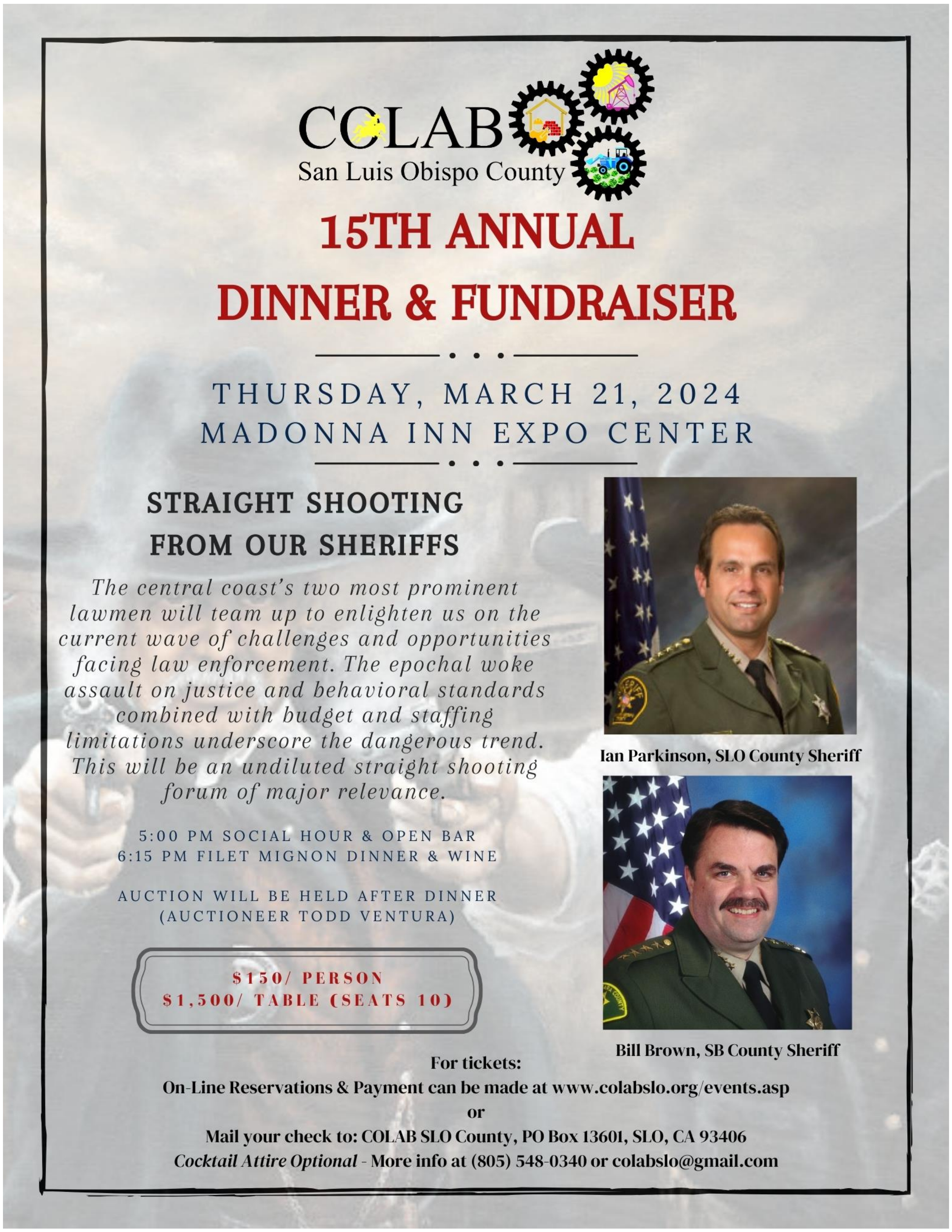
COLAB San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

WEEKLY UPDATE
MARCH 3 - 9, 2024



THIS WEEK
PAGE 4

NO BOS MEETING

OTHER AGENCIES DORMANT

LAST WEEK
PAGE 4

PENSION TRUST ENJOYING BULL MARKET

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SUPERVISOR DAWN ORTIZ-LEGG:
"EXTEND THE DIABLO OPERATING LICENSE FOR 20 YEARS"
ARNOLD & PESCHONG SUPPORT HER RESOLUTION

CANNABIS APPEAL FEE RAISED

CAL POLY HOTHOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPROVED FOR A NEW $200,000 - HOW MANY COMPANIES GREW AND STAYED IN SLO COUNTY?

COUNTY COST ALLOCATION PLAN INFORMATIVE
REVEALS OVERHEAD SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES

AUCTION OF SURPLUS COVID EQUIPMENT APPROVED
WHAT IF IT COMES BACK IN A MORE VIRULANT OR DEADLY FORM?

COUNTY HOMELESS SERVICES UNIT SUBORDINATED IN LARGE BUREAUCRACY

EXCELLENT REPORT ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF DIABLO AND OFFSHORE WIND

STATE LEGISLATIVE LOBBYIST REPORT
STATE BUDGET PROBLEMS, PROP 1

FY 2024-25 PROPOSED BUDGET UPDATE - $22 MILLION GAP
ONLY 3% OF THE ALL FUNDS $752.4 MILLION BUDGET
WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT OR WILL IT BE WORSE?

EXECUTIVE SESSION WITH COUNTY COUNSEL
EDGING TOWARD APPOINTMENT OF A CAO
SPRINGDALE KENNEL MESS/NO ACTION REPORTED

PLUMBING FIXTURE RETROFIT REQUIREMENTS AND WATER OFFSET REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW STRUCTURES IN LOS OSOS APPROVED

SUPERVISOR REPORTS AND REQUESTS
NOTHING EARTHSHAKING

EMERGENT ISSUES
SEE PAGE 21

CALIFORNIA SPENDS BILLIONS ON HOMELESSNESS YET THE CRISIS KEEPS GETTING WORSE

CALIFORNIA VOTERS WILL DECIDE ON NEWSOM'S MENTAL HEALTH OVERHAUL. HOW DID WE GET HERE?

CALIFORNIA'S IMPOSSIBLE WAR ON OIL AND GAS
State leaders are setting an example that the world - and Golden State residents - can't afford to follow

HOW TO DELIVER AFFORDABLE ENERGY AGAIN IN CALIFORNIA
California can set an inspiring example by embracing an all-of-the-above strategy to energy production

COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 34

OPEN BORDERS MEAN THE DISMANTLING OF THE UNITED STATES
The Biden administration and internationalist NGOs 'want to destroy the West'
BY KATY GRIMES

AMERICAN PARALYSIS AND DECLINE

Societies do not always collapse from a lack of wealth, invasion, or natural catastrophes. But they are so paralyzed by their fear that the road to salvation becomes too painful to even contemplate

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

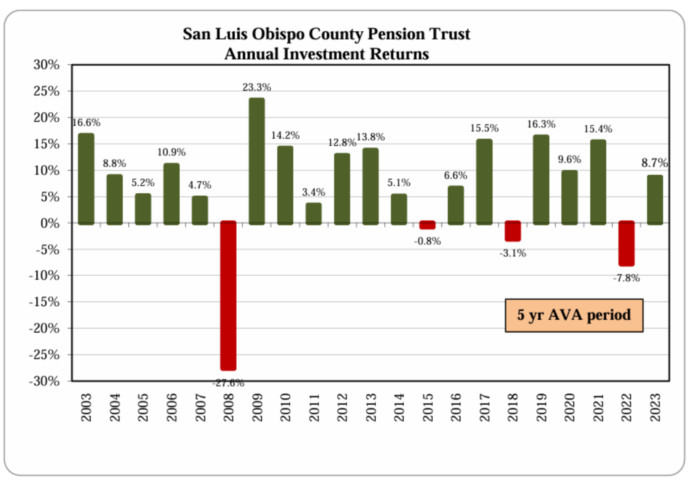
No Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 (Not Scheduled)

Other agencies (Not Scheduled)

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

SLO Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, January 26, 2024 (Completed)

Item 7 - Quarterly Investment Report for the 4th Quarter of 2023. The history of SLOCPT investment returns, gross of fees, is shown below.



Item 8 - Monthly Investment Report for January 2024. The January report is positive**.** It states in summary:

The attached report from Verus covers the preliminary investment returns of the SLOCPT portfolio and market commentary through the end of January.
February saw continued bullish momentum in the financial markets until the release of January's inflation data. The unexpected rise in inflation dampened hopes for potential interest rate cuts and triggered the largest daily loss in the S&P 500 over the past year. However, market sentiment swiftly shifted a few days later with the release of a weak retail sales report. Investors

interpreted this as a sign of a potential economic slowdown, prompting equities to rally to a new all-time high. The volatility stresses the market's sensitivity to economic data releases and highlights the importance of monitoring such indicators.

	1-month	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Fund (%) *(Gross)*	0.3	0.3	8.9	(8.0)	15.2	8.9	16.3
Policy Index (%)*	0.2	0.2	10.2	(9.7)	12.8	10	16.4

	January	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Market Value *(millions)*	$1,695	$1,691	$1,614	$1,775	$1,552	$1,446

* Policy index as of Nov. 2021 Strategic Asset Allocation Policy with 2024 Interim targets:

Public Mkt Equity-	20% Russell 3000, 17% MSCI ACWI ex-US
Public Mkt Debt-	4% Bloomberg/Barclays US Aggregate,
Risk Diversifying	8% Barclays 7-10yr Treasury, 7% Barclays 5-10yr US TIPS
Real Estate & Infrastructure-	14% NCREIF Index (inc. Infrastructure)
Private Equity-	12% actual private equity returns
Private Credit-	10% actual private credit returns
Liquidity-	8% 90-day T-Bills

Pending annual updates to interim targets.

Perhaps the County will be able to avoid rate increases in FY 2024-25.

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, February 27, 2024 (Completed)

Item 1 - Hearing to consider an ordinance amending a Planning and Building Cannabis Appeal Fee in the County Fee Schedule "B" for Fiscal Year 2024-25. The Board voted 3/2 to approve the increase, with Arnold and Peschong dissenting. As noted below, the processing of appeals costs the County considerably more than the fee covers. On this one Arnold and Peschong wish to support the general public.

Currently, **o**pponents to the siting of cannabis grows may file an appeal of a County permit approval for only $850. Similarly, a permit applicant who is denied may also file and appeal. The processing of these appeals costs the County thousands of dollars. Projected costs are detailed below:

	FY 2024-25 Projected Expense*	FY 2024-25 Fee Revenue**	General Fund Support
Planning and Building	$14,788	$4,000	$10,788
Total	$14,788	$4,000	$10,788

The Board had previously directed that the fee be raised to $2000. The staff has returned with the required ordinance amendment.

Planning and Building Cannabis Fees				
Fee Description	Current Fee	Proposed Fee	Fee Amount Increase	Percent Increase
Appeal (Cannabis) – Approval / Denial of a Cannabis-Related Land Use Permit, or Request for Review of an Environmental Determination (A30cn)	$850	$2,000	$1,150	135.3%

The County is generally losing money on the cannabis operation, as the very high permitting fees and taxes are not sufficient to cover the County's very high permit processing and inspection costs.

Item 7 - Request to approve a FY 2023-24 renewal agreement with the Cal Poly Corporation to support the Cal Poly - Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the SLO HotHouse in the amount of $200,000 from Fund Center (FC) 104 - Administrative Office to enhance economic development. The grant extension was approved unanimously, with the Board members expressing strong support, based on anecdotal data and their own experience with participant companies.

Background: The HotHouse is one of the County's economic development programs. It is operated by the Cal Poly Corporation, which is a multi-million dollar University captive service entity that provides support services to the University, such as food services, housing, bookstores, and parking management. Universities often get into the economic development business as an opportunity to apply research to practical applications, provide student experience, and benefit their host communities. The Stanford University Research Park is the bellwether historical example with its most famous offshoot founded by grad students Hewlett and Packard.

i. Scorecard:

During the six month period between July 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022, the SBDC counseled 415 clients and provided a total of 1,545 hours of counseling. In addition to the 1:1 business consulting hours provided, 2,747 hours of Student Engagement hours took place during the reporting period. Student hours are a collaboration between the SBDC and Cal Poly faculty. Faculty support SBDC clients by introducing them to student teams who work on specific projects for these clients in exchange for class credit. During this reporting period, 18 SBDC client companies participated in classes to work with students on Marketing/Sales projects, as well as General Startup Assistance.

We obtained the following 2022 results:	*7/1 to 12/31*	*1/1 to 12/31*
Business starts	13	22
Jobs created	17	178
Total Capital (Loans & Equity)	$16,533,295.90	$24,738,137.37

Each year the Hothouse reports its companies in the Incubator Program**.**

1. Startups Incubating in the SLO HotHouse:

As of June 30, 2023, there are 16 companies in the Incubator Program, including:

- *Abstract Security Stealth is a cybersecurity startup focused on developing advanced solutions to protect businesses and organizations from cyber threats.*
- *AcreCloud farm-management platform offers growers and contractors customized control over their operations, extensive auditing capabilities, and access to new products.*
- *AMS Pharma is dedicated to finding novel treatments for neurodevelopmental disorders. By repurposing standard medicines and strategizing new formulations, we can accelerate the development of medical treatments from idea to marketplace for children with different neurologic problems.*
- *Castle Innovations is bringing firearm safety into the 21st century with their innovative firearm safety device integrated with high speed biometric technology.*
- *DEMO is a blockchain marketplace for IP licensing, starting with music. We help music creators sell collaboration rights to their content.*
- *Farm to Table is part of the agricultural revolution aiming to transform the agriculture system by enabling local food independence. Utilizing the latest advancements in ag-tech, we*

will be significantly improving independent access to quality food and maximizing crop yields while reducing the environmental costs of food production in a meaningful way in our communities.

- *Intersect Fitness is a digital personal training platform. Utilizing artificial intelligence & wearable fitness technology to empower our coaches to bring one on one accountability, and next generation results to the world at an accessible and scalable price point.*
- *Little Place Labs is a software company that specializes in building advanced machine-learning solutions for deployment and execution on satellites and other space infrastructures.*
- *Novocuff is designing a minimally invasive, non-surgical device that will help prevent preterm birth.*
- *Quantum Energy is developing The TotalView Energy Platform and API - a comprehensive AI driven software tool for clean energy decision-makers.*
- *Ryde is a peer-to-peer travel marketplace that connects student drivers with student riders for long-distance travel.*

The County has funded the program each year for about 10 years. We wish someone would report accumulatively on the number of start-ups that have survived, how long they survived, and if they remained in SLO County.

If one of the start-ups does explode into a major success, it will have to move to Austin, Boise, or Tucson, because no one will allow the major factory to be built here, and there will be no housing for tens of thousands of employees. The question is: What are we really trying to accomplish?

Below: the new Tesla Factory in Austin

Item 10 - Submittal of a resolution adopting the Countywide Cost Allocation Plan for FY 2024-25. The updated version was approved unanimously on the consent calendar.

Background: This is a little understood process by which the County generates internal revenue for support departments.

Each year, the County prepares the Countywide Cost Allocation Plan (the Cost Plan) as required under Federal Office of Management and Budget Rules and Regulations 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards" to allow for reimbursement of indirect costs from State and Federal agencies.

The Cost Plan is an important document that allocates the costs of central servicing departments (e.g., Administrative Office, Auditor-Controller, Human Resources, Central Services, County Counsel, etc.) to the departments receiving the services. The Cost Plan also allocates building *and equipment use allowance that is based on the cost of the buildings and equipment and their useful lives.*

Auditor-Controller James Hamilton was very helpful in helping to interpret the table below, generously taking part of his weekend to share the following information.

The detailed breakout of Exhibit B you asked about is found in Cost Plan Exhibit A (full Cost Plan is attached).

Example: Board of Supervisors share of total overhead is $1,877,157

The individual components of that are seen in Exhibit A below (i.e. their share of building depreciation, County Counsel, HR, my office, etc., etc.).

Each allocation is based on 'rational' methodologies approved by the State Controller (SCO). For example, square feet occupied for depreciation, number of employees for cost of administering payroll, etc.

I think you know, this is all audited by the SCO and departments are permitted to include a share of this overhead in any Fed/State claims.

Feel free with any more questions. Jim

The table below is a sample exhibit for one department, the Board of Supervisors, which shows how the overhead is allocated. For example, of the County's total claimable building depreciation costs, the Board is assigned $94,834, based on its location and amount of space occupied.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 Actuals
For Use In Budget Year 2024-25

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COST ALLOCATION PLAN
2 CFR part 200

Date Printed: 12/29/2023

Exhibit A

Cost Exhibit

Department	Claimable Totals	100-Board of Supervisors	103-Short-Term Financing	106-Contributions to Other Agencies	109-Assessor	110-Clerk	119-Communication and Outreach	130-Waste Mgmt	131-Grand Jury
001-Building Depreciation	$2,485,545	$94,834	-	-	$228,026	$101,439	-	-	-
002-Equipment Depreciation	$782,941	$987	-	-	$64,125	$29,027	-	-	-
104-County Administrative Office	$645,730	$2,370	-	-	$13,186	$4,644	$231	$2,182	$644
111-County Counsel	$4,341,776	$787,500	-	-	$11,200	$141,126	-	-	$38,416
112-Human Resources	$5,370,665	$17,065	-	-	$98,453	$28,880	$2,625	-	-
113-Facilities Management	$5,141,474	$79,947	-	-	$223,457	$106,520	-	-	$11,244
114-Information Technology Department (ITD)	$14,473,210	$114,489	-	-	$450,877	$138,247	$4,296	$25,992	$34,382
116-Central Services	$4,596,862	$119,362	-	-	$21,028	$56,953	-	$4,354	$902
117-Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector	$5,153,466	$16,600	$844	$3,356	$82,844	$45,101	$2,261	$10,930	$5,669
118-Talent Development	$528,897	$2,718	-	-	$15,679	$4,599	$418	-	-
200-Maintenance Projects	$2,236,790	$2,698	-	-	$5,133	$4,645	-	-	-
Total Actual Costs	$45,757,356	$1,238,571	$844	$3,356	$1,214,007	$661,182	$9,831	$43,457	$91,257
Roll Forward Amounts	$10,039,674	$638,586	($1,211)	$1,077	$18,381	($96,600)	$3,399	$26,575	$32,423
Regular Adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
One-Time Adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Claimable Costs	$55,797,030	$1,877,157	($367)	$4,433	$1,232,388	$564,582	$13,230	$70,032	[illegible]

There is a similar analysis for very department. The reader can imagine how much more complicated this is for the large departments with multi-locations and many functions.

Table B, below, shows the totals for all the departments.

COUNTYWIDE OVERHEAD RATES
FOR 2024-2025 FISCAL YEAR

Fund Center	Department	Overhead	Expenditures	2023-2024 Overhead Rates
100	Board of Supervisors	1,877,157	2,091,479	89.75%
104	Administrative Office	484,542	5,315,028	9.12%
109	Assessor	1,232,388	11,371,666	10.84%
110	County Clerk Recorder	564,582	4,116,082	13.72%
111	County Counsel	350,576	5,272,215	6.65%
112	Personnel	817,019	9,112,734	8.97%
113	Facilities Management	849,485	9,473,108	8.97%
114	ITD	3,099,199	21,076,827	14.70%
116	Central Services	1,782,208	3,085,673	57.76%
117	Auditor-Controller, Treasurer, Tax Collector	1,123,203	9,444,745	11.89%
118	Talent Development	23,987	663,461	3.62%
119	Communication and Outreach	13,230	229,032	5.78%
130	Waste Management	70,032	1,359,192	5.15%
131	Grand Jury	123,680	92,310	133.98%
132	District Attorney	1,471,671	22,171,993	6.64%
134	Family Support	209,373	4,271,531	4.90%
135	Public Defender	377,865	8,117,285	4.66%
136	Sheriff-Coroner	7,593,928	96,226,253	7.89%
137	Animal Services	486,437	3,306,537	14.71%
138	Emergency Services	222,297	1,925,420	11.55%
139	Probation	2,362,279	26,635,065	8.87%
140	County Fire	1,338,892	28,447,939	4.71%
141	Agricultural Commissioner	571,863	7,338,263	7.79%
142	Planning Department	2,364,272	17,434,984	13.56%
160	Health Department	4,655,240	39,832,996	11.69%
166	Mental Health	7,383,398	93,902,150	7.86%
180	Department of Social Services	11,007,404	81,989,743	13.43%
184	LEMC	387,073	9,835,669	3.94%
186	Veterans' Services	135,563	1,099,279	12.33%
201	PW Special Services	109,239	2,722,423	4.01%
205	Groundwater Sustainability	40,734	1,131,197	3.60%
215	Farm Advisor	129,378	592,081	21.85%
222	Community Parks	515,462	5,567,281	9.26%
245	Roads	1,587,212	36,875,835	4.30%
266	Co-Wide Automation	449,490	79,645	564.37%
290	Community Development	88,901	696,894	12.76%
305	Parks	451,717	7,002,997	6.45%
330	Wildlife and Grazing	-394	879	-44.84%
331	Fish and Game	1,823	40,262	4.53%
335	Solid Waste Management	17,925	591,520	3.03%
351	Emergency Medical Services	9,841	319,741	3.08%
375	Drinking Driver Programs	20,411	1,135,952	1.80%
377	Library	860,134	12,101,241	7.11%
405	Department of Public Works	3,200,163	24,291,737	13.17%
407	Fleet	212,064	5,619,820	3.77%
408	Workers' Comp	915,917	5,387,801	17.00%
409	Liability Insurance ISF	318,973	4,569,422	6.98%
410	Unemployment Insurance	3,189	80,438	3.96%
411	Med Mal Insurance	29,892	838,635	3.56%
412	Dental Insurance	8,828	272,549	3.24%
425	Airport	498,042	7,931,418	6.28%
427	Golf Courses	214,390	4,086,993	5.25%
		62,662,174	647,175,420	

These numbers have not been approved by the State and are subject to change

Item 17 - Request to 1) adopt a resolution regarding donation of medical equipment and supplies related to the COVID-19 emergency response efforts and extend the delegation of authority to the County Health Officer to dispose of or donate COVID-19 equipment and supplies, and; 2) declare the attached list of COVID-19 pandemic related medical equipment and supplies as surplus, and authorize sale through public auction. The write-up states in part? The disposal of the equipment and material was approved unanimously on the consent calendar.

With the closing of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and the County Health Agency Department Operations Center ("CHADOC"), the County's Public Health Department (PHD) has continued to oversee the County's COVID 19 response. The PHD has identified pandemic related medical equipment and supplies that are no longer needed for the County's response efforts or that have expired.

Item	QTY
Abbott ID NOW Analyzer	2 each
ACS Oxygen Supply Hardware	1 pallet
Chairs, upholstered, non-folding	13 ea
Cigar Humidor	1 each
Evaporative Cooler, Large	5 each
Evaporative Cooler, Small	3 each
Floor Mat, foam, Interlocking	2 cases
Generator, Champion 8750	1 each
Generator, Predator 8750	1 each
Gloves, Nitrile, Medical	110 cases
Gloves, Nitrile, Non-Medical, Fish Scale, L	10 cases
Gloves, Nitrile, Non-Medical, S	84 cases
Insulated Shipping Containers	11 each
Nasal Canulas	18 cases
Nitrile Gloves, Non-Medical, Large	404 cases
Over-Bed Table	75 each
Oxygen Concentrators, Devilbis	33 each
Oxygen Concentrators, Eclipse 5	30 each
Oxygen Tubing	10 cases
Respirators, N95 1860s	30 cases
Scale, Postage	1 ea
Sink unit w/Water Heater	1 each
Transport Ventilators, Allied Healthcare	2 each
Two-Way Radios	30 each
Ventec Ventilator Consumables	2 pallets
Ventilator Stands, Ventec	10 each
Ventilators, Ventec	25 each
Vital Signs Monitor and Stand, 53NTO	4 each
Wooden Signage Boards	5 each

What did the stuff cost in the first place?

What is the estimated value now?

What if COVID comes back?

Did they smoke all the cigars?

Item 26 - Submittal of a resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) 1) for Fund Center 290 – Homeless and Affordable Housing services to delete 1.00 FTE Division Manager-Homeless Services and 2) for Fund Center 180 – Department of Social Services Administration to add 1.00 FTE Deputy Director-Social Services to improve operational efficiency and enhance coordination and program development. After some discussion, the reorg and new structure were approved unanimously. The CAO and Board members took pains to refute COLAB'S questions and argument that this move subordinates the program. The question of who will run the division day to day was never answered. We will see how this works out over time.

Background: The County appears to be diluting the mission of its Homeless Services unit by combining it with its existing Adult Services Division. The Board letter states in part:

To further enhance efforts in addressing homelessness, we recommend the appointment of a Deputy Director for Adult and Homeless Services. This position will play a crucial role in overseeing programs and services, providing leadership in program development, policy implementation, budget management, and coordination with partner agencies and stakeholders. Additionally, Adult services, which oversees In-Home Supportive Services, Adult Protective Services and Public Authority, often serves populations who either are homeless, or are at risk of homelessness. By aligning the strategic oversight of both programs, there will be more opportunity to identify areas of overlap, reduce duplication of services, identify funding opportunities, and build strategic partnerships across multiple areas to improve the network of services in the community. The recommended replacement of the Division Manager position with *a Deputy Director of Adult and Homeless Services, underscores our commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations and improving our organization's effectiveness in combating homelessness and serving the aging population of San Luis Obispo County.*

There are a number of problems here:

- **The County formed the consolidated Homeless Division to focus it recourses on the problem.**

- **It hired a strong competent project manager, Joe Dzvonik, who put together an excellent mult-year project plan with real schedules and accountability check points.**

- **Dzvonik was subsequently raided by Santa Barbara County. This could be a little payback by former SLO County CAO Wade Horton, who was hired as an Assistant CEO by Santa Barbara County after suddenly "resigning" last year.**

- **Now it is proposed that the Homeless Program be combined into the existing Adult Services Division of the Social Services Department under a new Deputy Department Head who will have multiple programs. See the Budget description of the Adult Services Division below.**

- **What executive at what rank will be fulltime on the Homeless Program?**

- **Who will be the new Joe Dzvonik?**

- **The Homeless Division should never have been assigned to Social Services, but should have been a free-standing developmental division reporting to the CAO.**

What happened to the priority?

Homeless Services Division

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Homeless Services Division is to reduce homelessness in San Luis Obispo County by partnering with the community and through the administration of programs and funding that provide affordable housing and sheltering options to the community, and services for our unhoused citizens.

SERVICE PROGRAMS

Homeless Services Division functions under the Social Services Department. Homeless Services Division has a total expenditure level of $14,182,842 and a total staffing level of 23.00 FTE to provide the following services:

Homeless Services and Affordable Housing Funds

These programs focus on promoting a communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness and assisting homeless individuals and families by quickly re-housing, minimizing trauma and dislocation, promoting utilization of mainstream programs and optimizing self-sufficiency.

Total Expenditures: $14,182,842
General Fund Support: $6,098,235
Total Staffing (FTE): 23.00

Adult Services

Adult Services includes two major programs: Adult Protective Services (APS) and In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), including Public Authority. APS provides services to elders and dependent adults who are unable to protect their own interests or to care for themselves. APS Social Workers investigate allegations of abuse or neglect, intervening when necessary, and provide community education and connection to resources. The IHSS Program assists with payment of personal and domestic services that enable blind, or disabled adults & children and elderly individuals, who have a Medi-Cal eligibility determination, to remain safely in their home. The Public Authority program works with IHSS care providers to complete background checks, enrollment processes and assistance with other caregiver related services. Total Expenditures: $15,195,098 General Fund Support: $4,130,068 Total Staffing (FTE): 80.50

To further enhance efforts in addressing homelessness, we recommend the appointment of a Deputy Director for Adult and Homeless Services. This position will play a crucial role in overseeing programs and services, providing leadership in program development, policy implementation, budget management, and coordination with partner agencies and stakeholders. Additionally, Adult services, which oversees In-Home Supportive Services, Adult Protective Services and Public Authority, often serves populations who either are homeless, or are at risk of homelessness. By aligning the strategic oversight of both programs, there will be more opportunity to identify areas of overlap, reduce duplication of services, identify funding opportunities, and build strategic partnerships across multiple areas to improve the network of services in the community. The recommended replacement of the Division Manager position with a Deputy Director of Adult and Homeless Services, underscores our commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations and improving our organization's effectiveness in combating homelessness and serving the aging population of San Luis Obispo County.

Item 32 - Request to receive and file the energy update report that includes updates on Diablo Canyon Power Plant and Offshore Wind, and provide direction as deemed necessary. After the presentation, substantial public comment (see below), discussion, and debate, Supervisor Ortiz-Legg surprised everyone with a motion for the County to support a 20-year extension of the Diablo Nuclear Plant operating license. Supervisor Gibson demonstrated his disapproval by holding his head in his hands. Of course Arnold and Peschong supported the motion. This is a very positive step, as the Plant will be necessary for decades. It is an example of how Supervisor Ortiz-Legg could be a major policy force for practicality on the Board.

She could take the lead on Budget review and help the Board break out of its superficial process, which is fossilized in staff dominated bureaucratic amber.

Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg

There was considerable public interest in the wind project. A group called REACT Alliance **(**Responsible Energy Adaptation for California's Transition) has formed to oppose the offshore wind projects. About 10 members spoke about the need for local input and participation on the project.

PRESERVING OUR CENTRAL COAST RESOURCES

We, as an Alliance, intend to provide information on proposed projects so the public can make informed decisions and advocate for the best solutions to our energy needs.

The REACT website evinces some sophistication, organizational skill, and financial ability.

As note below in the highlighted yellow clauses in the **Background** section COLAB raised some questions about the wording of the County's Legislative program in relation to offshore wind. There is a particular clause which favors offshore wind over retention of the Diablo Power Plant. Supervisor Arnold must have been wondering about the County's position, which was established a few years ago as a sort of benign effort to secure more energy and explore the impacts. She properly raised the question of changing the County's official position to one of vigilance and skepticism. This resulted in Supervisor Gibson forcefully opposing an effort to amend the Legislative program in this regard, and generally. Ultimately, this discussion spilled over into **Item 33,** below, which was an update on the State Budget and legislative session.

In the end, the board majority of Gibson, Ortiz-Legg, and Paulding rejected any effort to update the Platform in this regard.

REACT members may consider this refusal when they vote in County elections.

CAUTION

It should be noted that COLAB has not taken an overall position on offshore wind energy but did raise the alarm when industrialization of Avila Beach, Port San Luis, and Morrow Bay was being floated by the Feds and REACH. At this point it seems that this threat has been diminished for the moment and that heavy assembly of towers, attachment of blades, large crane work, and barging would be based in Long Beach. However, vigilance should be maintained.

With respect to the larger overall issue of the feasibility of offshore wind on floating platforms, COLAB has continually expressed dismay that neither the Board of Supervisors, the State Energy Commission, REACH , the CPUC, Supervisor Carbajal, nor the wind energy corporations themselves have provided estimates of what would be the actual cost of a kilowatt hour of electricity delivered to the grid. This should include both the private sector costs and the huge Federal and State subsidies. The wind corporations must know this. How could they responsibly bid on the leases without having their own proformas?

Before everyone gets excited about the green energy, environment, whales, and other details we need a clear analysis of this question to inform public policy. It is hoped that the County's consultant study of the matter, which is getting underway, will provide detailed short and long range proformas on this fundamental issue. After all, California already has some of the most exorbitant electric rates in the country.

Background: This was an excellent and informative report, which details the history and current status of the efforts to extend the both the license and the operation of the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant. It also details the history and current status of the proposed development of large scale wind-generated power off the San Luis Obispo County Coast. Further, it details the County's activities and posture with regard to the development of offshore wind power. The report is well prepared and worth a read at 159382 (ca.gov). Control click and wait, as it takes a bit of time to open. The extensive PowerPoint can be found at the link:
https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/159396

Key takeaways at this point include:

The Diablo Power Plant provides 9% of the State's electrical energy and will need to be on line for years.

The County's coastal communities, such as Morro Bay and Avila Beach, are not likely to be industrialized for the heavy construction, windmill assembly, and other marine activities. However, they could serve as maintenance bases once the windmills are in operation.

It will be many years, perhaps ten, before the first kilowatt of energy is ever generated and delivered to the grid.

The Feds and State are luring the locals with big grants for job training and development related to the project. Parenthetically (and not part of the report) is the issue of housing for the thousands of new workers who will be required.

The County has been heavily involved in various meetings and interactions with the State and Feds with regard to the project.

The County has, by its participation and various policies, incrementally and subtlety cast itself as a supporter. For example:

The County's policy work on OSW is further guided by the Board-adopted 2023 State Legislative/Regulatory Platform, which contains the following resolutions:

• Section 2F, page 13: Support Statewide OSW development programs and initiatives, as well as funding for Central Coast-specific OSW development, including studies aimed at infrastructure, workforce training and development, economic benefits, supply chain development, environmental analyses, permitting, and more. Support initiatives that improve coordination between local, state, and federal agencies as well as with other communities preparing for OSW development.

• Section 1.9, page 11: The County will work to ensure that Diablo Canyon Power Plant's continued operations do not interfere with any efforts to pursue alternative resources that could utilize the existing transmission infrastructure, such as potential large-scale OSW and long-duration storage installations. ***COLAB NOTE: They snuck this one by us!! One day Gibson will pull it out of his file and assert the utility powerlines must give preference to the wind power.***

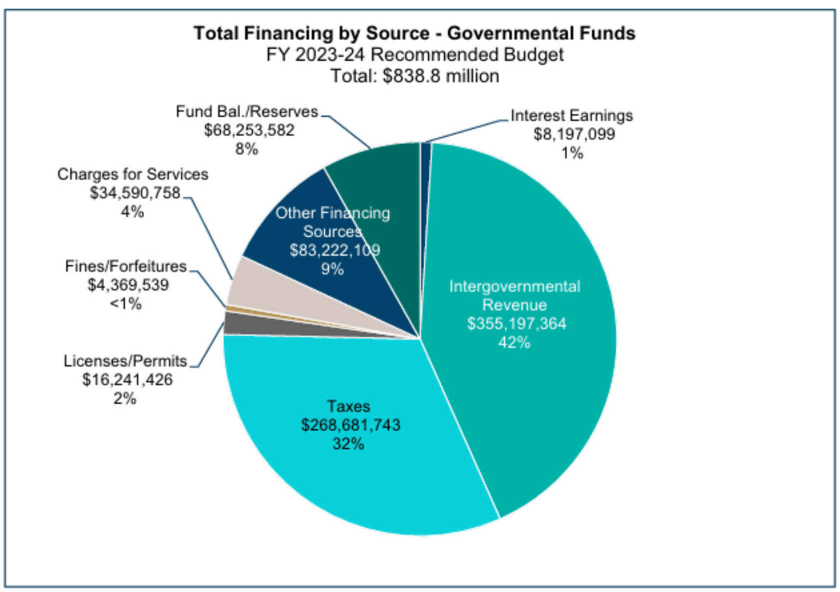
• Legislative Goal 7, page 6: Encourage, seek, and support legislation that facilitates orderly economic expansion and diversification and increases the opportunity for discretionary revenues and programmatic and financial flexibility for the County.

Below is a high-level timeline of key activities and events pertaining to the County's involvement in OSW:

• March 2, 2021: the Board approved the DCPP Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in partnership with REACH, Cal Poly, state and federal, and other partners representing tribal, environmental and labor interests that formed a coordination for a shared vision for the decommissioning of the DCPP and future uses at the industry site, "Parcel P", creating an opportunity for the Central Coast to become a hub for OSW and cleantech innovation;
• June 22, 2021: the Board authorized Resolution No. 2021-134, "Resolution recognizing the potential of renewable wind power generation for, and clean energy infrastructure, as long-term economic benefits to San Luis Obispo County";
• July 16, 2021: work under the DCPP MOU led to Chairperson Compton signing onto a multistakeholder letter to President Biden and Governor Newsom, "Declaration of bipartisan commitment to advance OSW planning and development on the Central Coast of California";
• May 17, 2022: Board of Supervisors unanimously approved funding for a waterfront infrastructure study;
• June 30, 2022: County was appropriated $1 million from State budget for Deep Water Port Feasibility Study for Offshore Wind;
• August 1, 2022: the Chairperson of the Board signed a letter submitted to BOEM commenting on the proposed sale notice for the OSW lease auction in fall 2022;

• September 8, 2022: Supervisors Arnold and Ortiz-Legg testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee hearing in Morro Bay about OSW;
• December 7, 2022: the Chairperson of the Board signed onto the multi stakeholder letter sent to the provisional winners of the Morro Bay Offshore Wind Energy Auction titled, "Community commitment to collaborate to advance OSW on the Central Coast of California";
• December 15, 2022: the Central Coast Emerging Industries Waterfront Siting and Infrastructure Study is published, with financial support from the County partnering with the City of Morro Bay, Santa Barbara, and REACH;
• June 20, 2023: Board of Supervisors unanimously approved executing documents necessary to transfer $1 million to County as designated in the State Budget Act of 2022 for an OSW port feasibility study;
• July 10, 2023: the County is appropriated $750,000 from the State Budget Act of 2023 for staffing resources to support OSW development; • September 12, 2023: the Board requested staff return to the Board with an energy update;
• November 1, 2023: the County hosted Congressman Carbajal, Congressman Panetta, Senator Laird, and Assemblymember Addis for a public information session on OSW development; and
• January 23, 2024: the Board authorized Resolution 2024-011, "Resolution approving the acceptance of state general fund grant funds for offshore wind resources project".

Item 33 - Request to receive an update on State Legislative activities by Paul Yoder of Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange. This was a verbal report. There was no agenda write-up or PowerPoint. The focus was on the State's looming $72 billion and rising deficit. No one knows yet how this might impact counties. SLO County receives about 36% of its revenue in the form of State payments to retail the Federal/State human safety net.



Note: This chart combines the State and Federal sources.

Legislative Program Friction

Initially, in **Item 32,** above (the Energy Report), Supervisor Arnold expressed concern about the content of the Legislative Program. She followed up with this item and expressed concern over the Board majority having watered down the County position on Proposition 13 as well as other matters. Supervisor Gibson expressed strong indignation and opposition to reconsider the Leg program and maintained that the County should stick with the adopted 2023 version. In the end, the Board voted 3/2 to reject opening up the program until at least May.

Somewhat surprisingly, Gibson stated that among the reasons for not opening up the Program is that the Board is hiring a new CAO. Gibson was particularly keen on having the new CAO on board before any work on the Program begins. This raises the specter that his preferred candidate could be an individual with more of a political bent than a professional management bent. We will see.

Item 34 - Request to 1) receive and file a presentation regarding the Fiscal Year 2024-25 County and State Budgets; and 2) provide direction to staff as necessary. The budget discussion was short and empty. The matter had been postponed until the end of the day in deference to some public hearings on zoning matters for which the public had been waiting. Five o'clock PM was approaching and the Board was tired. Only the Budget Director, one analyst, the Deputy Auditor Controller, and the Planning Director remained in the room. There were no members of the public. This suits the Board fine as they slide their budget under the door every year without any rigorous consideration.

Background: The staff is forecasting a $22.2 million impending revenue expenditure gap for the FY 2024-25 estimated operating Budget of $752.4 million. The $752.2 million is the estimate for what it will take to provide the current FY 2023-24 levels of services, which the staff refers to as a "status quo budget."
A Status Quo Budget generally assumes current year staffing and program levels and costs them out for the next year with no material changes (i.e. inflationary increase only, no increases or decreases to staffing levels, and no new or expanded services levels).

The November forecast, presented to the Board on November 7, 2023, for the FY 2024-25 Budget, forecasted a General Fund budget gap between $16-24 million due to the anticipated elimination of one-time funding as well as a slower rate of revenue growth. At the end of January, departmental budget submittals were due to the Administrative Office and a Status Quo budget gap has been calculated based on initial departmental budget submittals. At this point in the FY 2024-25 budgeting process, the County General Fund is faced with a gap of $22 million (the Status Quo Budget for the General Fund includes expenditures of $752 million and revenue of $730 million) as presented in the table below.

Table 1: FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget (Status Quo)

FY 2024-25 General Fund Budget	Forecast	Status Quo
Total Financing Sources (revenues)	$710,748,539	$730,229,770
Total Financing Uses (expenditures)	$730,886,105	$752,415,954
Total General Fund surplus/(gap)	**($20,137,566)**	**($22,186,184)**

A Status Quo Budget generally assumes current year staffing and program levels and costs them out for the next year with no material changes (i.e. inflationary increase only, no increases or decreases to staffing levels, and no new or expanded services levels).

Salaries and benefits growth constitute the most significant component of increased cost. The write-up states in part:

Status Quo includes additional salary and benefit costs only for increases that have already been negotiated and approved by the Board and are being paid for as of the current year. This *includes approximately $17 million in FY 2023-24 totaled scheduled employee contract increases (All Funds Budget) of which $11.1 million was estimated to impact the General Fund, as compared to the FY 2023 24 Adopted Budget.*

As we have noted in the past, this does not contain estimates for salary and benefit cost increases, which are currently under negotiation or which will be negotiated in the coming months or the new fiscal year (that impact the new fiscal year). This means that the estimate is deliberately low and that the gap will be larger than projected here.

	FY 23-24 Adopted Budget	FY 24-25 Forecast	FY 24-25 Status Quo
Financing Sources			
Non-Departmental Revenue	$274,603,870	$287,383,801	$286,358,712
Departmental Revenue	$374,526,742	$379,796,860	$402,038,345
FBA	$50,786,248	$42,508,752	$40,262,881
Subtotal	*$699,916,860*	*$709,689,413*	*$728,659,938*
Cancelled Reserves	$13,801,521	$1,059,126	$1,569,832
Total Financing Sources	**$713,718,381**	**$710,748,539**	**$730,229,770**
Financing Uses			
Salary and Benefits	$386,506,118	$396,289,499	$401,904,523
Non-Salary Expense	$283,095,438	$294,828,317	$309,897,562
5% Contingency	$33,499,242	$34,555,891	$35,590,104
Subtotal	$703,100,798	*$725,673,707*	*$747,392,189*
New Reserves	$10,617,583	$5,212,398	$5,023,765
Total Expenditures	**$713,718,381**	**$730,886,105**	**$752,415,954**
Available Funds/(Gap)	**$0**	**($20,137,566)**	**($22,186,184)**

One question is: Will the $401 million highlighted in yellow above actually hold? What is the actual figure forecast for June 30, 2024? This is an important omitted column, which if included, would illuminate the analysis.

In any case, and given the County's 9.5 % vacancy rate (funded but unfilled jobs), managing $22 million out of $402 million (only 2.5%) should not be all that difficult.

Moreover, $22 million out of $752 million "needed" expenditures is only three percent (.03 %) of the whole $752.4 million all funds budget. Only $11 million of this is within the General Fund. What is all the fuss about?

Fund the Sheriff, Fire, District Attorney, and pave the roads. As the Roman Emperor Diocletian said when asked how he had survived and retired: "Pay the soldiers and forget the rest."

State Budget Impacts: The Board letter points out that**:** *The County generally receives 38 percent of its General Fund revenue from the State. Therefore, we are and will continue to be mindful of the State's fiscal challenges and the consequential impacts on the County.*

The impending State deficit of $72 billion on a proposed $291 billion budget could be problematical for the County if State support to counties is reduced or even held even. Any reductions would exacerbate the County's current problem.

Overhead analysis: One bi-product of the Auditor Controller's development of the Cost Plan, (see **Item 10** above) is a table entitled "County Overhead Rates."

With respect to the overall budget, there might be an opportunity to capture some savings if the internal support services were monitored and rationed by the CAO's office. For example, instead of employees just calling up the County Counsel's Office (every time they are afraid to make a decision), they would have to get their Department Head's approval and the CAO's office approval before incurring hours of cost. Similarly, departmental staff could vacuum the offices, stock the bathrooms, dust, and empty waste baskets, rather than having the Central Services Department incur costs. Our soldiers and sailors perform these functions in the barracks and offices every day.

Supervisor Gibson stocking the 4th floor bathrooms and taking his turn to vacuum the Board Chambers would help save budget costs.

The Suits Help Out

COUNTYWIDE OVERHEAD RATES
FOR 2024-2025 FISCAL YEAR

Fund Center	Department	Overhead	Expenditures	2023-2024 Overhead Rates
100	Board of Supervisors	1,877,157	2,091,479	89.75%
104	Administrative Office	484,542	5,315,028	9.12%
109	Assessor	1,232,388	11,371,666	10.84%
110	County Clerk Recorder	564,582	4,116,082	13.72%
111	County Counsel	350,576	5,272,215	6.65%
112	Personnel	817,019	9,112,734	8.97%
113	Facilities Management	849,485	9,473,108	8.97%
114	ITD	3,099,199	21,076,827	14.70%
116	Central Services	1,782,208	3,085,673	57.76%
117	Auditor-Controller, Treasurer, Tax Collector	1,123,203	9,444,745	11.89%
118	Talent Development	23,987	663,461	3.62%
119	Communication and Outreach	13,230	229,032	5.78%
130	Waste Management	70,032	1,359,192	5.15%
131	Grand Jury	123,680	92,310	133.98%
132	District Attorney	1,471,671	22,171,993	6.64%
134	Family Support	209,373	4,271,531	4.90%
135	Public Defender	377,865	8,117,285	4.66%
136	Sheriff-Coroner	7,593,928	96,226,253	7.89%
137	Animal Services	486,437	3,306,537	14.71%
138	Emergency Services	222,297	1,925,420	11.55%
139	Probation	2,362,279	26,635,065	8.87%
140	County Fire	1,338,892	28,447,939	4.71%
141	Agricultural Commissioner	571,863	7,338,263	7.79%
142	Planning Department	2,364,272	17,434,984	13.56%
160	Health Department	4,655,240	39,832,996	11.69%
166	Mental Health	7,383,398	93,902,150	7.86%
180	Department of Social Services	11,007,404	81,989,743	13.43%
184	LEMC	387,073	9,835,669	3.94%
186	Veterans' Services	135,563	1,099,279	12.33%
201	PW Special Services	109,239	2,722,423	4.01%
205	Groundwater Sustainability	40,734	1,131,197	3.60%
215	Farm Advisor	129,378	592,081	21.85%
222	Community Parks	515,462	5,567,281	9.26%
245	Roads	1,587,212	36,875,835	4.30%
266	Co-Wide Automation	449,490	79,645	564.37%
290	Community Development	88,901	696,894	12.76%
305	Parks	451,717	7,002,997	6.45%
330	Wildlife and Grazing	-394	879	-44.84%
331	Fish and Game	1,823	40,262	4.53%
335	Solid Waste Management	17,925	591,520	3.03%
351	Emergency Medical Services	9,841	319,741	3.08%
375	Drinking Driver Programs	20,411	1,135,952	1.80%
377	Library	860,134	12,101,241	7.11%
405	Department of Public Works	3,200,163	24,291,737	13.17%
407	Fleet	212,064	5,619,820	3.77%
408	Workers' Comp	915,917	5,387,801	17.00%
409	Liability Insurance ISF	318,973	4,569,422	6.98%
410	Unemployment Insurance	3,189	80,438	3.96%
411	Med Mal Insurance	29,892	838,635	3.56%
412	Dental Insurance	8,828	272,549	3.24%
425	Airport	498,042	7,931,418	6.28%
427	Golf Courses	214,390	4,086,993	5.25%
		62,662,174	647,175,420	

These numbers have not been approved by the State and are subject to change

Item 35 - Conference with Legal Counsel-PERSONNEL (Government Code section 54957.) It is the intention of the Board to meet in closed session to: (18) Consider Public Employee Performance Evaluation for the Position of Acting County Administrative Officer; and (19) Consider Public Employee Appointment for the Position of County Administrative Officer. The County Counsel reported that they took no reportable action.

Why would they be listing performance evaluation of the Acting CAO each meeting?

Otherwise, they could be winnowing down the candidates for a permanent CAO and be getting close to an appointment. Note that SLO City Manager Derek Johnson was just appointed CEO of Marin County. He was probably not an applicant here.

Conference with Legal Counsel Current Litigation, County of San Luis Obispo, Case No. CODE2022-00041. The file contains scores of letters and pictures of pets and owners who support the expansion of the kennel. The County is between a rock and hard place on this one. The neighbors oppose a historical expansion, which the County approved. They complain that the dogs bark too much. It appears that the County violated its own ordinance when it permitted the expansion.

Item 36 - Request by the County of San Luis Obispo (LRP2022-00004) to amend 1) the Health and Sanitation Ordinance, Title 8 of the County Code, to update the plumbing retrofit fixture requirements for Los Osos; and 2) the Building and Construction Ordinance, Title 19 of the County Code, to update the plumbing fixture retrofit requirements and water offset requirements for new structures in Los Osos based on the new Los Osos Water Offset Study. Exempt from CEQA. The Board approved ordinance amendments requiring a variety of water saving devices in Los Osos. These would be required for any renovations or new construction. Showerheads, low flow toilets, sink aerators, and clothes washers will all have new restrictions. The installations will be subject to verification inspections by County personnel. There is controversy building in regard to the ordinance.

Here again, we see the preference by the left progressives and climatists for a world of restrictions as opposed to a world of abundance.

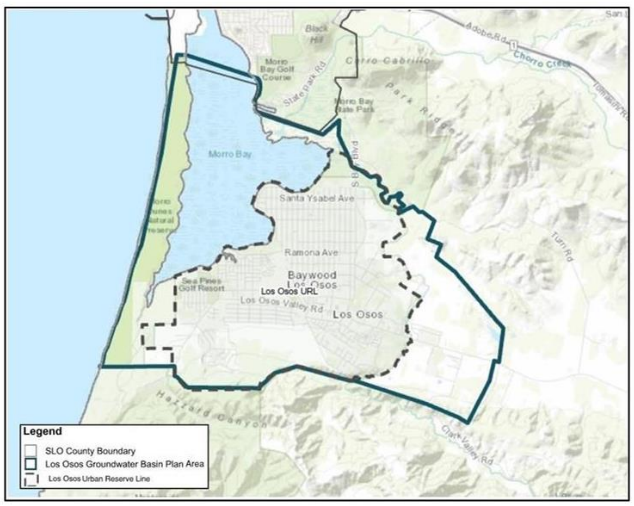


Figure A. Los Osos Groundwater Basin __**Plan Area**__ **~~Boundary, not to scale.~~**

Item 40 - Any Supervisor may ask a question for clarification, make an announcement, or report briefly on his or her activities. In addition, Supervisors may request staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter or may request that staff place a matter of business on a future agenda. Any request to place a matter of business for consideration on a future agenda requires the majority vote of the Board.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 – California spends billions on homelessness yet the crisis keeps getting worse -

BY Dan Walters February 28, 2024

IN SUMMARY

California has the nation's largest population of homeless people and has spent billions of dollars to lower the number yet it keeps growing.

California not only has the nation's largest number of homeless people, but one of its highest rates of homelessness vis-à-vis its overall population.

The last official count found more than 181,000 Californians without homes, nearly a third of the nation's homeless population. When new data is released later this year, the number will probably approach 200,000.

The numbers have continued to grow despite many billions of dollars in federal, state and local funds having been spent – $20 or so billion by the state alone over the last five years. As the problem worsens, it consistently ranks as one of Californians' most pressing public policy issues, polling has found.

How is it, one might ask, that so much money could be spent with so little, if any, progress?

One factor, certainly, is that the underlying causes of homelessness, such as sky-high housing costs, family breakups, mental illness and drug addiction have not abated.

Another, probably, is that here is no consensus on what programs would be most successful and officialdom has taken a scattergun approach, providing money to a bewildering array of often overlapping programs and services in hopes of finding approaches that work.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, who pledged 20 years ago to end homelessness in San Francisco when serving as the city's mayor, is touting a measure on the March 5 ballot that would authorize bonds to build facilities for treating the mentally ill and redirect some funds from a two-decade-old special mental health tax into new programs. He's also won legislative approval of "CARE courts" that could compel some mentally ill Californians into receiving treatment.

The multiplicity of programs to deal with homelessness cries out for some kind of independent appraisal of what's been spent and how effective the spending has been.

We may get such an overview soon because the Legislature has approved a request from Republicans for the state auditor to delve into what's been spent.

"Homelessness is the most urgent issue facing California," said state Sen. Roger Niello of Roseville, one of those making the request. "Given the crisis has only worsened, we need to know what the money has accomplished and what programs have been effective in moving people to permanent housing."

One area the state auditor should examine is what could be termed "bang-for-the-buck" – the startlingly expensive costs of providing even the most basic services to homeless Californians.

Sacramento, like other large California cities, has a large and growing homeless population and a new report from the city auditor is indicative of that aspect of the homeless crisis.

Auditor Farishta Ahrary said the city, which faces a $66 million budget deficit, spent $57 million on homelessness during the 2022-23 fiscal year, $34 million of it on maintaining about 1,300 beds of temporary shelter, or enough to house about a third of the city's homeless people. Overall that's about $26,000 per bed or $2,000-plus per month, which would equal the rent on a mid-range apartment.

Three contracts for shelters between the city and the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency amounting to more than $10 million stand out. Two 100-bed facilities cost the city almost $7 million – well over $100 per bed per day – while the third, $3.3 million for a 24-bed shelter for young people, cost the city $373 per day for each bed.

Sacramento is not alone in paying a lot of money for rudimentary shelters, and costs of that magnitude indicate that California would have to spend much more than the current levels to put roofs over the heads of its homeless people.

Meanwhile, Newsom is proposing to pare back homelessness spending because the state faces **a multibillion-dollar budget deficit.**

Item 2 - California voters will decide on Newsom's mental health overhaul. How did we get here? By Jocelyn Wiener February 21, 2024

Illustration by Miguel Gutierrez Jr., CalMatters

IN SUMMARY

Gov. Gavin Newsom's Proposition 1 is the latest milestone in California's long struggle to address mental illness. It would allocate new funding for housing and treatment facilities, aiming to address a crisis that plays out on city streets.

Fallout from our state's long history of breaking promises to people with serious mental illness is everywhere.

It can be found under our overpasses and in our tent encampments, but also inside our jails and prisons, our emergency rooms, our schools, our homes.

It flashes across our public opinion polls, which repeatedly list mental health as a top concern.

Increasingly, it makes its way into our political discourse. Referencing "our broken system," Gov. Gavin Newsom in recent years has rolled out mental health policies with dizzying speed.

Now he's promoting Proposition 1, a two-pronged March ballot measure that would fund a $6.4 billion bond for treatment beds and permanent supportive housing, while also requiring counties to spend more of their existing mental health funds on people who are chronically homeless.

The measure makes promises of its own.

"These reforms, and this new investment in behavioral health housing, will help California make good on promises made decades ago," Newsom has said.

What are the promises that California has made to people with mental illness over the years? And why are so many people still suffering?

Here's a brief timeline of mental health policies in our state—of promises made and promises broken—during the past 75 years.

1950-60s1970-80s1990s2000s2010s2020s

1950s & 1960s: An era of institutionalization

In the 1950s, it is relatively easy to force people into state mental hospitals, many of which have horrific conditions. The number of patients peaks in the late-1950s, at approximately 37,000. During that time, the state starts shifting control over mental health services to counties, embarking on the process of deinstitutionalization. This process accelerates in the late 1960s with the passage of the landmark Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, a law designed to protect the civil rights of people with mental illnesses.

1954: The federal Food & Drug Administration approves Chlorpromazine (Thorazine), the first antipsychotic drug, to treat people with serious mental illnesses.

1957: The California Legislature increases funding for community mental health under [the Short-Doyle Act], aiming to treat more people in their communities instead of in state hospitals.

Archival photograph of the Atascadero State Hospital in San Luis Obispo County. Date unknown. Photo via the California State Library

1963: President John Fitzgerald Kennedy signs the Community Mental Health Act, promising federal leadership to build and staff a network of community mental health centers. Less than a month later, he is assassinated. Many of the clinics are never built.

1965: Congress creates Medicare and Medicaid, allowing people with mental illnesses to receive treatment in their communities.

1967: Then-Gov. Ronald Reagan signs the Lanterman-Petris-Short law limiting involuntary detention of all but the most gravely disabled people with mental illness and providing them with legal protections.

1970s & 1980s: California tax revolt leads to austerity

As state mental hospitals close in the 1970s, many people with serious mental illnesses are moved into for-profit nursing homes and board and care homes. Their numbers on the streets and inside jails and prisons begin to rise. The 1980s sees significant funding cuts for mental health services at both the state and federal levels.

1978: The Community Residential Treatment Systems Act seeks to create unlocked, noninstitutional alternatives for people with mental illness throughout California.

The same year, voters pass Proposition 13, capping property taxes and reducing the amount of money available to counties for a variety of services, including mental health.

Paul Gann, left, and Howard Jarvis hold up their hands as their co-authored initiative Proposition 13 takes a commanding lead in the California primary, in Los Angeles, June 7, 1978. Photo by AP Photo

1980: President Jimmy Carter, who a few years earlier created a Presidential Commission on Mental Health at the urging of his wife Rosalynn, signs the Mental Health Systems Act to fund the community mental health centers envisioned by President Kennedy.

1981: President Ronald Reagan signs the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, repealing most of Carter's Mental Health Systems Act and kicking responsibility for people with serious mental illness back to the states.

1990s: Local control of mental health services

The decade sees funding and responsibility for mental health services shift from the state to counties. California passes a law to hold health plans accountable for providing adequate mental health treatment.

1991: The state Legislature passes "realignment" — moving funding and responsibility for many mental health services from the state to counties.

1995: The state implements Medi-Cal Mental Health Managed Care, making counties responsible for providing many Medicaid mental health services.

1999: California passes a state parity law, requiring private health plans to provide equal coverage for serious mental illness and physical health.

The same year, the Homeless Mentally Ill Act — a pilot program to help homeless people with serious mental illness and an important precursor to the Mental Health Services Act — rolls out in three counties.

2000s: New resources for mental health care

Optimism about the state's ability to finally address the needs of people with mental illness surges with the passage of the landmark Mental Health Services Act. But the Great Recession in the later part of the decade threatens some of that progress.

2002: The Legislature passes Laura's Law. Named for a young woman killed by a man who refused psychiatric care, the law allows — but does not require — counties to build court-ordered treatment programs.

2004: California voters approve the Mental Health Services Act. The 1% tax on people with incomes above $1 million provides a new source of revenue to bolster county mental health systems.

2008: A federal parity law, the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, requires health plans that offer coverage for mental health issues and substance use disorders to provide comparable benefits to those offered for medical and surgical treatments.

2010s: Homelessness focuses attention

The numbers of people with serious mental illness experiencing homelessness continue to increase. Jails and prisons are now the country's largest mental health providers, and a backlog of incarcerated people deemed incompetent to stand trial draws increasing scrutiny. The numbers of children and adolescents landing in hospitals in mental health crises begins to rise.

2010: The Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) requires insurers to provide mental health as an essential benefit.

2011: The Great Recession triggers significant budget cuts, pushing some people out of the public mental health system. A second movement or 'realignment' of mental health and substance use disorder services passes even more funding and responsibility from the state to the counties.


Skid Row in downtown Los Angeles on June 20, 2021. Photo by Teun Voeten, Sipa USA via Reuters

2012: California eliminates its Department of Mental Health and distributes its responsibilities among other state departments.

2013: The Mental Health Wellness Act injects about $143 million into increasing the capacity of the state's mental health crisis response system.

2018: California voters pass a ballot measure called No Place Like Home to build and rehabilitate supportive housing for people with mental illness. The measure authorizes the use of Mental Health Services Act funds to pay for $2 billion in bonds.

That same year, Newsom is elected governor and vows to make mental health a major focus of his administration.

2020s: Newsom's mental health agenda

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sheer number of people with mental illness on the streets, along with the fentanyl epidemic and a growing mental health crisis among children and teenagers, leads to increased public interest in mental health. The Newsom administration makes unprecedented investments and rolls out a steady stream of major policy changes. Critics decry some of these changes as moving the state toward more involuntary treatment.

2020: California passes a "groundbreaking" new state parity law, greatly expanding upon its earlier law and making it a national leader in requiring commercial health plans to provide mental health services.

2021: The Newsom administration allocates $4.6 billion in one-time funds for a Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative.

2022: The administration creates Community Assistance, Recovery, and Empowerment (CARE) Courts, new court systems to address the needs of people with serious mental illness that have some echoes of Laura's Law. This time, county participation is not optional.

That same year, a massive statewide effort called California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) begins rolling out, promising to expand and streamline access to mental health care for people insured by Medi-Cal, the public insurance program for low-income Californians.

Gov. Gavin Newsom speaks about mental health crisis before signing off on two major pieces of legislation to transform the state's mental health system and to address the state's worsening homelessness crisis in Los Angeles, on Oct. 12, 2023. Photo by Damian Dovarganes, AP Photo

2023: Newsom signs a law that amends the definition of "grave disability" that was originally laid out in the landmark 1967 law limiting involuntary confinement in the state. The amendment makes it easier to conserve people with serious mental illness—stripping them of their rights and entrusting their care to public guardians.

2024: Proposition 1 comes before the voters. If it passes, it will bring in billions of new funding for permanent supportive housing and treatment beds, and will place new parameters on how Mental Health Services Act funds are used.

This timeline was reported with the help of dozens of news articles and government and academic reports, as well as interviews and historical information provided by a variety of individuals, including Steve Fields, Adrienne Shilton, Michelle Cabrera, Corey Hashida, Stacie Hiramoto, Randall Hagar, Diane Van Maren, Chad Costello and Alex Barnard's 2023 book "Conservatorship: Inside California's System of Coercion and Care for Mental Illness"

Jocelyn Wiener writes about health and mental health for CalMatters, exploring the intersection between government policies and people's lives. She has worked as a reporter in her native California for close to two decades. Her work has appeared in The Atlantic, The Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor, Kaiser Health News, the San Francisco Chronicle and many other state and national publications.

After graduating from Stanford University, she received a Fulbright Scholarship to spend a year and a half working with young people living on the streets of El Salvador. She earned a master's degree at Columbia University's School of Journalism, and reported on poverty and homelessness for The Sacramento Bee. She has worked as a freelance journalist in Central and South America and India, as well as in California.

ITEM 3 - California's Impossible War On Oil And Gas By Edward Ring February 27, 2024

State leaders are setting an example that the world—and Golden State residents—can't afford to follow.

Determined to save the world from climate change, California has nearly shut down its oil and gas industry, though the Golden State currently gets 50 percent of its total energy from oil and another 34 percent from gas. The state's most recent move was a decision by California's Geologic Energy Management Division to deny new hydraulic fracturing permits on oil and gas wells.

The assault on oil and gas has been unrelenting. In September 2023, California attorney general Rob Bonta sued Exxon Mobil, Shell, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, and BP for allegedly causing climate change-related damages and deceiving the public. A year before that, in September 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom signed legislation to ban new oil and gas wells within 3,200 feet of any occupied structure—a restriction so likely to kill the industry that more than 623,000 registered voters have endorsed a referendum to repeal it this November.

The state government in Sacramento seems determined to be in the vanguard of an international movement to achieve the goals announced last December at the COP28 Climate Summit in Dubai. As part of a quest to achieve global "net zero" carbon emissions by 2050, countries committed to tripling their nuclear-energy output, with the presumption that renewables—primarily wind and solar—would make up whatever was left over after the demise of oil, gas, and coal.

A careful examination of global energy and population trends strongly suggests that this is a delusion. The most authoritative source on global energy production is the *Statistical Review of World Energy*, published annually. In the 2023 edition, total global energy inputs for the previous year amounted to 604 exajoules. Based on current data on population and energy use, that equates to 288 gigajoules per capita in the United States and a mere 67 gigajoules per capita in the rest of the world. By 2050—the target date for achieving global "net zero"—total global population will likely level off at about 10 billion. If so, for every person in the world to have access to, say, 100 gigajoules, total global energy production will need to expand to 1,000 exajoules, an increase of 66 percent. Meantime, if all goes according to plan, coal, oil, and gas—

which, according to the *Statistical Review*, provided 82 percent of those 604 exajoules of energy in 2022—will be completely phased out, providing no energy by 2050.

This is not possible. To begin with, the 82 percent figure is misleading, because most official sources, including the *Statistical Review* and the U.S. Energy Information Administration, inflate the reported energy inputs of "non-thermal" energy (that is, all energy sources except for the "combustibles"—coal, oil, gas, and biofuel), ostensibly to show how much of the less-efficient fossil fuel is already being displaced. In terms of actual electricity that these sources deliver to the grid: in 2022, 15.6 exajoules (EJ) came from hydroelectric power, 9.6 EJ from nuclear, 7.6 EJ from wind, 4.8 EJ from solar, and 2.8 EJ from biomass, plus another 4.3 EJ from biofuel (which already consumes an estimated 450,000 square miles of land, while displacing less than 2 percent of global transportation fuel demand). Altogether, "non-thermal renewables" (including nuclear) delivered only 44.7 EJ of power in 2022. We've got 27 years to boost that to 1,000 EJ.

And 1,000 EJ represents the bare minimum to which global energy production must aspire. For Americans to reduce their per capita energy consumption to 100 gigajoules from the current 288 would require extraordinary improvements in energy efficiency. Can electric vehicles, heat pumps, and other innovations increase efficiency that much? Because that's what proponents of net zero and electrification of the economy must accomplish. Otherwise, 1,000 EJ will not be nearly enough for humanity.

Where will this energy come from? Tripling nuclear power would increase the non-fossil-fuel total to 64 EJ. Shall we double hydroelectric capacity, along with biomass and biofuel? That would get us to 87 EJ, though few would find it desirable to dam every remaining stretch of river and allocate nearly 1 million square miles of rainforest to growing cane ethanol and palm oil diesel. And this brings us to wind and solar: under this scenario, they would have to expand their output from 12.4 EJs to an almost unthinkable 913 EJs—an increase of 74 times.

It isn't easy to summarize the challenges posed by massively increasing solar and wind energy. The uptick in mining; the land consumed; the expansion of transmission lines; the necessity for a staggering quantity of electricity-storage assets to balance these intermittent sources; the vulnerability of wind and solar farms to weather events, including deep freezes, tornadoes, and hail; and the stupefying task of doing it all over again every 20 to 30 years, as the wind turbines, photovoltaic panels, and storage batteries reach the end of their useful lives—all this suggests that procuring more than 90 percent of global energy from wind and solar is a fool's errand.

California's climate warriors may succeed in their quest to eliminate fossil fuel in the state, but it will come at a grievous cost to their fellow residents, and it's an example that the world cannot possibly emulate. Geothermal energy may offset some of this. Perhaps nuclear capacity could more than triple. But the path for California and the world is to utilize coal, oil, and gas in as clean and sustainable a manner as possible. "Alternative energy" is not a viable alternative.

This article originally appeared in City Journal.

Edward Ring is the director of water and energy policy for 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).

Item 4 - Ringside: How to Deliver Affordable Energy Again in California

California can set an inspiring example by embracing an all-of-the-above strategy to energy production By Edward Ring, February 29, 2024

Californians pay some of the highest prices for energy in the United States. Gasoline last year averaged $4.89 per gallon, and diesel fuel $5.07 per gallon, both the highest in the country. Electricity rates had California 45th in the nation in 2023 at $0.27 per kilowatt-hour, the worst of every major state with the sole exception of Massachusetts, which edged California out for the 46th spot at $0.28 per kilowatt-hour. Only in the price of natural gas was California's performance not the worst, insofar as California's prices were the 6th worst in the nation at $19.63 per thousand cubic feet, with the only major state that with higher prices being Florida at $25.37 per thousand cubic feet.

Energy is already punitively expensive in California, but it's likely to get worse. Achieving "net zero" emissions requires mass conversion to renewable electricity, and that process has barely begun. According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, in 2021 (the most recent year for which we have data), Californians consumed 6.9 quadrillion BTUs of energy, yet in that same year, according to the California Energy Commission, the state only produced 0.7 quadrillion BTUs of electricity.

Isn't the goal "net zero"? And to do that, don't we have to electrify every sector of our economy? We're only 10 percent of the way.

Now to be fair – don't wander yet, this is important – electricity can deliver energy services more efficiently than combustion. "Non-thermal electricity," delivered from solar panels into batteries and then into EVs or heat pumps, for example, may allow that total power requirement to drop significantly. Let's assume that if we electrify everything, the improvements in efficiency will mean we can cut it in half and still have enough energy. That's ambitious but plausible, but it still means our electricity production today is only at 20 percent of where it's going to need to be. We will still need to produce 3.5 quadrillion BTUs per year, which in electrical terms is 115 gigawatt-years (about 1.0 million gigawatt- hours). In 2021 we generated 22.2 gigawatt-years (that's 194,127 gigawatt-hours). As for our favored renewables, in 2021 solar contributed 33,260 gigawatt-hours, and wind contributed 15,173 gigawatt-hours.

If all these numbers are numbing, have another cup of coffee. They are the basic parameters that govern California's path to net zero. They are immutable. They matter. To summarize the previous paragraph: The electricity produced by utility scale solar and wind energy in California in 2021 amounted to 4.8 percent of how much electricity the state is going to need if it intends to fulfill its goal of net zero. It falls short by more than 20X. And that's probably a best case estimate.

To be sure, other acceptable energy solutions may help. Geothermal energy in 2021 added 11,116 gigawatt-hours, less than but comparable to wind. Biomass added 5,381 gigawatt-hours, and small hydro, which remains off the forbidden list at least for now, added another 2,531 gigawatt-hours. But that's not much, and expansion potential for those solutions are limited.

Fully 65 percent of California's electricity generated in 2021 came from the bad guys – natural gas 50.2 percent, nuclear 8.5 percent, and "large hydro" 6.2 percent.

So here is the question: Can Californians rely primarily on wind turbines, photovoltaics, and batteries to generate more than five times as much electricity as they did in 2021, convert their entire transportation sector to EVs, their entire residential sector to heat pumps, induction cooktops, and electric water heaters, and work similar massive miracles to convert their commercial and industrial sectors – possibly relying on electrolyzed hydrogen (which is less efficient to generate, meaning more capacity would be required) – and keep their prices for energy to the retail and wholesale consumer competitive with the rest of America, much less the rest of the world?

The answer to that question ought to be obvious. No. California's state Legislature, backed by every renewables special interest in the world, is embarking on an economic experiment on the backs of California's struggling households and beleaguered businesses, and it is not going to end well. Compromise is urgently required.

Here are ten policy suggestions:

1 – Require minimum 50 percent domestic content for all energy, from gasoline to photovoltaic panels to batteries. That might stimulate a more realistic assessment of what is economically and environmentally sustainable.

2 – Revise Newsom's executive order mandating pure EV sales of new cars by 2035 to include advanced hybrids. This will allow electric drivetrains to be paired with innovative new ultra efficient, ultra-clean combustion engines, fueled with green or blue hydrogen fuel, natural gas, or gasoline. There are simply too many promising new automotive technologies to bet everything on pure EVs.

3 – Reverse existing incentives to encourage at least two types of energy to be deliverable to new residential or commercial buildings. This will improve resiliency in the face of shortages or natural disasters. It will also force competition between energy providers, lowering prices.

4 – Declare an end to the moratorium on nuclear power.

5 – Repeal CO_2 emissions reporting requirements on large corporations. Under the new law, they are required to source this information from all their vendors including small businesses. It places a massive burden on all businesses for no purpose other than to produce reports. This information is not essential to formulating sound energy policy.

6 – Require the state legislature to review economic impact reports, environmental impact reports, and carbon lifecycle analysis from multiple independent sources before mandating any new energy policy.

7 – End the regulatory push to eliminate natural gas hookups, abolish VMT penalties on home builders, and make solar roofs and other "renewable" features optional on new home construction.

8 – Retrofit to the highest modern standards and technologies instead of closing California's natural gas fueled generating plants.

9 – Increase safe, responsible drilling for oil and gas in-state.

10 – Recognize that offshore wind development is an environmental catastrophe and an economic drain, and cancel all public sector support for these projects. Redirect savings into researching potential breakthrough energy technologies.

An inherent handicap towards advocating a comprehensive new energy strategy in California is the fact that energy sectors compete with each other, as they should. The EV lobby wants to eliminate gasoline. The PV and wind lobby wants to keep natural gas around for their peaker plants, that is, until the battery lobby ramps up storage capacity, wherein they'll want to eliminate natural gas. Most of these energy interests are either indifferent to or happy to reinforce the disparaging stereotypes surrounding nuclear and "large hydro." And so it goes.

This innate competitive drive makes it challenging for California's energy industry to unite behind a comprehensive policy agenda, but it shouldn't prevent political leadership from designing an energy strategy that pushes diverse energy solutions, and the industries that provide them, into healthy competition. That's how capitalism – as opposed to crony capitalism and monopoly capitalism – is supposed to work. The old truism is nonetheless true, when companies have to compete, the consumer wins.

California can set an inspiring example by embracing an all-of-the-above strategy to energy production. This would mean continued reliance on oil, natural gas, and nuclear power, while incorporating the highest standards possible to reduce pollution and improve efficiency. And while it would still provide for ongoing investment in renewables, it would be at a pace that spares the consumer having to pay locked-in rates on energy solutions that quickly become overpriced and obsolete.

Edward Ring is the director of water and energy policy for the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. The California Policy Center is an educational non-profit focused on public policies that aim to improve California's democracy and economy. He is also a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. Ring is the author of two books: "Fixing California - Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism" (2021), and "The Abundance Choice - Our Fight for More Water in California" (2022).

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

OPEN BORDERS MEAN THE DISMANTLING OF THE UNITED STATES

The Biden administration and internationalist NGOs 'want to destroy the West'

BY KATY GRIMES

“Open borders mean equal opportunity for dismantling the United States.” That statement was written in 2006 in a Newsmax article exposé about George Soros – nearly 20 years ago. Today the United States and its border states are under siege, facilitated by our own government, which apparently learned from Soros, “Essential to an open society is destruction of the nation-state authority, family structure, and religious beliefs, thus rendering national culture, heritage, and ethos meaningless.”

The Soros open-society, open-borders advocates’ concept calls for the United States be removed as a superpower and that the American people be subjected to the will and wants of all the world’s people. This is why for two decades, when asked I have said that the end goal is to break up the United States of America, turning our land mass into nothing more that provinces or small individual countries, rending the U.S. toothless.

“A current tool of deconstruction is the immigration chaos caused by 20 million illegal aliens residing in the United States.”

Again, that statement is from 2006, yet is not only still being used today, our own President and his administration have taken up the mantel and are facilitating our own deconstruction.

Why?

“Open-society advocates realize that open borders can only mean a devaluation of citizenship, of voting, of patriotism, and love of country. Open borders mean equal opportunity for dismantling the United States.”

Is Soros now funding the Biden Administration? (asked somewhat sarcastically)…

Soros used organizations funded by his Open Society, including Democracy Alliance, Human Rights Watch, the Center for American Progress, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), and the New Democrat Network (NDN).

How this works

“In 2006, the Open Society Institute contributed to the U.S. Justice Fund, which, in turn, awarded a grant to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, San Francisco office, to defend non-citizens in criminal and immigration matters and to combat the federal government’s ‘inappropriate’ use of local jails for detention of non-citizens.

Another grant went to an author to write articles on alleged immigration enforcement excesses for magazines and newspapers, thus attempting to sway public opinion in favor of illegal aliens and open borders.”

The Biden Administration pivoted to religious NGOs (non-governmental organizations), and “pays the NGOs billions of taxpayer dollars through numerous federal departments—including Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, State, and Justice—for this migration weaponization used against America’s interests,” Lora Ries of Heritage Foundation’s the Daily Signal reported recently.

A new investigation by Mike Howell, director of Heritage’s Oversight Project, “recently uncovered that Catholic charities and other non-government organizations have been working with the Biden administration to help move migrants across the country.”

Heritage found that NGOs, like Catholic Charities, “The biggest thing they do is liaise travel:” “What we’re seeing, much like the left’s march through all of the institutions, whether it’s the military, our culture, our schools, et cetera, the same thing has happened in a lot of the charitable arms of churches. Catholic charities is a prime example. They’re really the 800 pound gorilla when it comes to this.

They are deeply involved in facilitating the travel of illegal aliens throughout the country. But it doesn’t end there. These NGOs are also, a lot of money behind this, involved in lobbying the Biden administration and our Congress to keep the border wide open. And so it’s kind of this full scale operation where not only they’re involved in the border, but they’re involved in D.C. making sure the border stays open through policy and support to the Biden administration. A lot of their staffers and people connected in those NGO networks are in the Biden administration.

The cartels bring them to the border. Illegal aliens turn themselves into Border Patrol because they full well know they’re not going to get removed. And then Border Patrol drops them off at the NGOs. And then the NGOs liaises their travel and gets them wherever they need to go in the country. Oftentimes, for a lot of folks, that means to a place that they were trafficked to work or a human smuggling design. Obviously drugs are a big part of this as well when you have the Border Patrol, with all their eyes on this problem, they’re taking their eyes off the drugs. And the drugs, especially the fentanyl, is a national epidemic at this point.

The Daily Signal found that “what started out decades ago as faith-based organizations supporting the State Department to resettle genuine refugees in the U.S. after a legitimate application process has evolved into mass illegal immigration and downstream activities, creating an immigration industrial complex worth billions of dollars.”

“Worse, those same faith-based organizations also advocate for more migration to the U.S. and against immigration enforcement. They claim they are merely helping vulnerable populations, but these NGOs clearly benefit financially from more immigration in this corrupt money-changing circle.”
And the goal is to register all non-citizens to vote and to assure that they vote the Democratic ticket.

Why is this taking place?

Read this last paragraph very carefully:

“This is a resettlement program. The Biden administration wants open borders for the same reason these internationalist NGOs do. They want to destroy the West. They think that mass immigration and demographic change is a political benefit to them. It puts people on government dependency. It massively changes the population of a country. It waters down community and civic traditions and cohesion. It unsettles the country. This is a Marxist key part of their philosophy is that they need to build class warfare, and there’s no better way to do that than rapidly changing the demographics of a country with classes of people dependent on the government.”

Newsmax concluded nearly 20 years ago:

“The old bromides–environmental degradation, abortion, anti-war, poverty, human rights, justice for all, health care for all, and peace at any price are being doled out to a new generation in the hope that enough naïve, poorly educated U.S. citizens will support the open-society agenda.”

It appears to have worked.

Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of [California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?](#) This article first appeared in the February 24, 2024 California Globe.

AMERICAN PARALYSIS AND DECLINE

Societies do not always collapse from a lack of wealth, invasion, or natural catastrophes. But they are so paralyzed by their fear that the road to salvation becomes too painful to even contemplate.

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

"We can bear neither our diseases nor their remedies."

So shrugged the ancient historian Livy (59 B.C.- A.D. 17) of the long decline of Roman national character that, in his age, finally ended the Roman Republic.

Like a patient whose medicine proves worse than the disease, Livy lamented that the Romans knew that they had become corrupt and lawless.

But the very contemplation of the hard medicine needed for restoration—and the furious reaction that would meet the remedy—made it impossible to save the patient.

America is nearing such an impasse.

We know that no state can long exist after opening its borders to over 7 million illegal aliens, requiring neither background checks nor legality.

The recent murder of a Georgia female jogger by an illegal alien and the savage beating of New York policemen by similar others hardly merit media attention.

Everyone knows that neither new appropriations nor new laws are needed to secure the border as it was in 2020.

Instead, we could just stop suicidal catch-and-release, deport lawbreakers, privilege the legal over the illegal immigrant, demand would-be refugees apply for asylum first in their native countries, finish the border wall, and pressure Mexico to stop undermining the territorial integrity of its northern neighbor.

But then we shrug, "We can't do that"—paralyzed in fear of being smeared as "xenophobic," "nativist," or "racist."

So this generation apparently feels that it can endure the collateral damage of daily assaults on American citizens, the near bankruptcy of our cities, and 100,000 fentanyl deaths per year—but certainly not the idea that it is somehow not politically correct or compassionate.

The same is true of the $35 trillion debt, now costing more than $1 trillion a year in interest payments—and growing. We all know it is unsustainable. Americans understand it will eventually lead either to destructive hyperinflation, suicidal renunciation of federal debt, or confiscation of private savings.

Yet we ignore the reckless spending and keep borrowing well over $1 trillion a year. Apparently, our generation prefers being praised as “virtuous” and “caring.” So it leaves the next generation to be smeared as “cruel” and “unfair” when it is forced to cut federal entitlements and bloated government or face civilizational collapse.

The crime epidemic is also similar. Everyone accepts that no society can long endure quasi-legalized shoplifting or green-lighting smash-and-grabbers and carjackers to be released without bail.

But we assume that such a civilizational implosion will never reach our own sanctuary neighborhoods or safe places of work—at least not yet.

We also know that restoring deterrence by arresting, convicting, and jailing repeat felons will return safety to our streets.

But again, we fear even more that advocating “law and order” will earn slanders like “racist” or “reactionary.”

Ditto the homeless. In an age of self-congratulation and hyper-environmentalism, we know that a million homeless defecating, urinating, injecting, and assaulting on our downtown sidewalks and storefronts is medieval.

We know that it is illegal to camp out on the street and publicly harass citizens or relieve oneself in public.

And we know the cure lies in building and staffing more mental institutions and providing areas far from public spaces where the homeless can find shelter, sanitation, and medical care.

But the very idea of removing anyone from his accustomed sidewalk spot, or the notion of the use of force to transport the mentally ill to proper and humane facilities, terrifies us.

So we walk around, step over, and ignore those on the street.

Is the assumption that the odds of being assaulted or sickened acceptable? Or do we just not wish to learn where the flotsam, jetsam, and human offal of the street end up?

Most accept that had Donald Trump just not run for president in 2024 or was a man of the left, he would not now be facing four different felony court cases.

Most accept that three of the four prosecutors have either in advance promised to get Trump or have proved grossly unethical.

Most know it is wrong to try to remove a leading presidential candidate from state ballots.

Yet many shrug that this new weaponization of America's legal system is the flamboyant Trump's own problem, not their own. So they ignore the third worldization of our political system, which they quietly acknowledge is otherwise leading us to a Venezuela-like mess.

The paralysis of American society extends to our foreign policy as well. We deplore the terrorism of Iran and its thuggish surrogates. But we fear more the nasty, costly business of stopping its aggression.

Societies do not always collapse from a lack of wealth, invasion, or natural catastrophes.

Most often, they know what is destroying them. But they are so paralyzed by their fear that the road to salvation becomes too painful to even contemplate.

So they implode gradually, then suddenly.

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, and is the 2023 Giles O'Malley Distinguished Visiting Professor at the School of Public Policy, Pepperdine University. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush, and the Bradley Prize in 2008. Hanson is also a farmer (growing almonds 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, *and the forthcoming The End of Everything (May 7, 2024).. This article first appeared in American Greatness and the Stanford Hoover Institution Daily Review of February 29, 2024.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANDY CALDWELL SHOW NOW LOCAL IN SLO COUTY

Now you can listen to THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW
in *Santa Barbara, Santa Maria & San Luis Obispo Counties!*

We are pleased to announce that The Andy Caldwell Show is now broadcasting out of San Luis Obispo County on FM 98.5 in addition to AM

1290/96.9 Santa Barbara and AM 1240/99.5 Santa Maria
The show now covers the broadcast area from Ventura to Templeton -

THE only show of its kind on the Central Coast covering local, state, national and international issues! 3:00-5:00 PM WEEKDAYS
You can also listen to The Andy Caldwell Show LIVE on the Tune In Radio App and previously aired shows at: 3:00-5:00 PM WEEKDAYS

COUNTY UPDATES OCCUR MONDAYS AT 4:30 PM

MIKE BROWN IS THE REGULAR MONDAY GUEST AT 4:30!

SUPPORT COLAB

MIKE BROWN ADVOCATES BEFORE THE BOS

\

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON ADDRESSES A COLAB FORUM

DAN WALTERS EXPLAINS SACTO MACHINATIONS AT A COLAB FORUM

AUTHOR & NATIONALLY SYNDICATED COMMENTATOR/RADIO HOST BEN SHAPIRO
APPEARED AT A COLAB ANNUAL DINNER

NATIONAL RADIO AND TV COMMENTATOR HIGH HEWITT AT COLAB DINNER

MIKE BROWN RALLIED THE FORCES OUTDOORS DURING COVID LOCKDOWN

JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE TO COLAB ON THE NEXT PAGE

Join COLAB or contribute by control clicking at: [COLAB San Luis Obispo County (colabslo.org)] or use the form below:

Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business
San Luis Obispo County
"Your Property – Your Taxes – Our Future"
PO Box 13601 – San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 / Phone: 805.548-0340
Email: colabslo@gmail.com / Website: colabslo.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

General Member: $100 – $249 ❑ $ _______ **Voting Member: $250 - $5,000 ❑ $ _______**

Sustaining Member: $5,000 +❑ $ _______
(Sustaining Membership includes a table of 10 at the Annual Fundraiser Dinner)

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

MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: ____

Company: ____

Address: ____

City: ______________________ State: ____________ Zip: ________

Phone: ____________ Fax: ____________ Email: ________________

How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio ❑ Internet ❑ Public Hearing ❑ Friend ❑

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

NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

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

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

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check ❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard ❑ Discover ❑ Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: ____________________ Signature: ______________________

Card Number:________________________Exp Date: ___/___ Billing Zip Code: ______ CVV:____

TODAY'S DATE: ____________________