COLAB San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

WEEKLY UPDATE
NOVEMBER 17 - 23, 2024

THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 5

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

PENSION TRUST BOARD CANCELLED

LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 6

AN IRRITATING BUSY WEEK

SLO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NEW SHERIFF'S DEPUTY CONTRACT APPROVED

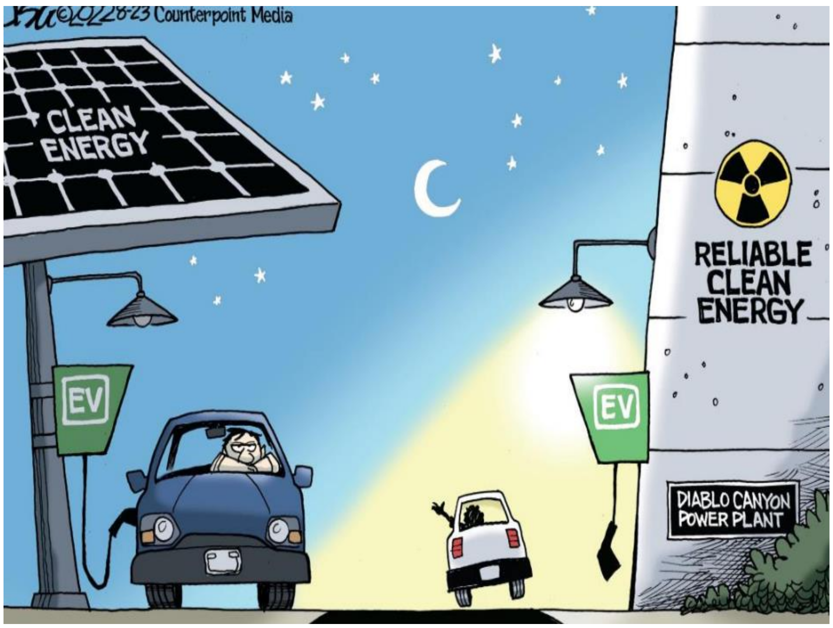
NEW PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER CHANGE ORDERS APPROVED

COUNTY'S FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 AND MULTI-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

REVENUE - EXPENDITURE GAPS ENDEMIC

COUNTY CAO DEMONSTRATES FISCAL LEADERSHIP
NOT ACCEPTING THE STATUS QUO
SEE HIS MESSAGE ON PAGE 9

CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY BRIEFS BOARD ON AUTOMATIC CUTOVER FROM PG&E ON JANUARY 1, 2025 – THE GRIFT EXPANDS
QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR RENEWABLE ENERGY CLAIMS



RETAIL POT SHOPS IN THE UNINCORPORATED COUNTY MORE ANALYSIS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BUT NO "CIGAR"
SO FAR THE JUICE IS NOT WORTH THE SQUEEZE

DEVELOPMENT & BUILDING FEE INCREASES FOR 2025 APPROVED – ARNOLD AND PESCHONG VOTE NO

CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROMISED FOR THE FUTURE ACTUALLY DECREASED OVER PAST 2 YEARS

SLO APCD

MILLIONS IN PATRONAGE

FOR WOOD STOVES, EV CHARGERS, ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES & HOME AIR FILTERS

LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

DANA RESERVE ANNEXATION TO NIPOMO CSD APPROVED

SUPERVISOR PAULDING ONLY NO VOTE

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CERTIFICATION OF LOS OSOS PLAN KICKED 6 MONTHS

COUNTY REQUESTED THE EXTENSION

EMERGENT ISSUES

SEE PAGE 26

RV SALES TO HALT IN CALIFORNIA, WASHINGTON, OREGON, NEW YORK, MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW JERSEY AS CLIMATE RULES TAKE EFFECT

CALIFORNIA'S PENDULUM INCHES TOWARD THE CENTER, THOUGH NOT ITS POLITICAL LEADERS

NEWSOM RAISES GAS PRICES AGAIN

WILL TRUMP'S WIN END MORRO BAY OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY PROJECTS?

COLAB IN DEPTH

SEE PAGE 32

STIRRINGS OF REALIGNMENT EVEN IN CALIFORNIA

REALIGNMENT HAS COME TO AMERICA. IF ENOUGH PEOPLE MUSTER THE RESOLVE TO STAY AND FIGHT, CALIFORNIA MAY NOT BE FAR BEHIND.

BY EDWARD RING

THE WORK TO RESTORE OUR REPUBLIC IS JUST BEGINNING

***TYRANNY NEVER SURRENDERS POWER EASILY*.**

LET'S MAKE CO2 GREAT AGAIN

***It is a good day when we find ourselves on the side fighting for the freedom to prosper as they contribute to the atmospheric store of carbon dioxide that enriches ecosystems and engenders life*.**

BY GREGORY WRIGHTSTONE

SPONSORS

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2024 (Not Scheduled)

Instead of a Board meeting this week, Supervisors may attend the California State Association of Counties' (CSAC) 130th Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. Our own Supervisor Bruce Gibson is President and will be presiding. His invitation states:

Dear County Colleagues,

I am thrilled to invite you to join us at the 130th CSAC Annual Meeting, which will be held in vibrant Los Angeles County. This marquee event offers a unique opportunity for us to come together, network, and engage in meaningful discussions about the challenges and solutions that shape our communities.

The Annual Meeting is not just a conference—it's a collaborative gathering where the collective wisdom of county leaders from across the state can shine. Our sessions are designed to inspire, inform, and foster innovative approaches to the common issues we face. By sharing our experiences and insights, we can strengthen our ability to serve our constituents more effectively.

This year, we have an exceptional lineup of speakers, workshops, and panels that promise to provide fresh perspectives and practical strategies. Whether you are looking to tackle fiscal management, public health, infrastructure, or any other pressing topic, you will find invaluable resources and connections at this event.

The importance of counties coming together cannot be overstated. It is through our unity and collaboration that we can drive progress and create positive change. The Annual Meeting is a testament to our commitment to working together, learning from one another, and building a brighter future for all Californians.

I look forward to seeing you in Los Angeles County for an inspiring and productive gathering. Let's make this 130th Annual Meeting a milestone of innovation and partnership.

Warm regards,

Bruce Gibson
CSAC President and San Luis Obispo County Supervisor

Change to what?
Socialism?
Claimatism?
The DEI State?
3rd World living style?

The meeting will take place at the Pasadena Convention Center.

In the evening they can go over to the Club 54 Lounge for some real "collaboration".

San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, November 18, 2024 (Cancelled)

No reason for the cancellation was provided.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, November 12, 2024 (Completed)

Submittal of a resolution approving 1) the January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County of San Luis Obispo and the Sworn Deputy Sheriffs' Association (SDSA) Sworn Law Enforcement Unit, Bargaining Unit (BU) 27; 2) the January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026, MOU between the County and SDSA Sworn Law Enforcement Supervisory Unit, BU28; and 3) amendments to the San Luis Obispo County Employees Retirement Plan Appendices. The new contract was approved unanimously on the Consent Calendar without discussion .

The Board took public action on a new labor contract with Sworn Law Enforcement that represents approximately 144 employees in the classifications of Deputy Sheriff, Sheriff's Senior, and Sheriff's Sergeant. The report indicates that the County is having trouble retaining and recruiting positions in these classifications. Key new costs to the Budget are displayed on the tables below.

Table 1: Ongoing Costs

Item	Fiscal Year 2024-25	Fiscal Year 2025-26	Fiscal Year 2026-27 and Annual Ongoing
Wages	$1,013,764	$2,621,049	$3,214,571
Pension	$314,136	$1,047,993	$1,357,784
Healthcare	$86,772	$245,676	$317,808
HSA	$2,625	$5,250	$5,250
Bilingual Differential	$7,220	$14,440	$14,440
Career Incentive Allowance	$262,800	$525,600	$525,600
Detective Assignment	$7,220	$14,440	$14,440
Deferred Compensation	$14,400	$28,800	$28,800
Uniform	$12,960	$25,920	$25,920
Special Assignment Pays 1. Canine 2. MAPS Team 3. Standby 4. Bailiff	$52,186	$104,372	$104,372
Total Costs	$1,774,083	$4,633,540	$5,608,985

Table 2: Non-Ongoing Payment to Employees

Item	Fiscal Year 2024-25	Fiscal Year 2025-26	Fiscal Year 2026-27	Total
$226.30 per pay period payment (26 paychecks)	$194,165	$194,165		$388,330
$226.89 per pay period payment (26 paychecks)		$165,176	$165,176	$330,352
$115.38 per pay period payment for Tier 3 members (52 paychecks)	$116,995	$233,991	$116,995	$467,981
Total	$311,160	$593,332	$282,171	$1,186,663

Item 19 - Request to: 1) approve Change Order No. 08 with Diani Building Corp. in the amount of $704,458 to procure furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) and to install the procured FF&E at the currently under-construction Public Safety Communications Center and at three remote towers all in support of the Public Safety Communication Center

Project (WBS 320061); and 2) submittal of a resolution making additional findings pursuant to Public Contract Code Section 3400 designating products by specific brand or trade name for Communications Equipment compatibility with existing County IT equipment; and 3) authorize the Director of Public Works, or designee, to approve change orders for a total contingency amount up to $2,000,000, increasing such contingency by $500,000 from the current $1,500,000 level. The changes were approved unanimously on the Consent Calendar without discussion.

The project has increased in cost since originally approved.

The Public Safety Communications Center Project, formerly referred to as the Co-Located Dispatch Project (WBS 320061) (Project), was established in FY 13-14 with the purpose of building a facility which will co-locate Countywide emergency dispatch services and manage emergency medical and 911 calls for fire and law enforcement using the Design-Build project delivery method. On August 23, 2022, your Board awarded a Design-Build contract to Diani Building Corp. (Diani) in the amount of $23,462,458 to design and construct the dispatch facility at the North County Regional Center in Templeton. Construction of the Project commenced in early 2024 and is expected to continue through completion in late 2025.

The write-up stated that the project is still within the original overall Budget. Funds for communications equipment and its installation that were originally to be expended by the County will be transferred to the building contractor for these purposes,

Co-Located Dispatch Center has a current budget of $39,922,358, funded by $25,250,000 in Bond Proceeds, $8,469,554 in Fire Public Facility Fees, $2,285,816 in Law Public Facility Fees, $2,426,767 from Proposition 172 Public Safety Revenue, $1,181,726 from the General Government Building Replacement Reserve Designation, and $308,495 in General Fund. There is currently no recognized funding gap for this project. The proposed change order will be funded by existing project FF&E funds that were originally planned to be used for direct County purchases. There will be no change to the total amount of the project budget of $39,922,358.

Item 26 - Consideration of a report regarding the County's Fiscal Year 2025-26 and Multi-Year financial forecast. The County Administrative Officer led off the presentation with a very positive statement about subjecting the proposed Budget to a very comprehensive and in depth performance review. The CAO and the Board are also concerned about the number of new positions added each year and their cumulative impact on expenditures. For example, what happens to all the new positions added under the massive Federal COVID grants, the American Recovery Act, and the Climate and Infrastructure Act, which when combined, pumped $6 trillion into the economy, funded completely by debt. This, in turn, produced the massive inflation of the last few years.

The CAO's great Statement is presented below:

CAO FISCAL FORECAST COMMENTS

Tuesday November 12, 2024

COUNTY of SAN LUIS OBISPO

CAO's OFFICE

Matt Pontes, Chief Administrative Officer

As County Administrative Officer, one of my most important responsibilities is to provide our Board with accurate and relevant data that enables truly informed decisions. In taking on this role last spring, I came in with some concerns about historical operational deficits, particularly given financial patterns over the past two fiscal years. With the budget cycle closing as I stepped in; I identified several priorities for immediate review as we entered into a new fiscal year. One of these priorities was for departments to refresh and complete a thorough assessment of all of our mandatory and discretionary County services. That includes important programs implemented through contracted service providers and community partners. This project is well underway, and there are hundreds of County programs to review. For today's fiscal forecast, I am incredibly grateful to our administrative staff and the department heads who provided key data for the information in today's presentation.

Ideally, our discretionary spending is based on strategic alignment between our available funding and our Boards priorities and core values. Our Board commits to those priorities annually as we build our annual budgets. One primary budget principle is to avoid using one-time funds for ongoing expenses, as it can lead to the depletion of necessary reserves. Over the past 4 years, Counties had access to significant one-time funding (Covid and ARPA funds to name a few,) and some of that funding expanded services and staffing to meet community needs. Since then, departments have been reducing those expansions due to a lack of ongoing revenue to support them. Our departments have worked hard to manage their workforce and meet the needs of our communities. Another example of one-time funding that can be a challenge to navigate is grant funding from both state and federal sources. We do an excellent job of applying for and receiving grants in this County, which leads to successful program expansions that help us move the needle on important community projects. Unfortunately, most of these new exciting expansions and programs don't have ongoing external financial support. Across the state counties to the same, often leading to positions and programs intended to sunset when the funding ends. Over the years here in our county, we absorbed many of these programs and services continuing them after those external funds expired. Over time, this has led to less flexibility of our discretionary revenue.

As you all may remember, a few years ago, we implemented an *Austerity plan* designed to address *immediate* structural budgetary concerns. It successfully bridged unanticipated gaps in our revenues and expenses. It was a well-intentioned, short term budget strategy, that relied on our revenues increasing, to get us back on track. That didn't happen. The *Austerity plan* provided immediate relief without addressing the longer-term department deficits that now threaten our ability to deliver consistent services.

Counties are responsible for many *mandated services* and provide discretionary services across our departments and through our contractors. Our *mandated services* cover everything from public safety and public health, to and probation and youth services, behavioral health, environmental services and planning. That is just a partial list. These services are essential, and defined by federal, state and

local laws. We also provide additional Board priority, community focused, non-mandated services that reflect some of our unique values and needs in SLO County. These discretionary programs are funded by general fund dollars and cover important programs in our homeless division, health agency, fire department, parks, emergency services, planning, libraries, across our departments and through contracts with local providers.

Our Board and departments have worked diligently to align discretionary spending with our mandated services and the Board's highest priorities. With hundreds of programs across departments, it is crucial to regularly assess these programs and ensure they are aligning with Board priorities. We must ensure new initiatives are not simply layered on top of legacy programs without proper evaluation.

To support this rebalancing effort, we are conducting a comprehensive review of all County programs across departments, assessing program impacts to our community, costs, outcome tracking, and overall alignment with our Board Priorities. Our objective is to present this information later this winter season to the Board with transparency, clarity, detail and in an actionable format, so informed decisions can be made that guide our county responsibly into the future.

Before I turn this over to Division Manager Lisa Howe and Assistant CAO Rebecca Campbell, I want to emphasize a few key points to keep at the forefront of our minds today. Conversations about budget deficits and the need to right-size our expenditures can naturally create feelings of uncertainty. It's important for our community, our employees and our partners to know I am committed to guiding us through these challenges with transparency. We will improve our budget stability and resilience.

As Lisa will outline, our projected deficit for next fiscal year currently ranges between $10 and $18 million, with a midpoint estimate near $14 million. Our county reserves, already at a minimum threshold for a county of our size, have been further strained by more than $30 million dollars in emergency expenses helping our community recover following the severe winter storms of 2023 and 2024. Although we anticipate partial FEMA reimbursement, the timing of that reimbursement remains uncertain. This depletion in reserves adds an additional layer of urgency to our budget concerns, underscoring that we cannot continue to operate with short-term strategies without a thorough re-evaluation and right sizing of our program spending.

Within this context, and as we move through this fiscal year, we are prioritizing a key internal objective that strengthens our workforce: we need to continue efforts to pay competitive wages and benefits. This is essential for both recruiting and retaining the talent needed to deliver consistent, high-quality county services. However, achieving this goal without pushing our budget challenge beyond $10 to $18 million requires careful strategy and balance. I am committed to maintaining this balance thoughtfully, ensuring that fair compensation and fiscal responsibility go hand in hand.

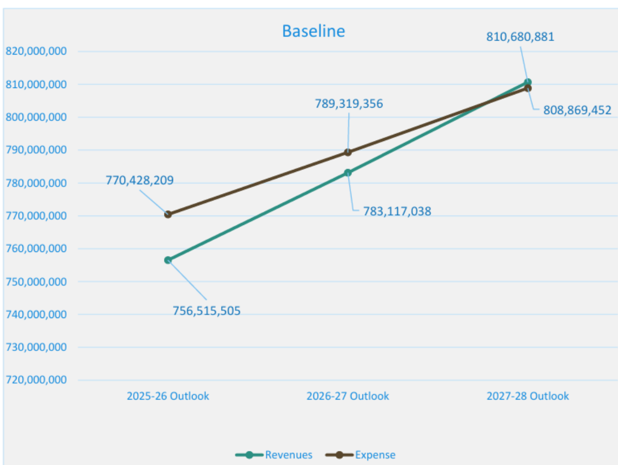
Finally, we recognize the depth and complexity of this information. We will revisit this discussion with the Board several times in the coming months to review our

rebalancing efforts and ensure program alignment with Board priorities. With that, I'll hand it over to Rebecca to lead us through the next part of this presentation.

Background: This is one of the most important reports received by the Board each year, as it provides a Budget forecast for the next 3 fiscal years. The County is generally experiencing faster expenditure growth than the natural growth of its major revenues. Labor costs, including salaries, pensions, and pressure to add staffing are significant components. Also the County continues to expand contractual services with for profit and not-for-profit health, mental health, homeless serving entities, and affordable housing developers. These are largely funded by State and Federal programs; however, they are usually one-time or limited to a period of a few years. This means they are subject to State Legislative and Congressional policy.

Typically, the staff is conservatively forecasting a higher revenue/expenditure gap (which they call a deficit) than actually occurs by Budget adoption time in June.[1] Slightly higher growth in revenues, combined with leaving some approved positions vacant generally meliorate the gap, allowing the Board to adopt a balanced Budget without significant service cuts. Some years ago the County adopted a fairly extensive set of policies to control for years that have an impending revenue expenditure gap.

Financial Forecast - Baseline



	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28
Revenues	$756,515,505	$783,117,038	$810,680,881
Expense	$770,428,209	$789,319,356	$808,869,452
Surplus/Deficit	**-$13,912,704**	**-$6,202,318**	**$1,811,429**

Expenditure Assumptions

Salaries and Benefits: $418 million (↑$14.9 M or 3.7%)

- Negotiated salary and benefit increases
- Pension rate increase
- Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) rate increase
- Pension Obligation Bond (POB) rate decrease
- Workers Compensation rate increase

[1] Calling a prospective gap a deficit is a mislabel. A deficit occurs when a jurisdiction ends the fiscal year with more expenditures than revenues and reserves. In California, a county may not legally incur a deficit.

Expenditure Assumptions

Non-Salaries: $313 million (↑$6.1 M or 2%)

- 2% increase based on Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Expense offsets for Social Services and Health Agency revenue
- Liability rate increase
- Increase costs due to Oceano CSD Fire Service Divestiture
- Decrease due to expenditures funded with final year of ARPA in FY 2024-25
- Decrease due to one-time costs in FY 2024-25
- Increase due to one-time reductions made in FY 2024-25 to balance budget

The write-up also presents several alternate analyses that forecast the situation if the County adds more staff than typically (about 22 per year), a recession occurs, property tax does not grow, etc.

While the report considers State and national economic conditions and forecasts, it does not link to the County's economic development program. This is too bad, since one reason to operate an economic development program is make decisions that grow parts of the economy that benefit property tax, sales tax, hotel tax, and job expansion. For example, what is the status of the plan proffered 5 years ago to build a 5-Star luxury resort on the former Chevron site overlooking Avila Bay? What are the possibilities for the Phillips 66 site, which is now being decommissioned? What about horse racing with para-mutual betting? What about a medical school at Cal Poly? What about clearing the deck for more launches and private expansion at Vandenberg? What about promoting 5-star resorts in wine country? How is the County's feasibility study on off shore wind coming?

Item 27 - It is recommended that the Board receive an update from Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) and provide staff direction, as necessary. The Board heard the report.

Background: The cut over from PG&E is set for January 1, 2025. The 3CE staff will present a PowerPoint detailing its community outreach efforts and explaining the opt out procedures. The presentation is primarily composed of propaganda about the benefits of 3CE. Of course, no countervailing formation will be presented, as PG&E has been forbidden by the California Public Utilities Commission to present any. In this regard, please see **Addendum I on page 46 of last week's Update that** contains information that the Board majority ignored and suppressed when it voted to join 3CE. Also see the **3CE Operations Board item** on its decline in renewable energy **on page 24 of last week's Update. These can be found on our website at colabslo.org.**

Item 29 - Request to receive and file a report on the consideration of an amendment to the land use ordinance to allow for Cannabis Retail Storefront Dispensaries and provide staff direction as necessary. The Board gave direction to staff to work on ordinance amendments to facilitate the permitting of the pot shops. However, the staff indicated that they do not have sufficient staff to undertake the project and continue with their other projects. The Board is going to have to work this out when it considers Planning Department priorities in February.

Background: Last December the Board directed staff to analyze the feasibility of allowing retail cannabis dispensaries - that is retail shops accessible to the public. Currently the County allows only delivery service dispensaries. The staff analyzed the practices in other nearby cities and counties that allow the dispensaries. Key issues include:

Items of Consideration

1. Maximum Storefront Locations
2. Allowed hours of operation
3. Visibility of salesfloor from exterior
4. Customer access requirements
5. Additional proximity requirements
6. Odor control requirements
7. Customer and community education
8. Retail storefront zoning

The staff developed a continuum of less severe to more restrictive standards on these items and seeks Board direction.

Zoning Options

Zoning Option 1 - Maintain existing retail zoning

- Commercial service and industrial zones.
  - Agriculture zoning allowed if product is grown on site.
- 600-foot buffer zone from any pre-school, elementary school, junior high school, high school, library, park, playground, recreation or youth center, licensed drug or alcohol recovery facility, or licensed sober living facility.

Zoning Option 2 - Expand allowable zones for storefront retail sites

- Allow for storefront dispensaries within commercial retail zoning in addition to existing allowable zones.
- Maintain existing buffer zones.

Zoning Option 3 - Expand allowable zones for storefront retail sites and remove park and playground buffer zones.

- Allow for storefront dispensaries within Commercial Retail zoning in addition to existing allowable zones.
- Remove 600-foot park and playground buffer.
- Maintain all other buffers.

Is the juice worth the squeeze? The original reason for considering the issue was to generate more taxes for the County. The report does not contain any projections of what could be generated under the different scenarios. This would seem to be an important consideration,

A new issue that emerged this year, which was not part of the original assignment, is on site consumption. Recently, some jurisdictions have been considering this possibility. How does this impact the neighborhood and potential revenues? Obviously, to have full service bars with alcohol, cannabis, and fancy desserts would be the most successful. It is not clear if the State will allow jurisdictions to consider these. Similarly, some nice chewy cannabis candies, a cup of cappuccino, a nice bottle of Zinfandel, and a soft lighting environment with Renaissance music in the background would end a perfect evening. If you're going to go, why not go all the way? Both the State and locals, after legalizing the stuff, have been so policy constipated that it's been a waste in many places. After all, a fortified concrete dispensary with no windows and an armed security guard at the door is not so enticing.

In fact, what if existing restaurants were allowed to serve it? Isn't all the hoopla about distance separation, schools, and drug treatment centers really just a hypocritical cover? Box Car Willy isn't ordering the Zin. Little Miss Muffet isn't walking over from Kamala Harris Elementary at recess to score a lid.

An immediate problem is that the P&B Department says it lacks the resources to undertake the development of an ordinance, etc. Is everyone back from COVID land and now working in the office? As an alternative, former Planning staffer and now prominent development advisor Jamie Kirk Jones could probably work up a proposed ordinance in a week or so as a consultant, expediting the matter and saving months of fiddling around, as well as tens of thousands of dollars.

Item 30 - Hearing to consider an ordinance implementing the County Fee Schedule "A" for Calendar Year 2025 and Fee Schedule "B" for Fiscal Year 2025-26. The Board adopted the fees as presented on a 3/2 vote, with Peschong and Arnold dissenting. Both are worried that businesses and the public cannot afford them in today's inflationary economy.

The A La Carte lists presented below are the result of a governmental movement begun in the 1960s to charge developers and builders fees to cover the costs of the regulatory departments that oversee safety and adherence to the land use regulations. The Fire Department, Planning & Building Department, Public Health Department and to some extent the Sheriff (with respect to security design and cannabis), and the public Works Department are the primary ones responsible for various segments of development oversight.

The underlying theory is that developers and builders will pay the costs of being regulated and then pass these on in the price of the up-zoned land, buildings, and amenities to the new residents. More specifically, the theory postulates that the new owners, tenants, and customers will thus pay for new development rather than all taxpayers. One problem is that this system suppresses new development, especially homes and apartments. Aided and abetted by the State, environmentalists, and socialists, the system in California has gone out of control and has created a housing crises problem among others.

The system also hides the true cost of government from the citizens. Instead of this thicket of overlapping and confusing fees, why not be honest and charge the new owners and customers the cost of administering this massive and hidden tax?

Simply charge a "fee" on homes, commercial development, industrial development, and all other structures etc. That way the people will know how costly the regulations are to administer and can judge their county supervisors, city councils, and State legislators accurately. If the new $600,000 home has a 15% fee of $90,000, everyone will know the truth.

Of course, now the cost of these fees that are buried in the price of a home or other development are included in the mortgage. Thus, not only are people paying the cost for the fees, but the interest over decades.

This is a hidden shameful government racquet that should be reformed and made explicit.

See last Week's Update for detailed fee tables for Fire, Planning and Building, Public Health Development review, and Public Works

Item 31 - 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. There were no new projects or feasibility studies proposed this week.

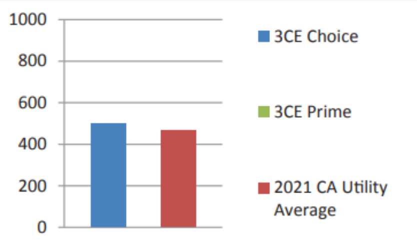
Central Coast Community Energy Authority (3CE) Operations Board meeting of Wednesday, November 13, 2024 (Completed)

Item 8 - Adopt Resolution No. OB-2024-04 Attesting to the Veracity of 3CE's 2023 Power Content Label. Each load serving energy (electric utility) in the State must annually provide a certification of the percent of its energy that is renewable. Remember that the State does not count nuclear or large hydro as renewable on ideological grounds, even though it is CO_2 free. Nuclear energy is the most renewable source of energy in the universe. It powers the stars whose light (solar) is counted as renewable. This agenda item is presented in order for the Operations Board to approve the 2023 certification.

Amazingly, the 2023 Power Content Label shows 3CE's percent of green power declined from 2021 to 2023.

The scam grows apace.

2021 POWER CONTENT LABEL						
Central Coast Community Energy						
https://3cenergy.org						
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Intensity ($lbs\ CO_2e/MWh$)			Energy Resources	3CE Choice	3CE Prime	2021 CA Power Mix
3CE Choice	3CE Prime	2021 CA Utility Average	**Eligible Renewable**[1]	**[illegible].4%**	**100.0%**	**33.6%**
494	**0**	**456**	Biomass & Biowaste	1.6%	0.0%	2.3%
			Geothermal	7.4%	0.0%	4.8%
			Eligible Hydroelectric	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%
			Solar	17.8%	50.0%	14.2%
			Wind	11%	50.0%	11.4%
			Coal	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**3.0%**
			Large Hydroelectric	**11.8%**	**0.0%**	**9.2%**
			Natural Gas	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**37.9%**
			Nuclear	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**9.3%**
			Other	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.2%**
			Unspecified Power[2]	**49.8%**	**0.0%**	**6.8%**
			TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Percentage of Retail Sales Covered by Retired Unbundled RECs[3]**:**				**0%**	**0%**	

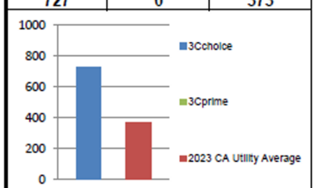


[1]The eligible renewable percentage above does not reflect RPS compliance, which is determined using a different methodology.
[2]Unspecified power is electricity that has been purchased through open market transactions and is not traceable to a specific generation source.
[3]Renewable energy credits (RECs) are tracking instruments issued for renewable generation. Unbundled RECs represent renewable generation that was not delivered to serve retail sales. Unbundled RECs are not reflected in the power mix or GHG emissions intensities above.

For specific information about this electricity portfolio, contact:	**Central Coast Community Energy (831) 641-7222**
For general information about the Power Content Label, visit:	http://www.energy.ca.gov/pcl/
For additional questions, please contact the California Energy Commission at:	Toll-free in California: 844-454-2906 Outside California: 916-653-0237

Copy of 2023 Power Content Label

2023 POWER CONTENT LABEL						
(Central Coast Community Energy)						
(https://3cenergy.org)						
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Intensity ($lbs\ CO_2e/MWh$)			Energy Resources	3Cchoice	3Cprime	2023 CA Power Mix
3Cchoice	3Cprime	2023 CA Utility Average	Eligible Renewable[1]	30.4%	100.0%	36.9%
727	0	373	Biomass & Biowaste	0.7%	0.0%	2.1%
			Geothermal	12.9%	0.0%	4.8%
			Eligible Hydroelectric	0.4%	0.0%	1.8%
			Solar	14.0%	50.0%	17.0%
			Wind	2.4%	50.0%	11.2%
			Coal	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%
			Large Hydroelectric	0.1%	0.0%	11.7%
			Natural Gas	0.0%	0.0%	36.6%
			Nuclear	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%
			Other	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
			Unspecified Power[2]	69.5%	0.0%	3.7%
			TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Percentage of Retail Sales Covered by Retired Unbundled RECs[3]:				0%	0%	



[1]The eligible renewable percentage above does not reflect RPS compliance, which is determined using a different methodology.
[2]Unspecified power is electricity that has been purchased through open market transactions and is not traceable to a specific generation source.
[3]Renewable energy credits (RECs) are tracking instruments issued for renewable generation. Unbundled renewable energy credits (RECs) represent renewable generation that was not delivered to serve retail sales. Unbundled RECs are not reflected in the power mix or GHG emissions intensities above.

For specific information about this electricity portfolio, contact:	(Central Coast Community Energy) (831) 641-7222
For general information about the Power Content Label, visit:	https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/power-source-disclosure-program

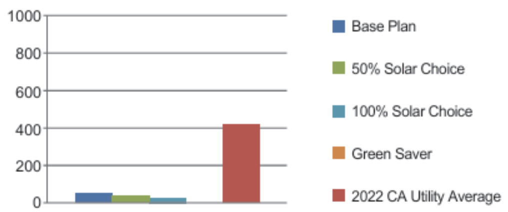
This does not seem possible, since 3CE has been signing billions of dollars contracts for renewable energy. Some is for future production that has not yet come on line. Nevertheless, it should be going up and not down. Was the 2021 report a fake? How badly snookered were the SLO County Supervisors who voted to join 3CE?

Note below that PG&E already has more green content than 3CE, even under the State's discriminatory system that does not count nuclear or large hydro. If the State did use an honest count, including large hydro and nuclear, PG&E would be 94.0 renewable.

2022 POWER CONTENT LABEL
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
www.pge.com/billinserts

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Intensity (lbs CO_2e/MWh)

Base Plan	50% Solar Choice	100% Solar Choice	Green Saver	2022 CA Utility Average
56	46	36	0	422



Energy Resources	Base Pl[illegible]n	50% Solar Choice	100% Solar Choice	Green Saver	2022 CA Power Mix
Eligible Renewable[1]	**38[illegible]%**	**67.2%**	**96.2%**	**100.0%**	**35.8%**
Biomass & Biowaste	4.6%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%
Geothermal	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%
Eligible Hydroelectric	1.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Solar	22.0%	59.0%	96.2%	100.0%	17.0%
Wind	9.4%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	10.8%
Coal	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**2.1%**
Large Hydroelectric	**7.6%**	**3.8%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**9.2%**
Natural Gas	**4.8%**	**4.3%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**36.4%**
Nuclear	**49.3%**	**24.6%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**9.2%**
Other	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**0.1%**
Unspecified Power[2]	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**3.8%**	**0.0%**	**7.1%**
TOTAL	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Percentage of Retail Sales Covered by Retired Unbundled RECs[3]**:**	**6%**	**0%**	**0%**	**0%**	

[1]The eligible renewable percentage above does not reflect RPS compliance, which is determined using a different methodology.

[2]Unspecified power is electricity that has been purchased through open market transactions and is not traceable to a specific generation source.

[3]Renewable energy credits (RECs) are tracking instruments issued for renewable generation. Unbundled renewable energy credits (RECs) represent renewable generation that was not delivered to serve retail sales. Unbundled RECs are not reflected in the power mix or GHG emissions intensities above.

For specific information about this electricity portfolio, contact:	**Pacific Gas and Electric Company: 1-800-743-5000**
For general information about the Power Content Label, visit:	https://www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/programs/power-source-disclosure-program
For additional questions, please contact the California Energy Commission at:	Toll-free in California: 844-454-2906 Outside California: 916-653-0237

Note: Figures on this Power Content Label can only include RECs generated in 2022. To achieve 100% solar supply in 2022 for customers enrolled in 100% Solar Choice and Green Saver, PG&E retired additional RECs generated in 2021, in accordance with the Green-e Renewable Energy Standard.

3CE's PowerPoint accompanying this agenda item indicates that it will ramp up its renewable energy per the table below:

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
SB 100 CA RENEWABLE REQUIREMENT		44%	46%	49%	52%	54%	57%	60%
3CE ENERGY PROCUREMENT	30%	55%	60%	68%	76%	84%	92%	100%
		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

But as noted above, it actually decreased from the 2022 report. What facilities are coming on line in each year that will make this happen? One of the big ones, (SunZia) in New Mexico and Arizona, is being sued by a coalition of Native American Tribes for desecration of the environment. Given that some of the Supervisors, our Congressman, and other leaders are so gung ho for the so-called Chumash Heritage Marine Preserve, how can they turn around and buy energy from SunZia

Back on November 12, 2023, COLAB reported extensively on the SunZia wind power project, which will generate electricity in New Mexico and transmit it to California. The Central Coast Community Energy Authority has signed a 15-year $715 million dollar contract to access 250 MGW on demand in an effort to have adequate resources and meet State green energy requirements. Our November article pointed out that there is considerable opposition by Native American Tribes in New Mexico, due to the construction of large transmission lines and other facilities to transmit the energy through heretofore undisturbed tribal and rural lands.

Now it turns that the San Pedro River Valley, east of the Saguaro National Park East and about 40 miles east of Tucson, will suffer major impacts. The San Pedro River is the last free flowing river in Arizona, and the Valley is lightly settled and supports an enormous variety of upper Sonoran Desert wildlife. The Valley as not been pumped. The river is lined by beautiful cottonwood trees and small farms. There are few paved roads. As a result, the small farmers and local tribes are opposing the project route, which has been approved by the Federal Government and the Arizona Public Service Commission.

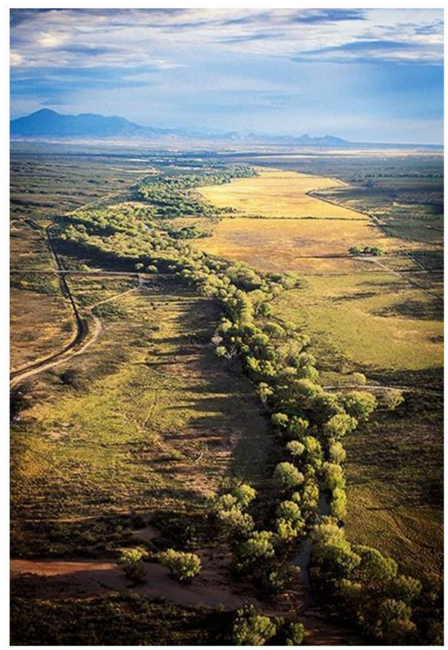
The net effect is that California and 3CE are exporting the negative environmental impacts of their green ideology virtue signaling to poor farmers and Native Americans in central New Mexico and Arizona's the San Pedro Valley.

3CE's press release celebrating its contract with SunZia stated in part:

The wind generation will complement California and Arizona's abundant solar generation by providing a continued source of clean electricity in the late afternoon and early evening hours, *the region's peak demand period, when solar output decreases. This is also a time of day when the grid can reach crucial conditions during extreme summer heat, whereby SunZia's energy will lessen the need for fossil fuels to meet the high levels of demand. The project is located in a region with some of the highest wind capacity factors in the country, and which is enabled by a new 550-mile transmission line (SunZia Transmission) that allows for deliveries of power into the CA and AZ load centers.*

"We are thrilled to sign on to this wind energy project, which will constitute 11% of our load once operational and marks a pivotal step towards our ambitious goal of achieving 100% renewable retail energy sales," said Robert Shaw, 3CE CEO. "This project will help to diversify and enhance the reliability of our renewable portfolio and will help accelerate the cleaning of California's grid and our collective transition away from fossil fuels."

HOW 3CE ENERGY IS HELPING TO DESTROY THE PRISTINE SAN PEDRO RIVER VALLEY IN ARIZONA WHILE TOUTING THEIR GREEN IMAGE



San Pedro Valley, east of Tucson

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District Meeting of Wednesday, November 13, 2024 (Completed)

Item B-1 Report on emission reduction projects funded through APCD grant Programs during Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The report detailed distributions of public funds to governments, school districts, and private companies to reduce CO_2 generation. First the State and localities create mandates such as replacing older diesel engines. They use tax and fee revenue to pay the entities to comply.

Do citizen payers actually want their fees and taxes to buy fireplace replacements, public EV chargers, and private room air purifiers.?

Table 1. FY 23-24 Grant Allocations by Funding Source

Funding Source	Incentive Funds	Implementation & Admin Funds
Carl Moyer	$528,589	$73,625
Local DMV Fees	$545,239	$34,075
CAP Incentives	$1,556,583	$219,954
Woodsmoke Reduction	$289,765	$30,975
CAP Implementation	$61,000	$35,279
FARMER	$529,725	$75,675
CAL FIRE Wood & Bio Energy Research Grant		$34,383*
TOTALS	**$3,510,901**	**$503,966**

Note that it costs them $503,000 to administer $3million in grant funds (14%).

Actual grant expenditures are displayed below:

Table 3. FY 23-24 Grant Expenditures

Project Category	Spending per Category	Funding Source
Ag Equipment Replacement	$1,500,090	FARMER, Carl Moyer
Public EV Chargers	$285,807	CAP
Marine Repower	$676,138	Carl Moyer
Old Car Buy Back	$3,000	Local DMV Fees
Woodsmoke Reduction Program	$24,000	State Funding & Local Mitigation Funds
Heavy-Duty School Bus	$370,125	Local DMV Fees
CalEVIP	$70,000	DMV Fees
Clean Air Room Air Purifiers	$51,443	CAP Implementation
TOTAL	**$2,980,603**	

Table 4. FY 23-24 Expenditure Statistics

Total Grant Project Expenditure	**$2,980,603**
Total Tons of Criteria Pollutants Reduced from Quantifiable Projects	**40.7**
Number of Companies that Received Grants	**20**
Number of Public Agencies that Received Grants	**1**
Number of Diesel Engines Replaced	**23**
Marine Vessel Engines Replaced	4
Off-Road Equipment Replacement Projects	19
Average Diesel Project Award: 23 Projects	**$97,937**
Number of EV Infrastructure Projects	**1** *
Average Infrastructure Project Award	**$285,807**
Number of Woodstove or Fireplace Change Out Projects	**5**
Average Woodstove Award	**$4,800**
Number of Clean Air Room Projects	**299**
Old Car Buy Back Purchases in 23-24	**2**
Total Number of Old Car Buy Back Purchases over Program Life	**663**

* The SLO RTA Project was partially paid in 22-23, so that project was counted in the reporting for last fiscal year's EV Infrastructure projects as opposed to this year's reporting.

Funds were granted to the following business, farms, governments, and schools.

Table 5. FY 23-24 Project Expenditure Summary
Organized by Expenditure Category & Project Number

Category	Project ID	Company	Project Award
Equipment Replacement	FARMER4-21	Red Dog Management	$ 163,000.00
	FARMER5-11	Tablas Creek Vineyard	$ 45,940.00
	FARMER5-14	John Vineyard Applications	$ 57,750.00
	FARMER5-16	Central Coast Equipment Repair	$ 50,070.00
	FARMER5-18	John Vineyard Applications	$ 140,000.00
	FARMER5-20	Jespersen Vineyard, LLC	$ 54,640.00
	FARMER5-22	Rocky Canyon Vineyard, LLC	$ 31,820.00
	FARMER5-5	Miller Moth, LLC	$ 36,430.00
	FARMER5-6	Miller Moth LLC	$ 108,200.00
	FARMER5-7	Miller Moth, LLC	$ 56,410.00
	FARMER6-1	SeaHorse Ranch BBG	$ 23,690.00
	FARMER6-11	Lou Moore Jacobsen	$ 25,850.00

	[illegible]	[illegible]	$ [illegible]
	FARMER6-5	JD Farming Inc	$ 150,000.00
	AB923-21-02	Zapata Ranch LLC	$ 43,520.00
	AB923-21-03	Nevarez Farm Labor, Inc.	$ 29,750.00
	CM21/22-08	California Valley Community Services	$ 12,150.00
	CM22/23-01	Dave Spurr Excavating, Inc. dba Spurr Co	$ 200,000.00
	CM23/24-01	Rocky Canyon Vineyard	$ 120,870.00
	CM23/24-04	Mesa Vineyard Equipment, Inc	$ 150,000.00
School Buses	AB923-19-03	San Luis Coastal Unified School District	$ 200,000.00
	AB923-21-01	Paso Robles Joint Unified School District	$ 170,125.00
EV Infrastructure	AB617-1819-01	SLO RTA	$ 268,005.00
	AB617-1920-21	694 Santa Rosa LLC	$ 17,802.00
Wood Burning Device Change Out	Local and State Funds	SLO County Residents	$ 24,000.00
Old Car Buyback	AB923-VAVR	SLO County Residents	$ 3,000.00
Marine Vessel Repower	CM21/22-12a,b	Sub-Sea Tours	$ 160,987.80
	CM21/22-02a,b	404 Marine Inc.	$ 300,000.00
	CM22/23-02a,b	Endeavor Sports, LLC	$ 81,500.00
	CM22/23-03a,b	Black Pearl Sportfishing, Inc.	$ 133,650.00
CalEVIP	AB923-2020	Center for Sustainable Energy, the CALeVIP contractor for the California Energy Commission	$ 70,000.00
Clean Air Room	State Funds	SLO County Residents	$ 51,443.40
		Total FY 23-24 Project Expenditures	**$ 2,980,603.20**

What if the total $3.5 million had been spent on road maintenance, a homeless shelter, or replacing aging fire apparatus? Or, what if the people had been allowed to keep their money to spend on food, gas, and electric in today crushing government-induced inflationary crisis?

Local Agency Formation Commission Meeting of Thursday, November 14, 2024 (Completed)

Item A-1 - LAFCO File No. 4-R-22 | Annexation No. 30 to Nipomo Community Services District (Dana Reserve Specific Plan). The annexation was approved 6/1, with Commissioner (County Supervisor) Paulding dissenting. The neighbors opposed the project and constitute a significant voting force in his district. On the other hand, a much broader group of his constituents supported the project.

Background: This was the last step in the lengthy process to approve the Dana Reserve Plan, which includes about 1400 homes and apartments at various levels of affordability. The issue is the annexation of the project to the Service District for the provision of water, sewer, and refuse disposal. The County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors have approved the project and have negotiated the annexation agreement. The Service District has demonstrated that it can provide the water.

The report and analysis is extensive and recommends approval:

November 14, 2024 Full Agenda Packet_Amended.pdf
A-1_Staff Report Dana Reserve_Amended.pdf
Attachment A_Resolution_Amended.pdf
Attachment B_GC 56668_Factors.pdf
Attachment C_Vicinity Map.pdf
Attachment D_Staff Report_Dana Study Session_September 2024.pdf
Attachment E_Staff Report_Dana Reserve Study Session_July 2022.pdf
Attachment F_Plan for Services.pdf
Attachment G_NCSD_DR_AnnexAgrmt.pdf
Attachment H_Phasing Study.pdf
Attachment I_Final Environmental Impact Report.pdf
Attachment J_DRSP2024.pdf
Attachment K_CEQA Findings.pdf
Attachment L_Development Agreement.pdf
Attachment M_NCSD SOI MSR.pdf
Attachment N_Rate Impact Study.pdf
Attachment O_Service Evaluation.pdf
Attachment P_WSA.pdf
Attachment Q_ Fiscal Study.pdf
Attachment R_Housing and Infastructure Regional Framework Final August 2023.pdf
Attachment S_NCSD Response to Commission Request.pdf
See the extensive analysis at the link:

https://slo.lafco.ca.gov/lafco-commission-meetings

There is opposition from some neighbors and several environmental groups. On the other hand, there is substantial support from the people in need of homes, business groups, and various major employers.

Background:

The Dana Reserve is the largest housing development proposed in the unincorporated County in nearly three decades. Note the very low number of home permits issued in the unincorporated County in the table below:

New Dwelling Units [1] by Planning Area/Sub Area, 2005-2021

Planning Area/Sub Area	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21[2]
Adelaida	24	12	21	11	3	5	3	2	5	5	4	8	5	8	6	4
Carrizo [3]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
El Pomar-Estrella	90	53	33	14	9	11	10	20	38	16	28	19	22	26	15	12
Estero	19	15	13	6	10	8	3	6	13	8	7	18	6	10	7	7
Las Pilitas	0	6	5	2	5	1	3	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	2
Los Padres (North)	2	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nacimiento	43	32	18	11	7	9	10	33	50	21	20	25	27	18	14	9
North Coast	14	7	9	1	5	0	3	7	2	3	2	0	0	2	1	1
Salinas River	99	41	33	36	25	16	15	21	45	60	65	207	74	86	65	37
San Luis Bay Coastal	52	22	70	7	15	13	17	34	41	25	30	39	41	9	11	1
San Luis Obispo	11	9	11	2	4	4	5	6	9	2	4	10	5	8	12	10
Shandon-Carrizo (North)	28	28	11	5	2	4	6	2	4	0	4	4	3	6	5	12
South County[4]	71	34	77	19	17	40	35	114	157	116	113	161	131	118	102	116
South County Coastal [3]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total	453	259	301	114	103	113	111	246	366	257	277	492	315	292	238	211

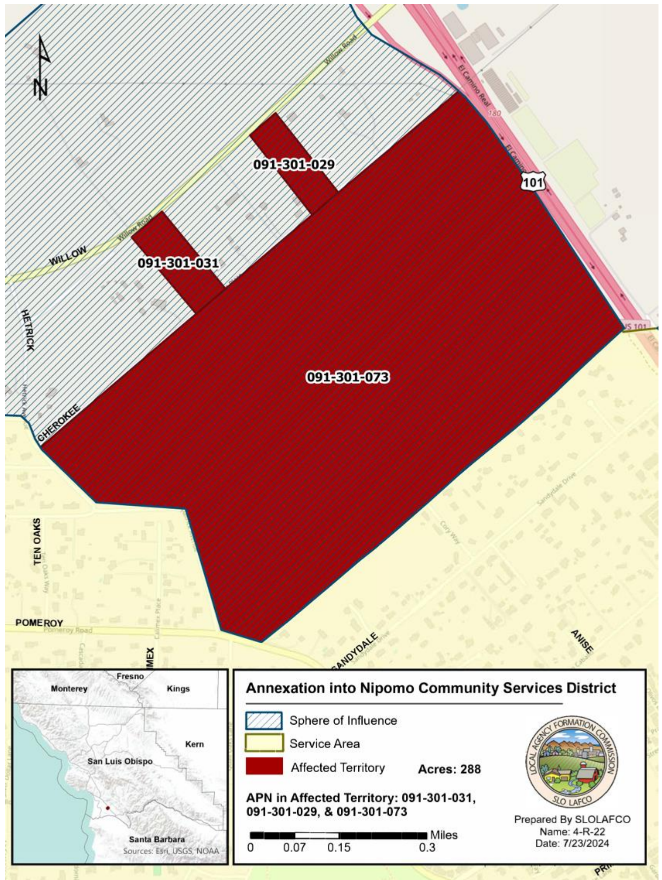
The project includes a layered program of affordability. Changes to this structure will vitiate the internal financing plan and render the project infeasible. The allocation and payment for water actually benefits all the residents of the NCSD, as it provides cash flow to meet the requirements of the District's take or pay contract for water with the City of Santa Maria.

The project is located next to a controlled access highway and a full interchange (Willow Road) that cost over $40 million to construct just a few years ago.

The site is not in some pristine undeveloped area, but is adjacent to a line of commercial uses, including a large open flea market, recreational vehicle sales, discount furniture stores, and other multi-family development. Unlike some of the other development just to the south, the Dana Reserve will be very enticing, landscaped, with high quality architecture. This will be in stark contrast to some of the development in the area, featuring large signs and even giant inflatable dragons and King Kong figures. It will constitute a huge upgrade.

A major challenge is the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) that would either forbid the project or render it infeasible by reducing its size and scope. Essentially, and beyond all the cited Class I impacts, the FEIR would prohibit conversion of raw land to any development. Of course, all of us actually live in homes that were once raw land.

In actuality, the County could use 5 projects just like the Dana Reserve. For whatever reason, its planning agencies refuse to take on this challenge.



California Coastal Commission Meeting of Thursday, November 14, 2024 (Completed)

Closed Session Item - Space Exploration Technologies Corp. v. California Coastal Commission, Govt. Code § 11126(e)(2)(A). Wouldn't you like to be a fly on the wall in this one. It gives them an opportunity to talk about their huge screw-up on politicizing their decisions on Vandenberg launches in private.

Item Thursday 12b - <u>November 2024 San Luis Obispo County LCP Amendment No. LCP-3-SLO-21-0028-1-Part G (Los Osos Community Plan Suggested Modifications). Time Extension Only</u>

San Luis Obispo County LCP Amendment No. LCP-3-SLO-21-0028-1-Part G (Los Osos Community Plan Suggested Modifications). Time Extension Only.

Request by San Luis Obispo County to extend the six-month deadline to acknowledge and accept Coastal Commission suggested modifications related to the Commission's June 2024 action on the County's proposed Los Osos Community Plan. (DJ-SC). The item has been postponed. It is not clear why, since just 2 weeks ago the County agreed to all of the Commission's added demands for the Certification of the Plan. Now what?

The County postponed implementation of new fees and regulations related to the Plan implementation but did agree to the Coastal Commission demands.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1- RV Sales To Halt In California, Washington, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts And New Jersey As Climate Rules Take Effect, Story by Mike Jenkins

RV (Unsplash)**© Tampa Free Press**

A new climate regulation from California is set to disrupt the RV industry, leading to the halt of diesel motorhome sales in several states starting next year.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has amended its Advanced Clean Truck regulations, which now require all vehicles over 8,500 pounds to be zero-emission vehicles. This stringent regulation will impact states like Washington, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, which often adopt California's emissions standards.

Some automakers, including Toyota, have expressed concerns about the aggressive push for electric vehicles, citing unrealistic targets and a lack of consumer demand.

As the automotive industry navigates these changing regulations, it remains to be seen how the market for diesel motorhomes will be impacted.

Tampa free Press Nov 13, 2024

Item 2 - California's Pendulum Inches Toward the Center, Though Not Its Political Leaders, Tuesday, November 12, 2024 By: Lee Ohanian

Californians voted very differently last week than in previous elections. Nine counties, including Orange, Fresno, San Bernardino, Merced, and Stanislaus, flipped to Trump, who received about 39 percent of California's vote in 2024, compared to about 34 percent in 2020. There were also large voting changes in down-ballot races and state propositions, both of which demonstrate voter frustrations about quality-of-life issues within the state and increasing voter skepticism about the state's political leadership.

Perhaps the most striking outcome was a nearly 70 percent approval of Proposition 36, which increases theft charges below $950 from a misdemeanor offense to felony charges for those with two previous drug convictions but drops charges if drug users plead guilty and complete a drug treatment program. This proposition passed overwhelmingly despite enormous resistance from Governor Gavin Newsom and many Democrats in the Legislative Assembly and state Senate who twice attempted to kill the proposition with their own legislation. Newsom and the state's Democratic political leadership were widely criticized, including in this editorial from the San Francisco Chronicle:

Governor Gavin Newsom and Democratic legislative leaders really, really don't want California voters to approve a November ballot measure to roll back parts of Proposition 47. … In fact, they're so desperate to prevent the measure from succeeding that they're willing to subvert and twist the very process they claim to revere more than anything else—democracy—to achieve their aims.

A likely reason why Newsom and the legislative supermajority didn't want Proposition 36 to pass is because it will increase the number of people in state prisons, where incarceration costs nearly $133,000 per inmate annually. But out-of-control prison costs created by this very same political leadership are of course no reason to permit crime and drug abuse to continue.

Voter frustration over crime also led to the 23-point defeat of progressive Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascon, whose office responded to neighbor complaints about a Beverly Hills estate being occupied by criminal squatters by saying, "Squatters have rights too." Voters also recalled progressive Alameda County District Attorney Pamela Price by about 30 points. Price may not have been so progressive when it came to personal matters, allegedly demanding a $25,000 campaign contribution from a suspected felon and allegedly threatening her own employees if they participated in her recall campaign. All thirteen of her county's law enforcement agencies supported her recall.

Voters also defeated Proposition 5, a ballot initiative that was not introduced by voters, but by the state Legislature. It would have changed the state constitution to require only 55 percent voter approval for local government bonds to finance affordable housing and public infrastructure, from its current two-thirds supermajority requirement. Bonds would have been repaid through higher property taxes. The outcome shows continued voter support for 1978's Proposition 13 and demonstrates growing skepticism about governments' ability to live within their remarkably generous budgets and build anything on time and at a reasonable cost.

As California voters are moving toward the center, some political leaders have not. Gavin Newsom called for a special legislative session next month to "Trump Proof" California, and state Attorney General Rob Bonta, who may be considering a run for governor in 2026, held a news conference
announcing he would "Protect California's values, people, and natural resources ahead of a second Trump administration."

Newsom and Bonta state they will protect California's illegal migrants, which will require significantly increasing the budget of Bonta's Department of Justice to fight deportations. But most Californians do not support such a policy. Sixty-two percent of Californians view the border as not secure, and 70 percent see undocumented migrants as a "burden" on Californians. And Hispanic voter views about illegal migration within this poll are not so different from those of non-Hispanic Whites.

Bonta and Newsom also want to retain California's policies that reduce carbon emissions beyond what has been achieved in other states. But these reductions have come at significant costs, including the highest gasoline prices in the country, which will rise following last week's decision by the California Air Resources Board to further reduce carbon emissions in the state's unique gasoline blend. It is difficult to justify the policies that make California's energy so expensive because greenhouse gas emissions are a global issue, and California is responsible for less than 1 percent of the global total. This suggests that the incremental climate benefits of California's carbon policies are virtually zero.

The most striking change within California voting patterns was among Hispanic voters, who voted for Biden in 2020 over Trump by about 60 points, but whose support for Harris dropped enormously, to about 54 percent in a poll just prior to this election. Moreover, the large counties of Fresno, San Bernardino. Merced, and Stanislaus that flipped to Trump last week are all Hispanic-majority counties.

It is clear why Hispanics voted so differently in this election. Like many others, they worry about economic opportunity, crime, inflation, and illegal migration. As one Hispanic voter, who owns a small landscaping business, confided to me in 2022, "I love this country. We are so lucky to live here. I vote for politicians who talk about freedom and lowering taxes and fixing up our city and making schools better and lowering gas prices and increasing water supplies, which is important to landscapers." It appears that many more are now voting like this individual. And if more eligible Hispanics exercise their right to vote, they can have a sizable effect on future elections.

Just how much of Newsom's reaction to Trump's election is political? Possibly a lot. Newsom could have waited until January to meet with legislators to discuss how Trump's presidency would affect California, but calling for a special session in December generated considerable national media attention, including a *New York Times* piece that highlights how Newsom "has positioned himself nationally as one of Mr. Trump's loudest critics."
After being pushed aside within his party to make way for Harris's candidacy,

Newsom has returned as the "resistance" to president-elect Trump. But such a strategy fails to recognize that many of Trump's disagreements with California—water policies that damage the agricultural industry, energy policies that raise costs and reduce reliability with few benefits, federal subsidies for a high-speed rail project that is grossly over budget and delayed by several decades, and California's failure to address homelessness—are critical policy shortcomings that have much more to do with a lack of common-sense governance than partisanship. And common-sense governance is increasingly what more Californians—and more national voters—want.

Lee E. Ohanian is a senior fellow (adjunct) at the Hoover Institution and a professor of economics and director of the Ettinger Family Program in Macroeconomic Research at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).He is associate director of the Center for the Advanced Study in Economic Efficiency at Arizona State University and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, where he codirects the research initiative

Macroeconomics across Time and Space. He is also a fellow in the Society for the Advancement of Economic Theory. Hoover Institution, California on My Mind for November 12, 2024.

Item 3 - Opinion | Newsom Raises Gas Prices Again, November 13, 2024.

Opinion by The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board

Opinion | Newsom Raises Gas Prices Again© wang zhao/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

California Gov. Gavin Newsom last Friday pledged to lead the resistance to a second Trump Administration. Also on Friday his regulators resisted the President-elect's plans to lower energy costs by raising the state's gasoline prices. Take that, Trump voters.

A mere three days after the election, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) voted to further squeeze its low-carbon fuel standard by 30% by 2030. The program requires refiners to reduce the "carbon intensity" of their fuel or buy credits from renewable producers. This is a de facto carbon tax that indirectly subsidizes politically favored businesses.

Regulators played down concerns that tightening the fuel standard would hurt low-income residents. According to CARB, they could "avoid the potential pass-through cost" of the regulation by buying EVs. This is typical of the thinking of Sacramento progressives. Many low-income households can't afford any new car at today's interest rates, let alone EVs.

"CARB risks underestimating the hardship stricter targets could impose on communities already facing high living costs," board member Dean Flores, a former Democratic state Senator, argued in dissent. "For Californians already stretched thin by escalating rents and inflation, these additional costs could become overwhelming, pushing many into deeper financial insecurity."

You'd think Sacramento progressives might reconsider the impact of their policies after the election results, but apparently not. They may not even mind if gas prices rise since the climate lobby has been fretting that the state's surge in electric rates—also fueled by its climate policies—are making EVs less attractive.

California's high gas prices were a problem for Democrats in this year's Congressional races, especially former legislators Rudy Salas and Adam Gray, who challenged GOP Reps. David

Valadao and John Duarte. Messrs. Salas and Gray voted to extend the state's climate programs and raise gasoline taxes. Both are trailing in the vote count.

As for Mr. Newsom, he may hope to ride opposition to Mr. Trump to the Democratic presidential nomination in 2028. But Mr. Trump's victory represents a repudiation of California's coercive progressivism. GOP candidates in battleground districts linked their Democratic challengers to the Governor. If Republicans keep the House, they can thank Mr. Newsom.

Item 4 - Will Trump's win end Morro Bay offshore wind energy projects?

November 14, 2024

By KAREN VELIE

President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to end offshore wind energy projects his first day in office, a promise opponents of the proposed Morro Bay offshore wind farms hope he fulfills.

Trump ran on lowering housing and energy costs. During his campaign speeches, he described offshore wind energy as "the most expensive energy there is." He noted environmental concerns such as whale and bird deaths.

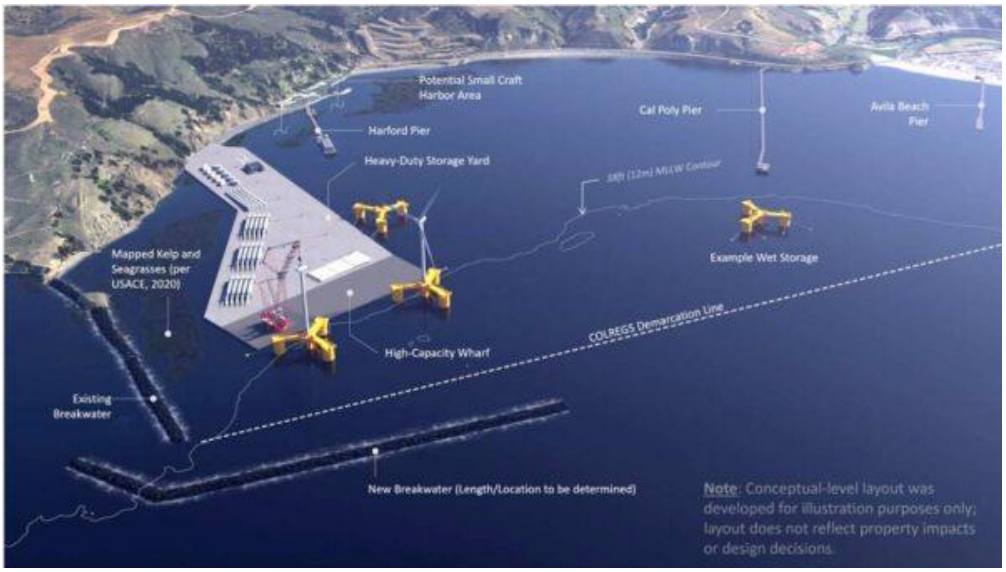
"We are going to make sure that that ends on day one," Trump said during a campaign speech. "I'm going to write it out in an executive order. It's going to end on day one."

In Dec. 2022, an auction for three offshore wind energy sites located off the coast near Morro Bay netted over $400 million to the federal government. The plan is to have the wind turbines float in the ocean more than 20 miles off the coast, with the electricity sent ashore via cables along the ocean floor. The goal is to have the windmills in the water by 2030.

While the majority of San Luis Obispo County residents initially supported the "green energy" project, sentiments changed as information regarding plans to industrialize Port San Luis near Avila Beach and portions of the Morro Bay waterfront spread through the community.

Industrialization of the proposed Central Coast ports will have significant impacts on the local economy and its ocean-dependent ecosystems. The support systems on land will include massive piers, and could require new breakwaters and dredging.

The offshore windmills themselves are 1,000 feet tall, taller than the Golden Gate Bridge, and their platforms are the size of a baseball field.



Site rendering of example of integration at Port San Luis. Breakwater may or may not be required.

The plan to transform Port San Luis into an industrial port to support proposed offshore wind farms moved forward in July with the assistance of the Port San Luis Harbor District in a 3-2 vote, though most of the discussions were held in closed session out of public view.

However, one of the pro-industrialization candidates did not run for reelection. The public then voted against pro-industrialization candidate SLO City Manager Katie Lichtig and for local fisherman Richard Scangarell, who opposes plans for industrialization.

In Morro Bay, residents largely supported a measure requiring voter approval for changes to some zoning on the waterfront. Vistra Energy, the company behind a proposed 24 acre battery storage facility on the waterfront, decided to seek state approval while bypassing the city's consideration shortly before the November election.

Morro Bay's proposed battery storage facility

Even so, a large amount of the funding for the offshore windmill projects and onshore support infrastructure is slated to be provided through the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes $369 billion in subsidies for renewable energy.

"The Inflation Reduction Act is anticipated to provide the opportunity to realize material benefits to Vistra with respect to its renewables and energy storage projects, as well as provide strong price support via the nuclear production tax credit for its nuclear facilities, including those acquired through the Energy Harbor transaction," Vistra said in a first quarter 2024 press release.

With Trump in office, it is anticipated he will ask Congress to reduce or eliminate tax credits for offshore wind provided through the Inflation Reduction Act. Without the subsidies and tax credits, the future of offshore wind energy and battery storage facilities in San Luis Obispo County appear bleak.

"REACT Alliance, a local offshore wind opposition organization, is very supportive of the incoming administration's opposition to offshore wind and hopes that the Trump Administration will get rid of it on day one as the president has pledged," said Saro Rizzo, vice president of REACT Alliance. "It will be the best thing for the Central Coast's environment and its ratepayers."

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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

STIRRINGS OF REALIGNMENT EVEN IN CALIFORNIA

REALIGNMENT HAS COME TO AMERICA. IF ENOUGH PEOPLE MUSTER THE RESOLVE TO STAY AND FIGHT, CALIFORNIA MAY NOT BE FAR BEHIND

BY EDWARD RING

The stunning nationwide victory by Republicans is not shared in California. And in what is now the very unlikely event that Democrats take over the House of Representatives, the path to that upset will run through California.

Trying to get a timely indication of how Californians have ultimately voted in close races is a good indication of just how far removed the state's election bureaucracy has drifted from the rest of the country. If you go to the election results page on the Secretary of State website for California, the first thing you see is the number of days left until voting results will be officially recognized. As of November 11, the number you see in a great big circle at the top of the page is the number 32. A small fraction of the circle's perimeter is highlighted, indicating the amount of allotted time to count ballots consumed so far. California allows 38 days from the November 5 election until the final certification on December 13, and the ballot processors use every bit of their time.

How is this normal? Why do we accept this?

As of November 11, California still had nine uncalled seats for the U.S. Congress. Democrats have officially won 36, and Republicans won 7. In terms of potential flips among the remaining close races, five are Republican incumbents defending their seats, three are Democrat incumbents trying to get reelected, and one is an open seat previously occupied by a Democrat. A week has passed since the election, and there are nine congressional races in California that remain too close to call. Remember that number and that date. How many of them will the Democrats win?

To fully appreciate the convoluted absurdity that has become the norm in California elections, consider the Secretary of State's "unprocessed ballots" page. Again, a week after the election, the Secretary of State reports the "cumulative total number of processed ballots" to be 10,728,985, and the "estimated total ballots remaining" to be 4,953,569. It's a week after the election, and the state hasn't managed to count nearly five million ballots.

The categories of unprocessed ballots are also revealing. "Vote-by-mail ballots received on or before election day" that remain "unprocessed" total 4,087,113. Included in this category are "vote-by-mail ballots received after [italics added] election day thru E+7/ballots forwarded by other counties," totaling 243,976, along with 76,764 "provisional ballots," 372,340 "conditional voter registration ballots," and 45,278 "other" ballots. "Other" is defined as "unprocessed ballots that are damaged or could not be machine-read and need to be remade, or ballots diverted by optical scanners for further review."

At the risk of spreading misinformation (or is it malinformation?), there are a lot of ways to find votes in this bizarre melange that masquerades as due process. And even if it's all legitimate, the definition of legitimacy has been stretched. Corruption, crime, and convoluted laws designed to facilitate favorable vote counts are all "legal" if compliant legislatures and partisan judges say so. At least in other states, this time, Republicans decided to play the game. Early votes, provisional votes, same-day registration, mailed ballots received up to a week after the election—whatever. If those are the new rules, we'll play. Across most states, the Republicans built a machine to rival the Democrats, and the results made history.

That's harder to do in California. The odds are too stacked. Unlike in battleground states, only 25 percent of California's voters are registered Republicans. And unlike in battleground states, almost no money is donated to support Republican candidates in California, because it's considered a lost cause. Even big Pennsylvania, with 13 million people, is tiny compared to sprawling California, with a population of 39 million. The state's Republicans are undermanned and underfunded. Worse still, the state's Republican Party leadership is split between RINOs and MAGAs and largely alienated from its base, which is dominated by MAGAs. As for California's

Democrats, they have armies of public sector union operatives, led by thousands of trained professionals.

These structural disadvantages help explain why in California, where enough independents join with Republicans to reliably deliver 40 percent of the vote to Republican candidates in statewide elections, the state's congressional caucus in 2022 only included 12 Republicans. In a less gerrymandered fight, with funds and activists available merely in proportion to the statewide support they consistently earn from voters, California's congressional caucus would include 21 Republicans and control of the US House of Representatives would not hang in the balance.

In the future, however, don't write off California. The goal remains distant, but the trends are positive. The 2024 election results in California refuted one of the most profound and daunting truisms the Democrats have smugly relied upon for decades: demographics are not destiny. As an unapologetic MAGA Republican, President Trump earned 42 percent of the Latino vote—47 percent of Latino men. California is now 40 percent Latino. That demographic fact used to be claimed as the ultimate advantage favoring Democrats. No more. The right Republican candidate, with the right message, will earn just as many votes from Latinos as they earn from whites. Even in California.

Today, California remains a bastion of blue, but that's changing. California voters have just rejected initiatives that would have imposed rent control, raised the minimum wage, and made it easier to raise taxes. At the same time, they overwhelmingly approved an initiative that—forgive the oversimplification—makes criminal behavior a crime again. So far, the belated counts coming out of California show Trump gaining 39 percent of the vote. If he maintains this percentage until 100 percent of votes are tallied, he will finish with over 7.0 million votes. This is up from 6.0 million (34 percent) in 2020 and 4.5 million (31 percent) in 2016. It's too soon to know how California will affect control of the U.S. House of Representatives. But California's MAGA cohort, 7 million strong, helped deliver Trump's triumph in the popular vote.

Realignment has come to America. If enough people muster the resolve to stay and fight, California may not be far behind.

Edward Ring is a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. He is also the director of water and energy policy for the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. Ring is the author of Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism (2021) and The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California (2022). This article first appeared in the American Greatness of November 12, 2024.

THE WORK TO RESTORE OUR REPUBLIC IS JUST BEGINNING

TYRANNY NEVER SURRENDERS POWER EASILY

Just as the Founders intended, the American people have used their First Amendment rights and freedom to vote, and rebuked the Democrats for their political malfeasance and hubris. So definitive has been the message that the Donks are now devouring one another over who or what is to blame for the debacle. Of course, they're avoiding the real causes of their political disaster—

their long leftist project to “fundamentally transform America,” as Barack Obama infamously put it.

But we shouldn’t take this entertaining autophagy to mean we still don’t have a lot of hard work to do in order to solidify and strengthen our battered Constitutional order. Remember, tyranny never surrenders power easily.

The first order of business obviously rests with President Trump. He’s already made a good start by naming his campaign manager, Susan Wiles, his Chief of Staff. Her brilliant management of the campaign bespeaks the skills and temperament needed for the huge task of staffing the federal government with the right people who can repair the damage done over the past four years.

To do that, Trump must staff federal agencies and his cabinet not just with the competent and ethical, but also patriots and Constitutionalists rather than technocrats, opportunists, and feral careerists. The issue isn’t just partisanship, but the very nature of large-scale government bureaucracies that are not accountable to the citizens. Such institutions are vulnerable to “professional deformation”: the institution’s legitimate function displaced by its own self-serving narrative, which exists to determine hiring and promotion, and is prone to fossilization into received wisdom—that is, the proverbial “box” we’re supposed to think outside of.

Every one of the 4000 positions filled by presidential appointment should be replaced by employees who are thoroughly vetted—especially given how federal agencies and some of their leadership undermined Trump during his first term, and colluded with a left-wing media that functioned as press agents for the Democrats. The national security, military, and foreign policy bureaus are particularly critical for the country’s security and interests abroad, and its employees must be carefully selected, and swiftly fired when they fail.

Take, for example, the idealistic, “rules-based international order,” the stale orthodoxy of our foreign policy and defense agencies. The notion that “diplomatic engagement,” and multinational treaties and institutions can keep the peace and serve our national interests, has for decades not just failed, but allowed enemy states to double down on challenges to our power; or allies to work against our national interests while serving their own.

The best example of this malign dynamic is Iran’s ongoing development of nuclear weapons, which is close to success. Barack Obama and leaders from several other nations created the 2015 “Iran deal” that promised to keep the theocratic regime from achieving its aim. The West’s foreign policy establishments went along with this Chamberlain-class appeasement, and transferred billions of dollars to the Mullahs despite the intelligence provided by Israel that documented the continuous violations of the treaty. Trump’s new appointees should be chosen for their foreign policy realism.

Similarly, Pentagon appointments and hires must comprise those who reject DEI protocols, “systemic racism” race-hustlers, and “trans” identity promoters. All these dubious ideas have been endorsed by some progressives in the Pentagon, who should be replaced with those who don’t want to politicize our country’s services, but instead get back to training warriors for war-fighting.

This would be a big step toward improving the services' dismal recruitment numbers at a time when our autocratic global rivals are planning for World War III. Trump's Secretary of State and other State Department positions also must be closely vetted to keep out feckless idealists and political operatives, and instead choose those who want to restore our country's foreign policy to its traditional realism about human nature and motivation.

With the foundation of the right personnel, the administration can start restoring our government to its Constitutional structure and ideals. For a century progressivism and left-wing influences have besmirched the Constitution, and tried to dismantle and weaken the Bill of Rights. These influences have taken over the Democrat Party, and accelerated these attacks. Most significant has been the assaults on the First Amendment's right to free speech and worship. Thanks to Trump's victory, this degradation of the cornerstones of our freedom can be stopped.

One reform that could strengthen those rights is putting more conditions on the $175 billion a year given to universities that are failing to teach these foundational principles. Campuses with policies that violate free speech, or in other ways violate the Constitution, should not be eligible for government grants. Nor should they be allowed to offload tuition expenses onto taxpayers through government subsidized student loans, which the Biden administration was eager to "forgive," blatantly violating a Supreme Court ruling in the process.

Also, there's no reason taxpayers should give money to a university like Harvard— coddler of anti-Semites and supporters of terrorism—that is flush with a $51 billion endowment. If Harvard and other universities are truly committed to "diversity," then they should pay for their DEI admissions and hires, instead of overpaying their faculty and dolling up their campuses.

All these dysfunctions reflect the growth of a big-state technocracy: government not run according to the principles of the Constitution, all of which exist to protect the political freedom and equality of the citizens. The progressives, like other collectivist governments, have always wanted government controlled by "scientists" and "experts" who know better than citizens how to create "progress" and "social justice."

In other words, the tyranny of the minority, the government clerks who are unaccountable to the electorate, and the slaves of scientism—bad ideas that are dressed up in the quantitative data and forbidding vocabulary of real science, but are in fact the products of politicized pseudo-science. Hence, they are dangerous to our country, even as they empower grifters and opportunists who wax fat on government subsidies and other transfers of taxpayer money.

Climate change, of course, is the obvious example. The dubious theory claims that human-created CO2 emissions will destroy civilization unless fossil-fuels—the cheap, abundant energy that has created modernity and enriched the West—are banished and replaced with unreliable "renewable energy." As a result of these policies, created and promoted mostly by Democrats, higher energy prices have damaged our economy, and threatened our national security by empowering nations like China that have no intention of damaging their own economies by ostracizing fossil-fuels—not when they can reap the benefits of cheap energy as their geopolitical Western rivals wreck their economies and make themselves vulnerable to their enemies.

Again, while staffing agencies like the EPA, the Trump administration should avoid anyone who buys into the "climate change" grift. As he proved in his first term, Donald Trump used executive orders and other tools to slow down this regulatory juggernaut. But for this issue and others, legislation is needed to strengthen the reforms required to correct such suicidal excesses.

Of course, that's more easily said than done. The story of the United States has been its diversity, which from the beginning has been more complex than the race-hustlers' recycled "scientific racism" obsession with physical differences. And we the people must not forget that we have the power to choose whom and what we vote for. Self-interest has always been the bane of self-government, but today it is empowered by secularism, affluence, leisure, politically corrupt legacy media, toxic social media, trashy entertainment, and failing educational institutions from kindergarten to university.

For all those dysfunctions, failures, and erosion of the Constitutional guardrails of our rights and freedoms, this election has demonstrated that diverse citizens of every stripe can make the right choice. To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, we've rescued our Constitutional Republic, now we have to keep it, and that will require diligence and holding our leaders accountable.

Bruce S. Thornton is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, an emeritus professor of classics and humanities at California State University, Fresno, and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. His latest book is Democracy's Dangers and Discontents: The Tyranny of the Majority from the Greeks to Obama. This article first appeared in Front Page Magazine on November 13, 2024

LET'S MAKE CO_2 GREAT AGAIN

It is a good day when we find ourselves on the side fighting for the freedom to prosper as they contribute to the atmospheric store of carbon dioxide that enriches ecosystems and engenders life

BY GREGORY WRIGHTSTONE

As the love affair with so-called green energy cools and "net zero" commitments to eliminate "carbon emissions" wane, we see glimmers of acknowledgment for the benefits of carbon dioxide. That's right: More people are beginning to understand that the gas—widely demonized as a pollutant endangering Earth with excessive heat—is a life-giving substance needed in greater amounts. U.S. voters know that President-elect Donald Trump has declared the Green New Deal a "scam" and promises to return common sense to environmental regulations and energy development. His return to office rests partly on that pledge.

In Europe, German politicians whose green fetish has produced economic decline face serious electoral challenges. And developing countries like India ignore "decarbonization" promises to aggressively develop coal mines and import more of the fuel to spur growth and eradicate poverty.

Less frequently reported is the story of carbon dioxide emissions greening the Earth and boosting crop production. Educating the public on the benefits of carbon dioxide is the mission of the CO_2 Coalition, which I lead. We sponsor speakers and publish scientifically based materials for adults and children. Much of the information is about the role of CO_2 as a beneficial greenhouse gas in moderating the extremes between daytime and nighttime temperatures and as a photosynthetic plant food.

"Fossil Fuels Are the Greenest Energy Sources" by Dr. Indur Goklany is an example of our work. Did you know that up to 50% of the globe has experienced an increase in vegetation and that 70% of the greening is attributed to plant fertilization by carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels? Or that nearly 200,000 square kilometers of the southern Sahara have been converted to a lush grassland from desert?

Few have heard that doubling atmospheric CO_2 from its current concentration of 420 ppm would significantly increase agricultural productivity and have little effect on the climate.

It appears that some of this knowledge has reached Canada because Alberta's ruling Unified Conservative Party (UCP) recently approved a resolution that promotes the salutary effects of CO_2 and endorses an outright rejection of the national government's net zero policy.

"It is estimated that (atmospheric) CO_2 levels need to be above 150 ppm (parts per million) to ensure the survival of plant life," says the proposal for a resolution eventually adopted by the party. "The Earth needs more CO_2 to support life and to increase plant yields, both of which will contribute to the health and prosperity of all Albertans."

The UCP calls for abandoning CO_2's designation as a pollutant and for recognizing the gas as "a foundational nutrient for all life on Earth."

The UCP's action was not well received by the likes of DeSmog, an online platform of climate alarmists, which called the party's resolution "a brazen display of climate science denial that harkens back to the 1990s fossil fuel industry playbook."

DeSmog reported that the UCP had credited the "notorious" CO_2 Coalition as its source of information—much to our gratification.

Except for the politically connected in the climate industrial complex, the carbon footprint phobia of recent years is a threat to everybody's economic well-being. But it is a direct assault on a place like Alberta.

Perhaps second only to the Canadian Rockies, the most distinguishing natural resource of the western province is its huge deposit of oil sands—the world's fourth-largest proven reserve of "black gold." Employing nearly 140,000 people and generating $17 billion in royalties, the oil industry is valued by Albertans.

"The problem is net zero has become a shorthand for 'leave it in the ground,'" says Alberta Premier Danielle Smith. She plans to fight "the federal government and a coalition of extreme environmentalists who want to stop the production of oil and gas altogether."

It is a good day when we find ourselves on the side of people fighting for the freedom to prosper as they contribute to the atmospheric store of carbon dioxide that enriches ecosystems and engenders life.

To paraphrase Donald Trump: Let's make CO_2 great again.

Gregory Wrightstone is a geologist; executive director of the CO_2 Coalition, Fairfax, Va.; author of "Inconvenient Facts: The Science That Al Gore Doesn't Want You to Know" and "A Very Convenient Warming: How modest warming and more CO2 are benefiting humanity. This article first appeared in the American Greatness of November 15, 2024.

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