accordance with CEQA, the County’s own policies, and concern for the public interest.

No SLOCOG Meeting on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

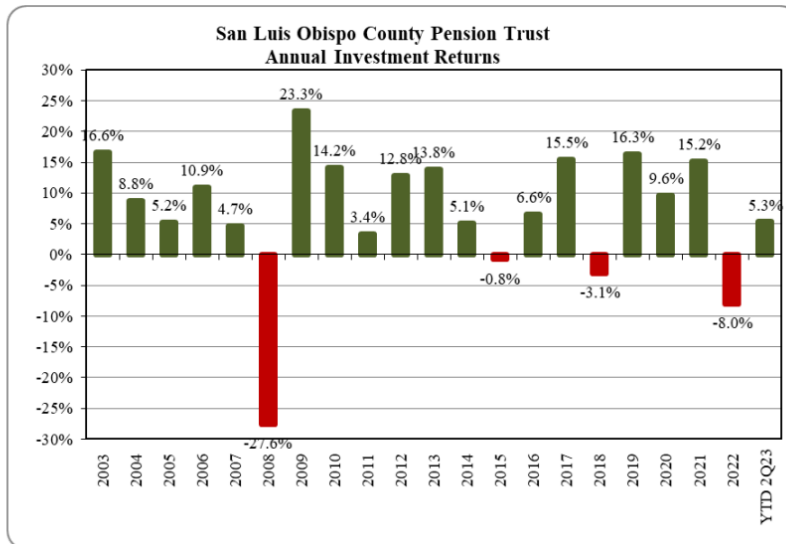
LAST WEEK’S HIGHLIGHTS

SLO County Pension Trust meeting of Monday, August 28, 2023 (Scheduled)

The Pension Trust was briefed on the status of the investments. So far, 2023 has been better than 2022. Hopefully the trend will continue. July was weak and August has not been good.

Agenda Item 11: Quarterly Investment Report for the 2nd Quarter of 2023

Attached is the 2Q23 quarterly investment report from the Trust’s investment consultant - Verus. Scott Whalen of Verus will present and discuss the quarterly report. The history of SLOCOPT investment returns, gross of fees, is shown below.



	July	Year to Date 2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Total Trust Investments (\$ millions)	\$1,673		\$1,614 year end	\$1,775 year end	\$1,552 year end	\$1,446 year end	\$1,285 year end
Total Fund Return	1.6% Gross	6.9% Gross	-8.0% Gross	15.2% Gross	8.9% Gross	16.3% Gross	-3.2% Gross
Policy Index Return (r)	1.5%	7.2%	-9.7%	12.8%	10.0%	16.4%	-3.2%

(r) Policy index as of Nov. 2021 Strategic Asset Allocation Policy with 2023 Interim targets:
 Public Mkt Equity- 21% Russell 3000, 17% MSCI ACWI ex-US
 Public Mkt Debt- 10% Barclays US Aggregate,
 Risk Diversifying 4% Barclays US Aggregate,
 5% Barclays 7-10yr Treasury, 4% Barclays 5-10yr US TIPS
 Real Estate & Infrastructure- 15% NCREIF Index (inc. Infrastructure)
 Private Equity- 10% actual private equity returns
 Private Credit- 8% actual private credit returns
 Liquidity- 6% 90 day T-Bills
 Pending annual updates to interim targets.

Separately from the Trust meeting, the media and public became aware of the unfunded liability.

A *Cal Coast News* article last week re-emphasized the unfunded liability problem. **Unfunded Liability has reached nearly \$1 Billion.**

SLO County’s unfunded pension liability soaring, to nearly \$1 billion

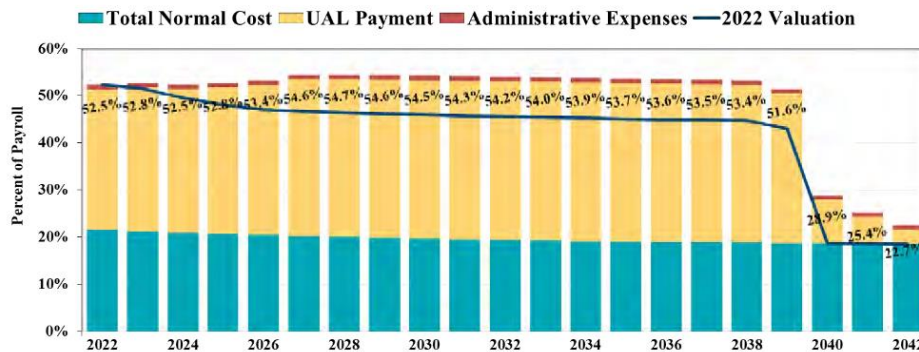
CALCOASTNEWS August 30, 2023

By KAREN VELIE

San Luis Obispo County’s unfunded pension liability is almost \$1 billion, primarily because of huge pay raises and poorly performing investments.

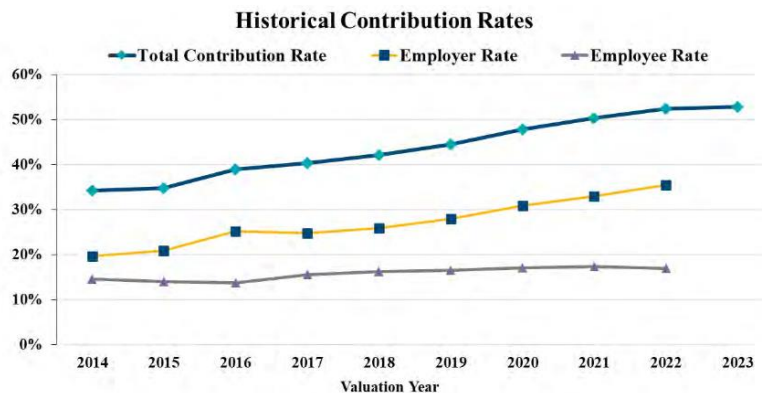
The SLO County Pension Trust Board of Trustees reported an unfunded pension debt of \$943 million on Jan. 1, up from \$879 million a year earlier, according to the Annual Actuarial Valuation report released in June. The county is almost \$1 billion short in the trust account set aside to pay former employees their monthly pensions and benefits.

For every dollar the county doles out for payroll, an additional 52 cents currently goes into the pension trust. In 2022, the pension deficit grew by \$64 million, or 7%.



UAL is the payment to cover the unfunded liability

The county pension fund generally receives money from employee contributions, employer contributions and returns on investments.



However, with a 7.7% loss in the market value of assets, “investment returns were less than favorable,” according to the report.

In addition, projected employee payroll grew by 8.1% to \$242.1 million. Pension trust administrators had anticipated a 3% yearly increase in payroll. However, while in 2022 line-level employees received pay increases of 3%, county officials, administrators and management staff were given raises of up to 23%.

As the county’s unfunded pension liabilities soar, the number of retirees receiving more than \$200,000 in pension and benefits a year is growing, according to Transparent California.

The top SLO County pensioners in 2022:

- Frank Freitas, tax collector – \$240,572
- Jeff Hamm, health agency director – \$225,021
- Pat Hedges, sheriff-coroner – \$213,496
- Dan Hilford, assistant district attorney – \$212,702
- Gerald Shea, district attorney – \$212,099
- Gere Sibbach, auditor-controller – \$207,584
- Enn Mannard, medical director – \$205,130

COLAB NOTE: It should be noted that most retirees receive much less - \$26,713 + Social Security.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY PENSION TRUST
ACTUARIAL VALUATION REPORT AS OF JANUARY 1, 2023

APPENDIX A – MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

SLOOPT Membership – Beneficiaries as of January 1, 2023

San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust Valuation Data Comparison - Beneficiaries				
	January 1, 2022	January 1, 2023	Change	
Total Beneficiaries				
Count	250	260	10	4.0 %
Average Age	76.3	76.3	0.0	(0.0)
Annual Benefit	\$ 6,521,508	\$ 6,945,332	\$ 423,824	6.5 %
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 26,086	\$ 26,713	\$ 627	2.4 %
Miscellaneous Beneficiaries				
Count	205	215	10	4.9 %
Average Age	76.5	76.5	0.0	0.0
Annual Benefit	\$ 4,790,952	\$ 5,117,219	\$ 326,267	6.8 %
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 23,370	\$ 23,801	\$ 431	1.8 %
Probation Beneficiaries				
Count	6	7	1	16.7 %
Average Age	79.5	78.1	-1.4	(1.4)
Annual Benefit	\$ 208,947	\$ 271,990	\$ 63,043	30.2 %
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 34,824	\$ 38,856	\$ 4,032	11.6 %
Safety Beneficiaries				
Count	39	38	-1	(2.6)%
Average Age	74.9	75.0	0.1	0.0
Annual Benefit	\$ 1,521,609	\$ 1,556,113	\$ 34,504	2.3 %
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 39,016	\$ 40,950	\$ 1,934	5.0 %

Recent retirees receive more, as their salaries were much higher than those who worked in past decades. This is helping to drive actuarial liability upward.

SLOCPT Membership – New Retired Members as of January 1, 2023

San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust Valuation Data Comparison - New Retirees Only			
	January 1, 2022	January 1, 2023	Change
Total Retirees			
Count	140	139	(0.7)%
Average Age at Retirement	61.1	59.2	(1.9)
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 37,232	\$ 43,112	15.8 %
Miscellaneous Retirees			
Count	119	114	(4.2)%
Average Age at Retirement	62.4	61.3	(1.0)
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 35,051	\$ 41,143	17.4 %
Probation Retirees			
Count	1	5	400.0 %
Average Age at Retirement	54.0	57.2	3.2
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 6,600	\$ 46,678	607.2 %
Safety Retirees			
Count	20	20	0.0 %
Average Age at Retirement	53.9	47.4	(6.5)
Average Annual Benefit	\$ 51,741	\$ 53,445	3.3 %

Historical Investment Performance

The following table shows the historical annual asset returns on both a market value and actuarial value basis since 2006. The 5-year, 10-year and 15-year geometric average annual returns are also included for reference.

Table III-5 Net Return on Market Value and Actuarial Value of Assets		
Year Ended December 31	Net Return on Market Value	Net Return on Actuarial Value
2006	11.1%	7.8%
2007	4.8%	8.4%
2008	-28.0%	3.8%
2009	23.5%	5.7%
2010	14.3%	6.0%
2011	2.7%	5.5%
2012	12.0%	6.2%
2013	13.1%	6.2%
2014	4.6%	5.3%
2015	-1.4%	3.0%
2016	6.1%	3.5%
2017	14.9%	6.0%
2018	-3.7%	3.7%
2019	15.2%	5.7%
2020	10.4%	7.9%
2021	13.6%	9.4%
2022	-7.7%	5.1%
Geometric Average		
5-Year	5.1%	6.3%
10-Year	6.2%	5.6%
15-Year	5.2%	5.5%

Returns are net of investment expenses starting in 2021.

Since its publication, this article has caused a degree of public outrage. The article did not mention that non-safety employees also receive Social Security on top of their County pension. The County contribution to Social Security for the 2023 calendar year is 6.20% of wages up to \$160,200. The County also matches the employee's contribution to Medicare. The 2023 calendar year Medicare rate is 1.45% of total wages (no maximum). We could not find the actual dollar value of the County's annual contribution in the Budget or the Annual Financial Report. Everything is lumped together as salaries and benefits – sort like buying a Mercedes S-650 with trim package 3 and not knowing what it contains. The one in the picture below costs about \$250,000, or about the same as one year of pension of major County executives.



The County is also paying off Pension obligation bonds that were issued in 2004, whereby the County hoped to arbitrage increased pension costs by issuing tax exempt bonds to reduce the unfunded liability. The gamble did not work, and the County is still paying \$10.8 million per year. The current Budget states in part:

This fund center reflects the debt service payment for Pension Obligation Bonds (POBs). The Board of Supervisors approved the use of \$137 million of POBs in FY 2004-05 to address unfunded pension liability costs. The bonds were amortized over a 30-year period and create an annual savings of over \$1 million (compared to what would have otherwise been paid). The bonds are paid by charging each department a percentage of payroll.

A portion of this debt was issued at a variable rate and during FY 2009-10 the lock period on the rate expired and the rate was set to increase. In order to avoid significant cost increases, these variable rate bonds were refinanced with fixed rate securities. The fixed rate is higher than the original rate issued, but not nearly as high as what the variable rate increase would have been. As a result, this annual debt payment increased by about \$700,000 per year beginning with FY 2010-11, but the refinance avoided an additional increase of approximately \$1.5 million per year.

As of the end of FY 2022, the Pension Bond obligation stood at \$109 million.

Year Ended June 30,	Pension Obligation Bonds		
	Principal	Unaccrued Appreciation	Total
2023			
2024	\$ 9,947	\$ 278	\$ 10,225
2025	9,981	869	10,850
2026	10,002	1,503	11,505
2027	10,009	2,176	12,185
2028-2032	9,996	2,894	12,890
2033-2037	35,177	16,563	51,740
2038-2042	-	-	-
2043-2047	-	-	-
2048-2052	-	-	-
2053-2057	-	-	-
2058-2062	-	-	-
Total	<u>\$ 85,112</u>	<u>\$ 24,283</u>	<u>\$ 109,395</u>

The County can expect more service sapping pension rate increases, as its assumptions have not been met. Note that the actuary’s current inflation rate assumption is 2.25% (It hit 8% in 2021). County raises exceeded the assumption rate of 2.75%. The system’s rate of return is currently 7.2% for the first 7 months of 2023, which could help. However, the recent months’ have been around 1.6%.

Actuarial Assumptions

The total pension liability in the January 1, 2022 actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions:

Inflation	2.25%
Amortization growth rate	Level percentage of payroll
Salary increases	2.75% plus service-related merit component based on years of services ranging from 0.00% to 5.25%
COLA increases	2.50% for Tier 1 and 2.00% for Tier 2 and Tier 3
Investment rate of return	6.75%, net of administrative expense
Post-Retirement Mortality	Sex distinct PUB-2020 Amount-Weighted, Above Median Income, adjusted by 0.99 for males and 1.01 for females, with generational mortality improvements using scale MP-2019

Additionally, the County has an unfunded liability for post-retirement health benefits. This fund has a net liability of \$29.5 million.

All in, the various components of the retirement finances include the Pension Trust unfunded liability of \$943 million, \$109 million of pension obligation bonds, and the \$29.5 million of post-retirement health obligations, for a total of \$1,081.5 billion.

The Auditor Controller presented some of this in May as a supplement to FY 2022-23 3rd Quarter Financial Report. Everyone was anxious to go to lunch.

What a debacle. The annual dollar cost of paying for these retirement programs is not displayed in the Budget document. It could be \$80-\$100 million per year or more. This represents dollars that are paying for past services and are not available for current services.

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, August 29, 2023 (Not Scheduled)

**Planning Commission Meeting of Wednesday, August 30 and Thursday, August 31, 2023
(Scheduled but Continued to October 23 and 24)**

Item 1 - Hearing to consider a request by Dana Reserve, LLC and NKT Development, LLC for the adoption of the Dana Reserve Specific Plan, a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (Tract 3159), and Conditional Use Permit for Oak Tree Removal and Grading/Impervious Surfaces. The Dana Reserve Specific Plan would allow for the phased development of a 288-acre master-planned community with up to 1,318 residential units, 110,000-203,000 square feet of commercial and non-residential (Visitor Serving/Hotel, Education) uses, a minimum of 54.9 acres of open space and recreation, and related circulation and infrastructure. The Commission did not conduct the actual hearing. Instead, it continued the hearing to October 23 and 24th by a unanimous vote. The Commission also added a “workshop” on September 28th. No decisions will be taken during the workshop. The meeting will include a presentation followed by public comment. The real action will be during the October hearings.

During the August 29th meeting there were about 2 hours of testimony from citizens and organized opposition groups requesting that the project be denied or substantially downsized. The delay will undoubtedly be used to develop and refine the opposition.

Background: This plan contains the largest housing proposal within the unincorporated County in years. Denial or dilution of the project would be a severe failure of public policy. It would be the proverbial looking a gift horse in the mouth. The project is certainly more attractive than the development immediately to its south that contains a hodgepodge of discount furniture stores, trailer sales, a flea market, and a sewage treatment plant.

Most communities in America would die to have this project. However key process impediments at this point include:

1. Supervisor Paulding formally requested that the Planning Commission continue the item for a month. The applicant, though disappointed, would agree to a continuance. See the letters below on pages 8 and 10 respectively. This could mean that Paulding is seeking to broker a deal between the applicant and the area opponents for a smaller project or that he is giving them more time to organize the opposition. Of course the applicant has been through years of costly process, plan revisions, and a huge EIR in order to arrive at this point. Time is money.
2. There is considerable neighborhood opposition, but so far no letters in the file from the usual project opponents such as the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Council or other specialty groups. These entities may be waiting until the matter reaches the Board of Supervisors. The South County Advisory Council did, however, recommend the project.
3. Neighborhood opponents naturally object to the development, as it would urbanize heretofore rural lands. They enjoy the ambience. The problem for them is that the site is at the intersection of Highway 101 and the major arterial road that provides a full interchange. It is an excellent site for homes and a mixed-use development.

4. The project includes a variety of housing types, including various forms of affordable homes targeted to various income levels. One problem is that Supervisor Paulding may attempt to push the applicant to provide more affordable units, which would upset the overall budget of the project, rendering it infeasible from a marketing and financial standpoint.

5. Most of the so-called environmental impacts are artificial constructs (strawmen) set up to prevent normal development. As communities grow it is natural that views of open fields are reduced. Water must be provided. Trees must be removed and birds must find other trees. Native thorny bushes will be removed. There will be more traffic and CO₂, but this is all relative. San Luis Obispo County contains 3,500 sq. miles, of which a tiny portion is urbanized. The entire population is only 280,000, mostly concentrated in 7 cities and a few unincorporated villages.

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) identifies 19 Class I unmitigated environmental impacts. Once a recommendation is forwarded from the Planning Commission to the Board of Supervisors, the Board would have to make a finding of Overriding Consideration to approve the project. These would invite lawsuits from intervenors who opposed the project. Many of the impacts involve biologicals such as oak trees, birds, snakes, mammals' wild shrubs, and insects. Others include CO₂ emissions, air pollution, and traffic. Two of the more significant pertain to the County's adopted Land Use Plan:

E. POPULATION AND HOUSING

1. **PH Impact 1:** The project would induce substantial unplanned population growth in the Nipomo area. Impacts would be significant and unavoidable (Class I). (Refer to pages 4.14-23 through 4.14-27 of the Final EIR.)
 - a. **Mitigation:** No feasible mitigation has been identified. Potential impacts associated with substantial unplanned population growth would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).
 - b. **Finding:** The County finds that specific economic, social, legal, technological, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR infeasible. No additional feasible mitigation is available to avoid substantial unplanned population growth. (Refer to pages 4.14-23 through 4.14-27 of the Final EIR.) A statement of overriding considerations for this impact is made in Section 12.
2. **PH Impact 5:** The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to substantial and unplanned population growth. Impacts would be significant and unavoidable (Class I). (Refer to page 4.14-29 of the Final EIR.)
 - a. **Mitigation:** Implementation of the project would result in substantial and unplanned population growth and no feasible mitigation has been identified to reduce impacts. Therefore, residual cumulative impacts would be significant and unavoidable (Class I).
 - b. **Finding:** The County finds that specific economic, social, legal, technological, or other considerations make the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR infeasible. No additional feasible mitigation is available to avoid substantial unplanned population growth. (Refer to page 4.14-29 of the Final EIR.) A statement of overriding considerations for this impact is made in Section 12.
6. Separately from the positive intentions of the applicant and the staff analysis, COLAB is disturbed by the entire social philosophy of the State of California and San Luis Obispo County,

which seeks to impose the costs of affordable housing on developers and home builders. This is equally true when the costs of submitting the application and the capital exactions for exterior roads, drainage, and schools are added in.

If governments wish to cover the costs of affordable housing, they should adopt that policy and spend less on other programs. Instead, they place increasing burdens on the housing industry and continuously seek new taxes to cover housing subsidy costs. Contiguous staffing expansions, retirement subsidies, archaic work rules, obsolete civil service systems, co-option by employee unions, and continuous expansions of fad programs of the day, such as subsidies to the incurable mentally ill and addicted, fad psychological programs such as the psychiatric Sound Pods, restorative justice (which is no justice for the crime victims), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs, allowing employees to work from home, high lost time rates (absenteeism) due to sick days and workers compensation, repeated costly updating of climate plans and related environmental fetishes, the California Environment Quality Act processing and legal costs, all mail ballots, lawsuit payoffs for employee and consultant mistakes (the \$10 million Los Osos Sewer settlement, the \$5 million Andrew Holland jail death settlement), golf subsidies, creation of new government entities such as the Central Coast Energy Authority and the Chumash Marine Sanctuary, and all the rest.

The decision presented to Supervisor Paulding is difficult. His constituents are opposed to the project. He has stated that he supports more housing. Recently he may have revealed some of his strategy when he stated that the project must guarantee affordable housing. This was not quantified.

Housing goes beyond shelter. Where you live, especially when you are young, has everything to do with your chances in life – who you associate with, where you go to school, a quiet space to do homework, who are your role models, and so forth. The extent to which the project helps provide a housing move up ladder and loosens up the market in general, not to mention providing actual rental housing, is a key social and economic benefit. Paulding is all for equity and inclusion. He will have to decide if the views of cattle in the field and 30-year-old Land Use Plan population limits outweigh his overall announced values.

How about his Planning Commissioner?



It has a front yard, back yard, 2 side yards and a 2-car garage. At some point in history its development replaced rural land and chased the cows and rattle snakes away. Note the low water shrubs in the front.²

Supervisor Paulding's home.

² Zillow Real Estate, 2023.

About Aratina Solar + Storage Project

	Original PPA	Amended and Restated PPA
Counterparty	64NB 8me LLC	64NB 8me LLC
Parent Company	Betrnube Solar Energy	Avantus (formerly 8minute Solar Energy)
Product	Solar PV PCC1 renewable energy and dispatch rights of Energy Storage system.	Solar PV PCC1 renewable energy and dispatch rights of Energy Storage system.
Delivery Term	20 years June 30, 2023, through June 29, 2043	20 years June 1, 2025, through May 31, 2045
Contract Capacities	120 MW Solar PV 30 MW Energy Storage (Lithium-Ion), 3-hour Discharge Duration	120 MW Solar PV 75 MW Energy Storage (Lithium-Ion), 4-hour Discharge Duration
Location	Kern County	Kern County
Not to Exceed Amount (\$,000)	\$261,000,000	\$465,000,000



Approval of the amended & restated PPA will increase the project's value to \$465 million, allowing us to meet our aggressive goal of 100% RPS by 2030, increase regulatory compliance, and increase our energy hedging abilities.



EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - The Unwelcome Return of Covid Restrictions and Lockdowns – By Connorn O’Keefe.



Covid restrictions are back. Almost a year after President Joe Biden [said](#) “the pandemic is over,” several hospitals, businesses, and universities have reinstated mask mandates and social distancing requirements. Meanwhile, nearly sixty universities have announced that students must take a covid vaccine to attend for the fall 2023 semester.

Although these restrictions are still limited to only a handful of organizations, their implementation demonstrates that the destructive public health dogmas responsible for the

devastation of the last three years are still with us. The American people must stop tolerating these ruinous policies and the totalitarian paradigm underlying them.

The current dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant is a subvariant of Omicron called EG.5. Informally, it's been nicknamed Eris after the [Greek goddess of strife](#). The strain was [first identified](#) back in February 2023. It [overtook](#) the previous dominant variant at the beginning of August. The symptoms of the Eris variant are [those of a cold](#)—a runny nose and a sore throat. There is no evidence that Eris is more contagious or severe than the previous dominant variant.

Another Omicron variant called BA.2.86, nicknamed Pirola, has also been detected, but the few confirmed cases have also been [very mild](#).

In recent weeks, an uptick in covid has been [detected](#) in wastewater, indicating a rise in cases. The trend is the [familiar](#) “summer wave” in viral spread seen as people move indoors to escape the late-summer heat. Still, the case numbers are extremely low, and the virus has the severity of a cold.

And yet some institutions have reinstated restrictions on their customers and workers in response to Eris. On August 17, two New York hospitals [reimposed](#) mandatory face masking and covid testing. Then, on August 20, Morris Brown College in Atlanta [reinstated](#) its mask mandate and banned large gatherings. The school also reimplemented contact tracing, symptom monitoring, and general social distancing requirements. The next day, the movie studio Lionsgate [instituted](#) a mask mandate for its offices. Two days later, a [San Francisco medical center](#) followed suit.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration [publicly urged](#) people to get fall booster shots last Monday. Then, last Friday, the president [said](#) he was requesting funds for a new covid vaccine that he anticipates will be recommended to everyone. And, as of August 26, [fifty-eight universities](#) have notified their students that they are required to take the covid vaccine to attend classes this fall semester.

These developments are disturbing because they indicate that the paradigm underlying the totalitarian pandemic response is still very intact. That paradigm was laid out well by both Dr. Peter McCullough and Dr. Aaron Kheriaty in their lectures at the Mises Institute's [Medical Freedom Summit](#) this year.

Dr. McCullough [traced](#) the origin of today's medical totalitarianism to the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) [Act](#) of 2005, which militarized the protocols for fighting a pandemic. Under this new philosophy, the government would mobilize the population to fend off a pathogen as if it were a foreign invader. War, be it on people or germs, breeds totalitarianism. As Randolph Bourne [wrote over a century ago](#), it's during times of war that “the State becomes what in peacetimes it has vainly struggled to become—the inexorable arbiter and determinant of men's business and attitudes and opinions.”

Dr. Kheriaty went a bit further back and [identified](#) a national public health conference in 1997 as the origin of the government's repressive approach to fighting viruses. At the conference, a subtle shift in pandemic policy's emphasis occurred that led public health away from viewing viruses as the enemy to be combatted and toward viewing human beings as possible vectors of disease, as a danger to be controlled. In other words, the field's priorities switched from working to care for sick people to the top-down control of entire populations.

This new paradigm of public health led to a “new paradigm of governance,” in the words of Dr. Kheriaty, that was rolled out in early 2020. For the first time in recorded human history, which is full of plagues and pandemics, quarantines were imposed on the entire population, not just the infected or those arriving from infected areas.

An overly sedentary population with concerning levels of mental illness was forced to stay inside and isolated from their friends, coworkers, classmates, and families. And to hide their faces from strangers when forced to go out. Six trillion dollars was quickly printed to try and delay the inevitable pain that results when millions of people stop producing the goods and services we all rely on.

The health and development of millions of young Americans have been harmed in ways that will take decades to fully comprehend. All in the name of halting a virus known early on to pose little risk to the young and healthy. And the virus still moved through nearly three-quarters of the American population anyway.

And yet the new public health paradigm is clearly still with us. It just lies dormant while case numbers remain low. The last few weeks have shown that it will resurface even when officials declare a virus low risk.

The doctrine of totalitarianism is too dangerous to be tolerated again. But unlike a pathogen, all this threat requires is our refusal.

Connor O’Keeffe produces media and content at the Mises Institute. He has a master’s in economics and a bachelors in geology. This article first appeared in the Aug 30, 2023 Mises Wire.

Item - 2 Invent Your Own Gender. Governor Gavin Newsom Encourages Youth With Millions In Taxpayer Support - “You’re on a gender journey” – California K-12 schools teach students that genders are limitless.” By Adam Andrzejewski



Neopronouns are a “step towards a society where people can more fully express all parts of themselves.” Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ advocacy group

California governor Newsom’s administration is funneling millions of taxpayer dollars into a nonprofit promoting “neogenders” like foxgender and autismgender and facilitating secret gender transitions for students in his state and across the country.

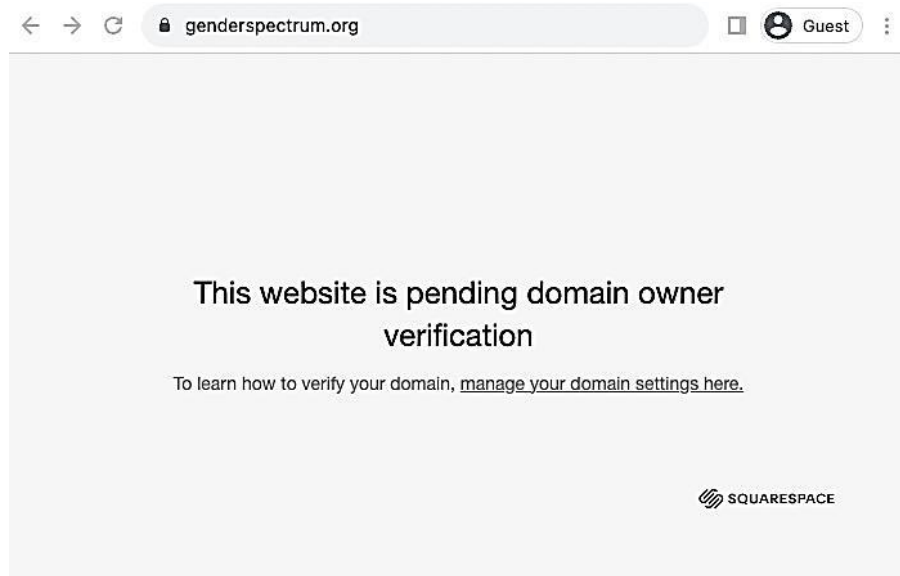
It’s no longer only “he” and “she” or “man” and “woman” in the California public schools. And if Gavin Newsom gets his way, it’s coming to your school too.

The California Department of Public Health is in partnership with the California-based Gender Spectrum organization through a nine-year grant to “conduct rigorous evaluation” of Gender Spectrum’s “professional development programs.”

The organization’s undergirding ideology is one of radical “liberation” from the “gender binary,” encouraging youth to invent their own “genders,” which parents are urged to “affirm.”

However, their “Resources” include a so-called “Gender Support Plan,” which explicitly excludes a child’s parents at the child’s request. Some initiatives start with kids in kindergarten.

In the hours before we published, today, Gender Spectrum’s website became no longer accessible and they didn’t respond to multiple comment requests.



Millions In Taxpayer Dollars

Gender Spectrum will collect \$2,340,000 from the California Department of Public Health, Office of Health Equity for the California Reducing Disparities Project. Here’s how the payments break down:

Started in the Jerry Brown era when Newsom was lieutenant governor, the grant originally ran from 2017-2022. However, in March 2022, the Newsom administration more than doubled the

annual funding and gave Gender Spectrum an extension until June 2026. In 2022 the California Department of Health gave the organization \$355,260 as a part of these payments, up from \$160,958 in 2021.

The grant gives financial and technical assistance to two Gender Spectrum professional development programs: The Foundations of Gender Inclusive Schools Training and The Gender Spectrum Inclusive Schools Network. The programs impart, among other items “concrete strategies for applying the lens of gender diversity to school practices.”

The plan is to continue to bring these programs to more schools.

Our auditors at OpenTheBooks.com found state payments to Gender Spectrum after we broke open the California state checkbook for the first time in history last year.

How To Use Neopronouns

Our report uses web resources found on Gender Spectrum’s website, and direct quotes and slides from the Gender Spectrum Family Conference 2022, which featured the organization’s executives as presenters and facilitators.

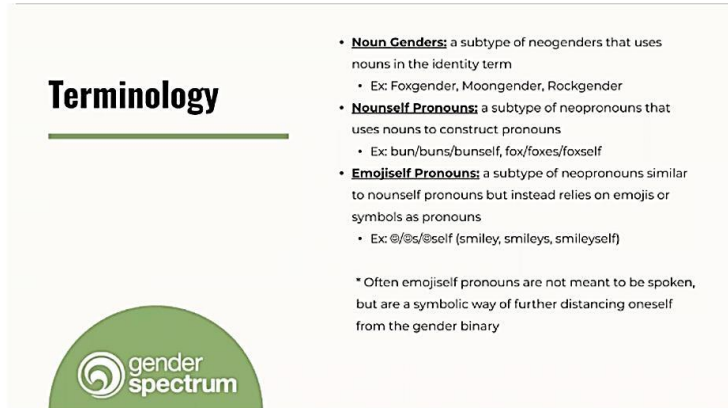
One presentation covered the intricacies of “neoidentities.”

Neogenders, or neoidentities, are words other than “man” and “woman” which individuals use to describe their gender. Neogenders may “describe gender as a personal, aesthetic, synesthetic, or head-space oriented experience.” A neogender may have a corresponding neopronoun other than “he” and “her.”

For example, someone could identify as “foxgender” and use the “foxself” pronoun. This does not necessarily mean the person believes he or she is a fox, but rather the person identifies with “aspects of a fox, whether that’s their appearance, their personality, or how they’re viewed in society.”

If one were to use the foxself pronouns, one could say “**Fox** said **fox** would rather do it **foxself**.” Instead of “She said she would rather do it herself.”

There are an unlimited number of genders one can have, so if an adult does not understand a child’s chosen neogender right away, that is understandable. In fact, youth don’t even have to properly understand their own neogenders, because they are on a “gender journey” that will likely change over time.



From "Intro to Neoidentities, and Neopronouns" by Naomi Cruz, Gender Spectrum.

Keeping It Secret – Parents Don’t Need To Know

Gender Spectrum’s mission appears to drive a wedge between children and their parents.

Parents are told they should unreservedly “affirm” their child’s neogender. And if parents aren’t affirming, they can expect to be cut out of this aspect of their child’s social and psychological development entirely.

As Naomi Cruz, Manager of Family and Educational Programming at Gender Spectrum, says:

“If parents are not supportive of neogender identities and the youth is feeling really torn because of that, I definitely recommend supporting that youth in the ways that you can, so definitely making sure to use this youth’s pronouns when it's safe to. The youth may request, obviously, ‘don’t use these pronouns around my parents,’ but when you two are alone or in spaces where their parents are not there, or the youth has indicated that it’s safe, making sure to use those neopronouns or making sure to refer to them in ways that make them feel gender affirmed.”

In other words, as soon as parents leave the room, a teacher or other adult can start referring to their child as “fox,” “rock,” “moon,” or whatever else the child fancies. It’s a little secret they don’t have to share with parents.

With One Exception

If a child chooses a gender that encompasses a racial, ethnic, religious, or disability group they are not a part of, the parent must direct the child to a different neogender. For example, only autistic people are allowed to use “autigender” or “autismgender.” Cruz provides a script for parents to correct their children in these cases:

“Yes, I understand that this term means something to you, but perhaps we can create another term or another pronoun that also has a meaning to you, but isn’t specific to a certain racial, ethnic, or other group where there are closed identities and pronouns.”

Cruz did not mention if the parent should redirect the child back to its own sex (or species), but we assume this action would not be considered “affirming.”

Neogenders and Youth

* Sourced from Christine Feraday & Diane Ehrensaft



- As our understanding of gender develops and evolves, we come up with "new" ideas surrounding gender
- One such idea is the importance of personal gender
 - Societal gender --> personal gender
- Our more traditional understanding of gender is through societal norms
 - Society dictates what we identify as and how we behave/express
- Our youth are becoming more and more independent regarding their self expression
- Instead of trying to fit into premade boxes, they're using their unique identities and forms of expression to create terminology to describe themselves

From "Intro to Neoidentities and Neopronouns" by Naomi Cruz, Gender Spectrum.

Gender Support Plans

Gender Support Plans are essentially tools to help administrators facilitate the social transition of a child's gender while at school.

Gender Spectrum's six-page document covers which bathrooms, locker rooms and facilities the student will be using, which name they will go by, and the "go-to adults" on campus.

Parental knowledge of their child's gender plan is entirely up to the child, whether or not parents would be supportive of such a transition.

The plan even includes strategies for keeping parents in the dark about their child's "gender identity." Such plans have been found in schools across the country.

If the student's guardians are not aware and/or supportive of the student's gender status, how will school-home communications be handled, including when individual staff members need to contact guardians?

What are some other ways the school needs to anticipate the student's privacy being compromised? How will these be handled?

Screenshot from Gender Spectrum's Gender Support Plan. The California Department of Health is evaluating the use of Gender Spectrum's resources as they increase their funding.

During the Gender Spectrum Family Conference in October 2022, Carla Pena, Director of Training, stated that this is a part of the training administrators and educators receive through Gender Spectrum's programs:

“We also give this training to school educators and administrators who are working with trans and gender expansive kids, and it’s not always the case that caregivers are supportive of their child’s gender, their gender journey, in that case, if parents are not supportive or if the child is not out, that’s not necessarily someone who will be a part of the gender support team.”

Supporting Transgender and Nonbinary Students



Screenshot from Carla Pena’s presentation at the Gender Spectrum 2022 Family Conference. Note the question mark after “Parents/Caregivers.”

Forming the Tea



Possible Members of the GST

- Parents/Caregivers (?)
- Student (?)
- School Leadership
- School Nurses
- Counseling Staff
- Teachers/other staff working directly with child
- Mental Health Providers
- Supporting Organizations

Secret school gender transitions have been an organizational priority for a long time. As reported in the Washington Examiner, in 2015 Gender Spectrum co-authored a report titled "Schools in Transition," which was also sponsored by the National Education Association, one of America’s biggest teachers' unions.

What seemed like a radical notion then has effectively permeated schools nationwide, boosted by partnerships at the state and national level.

A Federal Partnership Too

The state of California isn’t the only institution boosting the Gender Spectrum’s work; the organization consulted on the National Sex Education Standards, cited by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control for use in schools nationwide.

The standards were published in 2021 and included goals like:

- By 2nd grade define gender identity
- By 5th grade children should be able to describe the role of puberty blockers on those who identify as transgender. Also, fifth graders should differentiate between sexual orientation and gender identity and explain that gender expression and gender identity exist along a spectrum
- By 8th grade define anal sex and describe “pregnancy options” including abortion.

The CDC's website says of this guidance:

"The standards are designed to help schools focus on what is most essential for students to learn by the end of a grade level or grade span and can be used to create lessons and curricula with aligned learning objectives."

Gender Spectrum's Kim Westheimer was listed as one of the consultants on the National Sex Education Standards. Westheimer also gave a talk at the 2022 Family Conference, stating that exposing children to different ideas of gender encourages them to take on different gender identities:

"Things like social media and YouTube are giving young people more permission to explore their identity and maybe to try on new identities and decide if those are right for them or not. I would say that's a good thing, not a bad thing, and that kids should be supported in that."

The CDC has recommended Gender Spectrum resources in at least three other agency documents or webpages: LGBTQ Inclusivity In Schools: A Self-Assessment Tool; Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships; Creating Safe Schools for LGBTQ+ Youth.

Gender Spectrum has not received federal contract or grant funding, but has received \$297,111 in federal small business Covid-19 loans. Their first Paycheck Protection Program \$153,110 loan in April 2020 was forgiven. On February 26, 2021, the organization took a \$145,833 PPP loan and the current status is undetermined.

The organization has partnered with other national groups like National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National PTA, the American School Counselors Association, and the School Superintendents Association.

SUMMARY

Gender Spectrum openly brags about the organization's national, and even international impact, reaching youth from Switzerland to Singapore.

The half a million dollars in funding from the state of California between 2021 and 2022 (and \$2,340,000 by 2026) will go a long way with Gender Spectrum. Indeed, within the California Department of Public Health's Request for Proposals for the grant Gender Spectrum won is a stipulation for the organization to "increas[e] its current project scale to allow for effective evaluation."

Along with evaluating the program for supposed "effectiveness" the CDPH stated:

"secondary program goals include the development of infrastructure and business practices to expand and improve existing efforts in order to provide quality mental health services to more at-need community members."

If California school districts push back, then the California Attorney General sues.

On August 28 California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced a lawsuit against the Chino Valley Unified School District in California to halt the district’s mandatory gender identity disclosure policy. The policy would inform parents if a child asks to use a different name or pronoun in school, a policy which Bonta says is “wrongfully and unconstitutionally discriminating against and violating the privacy rights of LGBTQ+ students.”

Gavin Newsom stated in one of his wife’s documentaries (also shown in schools),

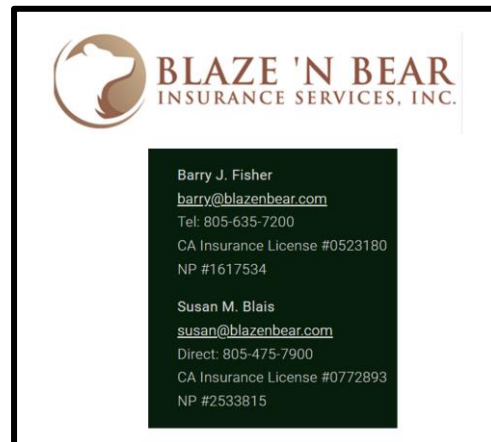
“At the end of the day a budget is a set of values. Budget reflects your values.”

California voters and taxpayers should consider how this spending reflects their own values and parents nationwide should be alert to how Newsom’s values are being exported to their children’s schools.

NOTE: We reached out for comment, context, and background to Gender Spectrum, the California Department of Public Health, and Gov. Newsom’s office. None responded by publication. If they do respond, we’ll do our best to update the piece in real time.

Adam Andrzejewski (say: And-g-f-ski) is the CEO/Founder of OpenTheBooks.com. Mission: “Every Dime, Online, In Real Time.” This article first appeared in Substack on August 31, 2023.

Sponsors



COLAB IN DEPTH
IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS
ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO
KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL,
POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES

THE UPLIFTING POTENTIAL OF PRACTICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE CHOICES
BY EDWARD RING

It's understandable that the people running a state as wealthy as California, with a culture of pioneering innovation going back nearly two centuries, would be inspired to set an example to the world. This negates the argument that even if Californians achieve "net zero" emissions of carbon dioxide, it won't make a bit of difference.

California's goal, which its elected officials have exported to Washington, D.C., is to inspire the whole world to achieve "net zero." If foreign nations aren't willing to do this voluntarily, then California is happy to have our government somehow force them into compliance.

This entire strategy is flawed on many levels. To begin with, honest carbon accounting has to recognize the embodied energy and resource cost of renewables, and when this is done, most renewable energy solutions are revealed to have an emissions cost in rough parity with the most efficient fossil fuel-based energy solutions.

Then there is the growing awareness that other environmental priorities—such as preserving wilderness and protecting wildlife from biofuel plantations, solar farms, wind farms, and dramatically expanded mining operations—are compromised by renewables development at a cost to the environment that may well exceed the alleged, eventual cost of carbon emissions. And to recite a growing heresy, well-supported by scientific evidence, it may be that most of the measured increase in atmospheric CO₂ has come from natural sources such as volcanoes, and in any case, the result of more atmospheric CO₂ may actually do more good than harm.

But the biggest flaw in California's net zero strategy is that other nations aren't going to follow this example. They aren't willing to impoverish their populations in fealty to what they perceive to be a concocted, overblown, phony crisis designed to further Western hegemony over their sovereignty. For everyone on Earth to consume half as much energy per capita as Americans do, global energy production needs to double. Because energy is the foundation of prosperity, this needs to happen fast, and it needs to be affordable.

For this reason, what Californians ought to be doing is applying their wealth to building state-of-the-art new energy infrastructure that is practical and cost-effective. For example, modern natural gas power plants employ combined cycle designs that harvest waste heat from the natural gas-fired turbine to produce steam to drive a second turbine. But new combined cycle designs replace the steam with helium, which harvests waste heat at much higher temperatures than steam can, which means less heat wasted to the atmosphere, greatly increasing efficiency. This advanced design can convert up to 80 percent of the embodied energy in natural gas fuel into electricity. For anyone who considers anthropogenic CO₂ a threat, this technology is a realistic and significant step in the right direction. Why not set efficiency standards and upgrade the fleet, instead of trying to destroy the entire natural gas infrastructure in a state of 40 million people?

For that matter, why aren't Californians at the forefront of both small modular and large next-generation nuclear reactor development? Why isn't there a nuclear power plant in California that not only generates emissions-free gigawatts of electricity, but reprocesses and utilizes the waste to produce still more electricity, rendering the eventual waste stream far less hazardous and harvesting far more electricity from each unit of fuel input?

When it comes to transportation, why hasn't California's legislature made a priority of widening and upgrading its roads and freeways to accommodate high-speed, self-driving vehicles? And why on earth did California's state legislature ban, starting in 2035, the sale of advanced hybrids? How can California's policymakers possibly view an all-electric vehicle, requiring a half-ton or more of battery payload, plus a steel chassis to support all the extra weight, to be an exclusive option?

Why wouldn't hybrid technologies, which use a battery one-tenth as heavy to harvest the energy otherwise wasted from braking and downhill momentum, be a permissible option? How can California's lawmakers begin to predict what new advances may arise in hybrid technology, wherein the emissions from new combustible fuels are almost negligible? Why not just set mileage and fuel standards instead of banning anything that uses combustion?

These are questions that should be front and center in Sacramento instead of self-congratulatory, uninformed bloviating over the need to streamline permitting for offshore wind farms and high-speed rail. California—and America—can set an example to the world, but only if it is an example the world is willing to follow.

*Edward Ring is a senior fellow with the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013. Ring is the author of *Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism* (2021) and *The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California* (2022). This article first appeared in the August 21, 2023 *City Journal*.*

THE GREAT CLIMATE CHANGE CON ISN'T RESONATING WITH NORMAL PEOPLE

'Eco-guilt is a first-world luxury'

BY KATY GRIMES

“Anthropogenic global warming is the biggest, most dangerous and ruinously expensive con trick in history.”

Remember when climate hysterics claimed “the science is settled?” That claim didn't weather well, but it also didn't stop the climate liars: “The scientific consensus that humans are altering the climate has passed 99.9%, according to research that strengthens the case for global action at the Cop26 summit in Glasgow,” the Guardian [reported](#) in 2021. The [Cornell University climate study](#) the Guardian cites in the article was “supported” (funded) by Alliance for Science. “Support for the Alliance for Science is provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.” But the hysterics just moved on from that lie to other climate lies.

A little over one year ago, California Governor Gavin Newsom [announced](#) his pompous plan for addressing “California's hotter, drier future:”

“Hotter and drier weather conditions spurred by climate change could reduce California's water supply by up to 10 percent by the year 2040. To replace and replenish what we will lose to thirstier soils, vegetation, and the atmosphere, Governor Gavin Newsom has announced California's latest actions to increase water supply and adapt to more extreme weather patterns caused by climate change.”

Think about that arrogant statement – as if California politicians are going to stop hot weather. But the joke was on the governor with record rainfall and snowfall in the winter of 2023... except that didn't stop him. Since then, we've been barraged with absurd radio advertisements warning us, “now that we face a hotter, dryer future...” and “let's make conservation a way of life,” providing helpful hints about saving water.

Enjoy the water-saving brilliance, brought to you by the [Drought.CA.gov](#) website:

- If it's raining, turn off your sprinklers
- Take 5-minute showers
- Fill bathtubs halfway or less
- Turn off water when brushing teeth or shaving
- Wash full loads of clothes and dishes
- Fix leaks
- Set mower blades to 3”
- Use a broom to clean outdoor areas
- Improve landscape irrigation

Taxpayers paid for this babble. With the state sending 50% of the water to the Pacific Ocean for environmental purposes, of the remaining 50%, 40% goes to agriculture, and 10% is urban use. Setting your mower blade to 3" isn't going to make a measurable amount of water conservation. And, as we heard this week, PG&E will be shutting off the power when it is windy. Never in California's history have energy providers shut off power when it was windy. This is a new policy, and is criminal – we are paying for that electricity. Who will be the first to sue over this?

According to the governor, “California’s Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future calls for investing in new sources of water supply, accelerating projects and modernizing how the state manages water through new technology.”

Refuting this drivel is not difficult.

One way is to read the [monthly reports](#) by E&E Legal, the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI), the Heartland Institute, Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), the International Climate Science Coalition (ICSC), and Truth in Energy and Climate, which just released another version of “Climate Fact Check,” for July.

“[Climate Fact Check: July 2023 Edition](#) highlights sensationalized stories about the climate, which is typical for the corporate media propaganda machine, although not rooted in reality.” “The media is calling July 2023 the ‘hottest month on record’ and even the ‘hottest month in the history of civilization.’ Keeping in mind that July is typically the warmest month of every year, NASA satellite data indicate that July 2023 was the warmest July in the satellite record. But that record only dates back to 1979 and there certainly were Julys before 1979.”

This is Very interesting:

Recalling that average global temperature is on the order of 58°F, use of the term “hottest” is obviously quite an exaggeration. Finally, the notion of “average global temperature” is not really meaningful in the first place. It has no physical reality, and its component satellite and surface station temperature measurements lack precision to a significant degree.

The group of actual scientists debunk recent reporting of the Washington Post’s claims of an “Era of Global Boiling”:

And this Fact Check on the Washington Post’s claim of the “hottest day in 125,000 years”:

Debunking the climate hyperbole is easy:

As for “emissions causing hotter oceans,” the Fact Check is delicious and easy – talk to a real meteorologist:

“No one knows why various parts of the oceans were so much warmer this year, but one factor can be ruled out – emissions. Not only does it remain unproven that emissions measurably warm the atmosphere, even if they could, the atmosphere can only warm the top one or two millimeters of the ocean, per meteorologist Joe Bastardi.”

And no, extreme heat is not killing more people. The scientists confirm that “it is well established that cold weather kills many more people than hot weather.”

In [an old interview](#) (2009) at the Spectator, James Delingpole talked to Professor Ian Plimer, the Australian geologist [who dispelled much of the nonsense](#):

“...geologists have always recognized that climate changes over time. Where we differ from a lot of people pushing Anthropogenic global warming is in our understanding of scale. They’re only interested in the last 150 years. Our time frame is 4,567 million years. So what they’re doing is the equivalent of trying to extrapolate the plot of Casablanca from one tiny bit of the love scene. And you can’t. It doesn’t work.”

“What Heaven And Earth sets out to do is restore a sense of scientific perspective to a debate which has been hijacked by ‘politicians, environmental activists and opportunists’. It points out, for example, that polar ice has been present on earth for less than 20 per cent of geological time; that extinctions of life are normal; that climate changes are cyclical and random; that the CO2 in the atmosphere — to which human activity contributes the tiniest fraction — is only 0.001 per cent of the total CO2 held in the oceans, surface rocks, air, soils and life; that CO2 is not a pollutant but a plant food; that the earth’s warmer periods — such as when the Romans grew grapes and citrus trees as far north as Hadrian’s Wall — were times of wealth and plenty.”

How did this common sense not get more traction? We can thank the media for that, and the global nonprofits funded by hateful billionaires.

Looking at the mind numbingly imbecilic headlines reminds us that the stupid people are in charge of everything right now – they are easier to control.

Plimer said “modern environmentalism is that it is driven by people who are ‘too wealthy’. ‘When I try explaining “global warming” to people in Iran or Turkey they have no idea what I’m talking about. Their life is about getting through to the next day, finding their next meal. Eco-guilt is a first-world luxury. It’s the new religion for urban populations which have lost their faith in Christianity. The IPCC report is their Bible. Al Gore and Lord Stern are their prophets.”

While nearly every poll shows that most people think claims of man-made climate change is BS, we can’t let them get away with this green hustle – but we may not have to push back very hard as a downturn in the economy will likely take care of it organically. As Plimer explained in 2009, “the global economic meltdown has changed all that. As countless opinion surveys have shown, the poorer people feel, the lower down their list of priorities ecological righteousness sinks. ‘It’s one of the few good things to come out of this recession,’ says Plimer. ‘People are starting to ask themselves: “Can we really afford this green legislation?””

Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol. This article first appeared in the August 31, 2023 California Globe.



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