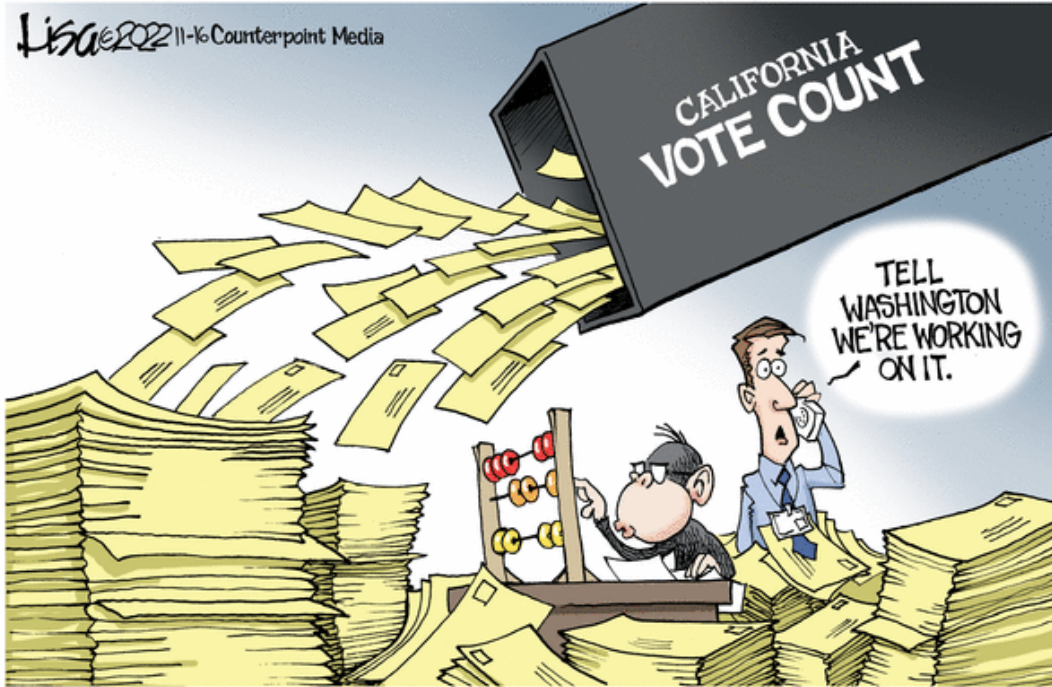
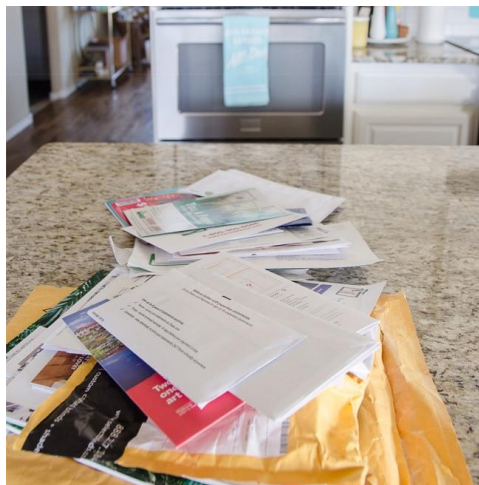




**WEEKLY UPDATE
NOVEMBER 3 - 9, 2024**



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE – GET THAT BALLOT OFF THE KITCHEN COUNTER AND WALK IT IN NOW



**THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 5**

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

OTHER AGENCIES OFF UNTIL NEXT WEEK

NOVEMBER 5TH ELECTION DAY



**The Goths Cross the Danube with Permission from the Emperor and Roman Senate
(The Roman citizens didn't get a vote)**

**LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 6**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY FEE INCREASE HEARING SET FOR NOV. 12TH

**SYMBOLIC AIRPORT DECARBONIZATION PROJECT
APPROVED**

***GIVEN EXISTING REQUIREMENTS, IT IS HIGHLY REDUNDANT
ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM IGNORED***

**LAST GASP TO SAVE BOB JONES PROJECT LAUNCHED
*IT'S NOT ABOUT THE PROJECT BUT THE ACCUMULATIVE CONTEXT***

**ADOPTION OF THE LOS OSOS GROWTH MANAGEMENT
ORDINANCE AND NEW FEES DELAYED**

**ADDENDUM I - SEE PAGE 32
NOVEMBER STATE PROPOSITION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**EMERGENT ISSUES
SEE PAGE 16**

**THE DAILY CHART: COAL FOR THE WIN
HOW TO KILL A STATE IN 5 EASY STEPS:
GAVIN NEWSOM'S CALIFORNIA**

**SHELTERING CALIFORNIA'S HOMELESS IS INSANELY
EXPENSIVE - IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE**

**CALIFORNIA VOTERS CONSIDER
CONTROVERSIAL VACATION HOMES TAX IN
ICONIC LAKE TAHOE AREA**

**COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 25**

**HARD TIMES A' COMIN', WHOEVER WINS
BY GEORGE WEIGEL**

**CALIFORNIA'S POLITICIANS NO LONGER
WORK FOR THE PEOPLE
*NOT THE GOVERNOR, NOT STATE SENATORS AND NOT
STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS*
BY KATY GRIMES**

NEW CITIES OFFER A CHANCE TO RETHINK HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKS

California would benefit from building more housing and having more experimentation with how public services are delivered

BY STEVEN GREENHUT

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THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
IT'S ELECTION DAY ON NOVEMBER 5TH

A Light Week in General - BOS and Other Regional Agencies Have No Meetings

Vote for your interest and civilization on the issues. Where do the candidates stand on these? How have they performed?



Border control

National security

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion mandates

Gasoline and diesel vehicle elimination mandates
Continuation of Diablo

Continuous tax and fee increases at all levels

Failure to zone more land for housing

Mismanagement of water – 80% goes to conservation/government programs and on out into the Ocean

Governments promoting an economy of scarcity rather than abundance

Inflation of prices due to COVID pork programs and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that injected trillions into the economy with no commensurate productivity increases

Energy independence

Restoration of the Federal income tax deduction for state and local taxes for the middle class

Need to phase back of the ever deepening penetration of the Alternate Minimum Income Tax (AMT) rate to exempt the middle class (Folks in the Hamptons, Montecito, and Martha's Vineyard could still pay)

Ability of elected officials who receive union campaign donations to vote on union contracts

Coastal Commission outrages

Crisis Climatism as a rationale for more government fees, regulations, taxes, and industry suppression

Out of control expenditures on the homelessness

Promotion of families, homes, our culture, virtue, and patriotism

Personal security

Rule of law

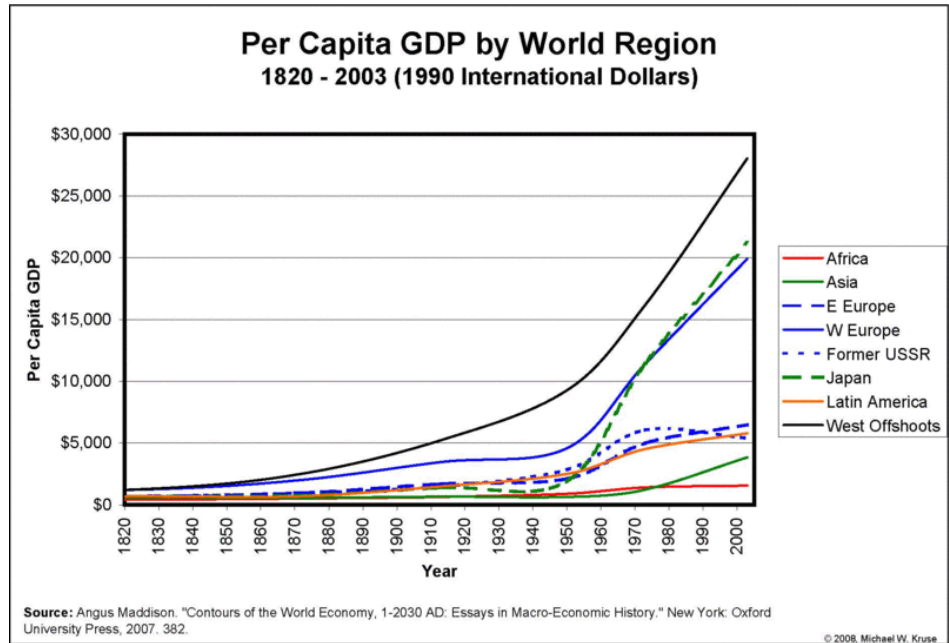
Regulatory efficiency

Limited government

Private property

Capitalism

Liberty



The statistical evidence is irrefutable.

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, Not Scheduled

There is only one meeting scheduled for November. It is set for November 12, 2024. It is the only Board meeting scheduled for the month of November.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, October 29, 2024 (Completed)

Item1 - Introduction of an ordinance implementing the County Fee Schedule "A" for Calendar Year 2025 and Fee Schedule "B" for Fiscal Year 2025-26. Hearing date set for November 12, 2024. This item constitutes early notice and introduction of the fee increases for 2025. The actual hearing will take place on November 12, 2024.

For years the County has had a policy of charging fees for services, permits, and fines, that cover the costs of providing those functions.

Budget Policy 21: Cost Recovery Through Fees

"Utilize fees to recover costs where reasonable and after all cost saving options have been explored. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. County departments will review fees annually to ensure that they meet statutory requirements, fall within the range of fees being charged by comparator counties and achieve cost recovery."

This came about decades ago, as governmental costs outstripped the natural growth of taxes. The fad has been a boon to governments, as they have no real immediate competition. Moreover, in California, most are so desperate for increased funds that just about all of the counties and cities raise fees every year. It is not like Santa Barbara County is going to suddenly lower its permit fees to outcompete SLO County for new homes and businesses. SB County could care less. In fact, many cities and counties like Santa Barbara County actually don't want any new development. Thus, there is no market discipline to hold our costs lower. Moreover, governments don't have annual sales. Everything is last year's cost plus.

The Supervisors are very relaxed about the fees because no one ever complains. Bruce Gibson repeatedly asserts that the public is quite satisfied with the fees because no business organizations other than the Home Builders and COLAB ever complain. If the 7 Chambers of Commerce in the County, the Contractors Association, retailers, vintners, restaurants, and the hospitality industry would show up on November 12th and point out some of the problems, it could help. The Board letter states that in the aggregate, the fee increases add \$1million to the current \$54.8 million.

We will report on the details before the November hearing.

Item 2 - Request to 1) approval of a Contract Agreement with AECOM in the amount of \$504,076 to provide sustainability and decarbonization plan consulting services; and 2) authorize a budget adjustment in the amount of \$200,000 to Airport Enterprise Fund 42502 Services and Supplies, by 4/5 vote. The Board approved the agreement unanimously. Several asserted that it would result in savings in utility bills. They know the CO₂ savings assertion is a red herring.

Background: The Airport Department proposed to expend \$500,000 on a consultant who will develop an Airport CO₂ reduction plan. The reason provided for doing this is that along with other Federal agencies, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is required to undertake activities to reduce CO₂. In turn the FAA is the major Federal grant funder to municipal airports. SLO, of course, wishes to meet requirements over time and remain eligible for millions in grants that it receives.

There does not seem to be any data about how much CO₂ SLO Airport operations generate. It is possible that the consultant will develop this information. However, the County has already spent millions on climate action plans and various energy assessments, and has required each department to reduce CO₂. Accordingly, you would think that there would be some quantitative definition of the problem in the write-up.

There is also redundancy implicit in the program, as California has already mandated total carbon free electrical supply by 2040. In effect, this one, which is likely to be the largest, has already been dealt with. In fact, if the State were honest, it would recognize that PG&E is already 80% carbon free if it would count Diablo in PG&E's Power Content Label. Exactly what is the marginal benefit of this project?

The study will focus on electrical energy, natural gas, water, refuse, and other sources. Of course, even if the Airport were able to eliminate all CO₂, it would be an infinitesimal amount when compared with US and California totals, not to mention China and India. In that regard, the whole effort is highly symbolic and hypocritical.

If people were really sincere about reducing CO₂, they would stop flying on vacations all over the world to places like Europe, Polynesia, the Caribbean, and Cabo. You would think that all the people who want to save the world from CO₂ destruction would stop flying, as it is actually a rich civilization luxury of high end consumption. Only 10% of the world's population flies. The rest are too poor.

Of course the consultant will develop a series of remedies that will cost much more money.

The elephant in the room: Note that commercial aircraft burn a type of kerosene known as Jet A, which reportedly contributes about 2% of worldwide CO₂.¹



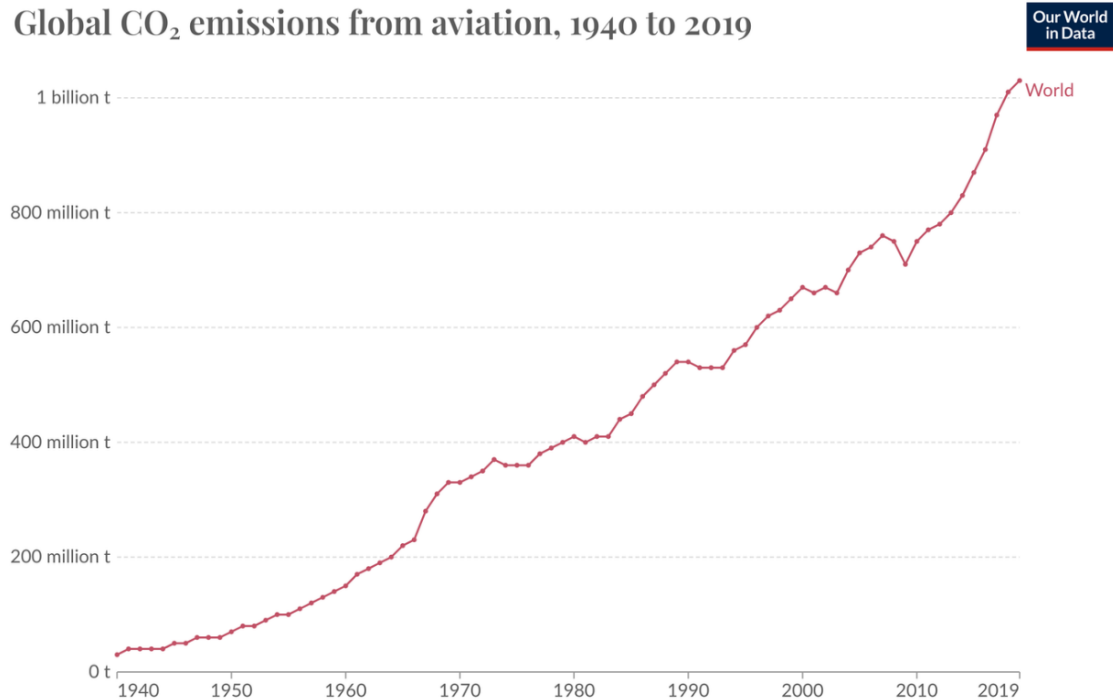
First 737 in regular service to land at the Airport

¹ The two most common types of jet fuel are Jet A and Jet A-1. However, there are other grades of jet fuel available as well:

- Jet A-1 is a type of kerosene-grade fuel commonly used in turbine-engined aircraft, with specific standards including a flash point minimum of 38 degrees Celsius and a freeze point maximum of -47 degrees Celsius, and it's readily available internationally.
 - Jet A, similar to Jet A-1 but with a higher freeze point maximum, is primarily found in the USA.
 - Jet B, covering naphtha and kerosene fractions, is less common due to its higher flammability but is used in frigid climates. Jet B comprises 30% kerosene and 70% gasoline. However, this fuel type is highly flammable and challenging to handle, with most operators eschewing its use except for military or specific commercial missions. However, Jet B remains available in climates where the risk of fuel freezing is very high, such as northern Canada or Alaska.

The first Boeing 737-800 to provide regular passenger service to San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport. Flights to and from Seattle. David Middlecamp

Global CO₂ emissions from aviation, 1940 to 2019



Data source: Pre-1990 data from Lee et al. (2021); 1990 onwards from Bergero et al. (2023) OurWorldInData.org/transport | CC BY
Note: Does not include non-CO₂ forcings and additional warming impacts at altitude.

Check out the article below by [Vyte Klisauskaite](#) in the August 31, 2024 Simple Flying.

Net Zero By 2050: 3 Obstacles Aviation Has To Overcome To Meet Its Sustainability Goal

SUMMARY

- Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) holds potential but faces availability and cost challenges.
- Slow technological advancement limits the availability of fuel-efficient aircraft in the near future. Addressing consumer flying behavior is important to meeting net-zero emissions goals.

The aviation industry as a whole has pledged to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Achieving this goal is one of the industry's biggest challenges, as it requires a shift from well-established practices to new ones, such as adopting alternative fuels and technologies and changing consumer behavior.

In the latest news, Air New Zealand, which pledged to reach net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 and achieve some of these targets by 2030, has already scrapped the plans.

The carrier cited a lack of political support, limited aircraft technologies, and a shortage of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

Indeed, the industry has launched many green initiatives, which are believed to make aviation environmentally friendly within the next two decades.

However, with temperatures hitting record highs this year, the industry appears to be well behind in achieving its goals, especially considering the strict and slow regulatory nature of the sector. This article will examine three obstacles aviation has to overcome to meet its environmental objectives.

Sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)

The aviation sector has bet on SAF achieving net-zero by 2050. SAF is an alternative jet fuel produced from various sources (feedstocks), including waste oils and fats, green and municipal waste, and non-food crops.

While reaching this goal will require a combination of methods, SAF is expected to account for 65% of this, followed by 19% from carbon offsets and capture, 13% from new technology, and 3% from new infrastructure, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). While the utilization of SAF looks promising, the SAF market has certain shortcomings. These boil down to two main issues:

- Availability
- High costs

Even though the industry is trying to scale up SAF production, the market is still facing and will continue to face issues related to its availability.

According to the IATA, SAF production is expected to triple to 1.875 billion liters in 2024, accounting for just 0.53% of aviation's fuel needs and 6% of renewable fuel capacity.

Also, the overall expansion of the commercial fleet with aircraft being delivered today is likely to remain in service for the next two decades. This means enormous volumes of SAF will be needed soon.

Additionally, the need for more availability and investments in the production of SAF will drive costs. The high cost of SAF could significantly increase airline ticket prices, IAG CEO Luis Gallego told Simple Flying in a June 2024 interview.

Due to the need for a revenue certainty mechanism, limited SAF production in Europe forces most SAF to be imported from the US, making it expensive, Gallego explained. An IATA report revealed that SAF was priced at \$2,400 per ton in 2022, approximately 2.5 times the price of conventional jet fuel.

To put it into perspective, the Boeing 737-800 aircraft, a workhorse of many airlines worldwide, burns approximately 3,200 liters of conventional jet fuel per hour, as per Epic Flight Academy .

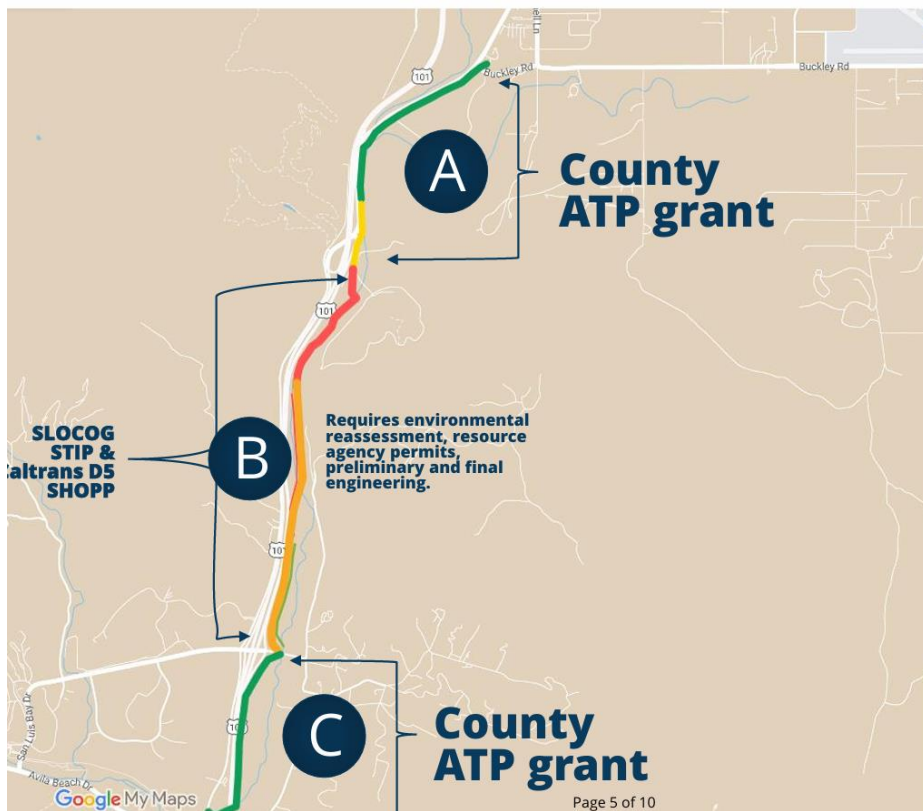
Vyte is an aviation journalist with over four years of experience in the field. Before joining the Simple Flying team, she worked with various aviation media outlets and oversaw check-in

operations at an international airport. Holding a degree in Sinology, Vyte's reporting mainly focuses on Asian and Eastern European markets. Based in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Item 15 - Request to receive an update on the status and give staff direction on options to proceed with the Bob Jones Pathway Gap Closure Project in order to meet the grant funding timeline for the Bob Jones Pathway from the Octagon Barn to Ontario Road Project, Avila. The Board approved authorization for the staff to attempt a last ditch effort to secure State approval of a new route for a portion of the trail. The vote was 3/1/1 with Gibson, Ortiz-Legg , and Paulding in favor. Arnold opposed, and Peschong recused. The Background section below summarizes the situation.

Background: The item presented a new solution to the Bob Jones Trail right of way acquisition dilemma. Essentially, it assigns various different types of funding to specific segments of the proposed trail. It would allow the trail to be partially rerouted to avoid the route over the holdout property owner's ranch, while at the same time using alternate funding for that portion of the new route that is ineligible for the \$18 million State grant. The Board letter does a nice job of integrating past history and current issues while explaining the complicated situation.

Preferred Segment Approach



Project Delivery Objective:

Deliver **A** and **C** using the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Active Transportation Grant funds (\$14.9M)

Timeline for **A** and **C** **must** achieve RTL by September 2025.

B to proceed on separate timeline; target of Aug 2027 RTL.

The project is up against the existing grant deadline and could be rescinded. The process to obtain various approvals and completed revised engineering and design work is severely time constrained.

Next Steps

- *November: Submit request to CTC for January meeting²*
- *November - January:*
- *Continue with ROW acquisition*
- *SLOCOG design work by Wallace Group (95% submittal end of January)
January 30/31 CTC Meeting: approval or denial of phases*
- *Denial: ATP grant funded efforts officially end*
- *Approval: Submit ready to construct documents, for first phase, to Caltrans by (fill in date here)
(Plans, Specs, Estimate, and Right of Way)*
- *March: CTC approval of project • Allocate construction funding based on Caltrans recommendation*

The Deeper Issues

- There is one land owner who will not sell a right of way to the County.
- The County's Parks Plan specifically states that the County will not use condemnation to acquire trails.
- Condemnation requires a 4/5 vote.
- Supervisors Arnold and Peschong, as a matter of principal, refuse to vote for condemnation even though they support the trail.
- The trail is widely popular and has been planned and worked on for decades.
- At the same time there is a growing segment of the population that is sick and tired of being strong armed by the government, even as overall societal conditions decline, taxes, increase, housing is deliberately constrained, government debt swells, officials promulgate DEI, draconian climate regulations are imposed, etc.
- Arnold and Peschong's objection is a manifestation of the growing rebellion.
- In effect, the County has partially condemned the property of those who are still suffering under the Paso Basin 2013 water extraction moratorium.
- So-called fees, such as the In Lieu Housing fee (that is actually a wealth transfer tax on new home construction), are promoted and constitute a form of partial condemnation.
- There are a number of proposals to condemn private farm and ranch land, such as de-zoning agricultural land and various proposed carbon sequestration mandates.
- The socialist left is constantly pushing proposals for confiscatory tools, such as punitive taxes on vacant urban lots, special taxes on vacant homes, special taxes on vacation homes (2nd homes), and special higher tax rates on custom homes.

Accordingly, it is not just this one instance of an owner refusing to sell an easement or 2 county Supervisors refusing to use condemnation. It must be viewed in the broader context of growing resistance to the Enviro-Socialist state. No Justice-NO Peace!

² California Transportation Commission could allow funding of the disputed section from a different pot of State funds that would be eligible for funding the new route.

MATTERS AFTER 1:30 pm

Item 18 - Hearing - Adoption of the Los Osos Growth Management Ordinance and New Fees. After a lengthy and complicated staff report, the Board unanimously approved incorporating the measures required by the Coastal Commission into the Plan and Growth Management Ordinance. Other controversial matters such as the amount of the new Habitat Fee, the percentage of growth to be allowed each year, conversion of commercial space to residential, etc., will be reintroduced on December 10 2024 and parcel out over future meetings as time and complexity permit.

Cory Han, a Planning Dept. Division Manager did a great job of presenting this complex item. He was able to answer the Supervisors' questions with insight and responsiveness. At the same time he was not pushed around or intimidated. He told them things they did not want to hear with skill and diplomacy.

Even after years of working on the Plan, Growth Management Ordinance, and Habitat Conservation Plan, the Coastal Commission decided that it would not certify the plans unless the Count added even more restrictions. The staff has reviewed these and has added them to the ordinance and other documents

If approved at that hearing, the legal Los Osos Development moratorium that has existed since 1988 will be lifted. However, the number of permits will be limited to 1% of something called the **5-Year Rolling Average of Annual Basin Yield Metric**, which needs some explanation. A new mitigation fee will be imposed on any development.

Other restrictions tied to the Los Osos Conservation Plan will stop progress as well. Applicants will have to suffer a complicated waiting list.

Table 1. Annual Growth Rate based on Basin Yield Metric.

5-Year Rolling Average of Annual Basin Yield Metric	Annual Growth Rate
≤80%	1.0%
>80% to 81%	0.8%
>81% to 82%	0.6%
>82% to 83%	0.4%
>83% to 84%	0.2%
>84%	0.0%

Even the minuscule development rate proposed by the County has been cut back.

Table 2: Interim Incremental Steps for Annual Maximum Residential Growth Rate

Calendar Year	Annual Residential Growth Rate for the Los Osos Urban Area
2025	0.4%
2026	0.6%
2027	0.8%

Moreover, the Coastal Commission is smart enough to have figured out that the revenues proposed to be generated by the new fee to be implemented for the Habitat Conservation Plan will be stillborn, because no one will be able to afford these and all the other existing fees. Thus, the Commission has bullied the County staff into recommending that the County advance “jump start” funding. This would require that the County provide a \$6.4 million General Fund “loan.”

Summary of Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan Mitigation Costs and Fees ^{1, 2}			
Category	Acres ²	Planning Level Mitigation Total Costs (\$)	Percentage of Total Mitigation Costs
Mitigation Cost			
Administration (permit term)	532	16,683,835	38%
Administration (post-permit)	532	4,060,452	9%
Management and Monitoring (permit term)	386	5,892,370	14%
Management and Monitoring (post-permit)	386	6,899,673	16%
Preserve Start-Up	279	1,944,715	4%
Restoration	46	3,020,422	7%
Acquisition of Fee Title	77	4,934,145	11%
Total Cost		43,435,612	100%
Mitigation Fee Summary per Acre			
Restoration /Management/Administration Fee	532	72,435	
Habitat Protection Fee	521	9,467	
Total		81,901	
Mitigation Fee Summary per Square Foot ³			
Restoration /Management/Administration Fee	532	1.66	
Habitat Protection Fee	521	0.22	
Total		1.88	

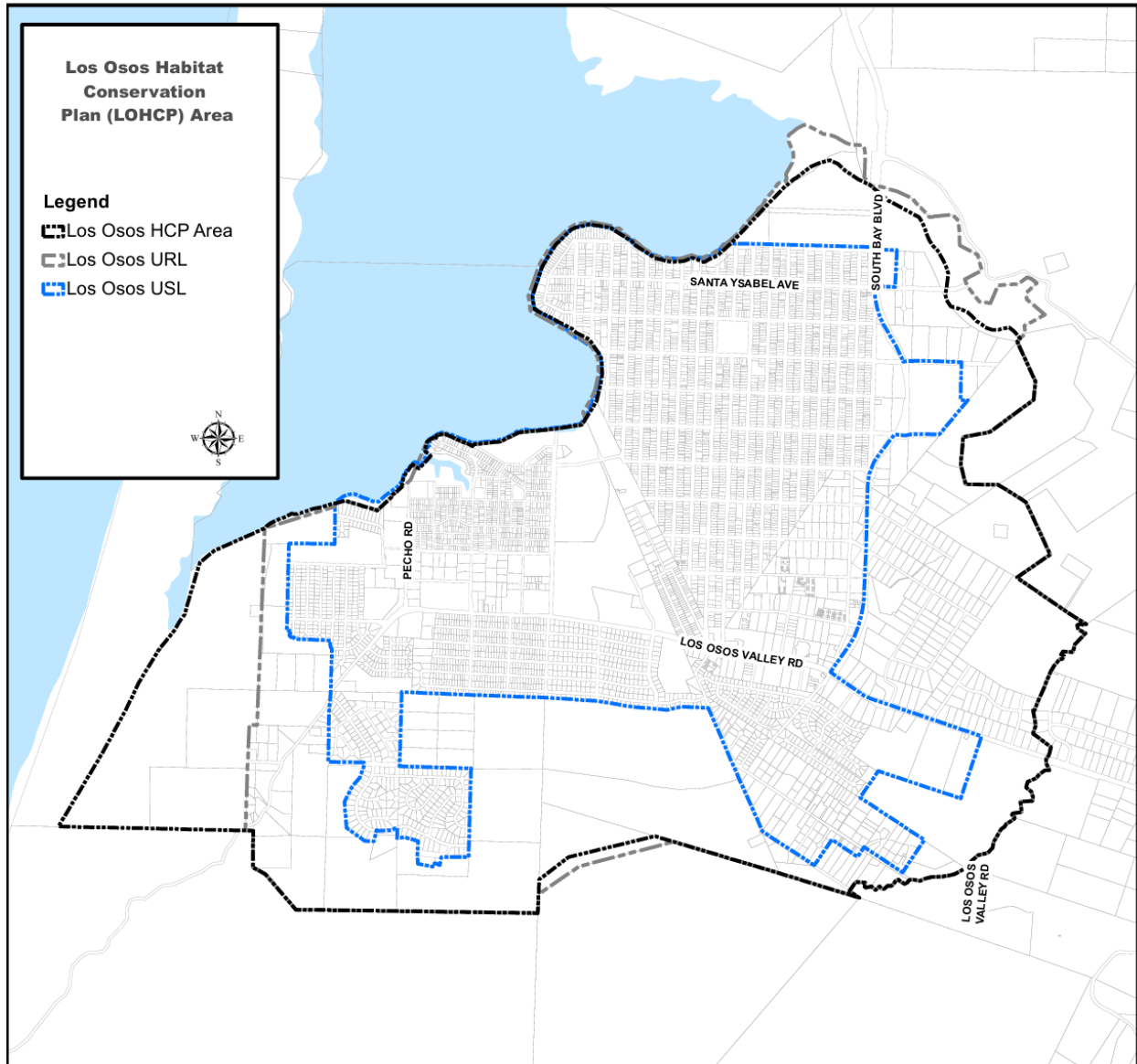
¹ The costs in this table have been updated from the December 2020 version of the LOHCP (Table 7-8). These costs are as of July 2024.

² Values may not appear correctly calculated due to rounding error. Total Costs includes County-wide Overhead.

³ Project fees will be charged by multiplying the area of ground-disturbing activities in square feet by the values listed here. In the text, fees are rounded to the nearest cent for ease of discussion. A 3.8% CPI Adjustment was applied to the fee amounts and updated as part of the fee hearing scheduled on October 29, 2024.

Someone will have to explain all this, but it appears that a 2,000 square foot house would have to pay a mitigation fee of \$3,750 on top of all the existing fees, such as the road fee, school fees, AB 1600 fees, sewer fees, Quimby fees, application processing fees, and of course all the professional consultant costs to help process the application.

Thus, after construction of a \$200 million sewer treatment plant, millions of dollars in plan development, millions for the Habitat Conservation Plan, and a 36-year moratorium, you still have a de facto moratorium, except for the wealthiest people.



The County could have bought the whole place in 1988 for less than it has spent on all of this. It could have turned it into a wetland preserve.

Item 19 - 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. No heavy policy was proposed here.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1- THE DAILY CHART: COAL FOR THE WIN POSTED ON OCTOBER 29, 2024 BY STEVEN HAYWARD IN THE DAILY CHART

Most mainstream news stories about energy are written by ignorant and/or energy-illiterate journalists, who tend to be mere stenographers for the “green energy transition” apparatchiks in government and the environmental community. One notable exception is Bloomberg’s energy reporter, [Javier Blas](#). It is worth following him on Twitter/X if you don’t have a Bloomberg subscription.

His latest piece of note is “[The Energy Transition Is Powered By — Wait for It — Coal](#).” He lays out several truth bombs:

As demand for power goes up faster than renewables can supply, [the world is turning to a time-tested source to produce it: coal](#). . . One barely hears about this in glossy descriptions of the energy transition. . .

Last week, the International Energy Agency published its annual [World Energy Outlook](#), a comprehensive review of the likely paths that supply and demand for fossil fuels and renewable sources of energy would follow up to 2050. Buried in the 398-page report was a warning: “The outlook for coal has been revised upwards particularly for the coming decade, principally as a result of updated electricity demand projections, notably from China and India.”

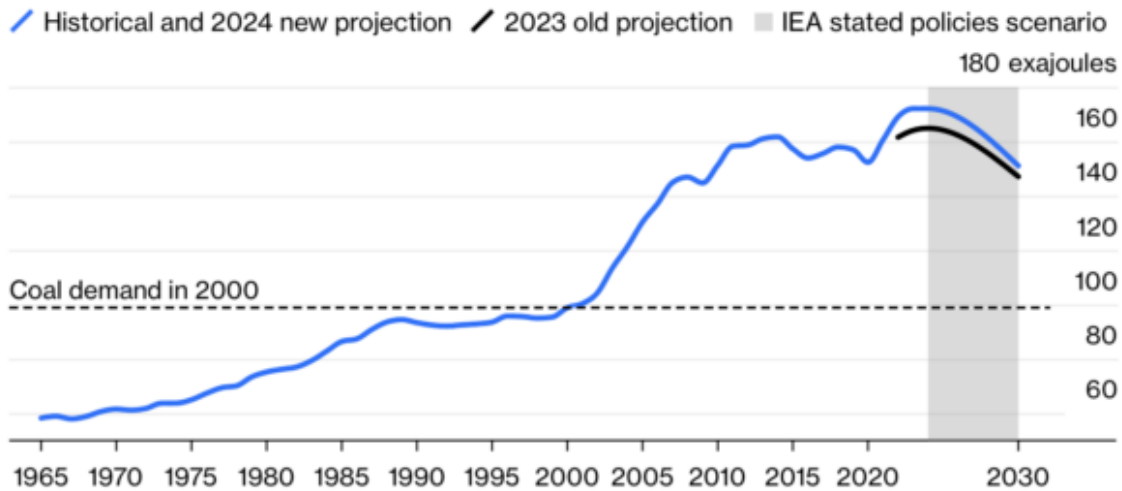
It wasn’t a small revision: Coal consumption in 2030 is now estimated 6% higher than only a year ago. That may sound small, but it amounts to adding the equivalent of the consumption of Japan, the world’s fourth-largest coal burner. By 2030, the IEA now believes coal consumption will remain higher than it was back in 2010.

Coal is needed because power use is accelerating faster than what renewable sources can provide. It’s also dependable: It doesn’t rely on weather conditions like hydropower, wind and solar do. Other than coal, only nuclear power plants and gas-fired stations can provide electricity around the clock. . .

One notable statistic: Two-thirds of the total increase in energy demand in 2023 was met by fossil fuels, according to the IEA.

King Coal Demand

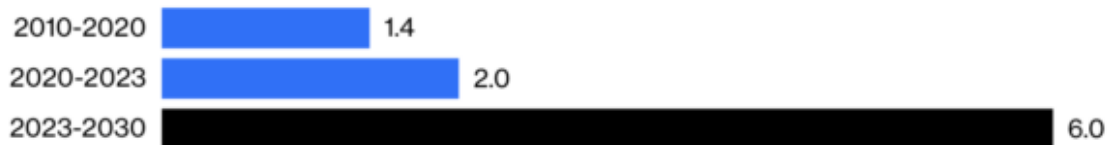
Global consumption of coal is now expected to be higher than the scenarios build only a year ago due to accelerating consumption for electricity



Source: Bloomberg calculations based on data from International Energy Agency

The Age of Electricity

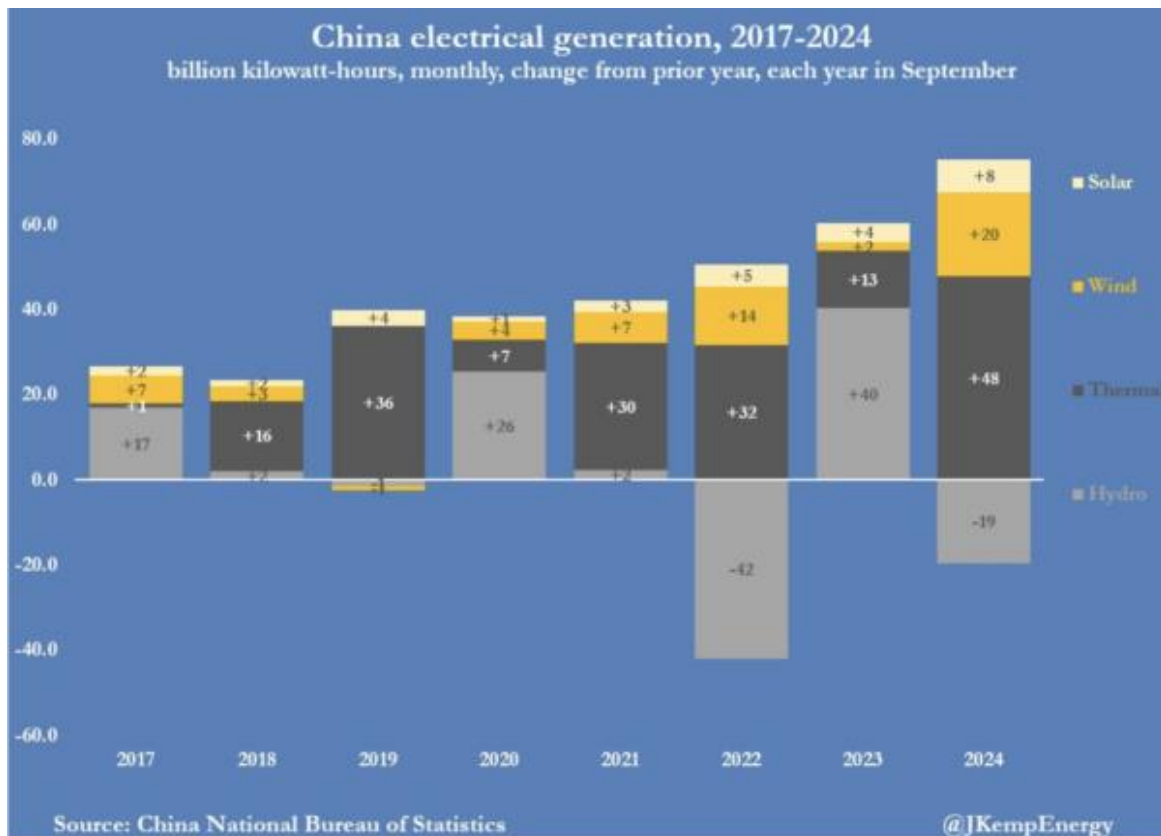
Ratio of electricity demand growth to total energy demand growth



Source: International Energy Agency

Note: Projected growth under today's policy settings

Blas point to China. How's China going in its decarbonization? Not too well.



Blas notes:

Under former US climate envoy John Kerry, America reached a sort of détente with China about the energy transition. The unwritten deal involved China giving up coal over time. With hindsight, it feels like Beijing played Kerry, who was desperate for a deal at the COP26 climate summit in 2021 in Glasgow — the first gathering for the Biden administration, when the White House wanted to burnish its green credentials after Trump. [Emphasis added.]

China wouldn't be the first adversary nation to have played Kerry, who is always desperate for a deal.

Item 2 - How to Kill a State in 5 Easy Steps: Gavin Newsom's California

Expand government, raise taxes, decrease gas supply, kill-off ag, cut water supply By Katy Grimes, October 29, 2024

As California's job openings declined 30% this year, as unemployment spiked, Governor Gavin Newsom gave fast food workers a minimum wage increase to \$20 per hour. As private sector businesses and residents have been fleeing California's high taxes and high cost of living, Newsom hired more state employees, expanding the size of state government.

California had 641,000 job openings in August, compared to 920,000 in August 2023, according to new data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed, the New York Post reported.

“Meanwhile, the year-over-year unemployment rate in September increased to 5.3% from 5% — more than a percentage point above the national rate of 4.1% and the second worst in the US, the data showed. Only Nevada had a higher jobless rate at 5.6%.”

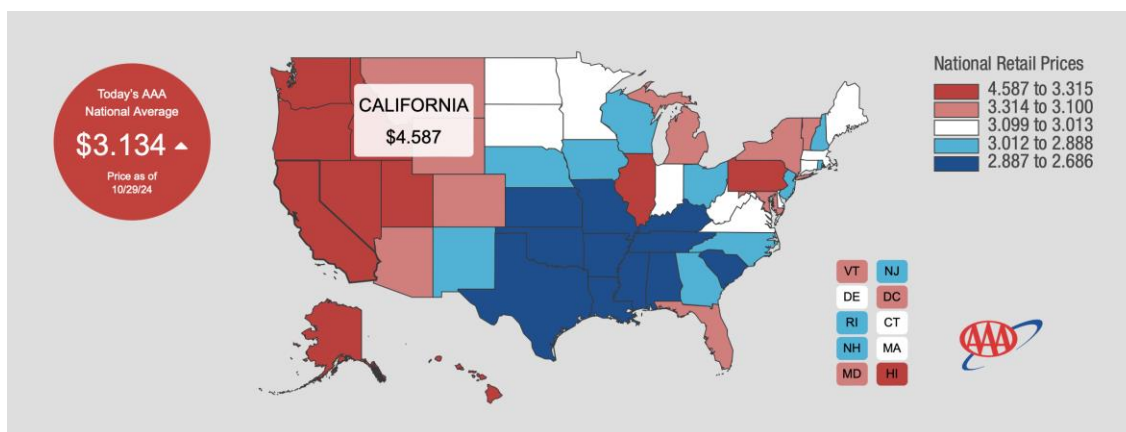
Since September 2022 – while Newsom had the state on full lockdown – California has lost a net 154,000 jobs in the private sector and gained 361,000 jobs in the public sector, according to California’s non-partisan Legislative Analyst’s Office.

A very worrisome trend, according to the LAO: “large and mounting private-sector job losses that have been offset by continued hiring in public sector (and publicly supported) fields. Since its post-pandemic peak in September 2022, California’s private sector has lost a net 154,000 jobs (1.2 percent) while the public sector has gained 361,000 jobs (7 percent).”

The LAO continues:

Nationally, Private-Sector Employment Continues to Grow. Compared to the California private-sector industries that have shown job losses since 2022, nationwide, these industries have continued to expand. The following figures highlight the divergence between California and national job growth in a few key private-sector industries. But WAIT! There’s MORE!

Californians also already pay the highest gas prices in the entire country – even higher than Hawaii, according to AAA today. While Gavin Newsom dubiously claims this is because oil companies are price gougers, the governor pushed a new law to decrease the state’s gas supply, which will clearly result in even higher gas prices at the pump.



Texans currently pay \$2.69 per average gallon of gas – Californians pay an average of \$4.59 per gallon, and over \$5.00 per gallon in many counties. That’s a difference of \$2.00+ per gallon that Californians pay a premium for. That’s \$40 additional per fill-up.

As the Globe has asked repeatedly, “If the ‘Big Oil’ companies are so greedy, why are they only greedy in California and not greedy in every state?”

In May the Globe reported that Gavin Newsom’s Air Resources Board is mandating an additional 50 cents per gallon be added to the price of gas in California in January.

Newsom is facilitating the real gas price gouging.

Newsom is also demanding more water conservation from urban users – residential homes, small, medium and large businesses.

Newsom’s State Water Resources Control Board issued statewide water restrictions recently. The title of their document even says this:

Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment of
Proposed ‘Making Conservation a California Way of
Life’ Regulation

This is a non-starter because urban water use is the smallest amount of water accounted for. Restricting even more water from urban and ag users doesn’t even move the needle, but does make a lot of lives much worse off.

And here is why: 80% of California’s water supply goes to environmental uses, 4.5% is urban use, and agriculture is only 15%.

Note: the environment (and not agriculture) gets 80% of the water in the state. Urban users – us – are being asked to conserve more when we only use 4.5% of California’s water. We and agriculture already conserve water.

Newsom’s connivance to constrict the state of water is evil – especially when there is plenty to go around.

California is one of five unique Mediterranean regions in the world (with no rain for six to eight months of the year). California produces high-value “specialty crops” including fruits, nuts, and lettuces. Many of California’s specialty crops are not grown anywhere else in the country.

Newsom is killing off California agriculture when it the number 1 state in the nation for agriculture outputs: \$51.1 billion in cash receipts, according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

As for California’s highest-in-the-nation taxes, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that he is even more giving taxpayer-funded tax breaks to Hollywood.

350 company headquarters have left California for good, and Gavin Newsom just smugly watched them go.

Gavin Newsom is killing California.

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. . This article first appeared in the California Globe of October 30, 2024.

Item 3 - Sheltering California’s Homeless Is Insanely Expensive. It Doesn’t Have To Be

In March 2023, Gavin Newsom announced that the state would help local governments address homelessness by providing funding for 1,200 “tiny homes,” which are small, prefabricated units to provide temporary housing for those in encampments. “I get it,” Newsom stated. “You want to see progress and you want to see it now.” Newsom said he wanted the tiny homes ready by the summer. Newsom meant summer of 2023. But none were ready then, nor in the summer of 2024. I am unaware of reports that even one is occupied now.

It is not just the delay that is the problem with the tiny homes plan. It is also the cost. San Jose, one of the four locations chosen for this project, will be spending \$30 million for tiny homes that will add 144 beds to an existing tiny homes site in the city, consisting of 72 single-occupancy units, which do not have plumbing, and 36 double-occupancy units, which have a bathroom but

no kitchen. The standard sizes of these units are 70 square and 120 square feet, respectively. This works out to about \$208,000 per bed and about \$278,000 per unit. (A phone call to confirm the size of the units was not returned.) Images of the 70-square-foot unit show space for a twin bed, a small desk, and two shelves, with clothes hanging below the bottom shelf.

The cost of these units also needs to include the value of the 4.4-acre plot dedicated for the tiny homes. Silicon Valley land is among the most expensive in the country. I estimate the value of this land is about \$11,400,000, based on the June 2024 sale of an adjacent property. Including the land value yields a cost of about \$254,000 per bed and about \$338,000 per unit for San Jose’s tiny homes expansion. This works out to about \$3,900 per square foot.

To put these estimated costs in perspective, note that the value of the median US single-family home is about \$180 per square foot; it’s about \$485 per square foot for a California single-family home. The cost per square foot of a tiny home exceeds these values by factors of about twenty-two and eight, respectively.

So, why does such bare-bones shelter cost about the same per square foot as the most expensive housing in the country, such as Jeff Bezos’s \$79 million, 1.9 acre estate on a private Florida island, or more than twice as much as the Beverly Hills estate currently being purchased by Jennifer Lopez?

The units described above are considerably more expensive than alternative tiny homes. For example, the cost of the 70-square-foot unit without a bathroom is about \$227 per square foot. In contrast, manufactured housing, which is also factory-produced, costs only about \$87 per square foot and includes bathrooms and a kitchen. A 500-square-foot unit—seven times larger than the 70-square-foot unit, and which includes a bathroom—is \$19,200, and there is a 380-square-foot model from Walmart that includes a bathroom and a kitchen for \$15,900. These units are significantly larger and much less expensive than the 120-square-foot unit built by one of the state’s vendors for \$48,500. And there are many other tiny home options that are much less costly.

The total cost of these units will be about \$2.9 million. But the budgeted cost for purchasing and installing the homes—just those categories in the budget identified as “modular”—adds up to about \$10,820,000.

This cost doesn’t include any fees outside of purchase or installation. It doesn’t include the separate categories of management fees, overhead, building site preparation, cleanup, water, sewer, or electricity. And many tiny homes are 99 percent pre-assembled and are advertised as being able to be finished by a do-it-yourself homeowner. So, why is it so expensive?

Like almost all projects contracted with state government or local government, this project has a project labor agreement, or PLA, which is a collective bargaining agreement between building trade unions and contractors. A PLA governs the terms and conditions of employment for all workers—union and nonunion—on a construction project. One developer I spoke with noted that costs on a recent development in Los Angeles that required a PLA were about 50 percent higher

than non-PLA projects. These high costs reflected not just the higher cost of labor but the costs of compliance in dealing with union work rules.

There are other seemingly expensive budget categories, including \$4.3 million for design fees. It is hard to understand just what would be so expensive to design on a site with existing tiny homes. I showed the budget to a developer who specializes in low-income housing in the state. He remarked that the budget was “out of control” and was “unacceptable.”

Getting the homeless off the streets and into shelters is necessary. But the process of creating small emergency shelters shouldn't cost anywhere close to this much. The big picture is simple: find low-cost locations, preferably those that are relatively flat and can reasonably tie into existing utilities, and purchase cost-effective units. It appears the state is failing at this, to the point that the per-square-foot cost is insanely expensive.

Taxpayers deserve to know why the state is making such expensive choices, but they have no idea how their money is being spent. So, what about an office of taxpayer advocacy that monitors state and local governments, which is independent of any government agency, whose responsibility is to inform voters of the fiscal decisions and efficiency of government, one which would be the agent of taxpayers, much as the state's Legislative Analyst's Office provides fiscal advice to the state's legislators? Without a much stronger presence of taxpayer advocacy within state and local government, we will just see more and more of this, and we'll burn through funding that could do so much more than it is.

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Item 4 - California voters consider controversial vacation homes tax in iconic Lake Tahoe area. Story by HAVEN DALEY and JANIE HAR, Associated Press, October 31, 2024.



Homeowner Kelly O'Hare stands on her balcony overlooking South Lake Tahoe, Calif. on Friday, Oct. 18, 2024, where voters will decide whether to approve Measure N, which will mandate a tax to homeowners who leave their homes vacant for more than half the year. (AP Photo/Haven Daley)

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. (AP) — Owners of vacation homes in Northern California's South Lake Tahoe could face a significant tax increase if voters in the mountain resort town approve a measure on Tuesday's ballot that pits [affordable housing](#) against private property rights.

South Lake Tahoe, which sits on the shores of the iconic alpine lake, has about 7,000 vacant homes — 44% of the city's estimated housing units — according to the 2022 American Community Survey. Measure N would levy a flat [\\$3,000 tax](#) on homes that are vacant 182 days within a calendar year.

The tax would increase to \$6,000 for every subsequent year the home remains empty for half the year.

The town is [the latest across the United States](#) with a growing debate about the impact of vacation properties. Critics say vacant second homes have worsened the nation's housing crisis by contributing to a shortage of affordable rental properties, especially in pricey resort places like South Lake Tahoe.

[Supporters](#) of the measure say they want to encourage homeowners to rent to workers or pay into a fund for housing, roads and transportation projects. They say the city is [shedding families](#) as businesses struggle to hire staff in a region with little land available for housing development.

Kelly Bessem works at least 50 hours a week, supplementing her main job as a field scientist in hydrology with work as a snowboard instructor to make ends meet. She's currently sleeping in her car to buy a house in Markleeville, which is a 40-minute drive to South Lake Tahoe.

I've done all the things I'm supposed to, but it's still to the point where I just squeeze by," Bessem said.

Nancy Dunn, a homeowner who has lived part-time in South Lake Tahoe since 2018, [opposes](#) the measure as unfair and un-American.

"This is my home, and I want to be able to come back to it when I want to, and come and go as I feel," Dunn said as she stocked her house with firewood earlier this month. "The American way is to have the right to own property, and to do with it as you please."

The California Association of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors have contributed a combined \$1 million to defeat the measure in a town with only 12,000 registered voters.

While still rare in the U.S., more places are considering an empty homes or vacant homes tax to address workforce housing shortages by tapping underused homes to expand the long-term rental market.

[In Hawaii](#), the Honolulu City Council is trying to pass an empty homes tax, its [third attempt since 2018](#), while the Colorado Association of Ski Towns is seeking legislation allowing cities and counties to ask voters to approve vacant homes taxes.

Margaret Bowes, the Colorado group's executive director, said [resort towns have few options](#) in where they can build. The lack of housing "has reached a crisis level" affecting basic services and commerce "from ski resort companies to local, small businesses," she said.

Perhaps the best known example is Vancouver, Canada, which in 2017 imposed a 1% tax on an empty home's assessed taxable value. The tax is now 3% and the city says it has generated \$142 million for affordable housing projects.

In California, San Francisco and Berkeley approved taxes on vacant properties in 2022.

Vacancy taxes can work to a limited degree in larger cities, but an empty homes tax could make a huge difference in smaller towns like South Lake Tahoe, said Shane Phillips, who manages the [Randall Lewis Housing Initiative](#) at the University of California, Los Angeles.

He did not know enough about the proposed tax to weigh in, but generally supports vacancy taxes on vacation homes in regions where housing is short. Taxes can be used to discourage harmful behavior, he said, such as taxes on cigarettes.

"And I think there's a similar argument to be made here, that people consuming multiple homes and not living in them in communities like South Lake Tahoe ... it's actually doing harm to other people," Phillips said.

Measure N has roiled the tiny community, which with about 21,000 year-round residents is the most populous city ringing Lake Tahoe and a popular weekend destination. It is 188 miles (300 kilometers) northeast of San Francisco.

The city has a median household income of \$68,000, lower than the \$95,000 median in California. The median sales price of a home was \$750,000 in September — up from \$427,000 five years ago, according to Redfin.

Modeled on Berkeley's [empty homes tax](#), the city projects that the proposed tax will [raise up to \\$8 million](#) in its first year and up to \$20 million a year afterwards.

Amelia Richmond, co-founder of Locals for Affordable Housing, the group that collected the signatures to get the issue on the ballot, said it is an opportunity to ensure South Lake Tahoe does not go the way of other mountain towns with even higher vacancy rates.

Property owners would self-report each year, although documentation may be required. There are exceptions to the occupancy requirement, such as homes undergoing renovation.

To avoid the tax, owners of vacation homes could sell their property, lease to a tenant year-round, or rent to seasonal travelers or workers. They can't list their homes as short-term rentals after the city voted to curtail rentals of fewer than 30 days, citing noise and the housing shortage.

Opponents say many of them scrimped and saved for modest second homes and they shouldn't be punished for the region's lack of affordable housing. They're also upset because as part-time residents, they cannot vote on the measure.

Tom Fields, 85, splits his time between a three-bedroom house that he describes as nothing special other than its location on Lake Tahoe and a place in central Oregon.

"This is crazy and I don't even know if it's constitutional," he said. "When you purchase the land and they start taking away rights, that's when people get upset."

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

HARD TIMES A' COMIN', WHOEVER WINS

BY GEORGE WEIGEL

Shortly after taking office, British foreign secretary David Lammy [described](#) the "nature crisis" as a greater threat than terrorism because the nature crisis is "more fundamental," "systemic," "pervasive," and "accelerating towards us at pace." The Rt. Hon. Member for Tottenham was right. He just had the wrong "nature" in mind.

For the fundamental, systemic, pervasive, and accelerating crisis of the West is a crisis of *human* nature: a crisis in our understanding of the human person, not an environmental crisis. The human nature crisis is at the root of virtually every deep division in Western societies. Unresolved, it could lead to the dissolution of the free societies of the twenty-first century.

Thus Vice President Kamala Harris is also wrong when she says repeatedly that “there’s more that unites us than divides us.”

At one level, of course, that’s true, thankfully. The enduring decency of the American character has rarely been displayed so powerfully as it was (and is) in the massive, full-spectrum response of their neighbors to those whose lives, homes, and businesses were destroyed when Hurricane Helene ripped through western North Carolina last month. Those responding neighbors were Asheville-area wokesters, Appalachian MAGA-types, and just about everything in between. Suddenly and instinctively, none of that difference made any difference: There were people, fellow Americans, in serious distress, and it was morally incumbent upon everyone to pitch in and help. I don’t recall so moving a display of solidarity-the-virtue since 9/11.

Yet that inspiring interlude cannot and should not mask the fact that we are a deeply divided country and that the divisions are expressions of the human nature crisis.

There are some among us—and they often occupy the cultural high ground—who insist that there is no such thing as a “human nature,” no givens in the human condition; that freedom is a matter of doing whatever I like, so long as “no one else gets hurt”; that the satisfaction of desires is the full meaning of “human rights,” meaning that virtually all human relationships are transactional. And because of all that, a six-month-old unborn child can be “terminated” at will, just as someone facing a terminal disease can terminate himself with a physician’s assistance.

There are others among us who believe that, as human beings, we bear a unique dignity and worth; that there are certain deep truths inscribed in the world and in us; that living those truths facilitates personal happiness and social solidarity; that a mature and ennobling freedom, as lived by adults rather than by willful toddlers (and their chronologically mature counterparts), is not a matter of “I did it *my way*,” but rather a matter of knowing the right thing, doing the right thing for the right reason, and doing the right thing with regularity. And because of all that, innocent human beings, from conception until natural death, deserve to be cherished in life and protected in law.

The great human nature divide thus expresses itself in diametrically opposed concepts of what it means to be a free person and a free people. Moreover, the human nature divide in our national politics has metastasized, such that both major parties are committed—in varying degrees—to the debased notion of freedom as personal autonomy in service to immediate gratification. This false idea of human nature has impacts far beyond life issues.

It turns our public life into an auction in which candidates vie to see who can bribe more special interests, using the public purse as a political piggy bank. It distracts attention from the fiscal obscenity of an Everest of mounting debt, which could bankrupt the country, place terrible burdens on future generations, and jeopardize our national security (as when China calls in all those IOUs). It contributes to the vulgarization of our culture, which in turn contributes to the further degradation of our politics—compare the funny but entirely civil exchange between candidates Kennedy and Nixon at the 1960 Al Smith Memorial Dinner in New York with the tawdry show put on by candidates Harris and Trump at that event this past October 17.

So yes, we have a “nature crisis,” but it’s far more about us than it is about trees and oceans. It’s about who we are and how our idea of who we are ennobles or debases our common life. Given

an ever-darkening international landscape and the pandering of both parties to our baser instincts, the realistic conclusion is that whoever wins the White House, hard times are coming.

The response to that must be a deep renewal of our political culture, rooted in the truth about the human person.

George Weigel's column "The Catholic Difference" is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver. George Weigel is Distinguished Senior Fellow of Washington, D.C.'s Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies. This article appeared in First Things on October 20, 2024.

**CALIFORNIA'S POLITICIANS NO LONGER
WORK FOR THE PEOPLE
*NOT THE GOVERNOR, NOT STATE SENATORS AND NOT
STATE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS*
BY KATY GRIMES**

California's politicians no longer work for the people – not the Governor, not state Senators and not State Assembly members. They work against the people, refusing to pass or enforce laws that make our lives better.

Look around you – you see drug addicted vagrants living in parks, on city streets, along rivers and bike trails. You see brazen retail theft when you shop at Target, Macy's, your neighborhood pharmacy, and convenience stores. You see dangerous highways and daily car crashes. You see run-down, failing public schools.

Do you feel safe in your neighborhood park? Do you feel safe in the parking lot at your grocery store? Is it safe for your child to walk to school?

Can you afford the home or apartment you are renting? How about your PG&E, SCE or SDGE electric and gas bills? How about filling your car with gas – too expensive for a full tank? What about those grocery bills that have more than doubled? And if you have growing kids, you can't scrimp on food.

What are California's politicians doing about any of this?

They are passing legislation to restore news media access to California prisons to the level it was in the 1990s, before the state restricted access. (SB 254 by Sen. Nancy Skinner, D-Berkeley)

They are removing the sunset on the small employer family leave mediation program to make it permanent. (AB 2011 by Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer Kahan, D-Orinda)

Protecting abortion clinics by increasing penalties for harassing patients seeking abortions as well as abortion doctors and nurses. (AB 2099 by Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer Kahan, D-Orinda)

They banned Plastic Bags. (SB 1053 by Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer Kahan, D-Orinda)

They passed a bill to authorize a three-year pilot program in the county of San Diego for preventative pelvic floor and core conditioning group exercises within the six to twelve-week postpartum window to help *birthing people* rebuild their pelvic floor after pregnancy. (AB 2756 by Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner, D-San Diego) Bill to authorize pharmacists to continue furnishing COVID-19 oral therapeutics to patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, without a prior prescription, until January 1, 2025. (AB 1341 by Assemblyman Marc Berman, D-Palo Alto)

They passed a bill to expand what is covered on the firearm safety certificate test to ensure that potential firearm purchases are aware of the risks associated with owning and bringing a firearm into the home. (AB 1598 by Assemblyman Marc Berman, D-Palo Alto)

They passed a bill that removes the ability of California courts to require a juvenile criminal to pay victim restitution, to pay for any crime, or to pay \$250 fine to be deposited in the county treasury, or to participate in uncompensated work programs. Instead the new law requires the minor to make amends by participating in a restorative justice program, performing community service, or participating in an educational, employment, youth development, or mental health program. (AB 1186, by Assemblywoman Mia Bonta, D – Oakland)

They passed the Menstrual Equity for All bill, which “Ensures menstrual products are readily available in California prisons.” (AB 1810 by Assemblyman Issac Bryan, D-Culver City) California media isn’t reporting on these new laws because they are actually harmful or injurious to average Californians. And none of these bills do anything to help the average California family feel safer, or help pay their exorbitant bills.

Career politicians

“Citizen representatives” turned into career politicians who won’t leave office, even when quite elderly... geriatric, in fact. Over half of the members of both the U.S. House and Senate are over age 65. Some are still quite relevant, but many are not. They have become useful idiots for their special interest funders.

In California we have term limits, which lessens the issue of lifetime geriatric office holders. But we have politicians who may leave the California Legislature, and then go back to their home counties and run for County Supervisor, or City Council, rather than getting or going back to an actual private sector job.

Republicans in California, an endangered species, can’t get any consequential legislation passed against the Democrat supermajority. So few in number, they can’t even block bad legislation – instead they have to rely on media pressure to raise public awareness to kill bad Democrat bills. Sometimes this works.

And what has California Governor Gavin Newsom been up to? Here are some headlines from the Globe’s reporting:

Gavin Newsom’s Gas Bill Pushing Venezuela-like Price and Inventory Controls on Oil Refineries

Gavin Newsom Chases Another Oil Company Out of California – Chevron and now Phillips 66.

Gov. Gavin Newsom’s \$20 Per Hour Fast-Food Minimum Wage is Tanking the Industry

Gov. Gavin Newsom Signs Dangerous Parent Secrecy Bill AB 1955

Will Gov. Gavin Newsom Face a Reckoning with His \$73B Deficit in the \$330 Billion Budget?

Here is what Gavin Newsom has been up to since being elected governor in 2019:

Doubled the drug-addicted vagrant population living on California's streets.

Created a housing shortage – doubling down on forcing cities and small towns to comply with his order to build “affordable housing.”

Cut water off to rural areas in the state; supported dam removal and hydroelectric plant removal.

Limited water deliveries to farmers and ranchers.

Raised the minimum wage so high, fast food owners and restaurant owners are forced to lay off employees.

Passed policies killing manufacturing.

Passed policies bolstering a service economy (rather than manufacturing).

Limited energy production to renewable energy only.

Limited gas and oil production creating a shortage, forcing people out of their cars and on to public transportation.

Ordered all internal combustion cars banned by 2035.

Mandated an all-electric state, including autos and trucks.

Signed bill to install thousands of floating offshore wind turbines at a cost of \$150 billion.

Legalized drugs.

Legalized sex with minors.

Legalized abortion up to baby's birth.

Destroyed the public education system by watering down actual disciplines of math and English, while sending his own children to private schools.

Promotes affirmative action, racial preferences over merit.

Creates fake crises – climate change, reparations.

Infringed on the people's right to keep and bear arms by passing laws which nibble around the edges of the 2nd Amendment, creating de facto gun control.

Stopped prosecuting crime.

Decriminalized certain crimes, resulting in emptying out state prisons.

Raised corporate taxes to discourage businesses from expanding.

Raised taxes and fees on public services and energy.

Raised income taxes on all income brackets.

Made it easier for local governments to raise taxes.

Tried to impose a wealth tax.

Supported initiative to radically alter property taxes for inherited homes.

Forced doctors to comply with state medical directive, and punish those who refuse to comply.
(Court overturned this law)

Has allowed millions of illegal immigrants into the state.

Provides free health care and welfare payments to illegal immigrants.

Allows illegal immigrants to vote in local elections.

Expanded the size of government by hiring hundreds of thousands of state workers.

Created more labor unions jobs by expanding state government.

Encouraged public schools to convince kids they are another gender; provide secret counseling to those kids; shelter kids from parents.

Has limited media access in State Capitol; reward compliant media.

Remember, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the compliant Democrat Supermajority in the California Legislature closed your children's schools, shut down your businesses, ordered your churches closed, cancelled holidays, masked your kids, mandated Covid shots to go back to work and school... while they exempted themselves from these mandates.

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 California Globe of November 1, 2024.

NEW CITIES OFFER A CHANCE TO RETHINK HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKS

California would benefit from building more housing and having more experimentation with how public services are delivered

BY STEVEN GREENHUT



(DPST/Newscom)

The average age of an owner-occupied house in California is 45 years, which is a reminder that your home was probably built relatively recently. I was an adult when my "historic" midcentury ranch was first sold (for around \$50,000 including the lot). It was part of a futuristic neighborhood of 200-plus properties plopped in a farm field. Everything around me—including our city's Gold Rush-era downtown—was once a fallow field.

Sorry for being Captain Obvious, but many people seem to have forgotten that our cities, suburbs and small towns were the product of ingenuity, investment, creativity and construction. It's not a coincidence the American Dream of homeownership has slipped away—with home prices in California now topping \$900,000—after years of no-growth rules, urban-growth boundaries and other limitations on development.

The Legislative Analyst's Office nine years ago pointed to a problem that's only gotten worse: chronic underbuilding, especially in coastal communities. Developers could easily meet the demand. But government meddling—from voter-backed slow-growth restrictions to state environmental rules—makes it inordinately costly and difficult for them to do so.

In recent years, the housing crisis has gotten so troubling that even California's progressive lawmakers have tried to address it by allowing streamlined "by right" development approvals. They've got the right idea, but they're steeped in an urbanist ideology that despises car-centered suburbia. As a result, they've only loosened rules for the high-density projects that few people prefer.

The state is at a crossroads, but fortunately some of its wealthiest and most-innovative residents are crafting plans to do what previous Americans have always done: build new cities. It's uncertain whether they can break through the Byzantine slow-growth regulatory process the state has developed in the last 50 years, but at least someone is trying to shake up the development process.

The highest-profile new-city proposal is known as California Forever. Its East Solano Plan would create a 50,000-plus population city on ranch land between the San Francisco Bay Area and

Sacramento. The project, spearheaded by Bay Area tech moguls, envisions a new downtown with traditional walkable neighborhoods. The proposal became national news after The New York Times reported the group was quietly buying acreage.

After tepid public support, the project's backers pulled the November ballot measure. They haven't given up, but instead have agreed to delay the project and work with the county to secure rezoning through the normal, life-sucking county entitlement process.

But two other new-city projects have gained recent attention. As The Sacramento Bee reported, Sutter County supervisors gave the go-ahead on the next phase of groundwork for a portion of Sutter Pointe—a proposal that would build around 17,500 new homes north of Sacramento in what the newspaper refers to as "effectively a new city." It's not as gee-whiz as the East Solano Plan, but it's also more likely to move ahead quickly.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco Chronicle reports on a new project in north Sonoma County called Esmeralda—something it calls "a future tech utopia with the look of a rustic Italian village." It sounds like just another upscale pseudo-European village in wine country, but so what? California needs more housing and experimentation of all kinds. Oddly enough, the Chronicle reports a somewhat favorable reaction among many locals.

The Chronicle quoted a scoffing social-media post from a journalist who was "referencing the vision among some in tech for a decentralized digital-first community that seeks to replace existing institutions and systems of governance." I'm stunned by the degree to which critics fear efforts that might challenge encrusted local institutions. That's one of the most compelling parts of the new-city movement.

New cities offer not only more housing but the possible rethinking of local government. We've all read endless stories about homelessness run amok, urban crime, failing public schools, crumbling road infrastructure, outsized pensions that consume public budgets, lousy transit systems, and multibillion-dollar municipal governments that can barely manage to build a public toilet. Is it absurd to try better ways to provide public services?

In some developing countries, entrepreneurs have created Special Economic Zones that bypass corrupt public agencies with self-governing cities. They mostly have been successes, creating businesses and housing—and offering modern infrastructure in places where it's a rarity. Our country has had successful privatized governments.

New-city developers in California have largely been mum on their governance plans (and likely envision some traditional model), but it's still worth thinking about the possibilities. And a critic might say these new cities aren't much different than the master-planned communities that have long been part of California's landscape (although they use different buzzwords). Again, so what?

As California Forever explains, "all cities were new cities." Our country long has encouraged new developments of every type, which have provided the neighborhoods and homes we live in today. It's time to start encouraging them again.

This column was first published in The Orange County Register.

ADDENDUM I

NOVEMBER STATE PROPOSITION RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposition	VOTE	WHAT IS IT?	WHY?
Prop 2	NO	Piles on \$20 Billion to existing out-of-control State Debt	Additional State Debt on top of existing current fiscal year debt of \$40 Billion and \$10 Billion in Local Debt for new school construction also on the ballot,
Prop 3	NO	Repeals Prop 8 same sex marriage ban	Unnecessary in view of federal court ruling
Prop 4	NO	Piles on another \$20 Billion to State Debt	See comment above on Prop 2.
Prop 5	NO!	Guts Prop 13's key 2/3ds vote	Adds housing and "infrastructure" projects to local bond measures that would be subject to lower 55% approval threshold.
Prop 6	NO!	Severely restricts requiring prison inmates to work	Slavery was prohibited after 1863. This would allow prisoners to refuse work requirements.
Prop 32	NO!	State minimum wage of \$18/ hour. Job killer that will bankrupt many small businesses.	State minimum wage is currently \$14.50/hour. State law imposing \$25/hour minimum wage for restaurant and health care workers already is killing jobs as well as bankrupting the restaurant industry and public and private hospitals.
Prop 33	NO!	Will destroy rental housing industry, worsen current state housing shortage, and put middle class home ownership out of reach.	Eliminates current state law exceptions to statewide and local rent control laws.
Prop 34	YES	Prevents Foundation that uses federal drug subsidies from misusing funds to promote apartment rent control	AIDS Health Care Foundation has spent hundreds of millions on sponsoring unrelated state and local rent control initiatives.
Prop 35	NO	Eliminates Legislature's discretion to use MediCal tax funds to cover general fund budget deficits	Permanently allocates existing tax from use for low income medical care.
Prop 36	YES!	Tough measures to combat retail theft and fentanyl possession and sales.	Also mandates fixed prison sentences for retail theft crimes based on property and mandates drug treatment for multiple offenses and higher penalties if treatment is rejected.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

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

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

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