

# COLAB

San Luis Obispo County



The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

## WEEKLY UPDATE SEPTEMBER 22 - 28, 2024

# COLAB

San Luis Obispo County



**Wednesday, October 23rd**  
**5:30—7:30 PM**  
**Thousand Hills Ranch**  
**550 Thousand Hills Rd.**  
**Pismo Beach, CA**

# FALL FORUM

Thousand Hills Rd. is off of Price Canyon. Please use caution, as the road is somewhat hidden around a bend in the road and it comes up on you suddenly. Once on Thousand Hills Road, follow the road for approximately one mile to the red roofed barn on right!

**Featuring:**  
**INSURANCE CRISIS - THE REPORTS, THE REASON, AND THE REALITY...HOW DO WE FIX IT?**

**HEAR FROM OUR INDUSTRY EXPERTS, DAVE BELMONT ADLER BELMONT GROUP, TYLER RILEY RILEY & RILEY, AND DARREN CAESAR HUB.**



Dave Belmont



Tyler Riley



Darren Caesar

**BEER, LOCAL FINE WINES, AND HOT & COLD APPETIZERS WILL BE SERVED**

**RSVP appreciated by October 16th — there is no charge for this informative event!**  
**Email: [colabslo@gmail.com](mailto:colabslo@gmail.com) or call (805) 548-0340**



**THIS WEEK  
SEE PAGE 5**

**SLO PENSION TRUST**

**ON TRACK TO HIT OR BETTER THE 6.75% ASSUMPTION RATE FOR  
THE YEAR**

**SLO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**

**COUNTY COSTS ALLOCATED FOR TAKEOVER OF OCEANO  
CSD FIRE SERVICES**

**BOARD ASKED TO PROCLAIM ITSELF “AGAINST HATE”  
HOW DO SOME MEMBERS FEEL ABOUT CONSERVATIVES?**

**FUNDING FOR PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE COMMITTEE  
*YOU WOULD THINK THAT AB 2453 HAD ACTUALLY PASSED***

**FY 2023-24 YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT  
THEY ARE OK FOR THE SHORT TERM  
*HOW ABOUT A LITTLE FUNDING FOR THE AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING FUND?***

**BIKE PATHS TO BECOME “TRANSPORTATION ROUTES”  
*NOT SUBJECT TO BAN ON CONDEMNATION FOR TRAILS***

**NACI PIPELINE LEAKS: GIFTS THAT KEEPS GIVING**

**SUPERVISOR REQUESTS**

**PLANNING COMMISSION LIGHT AGENDA**

**COMMUNICATIONS TOWERS DISGUISED AS FAUX WATER TANKS**

**ADDENDUM I**

**NOVEMBER STATE PROPOSITION RECOMMENDATIONS  
SEE PAGE 38**

**LAST WEEK  
SEE PAGE 13**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**

**CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY**

**JOINT POLICY AND OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING  
*ELECTROCRATS TO CELEBRATE AT POSH RESORT***

**CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY  
OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING**

**3CE FY 2024-25 BUDGET ALMOST ¾ OF \$1 BILLION**

**SLO COUNTY APCD**

**STATE BANS SALES OF NEW GAS MOWERS, LEAF BLOWERS &  
OTHER TOOLS STARTING IN 2026  
*WILL PROVIDE GRANTS TO LANDSCAPERS, GOVERNMENTS, & SCHOOLS TO  
STOP USING THE GAS VERSIONS***

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION  
BEGINS REVIEW OF DANA RESERVE HOUSING**

**EMERGENT ISSUES  
SEE PAGE 22**

**CALIFORNIA LEGISLATORS VOTE TO SLAP A  
GIANT WARNING LABEL ON ALL GAS STOVES**

*The wordy label makes no mention of the environmental agenda  
driving the bill's passage*

**CALIFORNIA INSURANCE CRISIS:  
HOMEOWNERS GETTING INSURED RIGHT OUT OF  
THEIR HOMES**

*BLAME DECADES OF BAD CALIFORNIA POLITICS*

**COLAB IN DEPTH  
SEE PAGE 28**

**THE PRESS, THE PROFESSORS, AND  
POSTMODERN PROGRESSIVISM**

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

**AMERICAN NIGHTMARE**

*On Stumbling Toward Utopia: How the 1960s Turned Into a National  
Nightmare and How We Can Revive the American Dream*

BY JAMES PIERESON

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

**SLO County Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, September 23, 2024 (Scheduled) 9:30 AM**

**Item 10 - Monthly Investment Report for August 2024.** The fund continued its progress toward hitting or exceeding its 6.75% assumption rate target in 2024.

	1-month	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Fund (%) <i>(Gross)</i>	1.20	6.6	8.9	(8.0)	15.2	8.9	16.3
Policy Index (%)*	1.30	7.8	10.2	(9.7)	12.8	10	16.4

	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Market Value <i>(millions)</i>	\$1,801	\$1,694	\$1,614	\$1,775	\$1,552	\$1,446

*All asset classes within the portfolio reported positive returns for August. Top domestic and international manager performers include Atlanta Capital (170 bps), and WCM (230 bps). Year to date gross returns were reported at 6.6%.*

**San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, September 24, 2024 (Scheduled)**

**Item 5 - Request to 1) approve an agreement between the County of San Luis Obispo and Oceano Community Services District (OCSD) regarding the transfer of current year**



**revenue and certain reserves in connection with the divestiture of the OCSD Fire Services; and 2) approve the assignment and amendment of OCSD's ongoing CalPERS liabilities and responsibilities following withdrawal from the Five Cities Fire Authority joint exercise of powers agreement.** This item is the actual agreement between Oceano Community Service District and the County, for the County to take over funding of the District's fire services. The report indicates that the County will start out providing a general fund subsidy of \$310,000 per year. This will grow as the cost escalates over the years. The cost does include a factor for the OCSD's unfunded pension liability.

Again, remember that this is a canary in the coal mine, warning as other weaker special districts and cities dissolve under the relentless pressure of cost increases that outstrip local economic growth.

*On June 18, 2024, the Board of Supervisors approved the attached contract for services (Attachment 2) between the County and FCFA. The Contract maintains the level of service currently provided to the community of Oceano. The contract will become effective upon LAFCO approval of the District's divestiture, target date of January 1, 2025, and terminate on June 30, 2027, with two one year options to extend. The contract cost is \$1,706,000 each year with annual CIP increases.*

*As specified in the Plan for Service, the County will assume responsibility for OCSD's ongoing CalPERS unfunded actuarial accrued liability (UAAL) arising out of OCSD's participation in Five Cities Fire Authority between June 7, 2010, through June 30, 2023, in the amount equal to 19.7% of the total. The Foster and Foster actuarial report dated December 15, 2023, shows OCSD's share of UAAL as of June 30, 2022, to be \$861,741. OCSD's liability is anticipated to be reduced due to reimbursement payments made after June 30, 2022, by the City of Arroyo Grande to Five Cities Fire Authority, reducing the total UAAL of \$4,374,321 by \$982,311.*

*At the time that the Board directed staff to prepare this Plan for Service, it was estimated that the ongoing annual cost of service including both contract cost and indirect County cost, would be approximately \$1,800,000, and the annual General Fund support would be \$498,783. Due to conditions included in the Plan for Service, primarily proposed lease agreements between OCSD and the County, the annual General Fund support is estimated to be \$310,143.*

**Item 7 - Submittal of a resolution recognizing September 21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2024 as United Against Hate Week in the County of San Luis Obispo.** In 2023, Governor Newsom created a new organization, the California vs. Hate Coalition, to receive complaints against hate incidents. These were reported to be growing. The effort includes a hotline to report hate as well as \$91 million in grants to 173 organizations across the state “to [support](#) victims, provide resources, and facilitate anti-hate prevention measures”. It is reported that the hotline received over 1,000 calls during its first year of operation.

*In its inaugural [report](#) released Wednesday (May 22), California's year-old CA vs. Hate program found that anti-Hindu incidents were the second most common religion-related hate crime reported to a state-sponsored hotline in the past year.*

*The non-emergency hate crime reporting hotline, administered by the California Civil Rights Department with support from organizations supporting minority groups in the state, saw 1,020*

reports of hate in the past year. Of those reported as anti-religious incidents, 36.9% were anti-Jewish, and 14.6% were anti-Muslim. Anti-Hindu crimes fell in between the two, at 23.3%. According to the California Department of Public Affairs, approximately 24 out of 103 crimes reported targeted Hindus, among cases where information on religious bias motivation was provided.

No data is reported in the Board write-up on hate crime trends and non-crime hate incident trends in San Luis Obispo County.

The Resolution states in part:

*WHEREAS, we support the "California vs Hate" coalition's mission to combat hate, prejudice, and intolerance such as xenophobia, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and anti-Muslim hatred in our communities;*

What about people that disagree with the Board majority and the State power structure on the issues? For example, SLO Democratic Party Chair Tom Fulks, in a recent missive exhorting the faithful to support local candidates, stated in part:

*That said, we must realize the down-ballot races – at the national, state and local level right here in SLO County – are where we stop MAGA and Moms for Liberty root and branch. Their culture of menace, hate, bigotry and fear festers locally and provides energy to the overall MAGA movement that supports Trump and Project 2025.*

Who does this include?

**Item 11 - Request to approve the full recommended Paso Basin Cooperative Committee (PBCC) FY 2024-25 Budget.** At this point the leftist Board majority has delivered the bacon for the large corporate interest takeover of the Paso Basin water management issue. It is tantamount to AB 2453 election having been passed. Readers may remember that the residents of the Paso Basin rejected the takeover by almost 80%.

GSA	Voting / Cost Share
County of SLO	32.3%
City of Paso Robles	15.2%
Shandon-San Juan Water District	20.2%
San Miguel CSD	3.0%
Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District	29.3%
TOTAL	100%

**Recommended PBCC Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget**

Budget Components	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27
<b>Grant Funded Cost Components</b>				
Grant Funded				
1 ET Ag Water Usage Program		\$ 120,000		
2 Cost of Service Rate Study		\$ 150,000		
3 Address High Priority GSP Data Gaps (Expanded Monitoring Network)		\$ 1,400,000		
4 MILR Program Framework		\$ 380,000		
5 Well Verification/Registration Program		\$ 100,000		
6 Drinking Well Impact Mitigation Program Development		\$ 200,000		
7 Blended Irrigation Water Supply Program		\$ 300,000		
8 SWP Feasibility Project		\$ 200,000		
9 City of Paso Robles Recycled Water Distribution System - Salinas River Segment	\$ 3,500,000			
10 San Miguel CSD Recycled Water Supply Project		\$ 1,000,000		
<b>Grant Funded Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,500,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,850,000</b>		

Budget Components	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27
<b>PBCC Funded Cost Components</b>				
SGMA-Required				
11 Annual Report WY 2024	\$ 95,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 121,000
12 GSP Fifth Year Evaluation		\$ 300,000		
13 ET Ag Water Usage Program			\$ 120,000	\$ 120,000
14 Ongoing Basin Monitoring Operations & Maintenance		\$ 75,000	\$ 82,500	\$ 90,750
GSP Initiatives				
15 Outreach Program (Continued efforts including new website)		\$ 75,000	\$ 82,500	\$ 90,750
Administrative				
16 Develop Governance Structure (e.g. JPA, etc.)		\$ 50,000		
17 Executive Director and Support Staff			\$ 180,000	\$ 200,000
18 Legal Counsel			\$ 82,500	\$ 90,750
19 PBCC Administrative Costs (Insurance, Audit, Accounting, etc.)			\$ 82,500	\$ 90,750
20 Grant Development (2 grants)			\$ 82,500	\$ 90,750
21 Technical Consultant(s) (as necessary)			\$ 110,000	\$ 121,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 95,000</b>	<b>\$ 600,000</b>	<b>\$ 932,500</b>	<b>\$ 1,015,750</b>

	GSA Cost Share	FY 23-24	FY 24-25	FY 25-26	FY 26-27	GSA Cost Share %
a	County of San Luis Obispo GSA	\$ 30,685	\$ 193,800	\$ 301,198	\$ 328,087	32.3%
b	Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District GSA	\$ 27,835	\$ 175,800	\$ 273,223	\$ 297,615	29.3%
c	Shandon San Juan Water District GSA	\$ 19,190	\$ 121,200	\$ 188,365	\$ 205,182	20.2%
d	City of Paso Robles GSA	\$ 14,440	\$ 91,200	\$ 141,740	\$ 154,394	15.2%
e	San Miguel Community Services District GSA	\$ 2,850	\$ 18,000	\$ 27,975	\$ 30,473	3.0%

**Item 33 - Submittal of the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Year-End Financial Status Report and request to approve various financial actions as detailed in Section 4 of Attachment 1 - FY 2023-24 Third Quarter Financial Report.** The item actually contains a number of reports related to finances, the status of projects, position allocations, and performance measures.

**ATTACHMENTS 1.**

- Attachment 1 - FY 2023-24 Year-End Financial Status Report
- Attachment 2 - Department Memos - Relief from Accountability, Donations, and Miscellaneous Letters
- Attachment 3 - Quarterly Report of Right of Way Conveyances
- Attachment 4 - Fleet Selection Criteria Policy Annual Progress Report
- Attachment 5 - Status Report on Capital and Maintenance Projects
- Attachment 6 - Resolutions Amending the Position Allocation List (Correction) [Attachment 7]
- Attachment 7 - Resolutions Amending the Position Allocation List (Reclassification)
- Attachment 8 - FY 2023-24 Performance Measures (Actual Results)

As the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter version, it presents the full results of the FY 2023 -24 fiscal year. Ultimately, the fiscal year ended with a higher fund balance than expected. This was largely due to a combination of higher than anticipated revenues, timing of the booking of American Rescue Program Act funds, and position vacancies in many departments.

The staff recommends that the savings be deployed per the table below.



Description	Sources	Uses
General Fund: Excess FBA	12,164,212	
General Fund: Increase COVID-19 designation		3,026,671
General Fund: Restore General Reserve		6,000,000
General Fund: Increase Governmental Fund Budgets due mid-year rate increases for Liability Self Insurance		3,012,371
General Fund: Restore Rainy Day Funds designation		125,170
<b>Total Adjustments</b>	<b>12,164,212</b>	<b>12,164,212</b>

Interestingly, the allocations are largely defensive, in that the \$3 million for the COVID 19 designation is a hedge against future disallowed expenditures for the tens of millions in COVID Slush money received by the County. Similarly, another \$3 million is being used to bolster reserves for the Liability fund. What do they know that we don't? Are there some big lawsuit losses in the offing? The \$6 million is allocated to the General Reserve to return it to the adopted policy level (around \$40 million).

**The Housing Policy Question:**

**Remember, a few weeks ago, we again had the discussion of the housing in lieu tax and how to provide for from \$2 million to \$4 million in recurring local share for affordable housing local share for not-for-profit projects. Why not start seeding that fund with a little of these dollars? What about using \$1 million to start?**

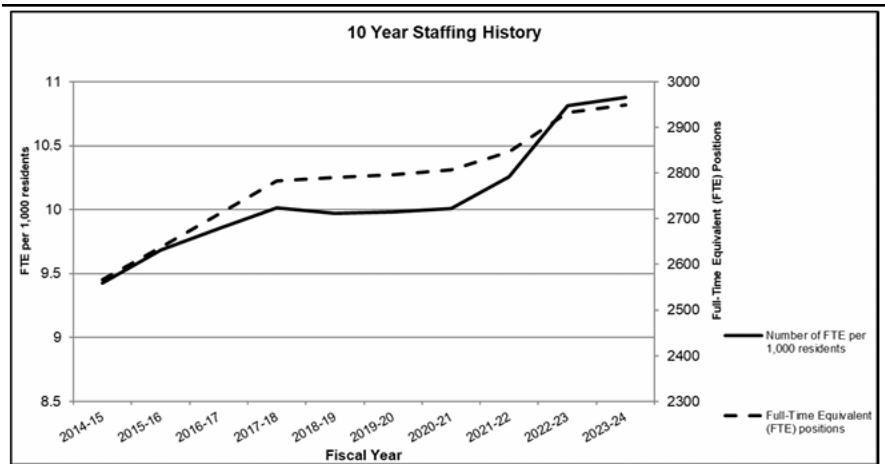
Once again, the County appears to be solvent in the near term and while the State and Feds are able to keep sending it more than one third of its revenue. Similarly, the rising, although volatile, stock market has kept the pension liability away from crisis. The inability to fill many County jobs has provided a cushion.

On the other hand, staffing levels continue to rise, and salary and benefit increases continue to add pressure each year. The collapse of some smaller special districts sends a warning that the County could be taking over more and more services over the years. Jail costs, psychiatric services, homelessness programs, and fire services are cost pressure leaders. Meanwhile, there is a maintenance deficit for roads, public buildings, and parks. Ideologically, State and local restrictions on home building continue to make it difficult to hire and retain critical employees. Rigid civil service and union labor rules that were developed over a half century ago limit flexibility and velocity.

What is the County's long range strategic plan?

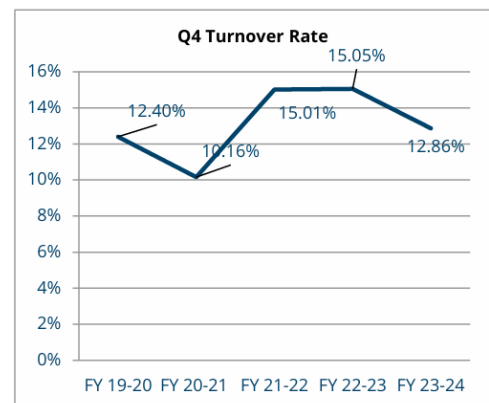
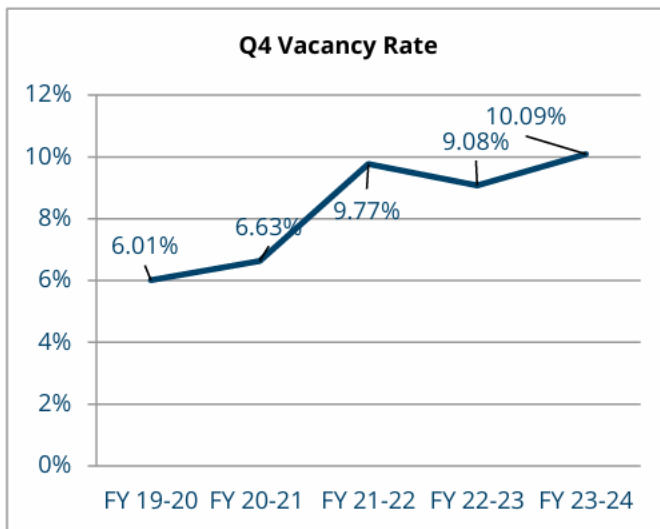
What is its long range (multi decade) revenue plan?

Land use is destiny for local governments. How does its overall rationing scheme impact the first 2 items above?



**SUMMARY OF POSITION ALLOCATION CHANGES**

FY 2023-24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quarter Start	2,958.50	2,961.50	2,973.50	2,995.00
FTE Additions	35.75*	88.00	30.50	5.00
FTE Deletions	32.75	76.00	9.00	2.00
Quarter End	2,961.50	2,973.50	2,995.00	2,998.00**
Net Change	3.00	12.00	21.50	3.00
% Change	0.10%	0.41%	0.72%	0.10%



The full report can be seen by control clicking on the link below.

[164545 \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov)

**Item 37 - It is recommended that the Board receive and file the 2023 Annual Agricultural Statistics for San Luis Obispo County and provide direction as deemed necessary. This is a**

good report that demonstrates the resilience and importance of agriculture in SLO County. In addition to the crop values listed in the report, there are more billions in economic multipliers when the suppliers, machinery, support jobs, technical jobs, trucking, irrigation, and other components are considered.

*Crop values for San Luis Obispo County reached another record high in 2023, as overall farmgate value edged past \$1.1 billion for the first time. Despite significant storm related damage early in the year, crops thrived under ideal growing conditions that led to strong yields across multiple crop sectors.*

*After four years of strawberries being the county's most valuable crop, winegrapes moved back into the top slot based on excellent growing conditions and steady prices. Combined, winegrapes and strawberries continue to account for more than half of the county's overall crop value, while the county's diverse geography and microclimates continue to support an incredibly wide variety of other crops.*

### Top Ten Value Crops

Crop	Value
Wine Grapes	\$323,952,000
Strawberries	\$274,072,000
Cattle and Calves	\$68,646,000
Broccoli	\$36,184,000
Avocados	\$34,202,000
Vegetable & Ornamental Transplants	\$33,543,000
Brussels Sprouts	\$24,604,000
Cauliflower	\$20,603,000
Cut Flowers	\$19,067,000
Celery	\$16,172,000

Agriculture employs a total of almost 5,000, collectively. Since the individual units are relatively small, they do not appear in the table below. However, by way of perspective, it is quite important. Note that hospital corporations may be the County's only remaining large private sector employers.

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

Employer	2023 <sup>2,3</sup>			2014 <sup>1</sup>		
	Number of Employees	Rank	Percentage of Total County Employment	Number of Employees	Rank	Percentage of Total County Employment
California Polytechnic State University	3,143	1	2.25%	2,573	2	1.81%
County of San Luis Obispo	2,932	2	2.10%	2,800	1	1.97%
Department of State Hospitals - Atascadero	2,000	3	1.43%	2,300	3	1.62%
Lucia Mar Unified School District	1,573	4	1.13%	1,000	7	0.71%
California Men's Colony	1,517	5	1.09%	2,000	4	1.41%
Tenet Health Central Coast	1,425	6	1.02%	1,200	6	0.85%
San Luis Coastal Unified School District	1,388	7	0.99%	902	10	0.64%
Paso Robles Joint Unified School District	1,262	8	0.90%	935	8	0.66%
Compass Health	1,200	9	0.86%	-	-	-
Cuesta College	892	10	0.64%	-	-	-
Pacific Gas and Electric Company	-	-	-	1,700	5	1.20%
Cal Poly Corporation	-	-	-	906	9	0.64%
Total Employment Labor Force <sup>4</sup>	139,800			141,800		

## MATTERS AFTER 1:30 PM

**Item 39 - Request to 1) authorize the conversion of the County Bikeways Plan into a comprehensive Active Transportation Plan (ATP) for County maintained roads in coordination with the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments Regional Active Transportation Plan; 2) direct staff to pursue grant funding opportunities to fund the conversion effort, and return to the Board to apply for such grants; and 3) upon securing project funding, direct staff to return to the Board with a recommendation for restructuring the Bicycle Advisory Committee to advise on the conversion to an ATP. (Public Works) (5).** This item is simply a ploy to work around the County's adopted Parks and Recreation Plan element that forbids the use of eminent domain to acquire trails. The County would simply incorporate bike trails into its transportation plan as an alternate means of commuting. They would no longer be purely recreational. This would then theoretically allow the Board to vote for the property condemnation necessary to complete the Bob Jones "bike" trail with a 2/3 rather than 4/5 vote. The bike community supports this one.

Of course, if bike trails are alternate transportation modes for commuting, should people have to pay a fee to commute on them, like the bus, train, rideshare, etc.?

**Item 42 - 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.**

**Added Item 43 - Adding Consent Item #43. Request to accept the first update regarding, and confirm the need to continue, the emergency actions to repair the Nacimiento Water Pipeline at the Yerba Buena Creek crossing in accordance with Public Contract Code Section 20134 and 22050, by a 4/5 vote.** The leaks continue and are worse than first suspected. As one "analyst" pointed out 2 weeks ago, they could just let it leak and continue to recharge the Paso Basin. After all, the City of San Luis Obispo uses Paso Basin water. It should help recharge the Basin.

*Whitaker excavated to the east and west side of the casing pipe and inserted a camera into the pipeline to find the leak location. A 2-inch leak was discovered on the top of the 18-inch ductile iron pipe approximately 9 feet into the casing. Whitaker cut the steel casing and ductile iron pipe and removed them from the shored excavation. The District discovered that the leak was caused by corrosion and that there was evidence of significant corrosion pitting along the entire 9 foot long pipe section that was removed. Since the damage was caused by corrosion, the District hired a corrosion consultant to inspect the damaged section and existing piping east and west of the damaged section. The corrosion expert determined that the undercrossing and pipe east and west of the undercrossing are installed in a corrosive environment and that protecting the undercrossing and surrounding pipe is needed to prevent further corrosion and prevent future catastrophic failures due to corrosion. The corrosion expert also identified a second advanced corrosion spot of the damaged section that was very close to failure. Since the pipe is installed in a corrosive environment, it will continue to corrode until additional protection is installed.*

*Delay of the repair and corrosion protection will result in additional damage to the NWP pipeline.*

*Implementation of the emergency repairs are ongoing, and the final cost of the repair is unknown. Costs to date are estimated to be \$250,000 including contractor and District staff. It is anticipated that the remaining repair may cost an additional \$450,000, making the total emergency project costs in the range of \$700,000.*

### **SLO County Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, September 26, 2024 (Scheduled)**

The agenda is light, consisting of permit requests for 4 wireless towers in various rural parts of the County. The Towers are 50 ft. tall and are disguised as traditional farm water towers. Why are water towers OK, but cell towers have to be camouflaged? Is society becoming fed up with modernism?



## **LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS**

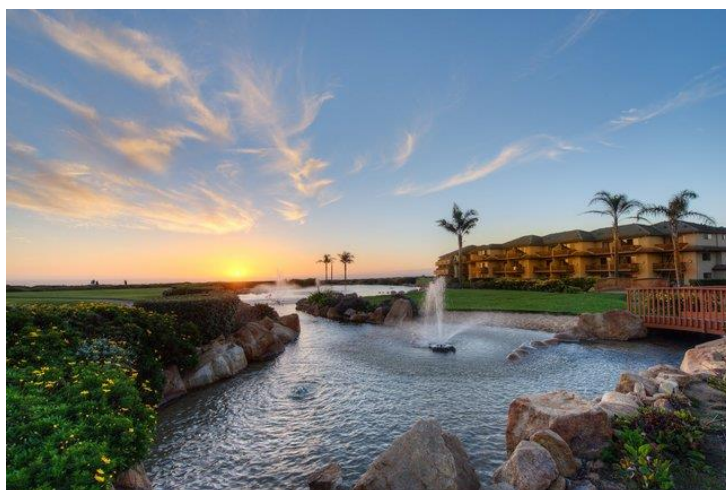
**No Board Of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 (Not Scheduled)**

**Central Coast Community Energy Authority (3CE) Joint Policy Board and Operations Board Meeting of Wednesday, September 18, 2024 (Scheduled) 1:00 PM - 1 Seascaple Resort Drive, Aptos, Ca. (Completed)**

The Electorcrats celebrated at a posh resort. They could sit by the pool and soak up seaside views if the conference became too boring. The meeting was a cheerleading session with no actual business items. SLO County reps Dawn Ortiz-Legg and Rebecca Campbell should be



given space on a SLO County Board agenda to report back on where the Electrocrats are taking us.



Seascape Resort. They didn't go to the Elks Lodge in Salinas.

## **Item 1 - Workshop of the Policy & Operations Boards**

**Welcome Address by Senator John Laird, 17th Senate District**

**Keynote Address by Katerina Robinson, Chief of Staff, California Energy Commission**

**Panel Discussion: *Challenges and Opportunities in the Clean Energy Landscape***

**COLAB NOTE: Keynoter Katerina Robinson was a long term aide to State Senator Nancy Skinner, who is one of the most left members of the Senate. Robinson is a huge promoter of offshore wind energy.**

- - *Andrew Campbell, Executive Director, Energy Institute at Haas*
  - *Melicia Charles, Director of State Affairs, CAISO*
  - *Andrew Mills, Director of Data Analytics, CalCCA*
  - *Scott Olsen, Director of Policy, Regulatory & Markets, Western US, Avangrid Renewables*

**COLAB Note: Panelist Campbell recently stated:**

*'Energy independence' is a political slogan, not an economic or technical concept with a clear definition," Campbell said in [a recent interview for Reuters Fact Check](#). "I understand that politicians use the term 'energy independence' to imply that a country is insulated from global energy markets. However, this is rarely the case."*

**Panel Discussion: *Strategies to Advance Climate and Clean Energy Goals***

- - *Carlos Blanco, Managing Director of Risk Management & ESG, Ascend Analytics*
  - *Natalie Hanson, Director of Energy Programs, Optony Inc.*
  - *Edson Perez, Senior Principal, Advanced Energy United*
  - *Kathleen Staks, Executive Director, Western Freedom*



### 3CE Powering the Future

- - *Dewayne Woods, Chief Financial Officer*
  - *Dennis Dyc-O'Neal, Chief Operating Officer*
  - *Catherine Stedman, Chief Communications Officer*
  - *Robert Shaw, Chief Executive Officer*

**Central Coast Community Energy Authority Policy Board Meeting of Wednesday, September 18, 2024 ,4:30 PM (Completed)**

**Item 12 - Consider supporting the Policy Board's adoption of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget and the Calendar Year 2025 cost-based rates.** The Board considered the FY 2024-25 Budget. Note that the agency is on an October 1-September 30 fiscal year. The budget will reach almost 3 quarters of a billion dollars. Much of their increase is attributable to the unincorporated San Luis Obispo County and the City of Atascadero coming on line on January 2, 2025.

FY 2024-25 Budget Summary						
	Prior Year Actuals 2022-23	Adopted Budget 2023-24	Mid-Year Estimate 2023-24	Requested Budget 2024-25	Recommended Budget 2024-25	Recommended Change from Adopted
Electricity Sales	450,713,404	556,433,448	551,405,974	745,962,356	745,962,356	189,528,907
Interest and Investment Returns	8,184,122	6,400,000	9,950,446	7,000,000	7,000,000	600,000
Other Income	2,356,837	-	88,732	68,400	68,400	68,400
Sub-Total Revenues	461,254,363	562,833,448	561,445,152	753,030,756	753,030,756	190,197,307
Capital Infrastructure Reserve	-	-	-	17,318,000	17,318,000	17,318,000
<b>Total Financing Sources</b>	<b>461,254,363</b>	<b>562,833,448</b>	<b>561,445,152</b>	<b>770,348,756</b>	<b>770,348,756</b>	<b>207,515,307</b>
Cost of Energy	398,746,769	520,297,514	538,515,199	665,267,116	665,267,116	144,969,602
Salaries and Benefits	6,200,592	9,537,076	8,789,063	13,086,907	12,585,841	3,048,765
Services and Supplies	21,646,235	32,998,858	26,839,006	35,249,798	35,177,798	2,178,940
Capital Assets	-	-	210,000	17,318,000	17,318,000	17,318,000
<b>Total Financing Uses</b>	<b>426,593,596</b>	<b>562,833,448</b>	<b>574,353,268</b>	<b>730,921,822</b>	<b>730,348,756</b>	<b>167,515,308</b>
<b>Total Budgeted Change to Net Position</b>	<b>34,660,767</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(12,908,116)</b>	<b>39,426,934</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 is 3CE's sixth year serving customers across the Central Coast and seventh year of operation. The Recommended Budget for FY 2024-25 aligns with 3CE's mission and goal of meeting 100% of customers' energy demand with reliable, clean, and renewable energy while investing in its communities and ensuring fair and responsible rates. The number of customers served by 3CE will increase in FY 2024-25 with the enrollment of unincorporated San Luis Obispo County and the City of Atascadero in January 2025. To carry out the agency's goals and serve this increased load, the Recommended Budget totals \$730.3 million, with an addition to reserves of \$40.0 million funded by estimated revenues of \$753.0 million and the use of the Capital Infrastructure Reserve of \$17.3 million for capital infrastructure, and the authorization of 56 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

Rates:

## Residential \*

### Tiered Rate Plan E-1\*

Residential: E-1	PG&E	3Choice
Generation Rate (\$/kWh)	\$0.16768	\$0.12400
PG&E Delivery Rate (\$/kWh)	\$0.29049	\$0.29049
PG&E PCIA/FF (\$/kWh)	\$0.00920	\$0.01079
Total Electricity Cost (\$/kWh)	\$0.46737	\$0.42528
Average Monthly Bill (\$)	<b>\$181.72</b>	<b>\$165.35</b>

Monthly usage: 389 kWh

Class	Recommended 2025 Generation Rates*	PG&E Vintage 2017* PCIA	Est. 2025 PG&E Generation Rates	Difference (%)
Residential	\$0.146	\$0.005	\$0.177	-14%
Small Commercial	\$0.125	\$0.005	\$0.164	-21%
Medium Commercial	\$0.121	\$0.005	\$0.168	-25%
Large Commercial	\$0.121	\$0.005	\$0.147	-14%
Small & Medium Ag	\$0.143	\$0.005	\$0.154	-4%
Large Ag	\$0.130	\$0.005	\$0.154	-13%
Business Electric Vehicle	\$0.119	\$0.005	\$0.179	-31%
Standby	\$0.102	\$0.004	\$0.117	-9%
Streetlights	\$0.117	\$0.004	\$0.139	-12%

\*3CE on average rates in PG&E service area

\*PG&E service area estimated surcharges (PCIA and franchise fees), based on 2017 customer vintage class

*Increasing Liquidity to Meet Reserve Targets and Maintain Credit Rating The Recommended Budget includes adding an estimated and maintained \$40.0 million to cash reserves to bring 3CE's reserves to 77% of the target by September 31, 2025. The addition to reserves aligns with targets established in the finance policies adopted by the Policy Board on June 26, 2024. The instability of market prices for energy, Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), and Resource Adequacy necessitate healthy reserves. In addition, the CPUC's continued propensity to consider impactful regulatory changes that disrupt CCA hedging strategies and interject significant market uncertainty threatens to increase costs.*

Estimated Reserve Balances at Year-End	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Strategic Reserve	128,722,322	151,386,285
Energy Rate Stabilization Reserve	96,247,101	113,083,138
Renewable Energy Innovation and Initiatives Reserve	-	500,000
Capital Infrastructure Reserve	17,318,000	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>242,287,423</b>	<b>264,969,423</b>

<https://pub-3ce.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.aspx?DocumentId=4619>

**SLO County Air Pollution Control district Meeting of Wednesday, September 18, 2024  
(Completed)**

**Item B-3 - Gas Powered Lawn and Garden Equipment Buy Back Program.** The State has banned the sale of new gas powered lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and related equipment, starting in 2026. The APCD has received a state grant to implement a buy-back program of existing equipment used by landscapers, not-for-profits, governments, and schools.

*Starting in January 2024, a California Air Resources Board (CARB) measure requires that most newly manufactured small off-road engines such as those found in leaf blowers, lawn mowers and other equipment be zero emission. This requirement, an amendment to CARB's existing small off-road engine regulation, applies to manufacturers and will impact new equipment (model year 2024 and later) only. While Californians can continue to operate their current CARB-compliant gasoline-powered equipment, that equipment continues to produce a significant amount of harmful emissions to the operator and the community.*

**Figure 2: Maximum Eligible Funding Amounts by Each Type of Eligible Electric Equipment**

Maximum Eligible Funding Amount per Piece of Equipment (and associated batteries and chargers)	
Electric Equipment Type	Amount
Chainsaws, Trimmers, Edgers, Brushcutters	\$700
Leaf blowers, Leaf vacuums	\$1,400
Walk-Behind Lawn Mowers	\$1,500
Ride-on or Stand/Sit Mowers	\$15,000

The APCD will have \$190,000 of your State tax money for the first cycle.

**Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) Meeting of Thursday, September 19, 2024  
(Completed)**

**Item B -1 - Study Session on the Annexation of Dana Reserve Specific Plan Project to Nipomo Community Services District.** The fate of the Dana Reserve project is now in the hands of LAFCO. This study session does not constitute the hearing to approve or reject the annexation. It is prefatory to providing the LAFCO Commissioners the opportunity to study the project and receive initial community input. The actual hearing and vote will be scheduled about 30 days after the Commission has determined that all the required information has been submitted. Hopefully they will do that during this session.

- The County has approved land use permits for the project.
- The Nipomo Community Service District (NCSD) has approved water, sewer, and refuse collecting for the project.

- Both the County and the NCS D have approved a tax exchange agreement that assists the District in providing services to the project.

LAFCO has the authority under State law to determine the following in deciding whether or to approve the annexation of the project to the NCS D:

*Table 2: LAFCO Summarized Mandatory Factors Per Government Code Section 56668 & 56668.3*

• Affordable Housing	• Need for Services	• Impact on Adjacent Areas
• Consistency with General Plans and Regional Transportation Plans	• Impacts to Agricultural Lands / Open Spaces	• Environmental Justice
• Consistency with LAFCO Policies	• Sphere of Influence	• Other Agency Comments
• Ability of agencies to provide services	• Availability of water supplies	• Population and Land Use
• Comments from landowners, voters or residents	• Existing information about existing land use	• Definite Boundaries
• If in the interest of landowners or present/future inhabitants	• Any resolutions raising objections filed by an affected agency	• Any other matter which the commission deems material

The LAFCO policies that must be considered are extensive.

*Policies have been adopted by the Commission to assist in the review of proposals. In furtherance of the Government Code, these policies, standards, and procedures allow the Commission to continue to exercise its powers in a manner that encourages and provides planned, well-ordered, and efficient urban development patterns with appropriate consideration of preserving open-space lands within those patterns within the context of this specific region (Government Code Section 56300(a)(b)). Some notable policies that may apply to this annexation are provided below. The Commission must balance its policies and goals against a variety of needs and overall benefits the annexation would provide.*

*2.1.1. The Commission shall endeavor to balance the need to efficiently provide public services with the sometimes-competing interests of discouraging urban sprawl, preserving prime agriculture land and open space (Gov. Code Section 56001 and 56301).*

*2.1.4. Jurisdictions are encouraged to create places to live that integrate various land uses as a way of providing for a diverse social and economic community.*

*2.1.6. The Commission will recognize and preserve clearly defined, long-term agricultural and open space areas established by the County or other jurisdictions to preserve critical environmental areas and to bolster local economies (Gov. Code Section 56001). This may be accomplished using agricultural easements, open space easements, conservation easements, or other mechanisms, that preserve agricultural or open space lands in perpetuity.*

*2.1.10. Impacts on affordable housing, impact of the creation of new jobs on affordable housing stock, within the annexation area and in neighboring jurisdictions. Demonstration that the effects of the proposed project on affordable housing have been mitigated (Gov. Code Section*

56001). *The Commission recognizes that providing a range of housing opportunities for persons and families of all incomes is an important factor in promoting orderly development.*

*2.1.11. In any proposal requiring water service, the Commission requires that the agency to which the annexation is proposed should demonstrate the availability of an adequate, reliable and sustainable supply of water. In cases where a phased development is proposed, the agency should demonstrate that adequate service capacity will be provided as needed for each phase. In cases where a proposed annexation will be served by an onsite water source, the proponent should demonstrate its adequacy (Gov. Code Section 56668 (k)).*

*2.3.2. Prior to annexation of territory within an agency's Sphere of Influence, the Commission encourages development on vacant or underutilized parcels already within the boundaries of a jurisdiction. The agency should provide LAFCO with a build-out estimate or inventory and document how it was prepared.*

*B-1-12 San Luis Obispo LAFCO September 19, 2024. The proposed annexation represents a logical and reasonable expansion of the district.*

*2.3.5. The proposed annexation reflects the plans of the adjacent governmental agencies. 2.3.6. The proposed annexation does not represent an attempt to annex only revenue producing property.*

*2.3.8. The district has the capability of meeting the need for services and has submitted studies and information documenting its capabilities.*

*2.10.9 The Commission shall balance preventing negative environmental effects while providing a decent home and satisfying living environment for every San Luis Obispo County resident. LAFCO Factors When processing a proposal, LAFCO has broad discretion over any anne*

It can be seen that even after years of processing and approval by the County and the NCSO, the Commission, LAFCO could reject the annexation, thereby killing the project. A further barrier is that in this case the Commission must override 19 CEQA Class I unmitigable environmental impacts. It should be noted that the Board of Supervisors did this on a 3/2 vote with Supervisor Paulding, who is on LAFCO, in opposition.

## **CEQA**

### *Class I Significant and Unavoidable Impacts*

**COLAB Note:** It is impossible to convert raw land to development without generating most of these impacts.

*The environmental impacts discussed below are comprised of those which are Class I Significant and Unavoidable. For full details of all impact analysis and mitigation, please refer to the EIR included in Attachment B.*



- Air Quality
  - **AQ Impact 1:** The project would conflict with an applicable air quality plan.
  - **AQ Impact 3:** The project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of criteria pollutants in exceedance of established SLOAPCD daily emissions thresholds.
  - **AQ Impact 9:** The project would result in cumulatively considerable impacts related to air quality.
- Biological Resources
  - **BIO Impact 1:** The project could directly or indirectly impact special-status plant and wildlife species.
  - **BIO Impact 4:** The project could directly and indirectly impact CRPR 4 and Watch List plant species, including California spineflower, sand buck brush, and sand almond.
  - **BIO Impact 14:** The project will directly impact Burton Mesa chaparral.
  - **BIO Impact 15:** The project will directly impact coast live oak woodland.
  - **BIO Impact 18:** The project will result in direct and indirect impacts to coast live oak woodland, coast live oak forest, and individual oak trees.
  - **BIO Impact 20:** The project would have cumulatively considerable impacts related to biological resources.
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
  - **GHG Impact 3:** The project would conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.
  - **GHG Impact 5:** The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact to greenhouse gas emissions.
- Land Use and Planning
  - **LUP Impact 3:** The project would adversely affect the local jobs-to-housing ratio within the project area and would be inconsistent with Land Use Planning Policy L-3 of the San Luis Obispo County Clean Air Plan.
  - **LUP Impact 5:** The project would result in the net loss of CRPR 4 and Watch List plant species, native oak woodland, and sensitive habitats; therefore, the project would be potentially inconsistent with goals and policies of the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Conservation Open Space Element pertaining to preservation of biological resources and Policy 3.8 of the Parks and Recreation Element.
  - **LUP Impact 10:** The project would result in cumulative impacts associated with inconsistency with goals and policies identified within the County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element, Framework for Planning (Inland), Land Use Ordinance, and South County Area Plan regarding preservation and no net loss of sensitive biological resources and preservation of rural visual character.
- Population and Housing
  - **PH Impact 1:** The project would induce substantial unplanned population growth in the Nipomo area.
  - **PH Impact 5:** The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact related to substantial and unplanned population growth.



- Transportation
  - **TR Impact 3:** Buildout of the Specific Plan Area would exceed the County VMT thresholds and therefore would not be consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). VMT per employee would be incrementally reduced compared to existing conditions; however, the project-related increase in residential VMT per capita and overall VMT would exceed the County VMT thresholds.
  - **TR Impact 9:** The project would result in a cumulatively considerable impact to transportation and traffic.
- Growth Inducing Impacts
  - **GI Impact 1:** The project would result in substantial growth inducement associated with the proposed project's population as well as the potential to induce additional spatial, economic, or population growth in a geographic area.

No wonder housing is in such short supply and so expensive in California. The deck is totally stacked against it.

**The Commission:**

**City Members**

Ed Waage, *City of Pismo Beach* | Term: December 2027

Vice Chair - Steve Gregory, *City of Paso Robles* | Term: December 2025

Alternate Carla Wixom, *City of Morro Bay* | Term: December 2026

**County Members**

Debbie Arnold, *District 5* | Term: December 2025

Jimmy Paulding, *District 4* | Term: December 2027

Alternate Dawn Ortiz-Legg, *District 3* | Term: December 2027

**COLAB Note:** Since the Board of Supervisors approved the project, will Paulding vote for the Board's adopted policy or his own preference that the project be substantially reduced or denied? Or should Ortiz-Legg sit in, since she voted for the project?

**Special District Members**

Chair - Marshall Ochylski, *Los Osos CSD* | Term: December 2026

Robert Enns, *Cayucos Sanitary District* | Term: December 2024

Alternate Ed Eby, *Nipomo CSD* | Term: December 2025

**Public Members**

Regular Member - Vacant

## The Project:

Figure 1: 2024 DRSP proposed Concept Master Plan<sup>1</sup>



## EMERGENT ISSUES

### Item 1 - California Legislators Vote To Slap a Giant Warning Label on All Gas Stoves

*The wordy label makes no mention of the environmental agenda driving the bill's passage.*

JACK NICASTRO | 9.16.2024 4:15 PM



(YevgeniySam/Newscom)

A bill prohibiting the sale of gas stoves that don't prominently display a label awaits the signature of California Gov. Gavin Newsom (D). California is famous for its overzealous labeling laws, but this proposed label is particularly unhelpful.

"WARNING," it reads. "Gas stoves can release nitrogen dioxide, benzene, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, and other harmful pollutants into the air, which can be toxic to people and pets. Stove emissions, especially from gas stoves, are associated with increased respiratory disease. Young children, people with asthma, and people with heart or lung disease are especially vulnerable to the toxic effects of combustion pollutants. To help reduce the risk of breathing harmful gases, allow ventilation in the area and turn on a vent hood when gas-powered stoves and ranges are in use."

Legislators spelling "gases" the British-English way is dismissible (though odd); their attempt to bend consumer preferences to serve their overcautious health and environmental agenda demands attention.

Assembly Bill 2513, proposed by Assembly member Gail Pellerin (D–Santa Clara), was more specific and qualified in its assertions when introduced in February. The original bill referenced the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's standards for outdoor air quality; qualified causal claims about causing respiratory illness with a "may"; and mentioned "harmful" only once and "toxic" not at all, whereas the enrolled bill deploys both alarming adjectives twice.

Despite the histrionics of the bill, 38 percent of U.S. homes use natural gas. NPR attributes Americans' affinity for gas stoves to a "decades-old 'cooking with gas' campaign." The gas stove industry undoubtedly spends money on advertising—as every industry does. But it seems like a stretch to claim, as NPR does, that "tobacco-style tactics" are responsible for the persistence of gas stoves. Home chefs "despise electric stoves [because] they take more time to initially heat up and are slower to respond when heat is ratcheted up or down," *Reason's* Liz Wolfe explains.

The entity that is making a concerted effort to change consumer preferences isn't primarily gas-stove manufacturers; it's California's state government. Pellerin's official website states that the



"initiative aims to increase consumer awareness of the environmental and health impacts of gas stoves." The invocation of the environmental impacts of gas stoves gives the lie to claim that the bill is solely about public health.

The absence of quantitative information from the warning label also suggests that it exists more to dissuade than to inform. The warning label can't help consumers "make the decision that's right for their family," as [NPR quotes Pellerin](#), if there's no corresponding effort to educate consumers with statistics on the extent to which gas stoves increase the concentration of nitrogen dioxide and rates of respiratory illness or other relevant information. Californians already suffer from warning label blindness; this will be just an ugly block of text on an everyday object for citizens to ignore. [NPR acknowledges](#) that the gas-stove campaign "is part of a larger climate effort to get consumers to switch to electric appliances." California legislators should do so as well.

**JACK NICASTRO** is an assistant editor at **Reason**.

## Item 2 - California Insurance Crisis: Homeowners Getting Insured Right Out of Their Homes



New home construction. (Photo: Katy Grimes for California Globe)

## California Insurance Crisis: Homeowners Getting Insured Right Out of Their Homes

### Blame decades of bad California politics

By [Katy Grimes](#), September 17, 2024 7:11 am

In the late 1970's Californians were being taxed out of their homes. Grandmas could not pay the escalating property tax bills on long-held family homes, and defaulted or were forced to sell. Thus, Proposition 13 was passed by voters and cut California's horrifically high property taxes by 30 percent, and then capped the rate of annual increases.

Forty-six years later California is in the throes of a self-imposed insurance crisis, with homeowners facing selling because they can't get insurance. And the state doesn't seem to be addressing this crisis with any sense of urgency.

The Globe recently spoke with a couple who shared that the condominium complex in which they reside lost its insurance coverage. “They told our HOA that they just don’t want to insure us anymore,” the husband said.

This is a very nice condominium building.

Consequently, the HOA had to scramble to find new insurance. But the new insurance will cost each of the condo owners an additional \$10,000 a year in HOA costs.

“Who can afford an additional \$10,000 payment to already high HOA dues?” the husband asked.

Indeed, and what about people on a fixed income or retirement? We agreed that some will have to sell their condos and likely move out of state in order to be able to buy another home or condo.

In June, former State Senator Ted Gaines reported on the insurance crisis for the Globe, in “The Time for Action on Insurance Crisis is Now: Insurance lubricates the entire economy; the current system is broken.”

“Californians need bold and immediate action from the Governor Gavin Newsom and Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara to help attract insurers back to the state, create a robust market, and give consumers more options for fire insurance coverage,” Gaines said.

He explained that “rate increase applications are languishing in the Department of Insurance (DOI) for up to two years. Instead of losing money while waiting for rate increases, insurers are pulling out of the state with astonishing speed. It’s likely that everyone reading this knows someone who has been non-renewed by an insurer and unable to find the needed fire insurance required by lenders.”

With homeowners’ insurance going up so dramatically (my own homeowners insurance went up 20% this year, and I feel lucky to have it.

This is pushing Californians to the California FAIR Plan, which is writing the highest-risk policies in California, but it is woefully underfunded, with only a few billion in assets and several hundred billion in liabilities, Ted Gaines reported. Insurers are now asking for a 34% increase in premiums in California now.

Sen. Gaines explained the history:

Proposition 103, passed by voters in 1988, governs our state’s property and casualty insurance industry. Under Prop. 103, the Insurance Commissioner must approve rate increase requests from insurers before they are implemented.

The DOI should immediately approve all currently filed rate filings from insurance companies. Rates will increase, for certain. But, right now, the choice is not between higher-priced and lower-priced policies, but between California FAIR Plan’s highest-priced policies or no policies at all. These approvals should extend to requests that include forward-risk modeling and reinsurance costs, which is standard in the other 49 states.

A single catastrophic loss event in an area dense with FAIR Plan policies would bankrupt the entity quickly. The insurance industry is the backstop for the FAIR Plan, meaning they would be liable for paying out excess FAIR Plan claims in proportion to the amount of business they write in our state, even though they are not receiving any premium for those policies and would also pay out for losses on their own policies.

This lose-lose scenario is another reason why insurers are shrinking their California footprint, to avoid FAIR Plan financial liability.

California is and has been a lower-cost state for insurance but that did not accurately reflect the risk insurers faced, as the devastating wildfires of 2017 and 2020 proved. Those fires wiped out decades of insurer California profits and shed critical light on what rate adequacy really looks like. The low prices were an artifact of Prop. 103, which is acting as a price control, which always leads to shortages. It is proving a barrier to its stated goal of ensuring insurance is available to all Californians.

The real responsibility for California's high insurance premiums lies in state politicians' and the governor's policy decisions and bad laws. Most insurers say because of California's high cost to rebuild, they can't keep premiums artificially low any longer.

And why are California's rebuilding and building costs so high?

- The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): As Ed Ring reported for the Globe, over 50+ years, "CEQA has acquired layers of legislative updates and precedent setting court rulings, warping it into a beast that denies clarity to developers and derails projects. When projects do make it through the CEQA gauntlet, the price of passage adds punitive costs in time and money."
- Project labor agreements are one of the biggest obstacles to political collaboration between construction unions and groups representing business interests, Ed Ring explained. A PLA is "a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement with one or more labor organizations that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project."
- federal, state, regional, and local agencies permitting, overlapping and conflicting regulations, and the agencies all have the power to halt building projects, allow a lawsuit, or rule change, require an entire new set of designs, and force and individual or builder to resubmit plans to every agency and start all over again (Ed Ring, summarized).

These reasons as well as incoherent water restrictions, preposterous "clean air" requirements, mandatory electricity requirements, mandatory solar requirements, mandatory interior sprinkler systems and the like. These state mandated regulations in home and commercial building have driven the cost of construction to unimaginable levels.

In "LA Homeless Tower Cost as Much as 5-Star Hotel to Build," Globe contributor Thomas Buckley showed how the new Weingart Center 19-story "Permanent Supportive Housing" for the homeless tower cost \$594,000 a unit to build – over \$1,000 per-square-foot.

The cost of the "housing first" \$1 Million dollar per-unit recently approved Santa Monica project is another example of why insurance costs are so high.

Or when in January Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg proudly announced "Sacramento's historic Capitol Park Hotel, a permanent supportive housing complex for "people experiencing homelessness," at a cost of \$478,000 – per 280 square foot room.

Using Darrell Steinberg's homeless housing math, his home of approximately 2,000+ square feet would cost \$3.8 million, in a residential bedroom community.



For the record, “people experiencing homelessness” are drug-addicted vagrants living on streets, in city parks, or on the banks of California rivers.

In 2020, we reported, “Redevelopment of the hotel is now budgeted at \$59.6 million, (up from \$23 million in 2019) and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2022 (not August 2019).” It was finalized in 2024.

The City of Sacramento says it contributed \$20.3 million. The rest was other taxpayer funds via Gov. Newsom’s state-funded Project Homekey.

It is 2024, and “guests” are just now moving in, the Globe reported. “We are taking bets on how quickly the apartments will be trashed by the ‘unhoused;’ the opening bet is 2 months.”

This is why California’s insurance has escalated to untold amounts in a relatively short amount of time. It’s not just the wildfires.

We always knew California’s leftist political policies would catch up to the people paying the bills. But no one expected just how high the bills would be. Or how devastating the costs and cancellations would be. Or how the repercussions would hit every industry in the state. Or how so many business owners would pick up and leave California. Or how many employees would leave the state.

Oh wait – yes we did. We’ve been warning about this since Jerry Brown was reelected as governor in 2011, and finished the state off that he started to destroy in his first term, 1975-1983. We’ve been warning that if Gavin Newsom was elected he would be worse than Jerry Brown. We warned that electing Ricardo Lara to Insurance Commissioner – who has never run a business or even signed the front of a paycheck – would be a disaster...

And here we are – your homeowners insurance has just been cancelled. Will you be forced to dump your single family home?

Now you know how it happened, and even who is to blame, but there will be no indictments.

The real blame falls on California voters; when will the California voter stop supporting dreadful policy makers? When will voters acknowledge that voting for today’s radical Democrats only leads to crisis after crisis?

Nothing will change for Californians until voters rid the state of the Democrat supermajority who wield the power that only harms the people.

*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?*

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

**THE PRESS, THE PROFESSORS, AND**  
**POSTMODERN PROGRESSIVISM**  
**BY PETER BERKOWITZ**

*This is a chapter that appears in the recently released book, “Against the Corporate Media: Forty-two Ways the Press Hates You.”*

Postmodern progressivism occupies the commanding heights of contemporary American culture. It combines a commitment to rule by credentialed elites, an ever more expansive egalitarianism conceived in terms of group identities, and a repudiation of traditional moral principles. Progressive elites draw from these clashing convictions a license to do whatever is necessary to make Americans conform to their prescriptions for diversity understood as intellectual conformity; equity understood as differential treatment based on race, ethnicity, and sex; and inclusion understood as silencing or excluding those who disagree with the progressive agenda. Oscillating opportunistically between a moral relativism that haughtily disdains to judge and a dogmatic moralism that judges haughtily, this incoherent sensibility fortifies self-righteousness and induces ideological blindness. It drives the mainstream media’s and the elite academy’s efforts to banish opposition, stigmatize debate, control the flow of information, supervise public discussion, and establish authoritative and unchallengeable progressive narratives.

Postmodern progressivism undercuts liberal democracy in America. Freedom and democracy depend on a knowledgeable citizenry, which requires a self-aware press that reports the facts accurately and analyzes the issues fairly, and an educational system devoted to the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation of independent minds. However, the prestige press and the elite academy collaborate to cocoon citizens within a set of purportedly final and uncontestable progressive assumptions and conclusions. This drastic narrowing of moral and political perspectives erodes the conditions for public discussion and reasoned deliberation essential to responsible self-government.

Seldom does the onrush of events provide a real-time laboratory for testing claims about culture, politics, and society. But the mainstream media’s starkly contrasting coverage of two grave accusations – the Russia-collusion accusation directed at candidate and then President Donald Trump, and the influence-peddling-scheme accusation directed at candidate and then President Joe Biden, his son, and other family members – demonstrates the lengths to which the mainstream media is willing to go to twist, suppress, or invent facts to advance progressive moral judgments and political interests.

From the 2016 presidential campaign through 2019, the mainstream media championed the falsehood that Donald Trump colluded with Russia to steal the 2016 presidential election. However, the “Report on the Investigation Into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election” Volume I and Volume II, submitted by special prosecutor Robert Mueller in March 2019 after nearly two years of work, failed to find evidence to establish that the Trump campaign engaged in a criminal conspiracy with Russia. Meanwhile, investigations by Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz – “A Report of Investigation of Certain Allegations Relating to Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe” (February 2018) and “Review of Four FISA Applications and Other Aspects of the FBI’s Crossfire Hurricane Investigation” (December 2019) – along with the “Report on Matters Related to Intelligence Activities and Investigations Arising Out of the 2016 Presidential Campaigns” (May 2023) issued by Special Prosecutor John Durham found abundant evidence of serious wrongdoing by law enforcement officials.

According to these reports, the Obama administration’s FBI and Department of Justice flouted standard operating procedures and abused their formidable law-enforcement powers in their investigations of candidate Trump. In no small measure driven by Obama administration holdovers, the FBI and Department of Justice continued to defy regular practices and protocols in investigations of Trump after he entered the White House. The mainstream media has tended to dismiss the significance of the Horowitz reports and the Durham report on the grounds that they did not uncover substantial prosecutable conduct, as if serious wrongdoing in politics is limited to crimes that can be proven in a court of law.

From the 2020 campaign to 2023, the same mainstream media ignored or suppressed the abundant evidence that Joe Biden’s son Hunter and other Biden family members conducted lucrative influence-peddling schemes while Biden was vice president. In October 2020, the *New York Post* reported that a laptop abandoned by Hunter Biden in a Delaware computer store and turned over to the FBI by the store’s owner contained on its hard drive – among sordid photos and extensive electronic communications – an email to Hunter Biden from Vadym Pozharskyi, “a top executive at a Ukrainian energy firm,” thanking the son for the introduction to his father, who was then vice president. The meeting took place “less than a year before the elder Biden pressured government officials in Ukraine into firing a prosecutor who was investigating the company.”

The mainstream media largely declined to cover the story, based in part on an open letter that was ginned up by then-Biden campaign advisor Antony Blinken and signed by fifty-one former intelligence officials. With reckless disregard for the truth, the open letter dismissed the laptop and its contents as “Russian disinformation.” The mainstream media’s insistence that the story was of little public interest was buttressed by collaboration between federal law enforcement and social media: With the FBI’s encouragement, Twitter and Facebook censored the laptop story. The stubborn facts remained. Ample evidence indicated that Hunter Biden, who has been under federal investigation since 2018 for, among other things, improper business dealings, received millions of dollars from Ukrainian natural-gas giant Burisma while his father was vice president and Obama’s point man on Ukraine despite Hunter’s lack of expertise on Ukraine and the natural gas industry. Meanwhile, other family members as well as Hunter received millions of dollars from companies connected to the Chinese Communist Party. Yet the mainstream media found few, if any, leads it regarded as worth pursuing about family members’ efforts to cash in on Joe Biden’s service as vice president.

These overlapping case studies throw into sharp relief an egregious journalistic double standard. In the case of the manufactured Russia-collusion false narrative, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the major broadcast networks, and cable-news outlets CNN and MSNBC – along with the local editors around the country who take their cues from these industry leaders – rushed to condemn Trump. Despite flimsy evidence and the steady unraveling of the case against him, the mainstream media persisted for years in fanning the flames of outrage against Trump’s supposed Russia collusion, promulgating deceptive story lines to hamstring and delegitimize his presidency.

In contrast, the same media outlets concocted far-fetched justifications for ignoring or denying credible allegations of Biden family malfeasance while hushing up the *New York Post*’s accurate reporting. Not even a video of former Vice President Biden boasting at a Council on Foreign Relations event that, by threatening to withhold \$1 billion of U.S. foreign aid, he compelled Ukrainian authorities to fire a prosecutor investigating his son’s employer Burisma was enough to prompt the mainstream media to swing into action. Finally, in March 2022, leading news organizations began to belatedly acknowledge the provenance of Hunter’s laptop. However, they continued to ignore, or slow-walk, reporting of the influence-peddling revealed by his emails and corroborated by the eye-witness testimony of Hunter’s former business partner Tony Bobulinski.

While priding themselves on serving as the nation’s watchdogs, America’s prestige news and opinion organizations have demonstrated little recognition of, and offered scarcely a word of apology for, their opposite derelictions of duty in the cases of Trump and Biden. The likely explanation for the absence of public expressions of remorse is absence of private pangs of remorse. Publishers, editors, reporters, and columnists appear to believe, all things considered, that no apology is owed.

The starkly contrasting approaches to reporting the allegations against Trump and Biden followed a familiar pattern. Consider the mainstream media’s coverage of several high-profile stories since Trump was elected: the never-substantiated charges of sexual assault slung at judge Brett Kavanaugh during his 2018 Senate Judiciary confirmation hearings; the false accusation advanced by the press in January 2019 that boys from Covington Catholic High School mocked a Native American on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; the Jussie Smollet “MAGA” hoax a few weeks later; the much-derided hypothesis during the early months of the pandemic, now widely viewed as more likely than not, that Covid originated in a lab in Wuhan, China; the soft-peddling of the George Floyd protests, at many points lawless and destructive, during the spring and summer of 2020; and the sedulous portrayal of the January 6, 2021, Capitol Hill riots, involving three hours of criminal trespassing, as insurrection, which in common parlance means the effort to overturn a regime. In each case, the mainstream media promulgated a sensationalized version of events consistent with progressive prejudices and aims. As it became increasingly difficult to suppress the facts, the mainstream media lost interest and moved on. Nevertheless, its one-sided characterizations continued to echo through news accounts and op-ed pages and burrow into the progressive imagination and memory.

The temptation should be resisted to attribute the mainstream media’s two-tiered system of reporting to ordinary bias or to the hastiness bound up with producing the first draft of history. Elite news organizations’ acts of commission and omission are not haphazard; they consistently advance progressive interests and goals, simultaneously demonizing the Right and running interference for the Left. Rank partisanship cloaked as morally righteous truth-telling has become a regular feature of the mainstream media’s work product.

Another error is to view the mainstream media's subordination of accurate reporting to activism as a return to the past. It's true that for much of American history, newspapers frankly served one party's interests or another's. It's also true that in the twentieth century, the media establishment resolved to professionalize its operations and to make objective reporting its mission. And it's true that thanks to the internet, which places abundant partisan content to fit nearly every taste and style within easy reach of a few clicks or taps, the days are gone in which a handful of newspapers and networks controlled the nation's access to news and opinion. Nevertheless, the twenty-first-century mainstream media retains a substantial influence on the nation's elites and popular discourse. That influence, however, does not stem from a return to the frank partisanship of early American newspapers or from a doubling down on the professional commitment to objectivity that marked mid-twentieth-century reporting. Instead, the mainstream media contradictorily combines covert partisanship with pious attestations to its own dispassionate professionalism. While riding roughshod over the truth to advance progressive ends, it persists in claiming that it reports reliably on the world as it really is.

To the extent that they own up to a change in their political coverage, members of the mainstream media tend to blame Trump. For example, in the summer of 2016 in "Trump Is Testing the Norms of Objectivity in Journalism," *New York Times* journalist Jim Rutenberg brought to the public's attention a question echoing through the media: "If you're a working journalist and you believe that Donald J. Trump is a demagogue playing to the nation's worst racist and nationalistic tendencies, that he cozies up to anti-American dictators and that he would be dangerous with control of the United States nuclear codes, how the heck are you supposed to cover him?" The obvious answer was that journalists should recommit themselves to getting the story right, scrupulously reporting the bumptious billionaire's wild rhetoric and erratic conduct, the better to equip voters to make an informed decision on his qualifications for the highest office in the land.

Instead, the mainstream media proceeded in the opposite direction. Rutenberg suggested that it was "unavoidable" for reporters to cover Trump as an "abnormal" eruption into the political system: "No living journalist has ever seen a major party nominee put financial conditions on the United States defense of NATO allies, openly fight with the family of a fallen American soldier, or entice Russia to meddle in a United States presidential election by hacking his opponent (a joke, Mr. Trump later said, that the news media failed to get)," the *Times* journalist wrote. "And while coded appeals to racism or nationalism aren't new—two words: Southern strategy—overt calls to temporarily bar Muslims from entry to the United States or questioning a federal judge's impartiality based on his Mexican heritage are new."

There is, however, a world of difference between covering Trump's abnormalities and covering Trump abnormally. It is one thing to unsparingly report Trump's deviations from the norm. It's quite another to conclude that Trump's deviations compelled journalists to deviate from traditional reportorial standards.

How would the public have been harmed or journalism betrayed if the mainstream media had accurately reported that Trump wanted to put financial conditions on NATO allies because he recognized that they were not paying their fair share for the collective defense; that it was indecent for Trump to mock a fallen soldier; that in context it sounds like Trump is speaking facetiously when, at a large political rally, he invites the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton's email; that a temporary ban on Muslims' entering the United States was a crude response to plausible threats



(President Trump issued a ban on nationals from seven Muslim-majority countries to the United States on the grounds that they posed a terror risk); and that vulgar as it is to question a federal judge's impartiality based on his or her heritage, Trump's accusation reflects the practice all-but institutionalized among progressive elites of ascribing opinions to individuals based on their ethnic and racial identity (a sitting Supreme Court justice appointed by President Obama stated that her Latina ethnicity gave her an advantage in adjudicating cases and controversies, and elite law-school professors, overwhelmingly progressive, routinely disparage white judges as implacably racist)?

The answer, toward which Rutenberg gestured but never forthrightly stated, is that the mainstream media felt obliged to use all means, fair and foul, to besmirch Trump because its members saw him as an unprecedented threat to their political convictions and priorities. Although they flirted in print with the need to renounce objectivity in their treatment of Trump, they believed that he objectively menaced all they held dear. Therefore, they refrained from reporting facts or considering opinions that might lend support to Trump's campaign and validate his voters' views while hastening to publish wild accusations and flimsy speculations to damage Trump. Since the objective truth in their eyes was that a Trump presidency would overthrow progressivism's righteous hegemony in America, the corporate media considered itself duty bound to spare no effort in using its extensive powers to shape the narrative to defeat Trump and, if he were elected, to straitjacket his presidency.

In "The Press Versus the President," a deep dive into the Russian collusion narrative that appeared in the *Columbia Journalism Review* in early 2023, veteran journalist Jeff Gerth dispassionately analyzed the extraordinary extent to which the mainstream media abandoned dispassionate analysis to construct the false Trump collusion narrative. The prestige press, he demonstrated, published stories riddled with inaccuracies, uncritically reported mendacious statements by FBI Director James Comey and California's Democratic Representative Adam Schiff, hyped accounts that contained false claims "without any attribution or sourcing" and "significant omissions," greatly increased their reliance on anonymous sources, excluded exculpatory evidence and explicit denials by key actors while presenting statements out of context to make them seem incriminatory, and stood by error-riddled reporting for months despite mounting evidence of erroneous details and misrepresentation of the larger picture. In 2018, the Pulitzer Prize Board awarded journalism's most prestigious honor jointly to the *Times* and the *Post* in the face of coverage that systematically betrayed traditional journalistic standards. Its judgment and conduct in convicting Trump in the court of public opinion having been spectacularly rewarded, the mainstream media proceeded to bury the Biden influence-peddling scheme, the better to exonerate its party's leader.

"My main conclusion is that journalism's primary missions, informing the public and holding powerful interests accountable, have been undermined by the erosion of journalistic norms and the media's own lack of transparency about its work," wrote Gerth. "This combination adds to people's distrust about the media and exacerbates frayed political and social differences." Accordingly, Walter Lippmann was right to worry in his 1920 book *Liberty and the News* "that when journalists 'arrogate to themselves the right to determine by their own consciences what shall be reported and for what purpose, democracy is unworkable.'" But Gerth offered no explanation as to why, a century later, our prestigiously credentialed and highly educated journalists believe that their job is to determine what the public needs to know, what it should feel, and what it is better off not knowing.

One crucial factor inspiring journalism's abandoning of its primary mission to inform the public and impartially hold powerful interests accountable is the postmodern progressivism inculcated by higher



education in America. Since at least the late 1940s, colleges and universities have been reshaping the curriculum by putting it in the service of progressive priorities. Since the 1970s, colleges and universities have come to function as the indispensable credentialing institution for journalism's higher echelons. And since roughly the 1980s, they have injected into the curriculum the postmodern demotion of reason and repudiation of authoritative norms and standards. Eventually, the progressivism and the postmodernism coalesced into a single sensibility, committed to empowering government to emancipate individuals from traditional moral virtues and judgments. Few are the members of the mainstream media who, during their passage through the credentialing institutions of American higher education, have not imbibed the spirit of postmodern progressivism.

Thanks to instructive writings by predominantly – but by no means exclusively – conservative authors, four stages stand out in the establishment of postmodern progressivism as higher education's governing ethos.

The process began in the soft dogmatism that then-recent-Yale-University-graduate William F. Buckley documented in 1951 in his book *God and Man at Yale*. Buckley's examination of course syllabi from the social sciences, particularly economics and political science, demonstrated the faculty's determination to portray what Buckley called collectivism – a preference for larger government staffed by supposedly disinterested technocrats seeking the people's good often contrary to the people's expressed interests – as preferable to individualism, or the traditional American view of individual liberty and limited government. At the same time, Buckley's review of syllabi from Yale's humanities curriculum as well as from the Yale Divinity School's course offerings, disclosed readings and assignments that did not merely teach the arguments and influences of atheism but consistently advocated a secular point of view. While assuming basic principles of objectivity and academic freedom, Yale's overall curriculum gently eroded them by presenting the faculty's preferences for collectivism and atheism as objectively correct and the alternatives, by their silent omission, as unworthy of serious exploration.

In his 1988 bestseller *The Closing of the American Mind*, University of Chicago professor Allan Bloom illuminated the soft relativism that, with the cultural upheavals of the 1960s, had conquered the campuses. This relativism – which derived in part from Nietzsche's assertion that morality expresses the desire for power, and in part from the neo-Marxist doctrine that morality reflects institutionalized structures of power – was soft because of its transparent insincerity and inconsistency. Students and professors invoked moral relativism to disarm the claims of inherited authority and to disparage the achievements of Western civilization. But students and professors maintained firm convictions about the falseness and harmfulness of biblical faith, the irrelevance of classical political philosophy, the goodness of the liberation of sexual mores from the tyranny of traditional norms and practices, and the evilness of Ronald Reagan's presidency.

In the 1990s, campus dogmatism turned hard. In their 1998 work *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses*, University of Pennsylvania history professor Alan Charles Kors and Boston lawyer Harvey Silverglate explored an outbreak of cases across the country in which university administrations, often joined by faculty, conspired to deprive students of rights basic to a liberal education: liberty of thought and discussion, and the right to due process in the adjudication of allegations of misconduct, particularly sexual misconduct. Underwritten by the emancipation from the standard norms of free societies thought to be conferred by Nietzsche and the neo-Marxists, administrators and professors justified crude infringements on liberty by dubious

progressive interpretations of social reality. Speech codes sought to protect historically discriminated-against minorities and women from supposedly hateful opinions and ideas. The curtailment of due process for males accused in cases involving women's allegations of sexual misconduct was intended to compensate for the pervasive inequalities that, it was said, society had imposed on women.

In practice, as Kors and Silverglate exhaustively showed, university administrations rode roughshod over the facts to censor speech that deviated from orthodox progressivism and to convict students accused of sexual assault on the grounds that the achievement of equality for women demanded belief in whatever they said. Students internalized the implicit lesson: Objectively true progressive ends justified authoritarian means, including the promulgation of gross falsehoods. Despite their hope that the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) – established in 1999 by Kors and Silverglate to combat the assault on rights on university campuses – would complete its work within a decade, the organization's case load has only grown and now extends beyond the world of higher education. To reflect the proliferation of challenges to free speech and due process that it has been compelled to address, FIRE has recently changed its name to The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression.

Over the past twenty years, political correctness has metastasized into “wokeness,” in which dogmatism has become militant. Wokeness combines an idiosyncratic interpretation of postmodernism according to which only the West's grand historical narrative has been thoroughly discredited with a dogmatic grand historical narrative of its own. According to woke doctrine, America's political ideas and institutions—and indeed those of the Western civilization from which they emerged—serve white people's interests in domination, are permeated by racism and sexism, ineluctably usher in colonialism and imperialism, and must be overcome by all means necessary. Wokism builds on identity politics, which teaches, on the one hand, that truth is relative to racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual, and gender backgrounds and, on the other hand, that some racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual and gender backgrounds – those that embody progressively endorsed accounts of oppression – bestow moral superiority. No book has done more to expose the woke spirit's militant dogmatism than *Woke Racism: How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black America*. In that 2021 work, Columbia University professor of linguistics John McWhorter explained how elites' redefinition of “truth” as that which serves the empowerment of socially approved oppressed groups harms those it purports to benefit, poisons the public square, and undermines the quest for knowledge.

The declension of higher education in America over the past seventy-five years make it a great irony that the mainstream media blamed Donald Trump for undertaking a war on the very notion of truth. In fact, the prestige media are exemplary products of a system of higher education that—through the partisan content of its curriculum, the tendentiousness of its teaching, the slant of its scholarship, and the canons of illiberal conduct on its campuses—has for decades self-righteously subordinated the search for truth to politics.

Progressive opinions deserve a respectful hearing in a liberal democracy. However, the indoctrination of students to use the press to indoctrinate citizens in progressive opinions is anathema to liberal democracy. To overcome the postmodern progressivism that has corrupted the mainstream media by institutionalizing a two-tier system of news coverage and opining – one for the progressive

party that the mainstream media serves and one for the conservative opposition – the nation must reform higher education.

*Peter Berkowitz is the Tad and Dianne Taube senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. From 2019 to 2021, he served as director of the Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. State Department. His writings are posted at [PeterBerkowitz.com](http://PeterBerkowitz.com) and he can be followed on Twitter @BerkowitzPeter. This article first appeared in the Real Clear Politics of September 15., 2024. It was redistributed by the Hoover Institution on September 16, 2024.*

## AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

BY JAMES PIERESON

### *On Stumbling Toward Utopia: How the 1960s Turned Into a National Nightmare and How We Can Revive the American Dream by Timothy S. Goeglein.*

Seldom have Americans been so beset by history as in the 1960s, when historic events rushed at them at high speed from all directions. There were riots, assassinations, and daily protests on college campuses. Americans dealt with crises by the bucketful: an urban crisis, a racial crisis, a poverty crisis. There was a sexual revolution, aided by the invention of the birth-control pill; a youth revolution, caused by the coming-of-age of the baby-boom generation; and a civil-rights revolution, sparked by the migration of America's black population from the South to northern cities.

At the same time, it was a decade of affluence and unprecedented prosperity, in contrast to the destitution of the 1930s. There were breakthroughs in science, medicine, and technology. On television, Americans saw a foreign war unfolding and a landing on the moon, the ultimate achievement of American know-how. It was a decade of progress in many areas, but in many cases the cost was wreckage and ruin to institutions Americans had long taken for granted as fundamental to their way of life.

Timothy S. Goeglein supplies an audit of the damage inflicted on the nation by that turbulent decade in an important and informative new book, *Stumbling Toward Utopia: How the 1960s Turned Into a National Nightmare and How We Can Revive the American Dream*. Goeglein, a former special assistant to President George W. Bush, the vice president of the nonprofit Focus on the Family, and the author of several other books on culture and politics in the United States, describes how revolutionaries in that era pursued utopian visions but succeeded mainly in upending families, schools, colleges, civic life, and the foundations of a safe and prosperous society. The book is a disquieting inquest on that era, now more than a half-century in the past.

Goeglein suggests, quite accurately, that many of the leaders of the period acted as they did because they did not care much for American society or for American influence around the world. Some of these leaders may have been utopians, he acknowledges, but many were nihilists in pursuit of entertainment and amusement through revolution and upheaval. Whatever their motives, they succeeded far beyond any expectations they may have had in mind when they launched their various crusades. **The unsettling winds turned loose in that decade ripped through**

American life for years thereafter and continue to do so to the present day. Goeglein, while wrestling with that disturbing reality, nevertheless points to some hopeful signs in the direction of restoration and recovery from the long-lasting effects of the 1960s.

He frames his narrative around letters he received from a friend beginning in 1965, when both were in school, with the exchange continuing until just a few years ago. The early letters describe the religious and patriotic culture they took for granted as youngsters in a small town, and they go on to chronicle the dissolution of that culture over the years as it gave way to anti-war protests, flag-burning, drugs, gang warfare, homelessness, broken families, crime, and a general sense that the country had fallen apart. Looking back over the decades, they had no trouble in locating the origins of America's decline in the 1960s. As one observer wrote, "we are still living in the long shadow of 1968."

The idealists of that decade wished to free themselves from the restraints of inherited institutions, including religion, schools, the family, and even the U.S. Constitution. These were not altogether new impulses; rather, they were handed down by an earlier generation of reformers. Woodrow Wilson, for example, claimed early in the century that Americans should give up their dedication to the U.S. Constitution, in his view an outdated relic of eighteenth-century thinking, and argued for a "living" constitution that would evolve with the times. John Dewey, another early twentieth-century progressive, envisioned the schools as laboratories of reform in which students would be inculcated in left-wing ideals with regard to sex, families, and politics. Herbert Marcuse, an old-time radical who fused Marx's ideas with Freud's doctrines about sexuality, claimed that openness and experimentation with regard to sex represented the true path to human growth and progress. Wilson, Dewey, and Marcuse, among others, first set down the ideas about sex, schools, jurisprudence, and governmental reform that resurfaced with a vengeance in the 1960s.

These ideas came together in the Port Huron Statement, a far-left manifesto written and published in 1962 by a group of young radicals operating under the umbrella of the Students for a Democratic Society. The publication of this document, according to Goeglein, was the step that launched the radical movements of the 1960s that were aimed at the transformation of American society. As he writes, "The sexual revolution, radical feminism, the corruption of the arts, and the modish disrespect for America were birthed through this statement." The authors were leaders of the "New Left," so called because they broke ranks with revolutionary communists and Marxists and sought to change American society by taking over key institutions. They targeted the universities, in part because the liberals who ran them were too weak to resist radical demands and in part because universities were walled off from much of American society. If they could take over the academy, they reasoned, then they could use it as a base for radical reform and provide jobs for allies and fellow travelers, while indoctrinating students with regard to race, gender, and opposition to capitalism and free markets.

Goeglein traces the effects of New Left ideas as they proceeded through the decade to challenge one institution after another. The teachers' unions took over the public schools, then used them to propagandize for higher taxes, race and gender quotas, and other progressive causes. The entertainment industry, formerly led by conservative producers and actors like Louis B. Mayer, Samuel Goldwyn, and John Wayne, gave way in the 1960s to left-wing actors and producers, such as Jane Fonda, Dustin Hoffman, Stanley Kubrick, and Norman Lear, who inserted progressive themes into their movie and television productions. The same causes were taken up by mainline Protestant churches, which soon began to hemorrhage members to upstart evangelical churches that professed traditional Christian values. Government debt exploded in

the 1960s—and thereafter—as new welfare programs expanded and claimed ever-larger shares of the federal budget; citizens’ trust in government declined at the same rate as the debt increased. Colleges and university leaders capitulated to radical protests and demands for “change” and “relevance,” much as the New Left theoreticians had predicted in the Port Huron Statement. Homicide rates tripled during the decade; family breakdown through divorce and out-of-wedlock births followed a similar path. Goeglein is harsh in his assessment of the 1960s, but he marshals ample evidence to support his conclusions.

The 1960s were an unusual time, as shown in this book, in the degree to which so many political, cultural, and social movements came together in a few short years to drive the country rapidly to the left in many areas. It was unlike the 1920s, a period of cultural experimentation that remained checked by political conservatism, and also differed from the 1930s, a decade of political liberalism matched against strong currents of cultural conservatism. The progressivism of the 1960s was like a cold shower for the country against the background of the 1950s, a decade of both cultural and political traditionalism.

Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society pushed the country to the left politically in the mid-1960s via the passage of civil-rights and social-welfare legislation. The Supreme Court accelerated that move through landmark interpretations of the “living” constitution; the court’s decisions broke new ground in the areas of civil rights, voting rights, criminal procedure, legislative and congressional apportionment, and obscenity, the last providing further momentum for the sexual revolution by making it easier to publish and distribute pornography. The civil-rights model banning discrimination by race was soon adapted and applied to new groups, including women, which aided the rise of feminism.

This singular decade tested every institution and cultural practice. Many of the changes inaugurated in that decade are still unfurling today. As Goeglein points out, “We are now living in the seventh decade of what the 1960s has wrought: disrespect for our country, mockery of faith, broken families, aimless and angry males, sexual promiscuity, traumatized and confused youth, catastrophic national debt, and other social ills.”

at is an impressive catalogue of problems, greatly outweighing the few constructive steps taken in that decade. It is fair to wonder: Is there a way out? Can those problems be solved? Can America rebuild the institutions that were corrupted in the 1960s and recover the patriotic spirit of former times?

Goeglein thinks we can revive the American dream, and he believes such a revival is already underway in the backlash against “woke” ideology; increasing support for school choice and religious schools; the impressive growth in evangelical churches; and expanding advocacy for traditional values as they relate to family, religion, and patriotism. He does not counsel withdrawal from the corrosive culture of progressivism. Far from it: he encourages conservatives to engage in local institutions, including public schools, and in national politics. It is only through this kind of engagement, he argues, that the mood of despair and decline that afflicts so many Americans can be reversed and turned into the positive spirit of hope and opportunity that once shaped the nation until it was toppled in the 1960s. Ronald Reagan showed a few decades ago how this can be accomplished when he reignited the U.S. economy, challenged the Soviet Union, and rekindled faith in the American future. There is no reason why this cannot be done again, says Goeglein, whose wise counsel stands in defiance of the 1960s and the destruction it unleashed.



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## ADDENDUM I

### NOVEMBER 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.



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## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

General Member: \$100 - \$249  \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Voting Member: \$250 - \$5,000  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

### MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio  Internet  Public Hearing  Friend

COLAB Member(s) / Sponsor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

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

Donations/Contributions do not require membership though it is encouraged in order to provide updates and information.

Memberships and donation will be kept confidential if that is your preference.

Confidential Donation/Contribution/Membership

### PAYMENT METHOD:

Check  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_