



**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
**SEPTEMBER 8-14, 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!

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

**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

**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**



**ALERT**

**HOUSING IN LIEU TAX MIGHT COME BACK  
1:30 PM AT TUESDAY BOARD MEETING**

**THIS WEEK  
SEE PAGE 5**

**BOS MEETING**

**TAX AGREEMENT WITH OCEANO SERVICE DISTRICT  
COUNTY TO TAKE OVER FIRE SERVICES - & LOSE MONEY**

**REAPPOINTMENT OF RITA L. NEAL AS COUNTY COUNSEL FOR A  
NEW FOUR-YEAR \$2 MILLION CONTRACT**

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE CONTRACTS OK  
BUT ILLUSTRATE NEED FOR BIG PICTURE LOOK**

**MORE NACIMIENTO PIPELINE LEAKS & REPAIRS**

**LEGISLATIVE LOBBIEST REPORT  
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION APPROVED  
THEY REALLY CAN'T TELL HOW BAD IT IS IN SACRAMENTO**

**BIG CONSULTANT STUDY ON WIND ENERGY BASES  
THESE ARE FOR THE SMALL POST CONSTRUCTION VERSIONS  
WE STILL DON'T KNOW THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE ENERGY**

**HOUSING IN LIEU TAX REPORT  
SUGAR COATED BY STAFF SO GIBSON CAN PROPOSE RENEWAL**

**SUPERVISOR REQUESTS**

**PLANNING COMMISSION CANCELLED**

**COASTAL COMMISSION PLAYING COY WITH SPACE PLANE**



**LAST WEEK  
SEE PAGE 24**

**NO BOS MEETING  
ONLY 8 MEETINGS LEFT THIS YEAR**

**SLOCOG  
1-ITEM MEETING: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL  
PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

**OTHER AGENCIES DORMANT**

**EMERGENT ISSUES  
SEE PAGE 28**

**CALIFORNIA'S ANTI-BUSINESS, HIGH-TAX  
POLICIES ARE DRIVING BUSINESSES AND  
PEOPLE AWAY**

**ENVIRO-GRIFT: CALIFORNIA LAWMAKERS PASS BAN  
ON 'REUSABLE' PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS**

**CALIFORNIA'S LEGISLATURE HAS TURNED ON THE  
PEOPLE**

**FEDERAL DEBT INTEREST \$3 BILLION PER DAY**

**CALIFORNIA TO GET FIRST NEW NATIONAL  
MARINE SANCTUARY IN 32 YEARS, BANNING  
OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING ALONG 116 MILES  
OF COAST**

**COLAB IN DEPTH**  
**SEE PAGE 37**

**LABORING UNDER A DELUSION**

*America is in a Culture War. Détente is not an option, and surrender is unconscionable, for it would mean the end of our free republic.*

**BY THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER**

**THE MEDIA LIES ADD UP**

*FOR SOME NINE YEARS, THE MEDIA AND THE LEFT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FED THE COUNTRY A SUCCESSION OF RANK DECEPTIONS AND CONSPIRACIES*

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

**SPONSORS**



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

**Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, September 10, 2024 (Scheduled)**

**Item 5 - Submittal of a resolution accepting the exchange of property tax revenue and annual tax increment for the transfer of fire protection services from the Oceano Community Services District (OCSD) to the County of San Luis Obispo.** The County has negotiated a property tax exchange agreement with OCSD to help offset costs of the County agreeing to take over Fire and all hazard emergency services for the district. The County will in turn contract with the Five Cities Fire Authority to provide the actual service.

**Key points of the deal include:**

1. The County will receive 96.15% of the District's portion of the property tax to help offset its costs for taking over the services. The most recent audited financial statements (FY 2022-23) for the District indicate that it received \$1,286,944 in taxes and assessments. There is no breakdown in the report. Thus, it is not possible to determine how much actual property tax that the County will receive.

The County Board letter is deficient in that it does not disclose how much **property tax** net of the assessments the County will receive. It only presents abstract percentages.

*If the divestiture request is approved by LAFCO, OCSD will retain 3.85% of all current tax revenue, and future property tax increment, after transfers to the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF), and the remaining 96.15% of all current tax revenue, and future property tax increment, shall be transferred to the County.*

2. The Board letter does disclose that the County will only begin paying \$1.8 million for the service that will only grow over the years.

*On September 12, 2023, the Board of Supervisors received a staff report on the County's option to assume fire responsibility as named in OCSD's application of divestiture, and directed staff to develop a plan for service to provide fire service to the community of Oceano and its surrounding areas from the Five Cities Fire Authority (FCFA) Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach stations via a contract including two person staffing in the approximate amount **of \$1.8 million** annually, including County indirect cost, to provide an equivalent level of service to the OCSDs current service level.*

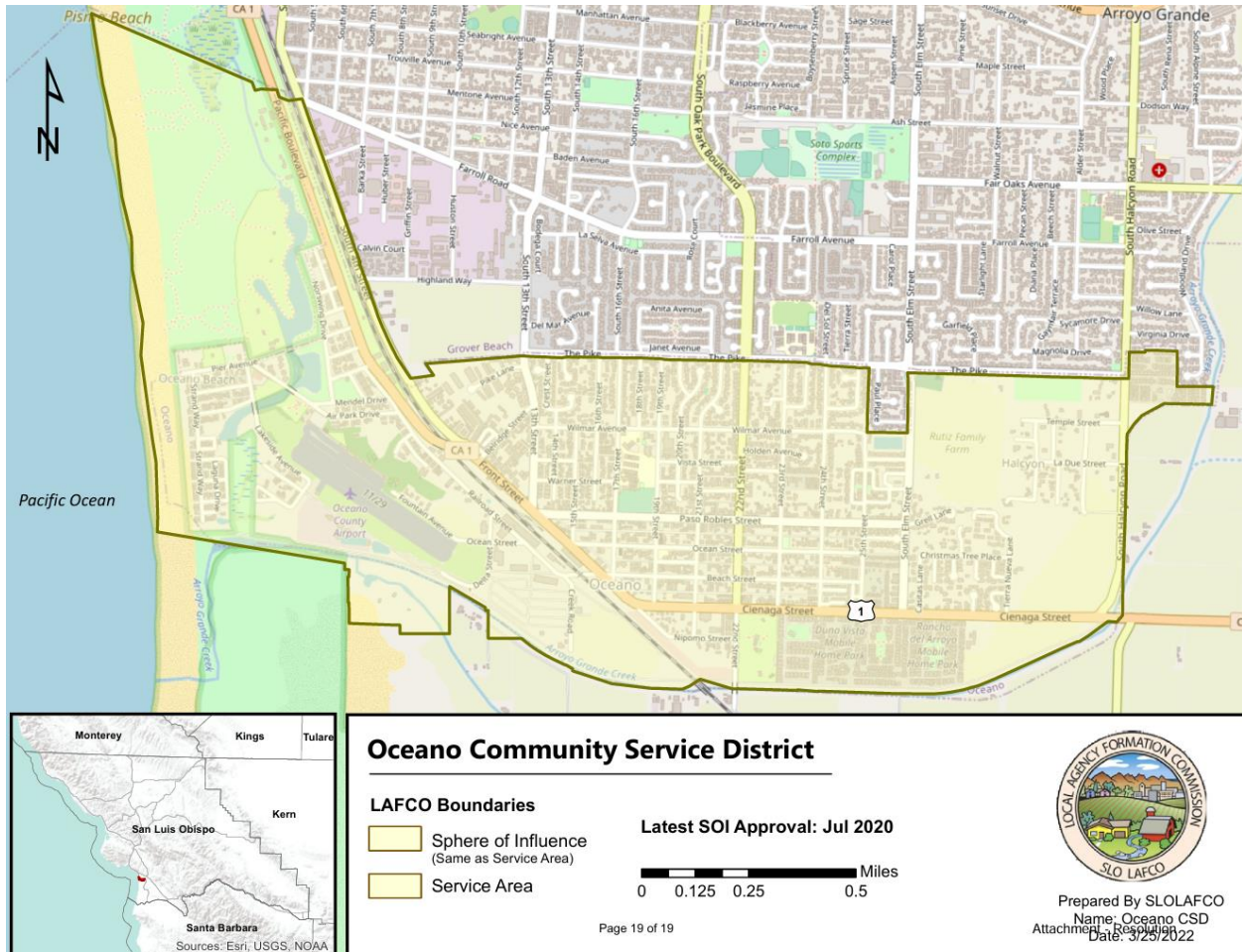
3. Even if all of the \$1.286 million is property tax (which it is not), the County will have to fund a substantial gap (\$800,000?). This will be paid for by the general taxpayers of the entire County. It will grow inexorably each year.

4. The Oceano Community Service District has a substantially unfunded pension liability. Some of this has to be related to its Fire services over the years. Is the District or the County going to pay off this liability?

**Big Picture**



The smaller and weaker districts are the canaries in the coal mine. Gradually, they will collapse and the County will have to pick up the services. Eventually, the smaller and weaker cities will also collapse under the pressure of salary increases and pension liability costs. As we asked in last week's highlights, below, what is the County's long range Revenue Plan? Given the inexorable growth of salaries, benefits and staffing levels, what does the County need to do to raise the revenues to cover these costs over 5, 10, 20, and future years. Are tax increases the only solution? Are service cuts inevitable? How does the REACH Economic Development Plan tangibly relate, if at all?



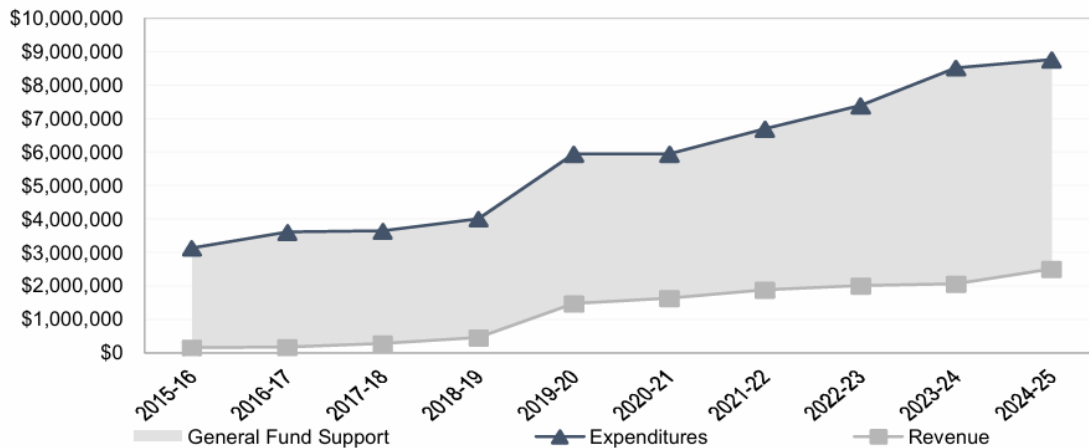
**Item 6 - Submittal of a resolution reappointing Rita L. Neal as County Counsel for a four-year term beginning September 30, 2024. The write-up states in part:**

*Approval of this reappointment does not result in an increase in salary or benefits. The adopted FY 2024-25 budget includes full-year funding for the County Counsel position. The salary range for the County Counsel is \$224,844 to \$286,992 per year. The budgeted full year salary for Ms. Neal is \$286,992 and \$192,014 per year in benefits, which reflect the same rate(s) for benefits that are provided to general management employees (payroll unit BU09), and in accordance with the applicable San Luis Obispo County Code Sections(s) 2.48.180 and 2.48.034. Sufficient authority and funding exists in the FY 2024-25 Fund Center 111 – County Counsel adopted budget to cover these expenses. The FY 2024-25 partial year cost of the reappointment of Ms. Neal beginning September 30, 2024, is \$359, 254 for both salary and benefits.*

The County Counsel’s Budget has more than doubled in the last 9 years. The County has also paid out millions in major legal settlements on jail deaths, construction contract disputes, and employee harassment settlements. Neal advised the Board of Supervisors in closed session to surrender the lawsuit on redistricting. The prior Board majority had adopted a legal redistricting plan that was challenged by leftists who wanted to preserve the prior decades gerimandering plan.

	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24 Adopted	% Change
Expenditures	\$8,758,394	\$237,736	3%
Revenue	\$2,503,797	\$439,457	21%
General Fund Support	\$6,254,597	\$(201,721)	(3)%
Staffing Levels	45.00 FTE	(1.00) FTE	(2)%

**Ten Year Budget History**



Cal Coast News provides a little perspective in the article below.

*San Luis Obispo County Counsel seeks four-year contract, nearly \$2 million*

September 6, 2024



**San Luis Obispo County Counsel Rita Neal**

**By KAREN VELIE**

The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors is slated on Tuesday to approve a new four-year contract with County Counsel Rita Neal at a cost of nearly \$2 million, according to the consent agenda.

If approved by the board, Neal's new contract will run from Sept. 30, 2024 through Sept. 29, 2028. The staff report, however, lists the ending date as Sept. 29, 2028, which would be a five year extension.

As head of the County Counsel's Office, Neal oversees a staff equivalent to 20.5 full-time employees. The office provides legal advice to the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors and 26 county departments.

First appointed county counsel in 2012, in 2013 Neal received \$258,541 in salary and benefits, a number that nearly doubled in 10 years amid large pay increases.

In 2020, the SLO County Board of Supervisors voted to give Neal a 20% pay hike that provided her a compensation package of \$374,579 a year. Then in 2022, the board gave Neal a 15.56% increase in pay. Neal is currently receiving \$479,006 in salary and benefits.

*This article first appeared in the September 6, 2024 CalCoastNews.*

**Items 16, 17, and 18 are all related to the Behavioral Health Department contracting out to various private for-profit agencies for various types of mental health care for County patients.** There is no special problem with these actions. It is significant that such contracts appear on the agenda quite frequently. As illustrated in the Budget chart below, \$71 million of the Department's \$120 million Budget is for Services and Supplies. Most of this is probably attributable to the types of contracts illustrated below. The Budget does not detail the total amount for this type of contract versus the services and supplies consumed internally by the department (for example electricity, paper goods, motor pool, etc.).

What is notable is that the entire budget has doubled in 9 years from \$60 million to \$120 million. How much of this is increased cost, and how much is attributable to expanded patient loads and new services?

Neither the Budget nor the Department's 2024-29 Strategic Plan contains any longitudinal data about how many patients the department has had in the past, and what is forecast for the future. The closest they come are charts depicting subcomponents of the population, such as the regions shown below:



Figure 3 depicts the number of San Luis Obispo County adults (by region) who received specialty mental health services in fiscal years (FY) 2022–2023 versus FY 2021–2022. In FY 2022-2023 there were 4,899 adults served; a 7% increase over the 4,579 adults served in FY 2021-2022.

**Figure 3. Adult Ages 21 and Older Receiving SMHS, FY 2021–2022 and FY 2022–2023**  
 Unduplicated Adults by SMHS Type by Region  
 Overall Fiscal Year Comparison

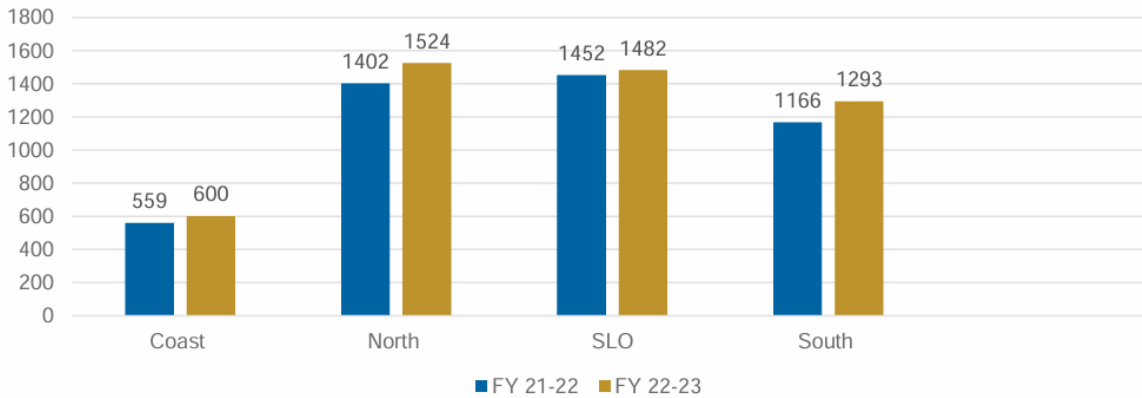
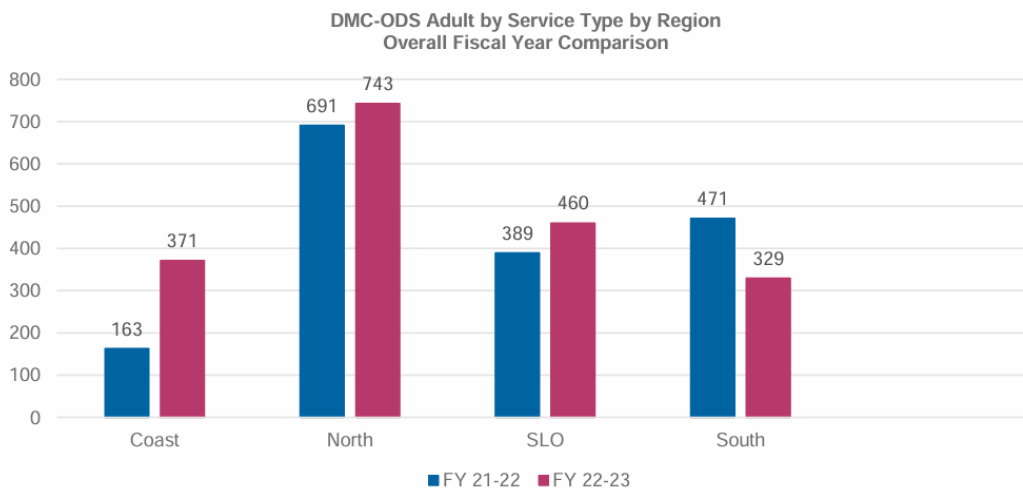


Figure 5 depicts the number of adults in San Luis Obispo County, by region, who received DMC-ODS substance use disorder treatment services in fiscal years (FY) 2022–2023 versus FY 2021–2022. In FY 2022-2023 there were 1,903 adults served; a 11% increase over the 1,714 adults served in FY 2021-2022.

**Figure 5. Adult DMC-ODS Services, FY 2021–2022 and FY 2022–2023**



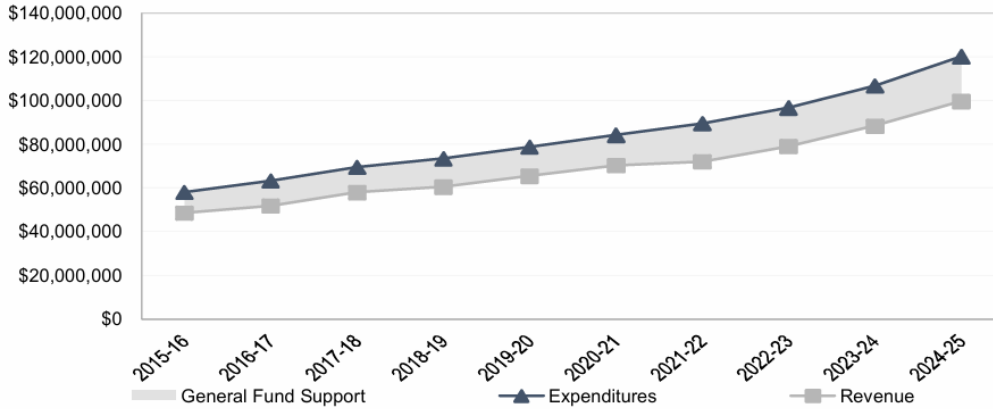
There do not seem to be any consolidating charts. It is difficult to determine if things are becoming better or worse. Is there a mental health epidemic? Is society deteriorating? The County continues to contribute more and more General Fund dollars but does not have a long-range revenue plan. It is nice that all these services are being provided, but why? The Budget growth (see the chart below) certainly suggests a growing problem. We are not seeing the forest through the trees.

Behavioral Health provides services and programs countywide for individuals experiencing symptoms related to disabling mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.

**BUDGET AT A GLANCE**

	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24 Adopted	% Change
Expenditures	\$120,227,722	\$13,405,464	13%
Revenue	\$99,724,122	\$11,343,072	13%
General Fund Support	\$20,503,599	\$2,062,391	11%
Staffing Levels	320.75 FTE	(7.00) FTE	(2)%

**Ten Year Budget History**



	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$72,000	\$72,000	\$74,000	\$74,000	\$2,000
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$0	\$24,374	\$46,330	\$46,330	\$46,330
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$86,818,549	\$89,576,712	\$95,876,615	\$96,477,503	\$9,658,954
Charges for Current Services	\$492,081	\$492,081	\$549,916	\$549,916	\$57,835
Other Revenues	\$998,420	\$1,798,960	\$2,576,373	\$2,576,373	\$1,577,953
Interfund	\$0	\$141,442	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$88,381,050</b>	<b>\$92,105,569</b>	<b>\$99,123,234</b>	<b>\$99,724,122</b>	<b>\$11,343,072</b>
Salary and Benefits	\$47,197,239	\$43,649,064	\$47,787,550	\$47,995,068	\$797,829
Services and Supplies	\$59,553,586	\$71,035,964	\$72,644,464	\$71,726,745	\$12,173,159
Other Charges	\$2,069,745	\$2,531,231	\$2,415,337	\$2,415,337	\$345,592
<b>Gross Expenditures</b>	<b>\$108,820,570</b>	<b>\$117,216,259</b>	<b>\$122,847,351</b>	<b>\$122,137,151</b>	<b>\$13,316,581</b>
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(1,998,312)	\$(1,875,572)	\$(2,009,429)	\$(1,909,429)	\$88,883
<b>Net Expenditures</b>	<b>\$106,822,258</b>	<b>\$115,340,687</b>	<b>\$120,837,922</b>	<b>\$120,227,722</b>	<b>\$13,405,464</b>
<b>General Fund Support</b>	<b>\$18,441,208</b>	<b>\$23,235,118</b>	<b>\$21,714,688</b>	<b>\$20,503,599</b>	<b>\$2,062,391</b>

**Source of Funds**

**Use of Funds**

**Item 16 - Request to 1) approve FY 2024-25 contracts with Central Coast Treatment Center and BHC Alhambra, dba Reasons, in a total amount not to exceed \$702,000 to provide eating disorder treatment services to high risk youth and adult Health Agency Behavioral Health clients; 2) approve the request to waive the terms of the Contracting for Services Policy; and 3) delegate authority to the Health Agency Director or designee to sign**

**any amendments to the contract, including Options to Renew for four additional years (through June 20, 2029), that do not increase the level of General Fund Support required by the Health Agency.**

*EDs are prevalent across all demographics. At least 30 million individuals of all ages, gender identifications, sexual orientations, and races/ethnicities suffer from EDs in the United States. During the Covid-19 pandemic research indicates that there was an increase of 30% in eating disorder-related hospital admissions among females ages 12-18. BHD staff continue to receive an increasing flow of client referrals with serious EDs and assessed a higher demand for a range of EDs treatment modalities, including assessment, Intensive Outpatient Treatment Program (IOP), Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP), and residential treatment. In prior years, BHD received on average five or six of these referrals for treatment annually.*

*The Health Agency Behavioral Health Department (BHD) is mandated by the State of California to provide eating disorder (ED) treatment services to eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries throughout the County. BHD does not have staff on hand to provide outpatient treatment for these services and does not operate a facility that provides inpatient residential treatment services.*

The incidence is increasing. The Department contracts out for the necessary services.

**Item 17 - Request to 1) approve a FY 2024-25 contract with Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc., in a cumulative budgeted pool amount not to exceed \$4,013,298, to provide client placement and intensive care, for adult individuals with severe mental illness, at Mental Health Rehabilitation/Institutions for Mental Diseases facilities; 2) ratify payment for services that may have been rendered in good faith and in the best interest of the public health and welfare prior to the execution of the contract, by 4/5 vote; and 3) delegate authority to the Health Agency Director or designee to sign any amendments to the Contract, including Options to Renew for four additional years (through June 30, 2029) that do not increase the level of General Fund support required by the Health Agency.**

The write-up does not indicate if the problem is increasing or decreasing.

*The Health Agency's Behavioral Health Department contracts with various residential providers within a wide range of adult residential services, providing appropriate levels of care to seriously mentally ill individuals in need of residential placement. With the exception of State hospitals and other acute care hospitals, Mental Health Rehabilitation/Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) facilities offer the most intensive level of care in the residential care continuum. IMDs are locked residential facilities that are primarily engaged in providing intensive care of persons with severe mental illness, which includes medical attention, nursing care, assessment, clinical treatment, and other related services. Intensive services including psychiatrist coverage are offered 24 hours per day / 7 days per week.*

**Item 18 - Request to 1) approve Restoration and Amendment Number 11 to the Contract with Sierra Mental Wellness Group to provide Crisis Stabilization Unit services for the period of July 1, 2024, through October 11, 2024, and 2) ratify payment for services that may have been rendered in good faith and in the best interest of the public health and welfare prior to the execution of the contract, by 4/5 vote. The overall contract is for multiple years. It is not clear how much is retroactive and has already been expended. It may be \$200,000 but the write-up is a little confusing.**

The funding is outlined below:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Maximum Annual Contract</b>
<b>Estimated Expenditures</b>	
Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)	\$1,825,634
<b>Total Expenditures Maximum</b>	<b>\$1,825,634</b>
<b>Estimated Funding Sources</b>	
Medi-Cal	\$593,603
MHSA	\$1,232,031
<b>Total Funding Maximum</b>	<b>\$1,825,634</b>

**In general:**

The Department provides a huge list of services:

How many unduplicated patients and individuals did they serve last year?

What were the top ten diagnoses?

What were the trends for these measurements over the past ten years?

How many people are cured each year and don't relapse?

Since most of the population has private health insurance and or Medicare, how many more people are there in the County with mental health problems who are not served by the Department?

**Services**

[Adult Mental Health Outpatient Treatment](#)

[Assisted Outpatient Treatment](#)

[Behavioral Health Treatment Court](#)

[Residential Wellness Counseling Program](#)

[Friday Night Live/Club Live/Cal Poly FNL](#)

[Homeless Outreach Full Service Partnership](#)

[Latino Outreach Program](#)

[Martha's Place Children's Center](#)

[Mental Health Evaluation Team \(MHET\)](#)

[Psychiatric Health Facility \(Inpatient\)](#)

[\*\*Veterans Treatment Services\*\*](#)

[\*\*Youth Substance Use Treatment Program\*\*](#)

[\*\*Youth Mental Health Outpatient Treatment\*\*](#)

[\*\*Access to Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services\*\*](#)

[\*\*Abused Children's Treatment Services \(ACTS\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Child and Youth Full Service Partnership \(FSP\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Katie A Intensive Team\*\*](#)

[\*\*Youth Group Home/Residential Mental Health Services\*\*](#)

[\*\*Therapeutic Behavioral Services\*\*](#)

[\*\*Mental Health Services in Therapeutic Learning Classrooms\*\*](#)

[\*\*Adult Full Service Partnership \(FSP\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Adult Residential Programs\*\*](#)

[\*\*Older Adult Full Service Partnership \(FSP\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Network Provider Resources\*\*](#)

[\*\*Middle School Comprehensive Program\*\*](#)

[\*\*College Prevention & Wellness\*\*](#)

[\*\*Student Support Counseling\*\*](#)

[\*\*Transitional Aged Youth \(TAY\) Full Service Partnership\*\*](#)

[\*\*Mental Health Services at the Juvenile Hall\*\*](#)

[\*\*Wraparound Services\*\*](#)

[\*\*Services Affirming Family Empowerment \(SAFE\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Intensive Care Coordination \(ICC\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Intensive Home Based Services \(IHBS\)\*\*](#)

[\*\*Intensive Day Treatment Services\*\*](#)

[\*\*Behavioral Health Managed Care\*\*](#)

[\*\*Quality Support Team\*\*](#)

[\*\*Health Agency Contractor and Network Provider Support Page\*\*](#)



**Behavioral Health Board**

**Customer Awareness Response Effort (CARE)- Not for Ourselves Alone**

**Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)**

**Suicide Prevention**

**Cannabis Health and Safety Information**

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

**Mental Health First Aid**

**Veterans Outreach**

**Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)**

**Justice Services Treatment**

**Court Screening**

**Behavioral Health Community Action Team**

**Co-occurring Treatment Courts (ATCC)**

**Mental Health Diversion Court (MHDC)**

**Opioid Safety Coalition**

**Mobile Crisis Team (MCT)**

**Mobile Crisis Services**

**Strategic Plan 2024-2029**

**CARE court**

**Patient Access & Provider Directory API**

**Patients' Rights Advocate**

**May Mental Health Awareness Month**

**September Suicide Prevention Month**

**Withdrawal Management - Detox**

**Sobering Center**

**Recovery Support Services**

**Perinatal Outpatient Extended Group (POEG)**

Medication Assisted Treatment

Drug & Alcohol Services Walk In Clinics

Drug & Alcohol Services Residential Programs

Co-Occurring Disorders Program

Adult Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment

Adult Justice/Court Mandated Programs

Narcotic Treatment Program (NTP)

Jail-Based Services

Genoa Pharmacy

Drug Medi-Cal Outpatient Delivery System (ODS)

Drug & Alcohol Services Fees

Driving Under the Influence Programs

Behavioral Health Bridge Housing

How would all these programs look on a real organization chart with cost and staffing data?

**Item 24 - Request to: 1) review, ratify, and approve 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 4/5 vote; 2) approve WBS Maintenance Project 310003 – Yerba Buena Crossing Repair; and 3) find that the project is exempt from Section 21000 et seq. of the California Public Resources Code (CEQA).** This Item seeks funds to repair yet more leaks on the Nacimiento Pipeline. Did the County ever recover any money from the original contractor, who built the line with faulty joints?

*The District recently completed construction of temporary piping on the Nacimiento Water Project (NWP) in south Atascadero to reconnect the 800-foot section of pipeline that was damaged and lost during the 2023 winter storms when the Salinas River swelled and eroded the cover and ground supporting it. The damages resulted in the shutdown of water supply delivery to the City of San Luis Obispo (City) until the temporary piping could be constructed.*

*After the temporary piping was installed, water deliveries resumed on July 24, 2024 for approximately 12 hours until another leak was discovered at the Yerba Buena Creek Crossing. The Yerba Buena Creek Crossing is approximately 200 feet long and is comprised of the 18-inch distribution pipeline inside a 36-inch steel casing that runs under the creek. The leak is confirmed to be coming from the pipeline inside the casing. The newly discovered leak is resulting in the continued shutdown of water supply deliveries to the City. The City typically receives 5.3 million gallons per day from the NWP pipeline and uses this critical source to serve its 47,545 residents.*

**Item 35 - Request to receive an update on State Legislative activities by Paul Yoder and Karen Lange of Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange.** The agenda package includes a very detailed report of the action on bills sponsored by the County, supported by the County, and opposed by the County. The results of a number of other bills (both good and bad) relevant to counties are also detailed. There is also a general summary of how the Session ended and the general political climate in Sacramento. In part the report states:

*The Legislature adjourned its 2023-24 legislative session at midnight on Saturday, August 31. The Governor now has until September 30, 2024, to sign or veto bills sent to him in the last several weeks of August. The disposition of several measures may not be known for weeks; however, we expect the Governor to act on the majority of bills relatively quickly. As possible evidence of this, the Governor's office is asking to have all letters to him within 3 days of the bill's enrollment, which for most bills will be the end of this week.*

*While most end-of-sessions are rife with tension, this year's intra-governmental branch tension seemed to be higher than usual. While there were a plethora of factors that led to these disputes, the major contributing factors were: 1) a difference of opinion on the Governor's push for legislation to address gasoline prices; 2) several bills in pro Tem McGuire's "California Made" energy package; 3) a last-minute Speaker-endorsed push to address warehouse development (AB 98), and; 4) the Senate's early adjournment on Friday, which narrowed the time to dispense with the remaining Assembly bills in the Senate on Saturday in order for the Assembly to take them up timely before the adjournment at midnight, as mandated by the Constitution.*

Regarding the Energy Package, which originally consisted of SB 950 (Skinner), SB 1003 (Dodd), SB 1272 (Laird), SB 1142 (Menjivar), SB 1420 (Caballero), AB 3121 (Petrie-Norris), and AB 3264 (R. Rivas), there was mixed reception to the effort to move all of these bills through in the last week of session. When the dust settled, SB 950 (Skinner), SB 1003 (Dodd), SB 1272 (Laird), and AB 3121 (Petrie-Norris) did not move forward.

Note that Senator Skinner's SB 950 is the prelude to the State taking over oil refineries. It will no doubt come back in the Special Session that the Governor has just called.

For more details and to make your head explode, control click on the link below:

<https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/164210>

**Item 36 - Request to 1) approve a sole source special services consulting contract with Mott MacDonald Group, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$684,750, to prepare an Offshore Wind Operations (OSW) and Maintenance Infrastructure Study for Port San Luis Harbor District, Cal Poly (pier), and Morro Bay; and 2) authorize the County Administrative Officer, or designee, to sign subrecipient agreements totaling \$315,250 with Port San Luis, Cal Poly, and the City of Morro Bay. (Administrative Office and Department of Planning and Building).** The large consulting contract is requested to study the feasibility and impact of using Port San Luis or Morro Bay maintenance crew bases for the operational phase of the deployment of offshore windmills.

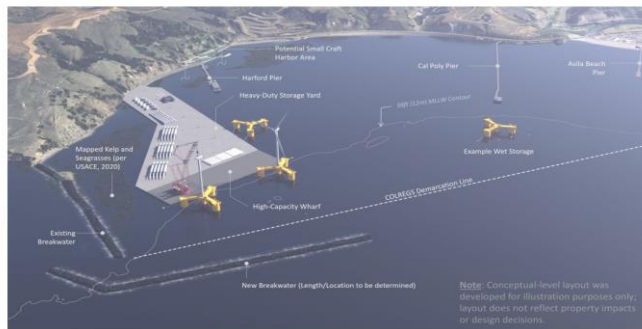
The staff report seeks to emphasize that these are not the large assembly and construction bases that had been previously discussed. Instead, once the mills are in place, they need to be

maintained and repaired. The bases required for this part are relatively small. To this end the write-up includes graphics.

## What could OSW Waterfront O&M Infrastructure look like?



## What an OSW O&M Infrastructure will NOT look like



## Service Operations Vessel



We are not so sure how this skimpy boat with a toy crane is going reach the turbines on windmills that are taller than the Eiffel Tower.

The actual generators mounted at the top are huge.



Note the scale with the worker on the platform.

In any case the push is on.

### **Mott-MacDonald Group**

The consultant Mott-MacDonald Group, Inc., is a large worldwide consultant group headquartered in England with sub-headquarters all over the world. They specialize in large engineering projects in the fields of utilities, transportation, wind energy, and environmental management. A review of their website reveals that they are more than totally in the tank on the whole climate change and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction movement. They are also a major supporter of DEI within their organization and outside.

**Note:** COLAB has not taken a position on the proposed offshore wind project. We believe that before we get into all these other issues, the public and their governments should see the financial proformas for the projects in order to understand the cost of the energy to be produced over the life of the systems, including depreciation. So far, the cart has been ahead of the horse.

## **Matters After 1:30 PM**

**Item 39 - Submittal of the Title 29 Affordable Housing Fund FY 2023-24 Annual Report (Social Services).** There is plenty of trickery in this item. First of all, the title itself is designed to sneak it past the public. How many people actually know that Title 29 is the Housing In Lieu Tax?

The title of this item is camouflaged as Submittal of the Title 29 Housing Fund. The so-called fee is in actuality a tax, which has been deceptively packaged as a “fee.”



**Brief History:** Decades ago, the State adopted enabling legislation that allows cities and counties to require that developers include a percentage of affordable housing within their new projects. Only 148 jurisdictions (out of 58 counties and 450 cities in the state) have adopted the provision. San Luis Obispo County is one of those entities and adopted its ordinance in 2008. San Luis Obispo County typically requires that a new subdivision of 100 homes provide “20” affordable homes. Obviously, projects that are already 100% affordable (usually government funded not-for-profit projects) are exempted. Thus, it is the market-priced homes that are taxed. Commercial projects are also subject to the tax, posing as a fee on a per square foot basis.

It is ironic and patently stupid that government has determined to tax the very thing that is in short supply, in order to provide more of it.

Over the years, various jurisdictions learned that this compulsory mixing of housing types did not work well from a marketing or social interaction standpoint. There are huge fights in homeowner associations (HOAs) about common uses. For example, do the people in the affordable units get to use the pool? From the developers’ standpoint it is difficult to market the non-affordable units in a subdivision or complex that contains less stylish and less fancy affordable units. Market buyers are leery of buying into a social engineering scheme.

Eventually, the State amended the enabling statute to allow developers to pay a “fee,” in reality a tax, instead of building the actual units. This is the so-called “housing in lieu” fee. SLO uses it to assist “affordable” projects in the cities and Templeton.

**The Bottom Line:** The bottom line is that over the decades, the process of developing residential and commercial property has become so overregulated and expensive that developers cannot afford to produce affordable housing and prefer to develop larger, more expensive units. In turn, the State Legislature has made things worse by enabling cities and counties to require that developers include a stipulated number of affordable units in their projects or pay an “in lieu fee,” which is really a tax on development. The dollars generated from the “in lieu fee” are accumulated and then given to non-profit housing developers to help finance their affordable projects. This is really a government blackmail program to force homebuilders to charge more for their market units in order to bail out the politicians’ failed public policy.

In 2019 the Board updated the ordinance to exclude homes with less than 2200 square feet and substantially raise the so-called fees for market and custom homes. In exchange, Supervisor Gibson agreed to let the Board majority direct staff to conduct an extensive analysis of alternative methods to help affordable housing. During the first phase of the project, staff generated a list of potential programs from which the Board selected some strategies for further feasibility study. A Project Manager, who has since left the County, was assigned to lead the project. The project was abandoned when COVID 19 arrived, and staff members were shifted to other duties. Subsequently, the project was reassigned to SLOCOG. Nothing has been heard for years.

**Screwed Again:** As a result, Gibson got higher fees established, but the promised project to find other better solutions never took place. The Board revised the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance on March 12, 2019. The most significant changes to the fee structure included applying the fee to all new dwellings over 2,200 square feet in size (previously the fee only applied to subdivisions) and replacing the flat rate fee (\$1.50 per square-foot) with a tiered rate structure based on square footage (with a maximum overall rate of \$7 per square-foot). As an example, a new 3,000 square-foot house would pay \$8,400 in in-lieu revenues under the tiered rate structure.

Ultimately, the old Board majority repealed the tax. So far the new Board majority has not been able to marshal 3 votes to restore it.

This item presents the current status of funds and projects that were generated prior to the abolition of the tax.

**Current Status:** This Board item clearly demonstrates the failure of the program. Per the table below, the County collected only \$1.5 million over 4 years.

Table: In-lieu Fee Revenues (FY 17-18 through FY 20-21)

Fiscal Year	In-lieu Fee Revenues - Residential	Impact Fee Revenues - Commercial	In-lieu Fee Revenues - Total
FY 17-18	\$36,419	\$94,542	\$130,961
FY 18-19	\$77,778	\$143,159	\$220,937
<b>FY 19-20</b>	<b>\$313,060</b>	<b>\$19,496</b>	<b>\$332,556</b>
<b>FY 20-21</b>	<b>\$723,197</b>	<b>\$93,038</b>	<b>\$816,235</b>

Since 2019, the County allocated \$1,167,000 in in-lieu and impact fee funds to non-profit builders to construct 222 new affordable housing units in 8 new developments, with a total development cost of \$118-M. See Table 2, below.

These funds were than distributed per the very misleading and incomplete table below:

Table: Projects Funded with In-lieu and Impact Fee Revenues (2019 - 2021)

Year	Project	In-lieu and Impact Fee Award	Units
2019 and 2020	Templeton Place II	\$151,261	36
2019	Brisco Rd. Affordable Housing	\$184,294	8
2019	Longbranch Transitional Housing	\$119,000	6
2020	Nipomo Senior 40	\$59,032	40
2020 and 2021	Pismo Terrace	\$229,969	50
2021	Toscano Family Apartments	\$142,396	38
2021	Morro Bay Family Apartments	\$7,216	35
2021	Vine Street Affordable Housing	\$185,221	9

In the near term, the County funded small amounts for 3 projects.

Table 3: Projects Funded in Fiscal Year 2024/25

Project Name	Amount Allocated	Location and Funding Source
<b>Rolling Hills III</b> Templeton People's Self-Help Housing  28 units for low-income individuals and families including 7 units for those experiencing homelessness.	\$89,978	Templeton, North County funds
<b>Arroyo Terrace Apartments</b> Arroyo Grande San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation  63 affordable multi-family housing units	\$199,884	Arroyo Grande, South County funds and Open to All funds
<b>Monterey Crossing Affordable Senior Housing</b> San Luis Obispo San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation  56 units for low-income seniors	\$228,641	San Luis Obispo, Central County funds
<b>Total Fiscal Year 2024/25 funds</b>	<b>\$518,503</b>	

The County proposes to use the remaining balance for projects in various parts of the County.

Table 4: Remaining Amounts for Future Projects

Fund Source	Beginning Balance FY 23-24	FY 24-25 Allocations	Accrued Interest	High and Medium Risk Funds on Issued Permits	Remaining Available Funds
Open to All	\$63,078	\$43,594	\$32,668	\$0.00	\$52,152
North County	\$121,025	\$89,978	\$0.00	\$25,287	\$5,760
Central County	\$248,217	\$228,641	\$0.00	\$2,280	\$17,296
South County	\$156,291	\$156,290	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1
North Coast	\$46,308	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$46,308
<b>Total Amounts</b>	<b>\$634,919</b>	<b>\$518,503</b>	<b>\$32,668</b>	<b>\$27,567</b>	<b>\$121,518*</b>

The tables hide the truth in that the total cost of the listed projects is not displayed. Thus, laypeople and even officials might think that the projects were constructed for the costs listed. These were actually funded by Federal and State programs and cost tens of millions of dollars. The County contribution to the funding packages is miniscule in comparison the real costs. By offering this presentation, the staff significantly disguises the truth

Additionally, the report displays pictures of projects to which the In Lieu Tax contributed, inferring that it was an important source. In actuality these projects cost tens of millions of dollars that were funded by HUD grants, State grants, and other tax supported sources. It also slyly displays renderings of potential future projects, insinuating that they could be funded if the tax were restored.

For example , the project displayed below is not going to be built for \$199,000.

# Arroyo Terrace Apartments



- Developed by San Luis Obispo Nonprofit Housing Corporation
- A 63-unit affordable housing community for low- and very low-income households
- Action Plan 2022: \$55,088
- Action Plan 2024: \$199,884
- Construction not yet started

This is a dishonest presentation as it does not present the true picture of the insignificant contribution of the Housing In Lieu tax.

Meanwhile if it were restored, everyone else would have to pay the tax outlined below.

## 29.04.020 - Calculation of fees.



- (a) The planning director shall calculate in-lieu fees for residential development projects as shown in subsections (1) through (5) below.
- (1) The first two thousand two hundred square feet of the unit shall be exempt from paying fees.
  - (2) The portion of the unit between two thousand two hundred and two thousand five hundred square feet shall be subject to a fee of eight dollars per square-foot.
  - (3) The portion of the unit between two thousand five hundred and three thousand five hundred square feet shall be subject to a fee of twelve dollars per square-foot.
  - (4) The portion of the unit above three thousand five hundred square feet shall be subject to a fee of sixteen dollars per square-foot.
  - (5) The maximum fee for any single unit shall not exceed seven dollars per square-foot as calculated using the entire square footage of the residence. Units greater than four thousand six hundred twenty-two square feet in size would pay a rate of seven dollars per square-foot instead of the fee resulting from the above rate schedule. In the Coastal Zone, projects that include eleven or more dwelling units, and that provide moderate and/or low-income units pursuant to Section [23.04.092](#), shall be exempt from paying in-lieu fees.
- (b) The planning director shall use Table 29.1 to calculate the housing impact fees for nonresidential development projects.

Table 29.1

Commercial/Retail	\$1.36
Commercial Service/Offices	\$0.96
Hotel/Motel	\$1.44
Industrial/Warehouse	\$0.58
Other Nonresidential	\$1.26
Commercial Greenhouses	\$0.03

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

#### **Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, September 12, 2024 (Cancelled)**

**The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on September 26, 2024, in the Katcho Achadjian Government Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo.**

#### **California Coastal Commission Meeting of Thursday, August 12, 2024 (Scheduled)**

The Commission received 2 appeals of County-approved 1 unit residential projects (one in Morro Bay and one in Los Osos). The staff recommends that the appeals do not rise to the level of real coastal issues and that therefore the Commission should refuse to hear them.

Additionally, the Commission ambushed a motel proposal in Cayucas that had been approved by the County. It will be beaten to death in a future meeting.

Separately, Sierra Space Corporation is requesting a Federal consistency determination to permit the landing of space planes at Vandenberg. For an unknown reason, the matter has been postponed. Perhaps the Commissioners just want to badger Vandenberg and the space industry. Readers may remember that last month Commissioners began to assert that private space corporations should not receive consistency under the Federal Government umbrella. They feel dissed by Elon Musk and the Space Force. Of course, they have no idea of technology, economics, or anything real.





Space Plane

## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, September 3, 2024 (Not Scheduled)

**Item 1 - The next meeting is set for Tuesday, September 10, 2024.**

**Item 2 - The Board's agenda has been relatively light so far this calendar year.** Aside from the Budget adoption, the approval of the Dana Reserve mixed use project (including 400 homes), the approval of some large labor contracts, rejection of a TOT tax increase effort, and the selection of the County Administrator, there has not been an extensive (at least visibly) set of policy initiatives from the leftist Board majority. When they first took office, they rescinded many of the major policies of the prior Board majority. Since then, they have not attempted any significant new policy initiatives. This could be, in part be due to the fact that Supervisor Gibson, as President of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), has bigger fish to fry in Sacramento.

There have been a number of show and tell reports on the status of various prior initiatives. These include the Plan to Reduce Homelessness, Cannabis development and revenue, the Behavioral Health Plan, capital projects status, progress of the REACH Economic Development Program, the pension system status, and the status of various administrative projects assigned to Planning such as updates to Plan Elements and Zoning Ordinance revisions.

**Some projects that have been assigned in the past seem to have disappeared from the radar include:**

1. The joint study with Santa Barbara County of the feasibility of industrial scale desalination.

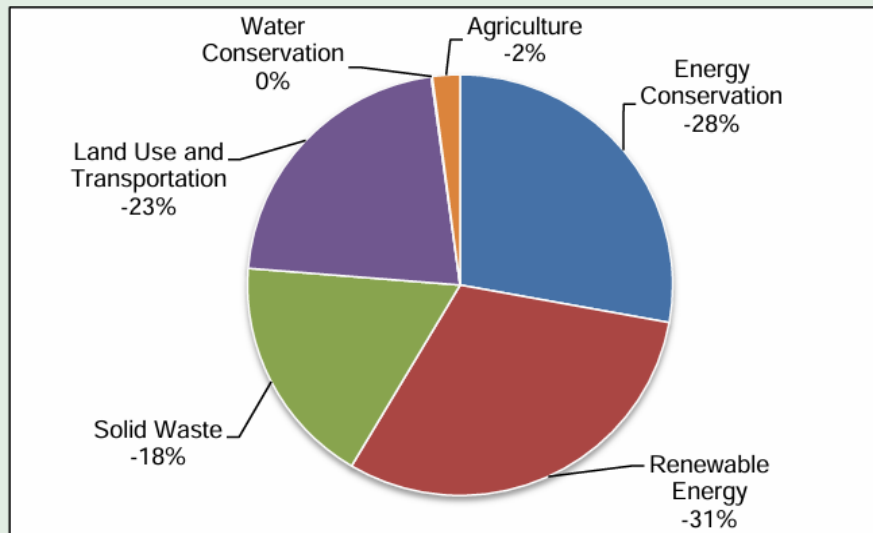
2. The feasibility and location of zoning more land for housing. This study was first assigned to the CEO's office and then pended during COVID. It was then transferred to SLOCOG.

3 The feasibility and land use analysis to permit a 5 Star luxury hotel resort on the former Chevron site on the hill above Avila Beach.

4. Development of a sub plan in Paso Basin SGMA Plan to allow water pumping by those small users still trapped in the Paso Basin Moratorium since 2013. There does not seem to be appropriate urgency.

5. What is the status of the Climate Action plan that was adopted with much fanfare some years ago? How much CO2 has actually been reduced, if any?

**Figure ES-6. 2020 Community-Wide GHG Emissions Reduction Summary by Goal**



6. Tellingly, 2 of the Planning Department's most significant projects are 1) the decommissioning of the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant and 2) cleanup of the land being abandoned due to the closure of the Phillips 66 Oil Refinery. Other than approval the aforementioned Dana Reserve project that is still not a done deal, what major initiatives are planned? The County is crowing about various government subsidized affordable housing projects, but these are not real private investment. Of course, at some point the subsidies will run out, and they may be tax exempt.

**Projects for which the Board has not shown interest include:**

1. Reform of the Budget document and related tools. Prior CAOs have said that they are working on this. The County is in the process of installing new budget software (and perhaps enterprise wide data sharing software) that they say is required to modernize the Budget. When will this happen? After all, the County is still budgeting by archaic "fund centers", rather than comprehensive programs and performance.

2. Development of a long range Revenue Plan. Given the inexorable growth of salaries, benefits and staffing levels, what does the County need to do to raise the revenues to cover these costs over 5, 10, 20, and future years. Are tax increases the only solutions? Are service cuts inevitable? How does the REACH Economic Development Plan tangibly relate, if at all?

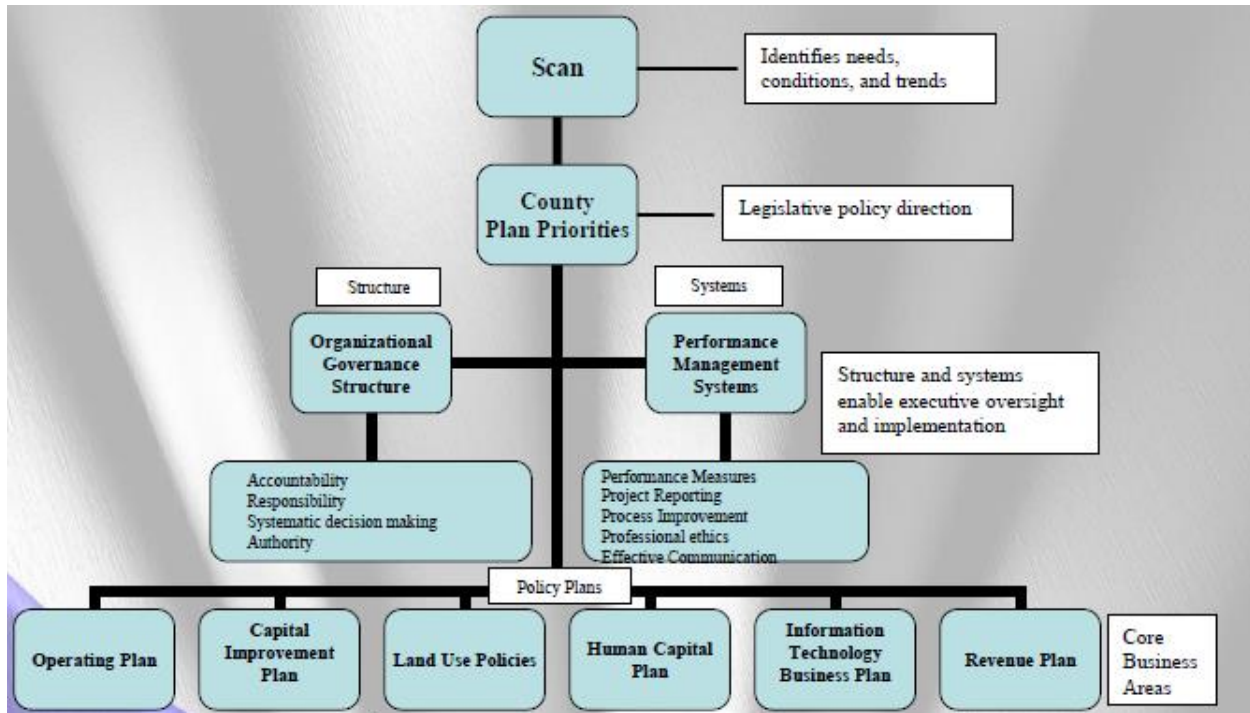
3. What is the County's Strategic Operating Plan? Other than platitudes listed in the Budget Summary shouldn't there be an overall Plan rather than just reaction to the latest State policies and mandates, let alone all the leftist fads?



Current platitudes above.



A Basic System is needed



**Implementation structure and process.**

What’s your management system?

There are 8 board meetings left in 2024.

**San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Meeting of September 4, 2024 (Completed)**

This was essentially a one-item meeting, the annual performance review of the Executive Director.

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Any member of the public may address the SLO Board for a period not to exceed three (3) minutes on any item of interest not on agenda within the jurisdiction of the Board. In compliance with the Brown Act, the Board will listen to all communication, but in compliance with the Brown Act, will not take action on items that are not on the agenda.

1

**III. CLOSED SESSION**

- A-1 Personnel: Executive Director’s Annual Performance Evaluation (Government Code Section 54957(b)).

- IV. OPEN SESSION: SLOCOG Legal Counsel Reports Out**  
**V. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS & BOARD REPORTS**  
**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Next SLOCOG meeting: October 2, 2024, Wednesday

## EMERGENT ISSUES

### **Item 1 - California's anti-business, high-tax policies are driving businesses and people away**

September 3, 2024 By Jonathan Williams

Chevron, one of America's largest corporations, recently made headlines with its decision to relocate its headquarters from San Ramon, California, to Houston, Texas. This move is not just another routine corporate shuffle; it is a loud and clear message to high-tax states like California, which have long been suffering the economic consequences of their own policies. Chevron's exit serves as a stark reminder that poor economic practices, overregulation, and high taxation have real consequences—and they are driving businesses and individuals away.

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Chevron's CEO, Mike Wirth, was refreshingly candid about the reasons behind this move. In a statement to *The Wall Street Journal*, Wirth pointed out that California's policies have raised costs, hurt customers, and discouraged investment, ultimately stifling economic growth in the state. This is not just Chevron's opinion; it's a reflection of a broader trend where states with burdensome regulations and high taxes are losing their competitive edge, while states with more free market and business-friendly environments, like Texas, are thriving.

Chevron's decision to relocate is also a testament to the power of favorable economic conditions. Texas, with its lower cost of living, no personal income tax, right to work and other free market policies, has become a beacon for companies looking to expand and thrive. The state's recent \$18 billion property tax cut, the largest in its history, shows its commitment to sending surplus dollars back to hardworking taxpayers. In contrast, California has continued to fall in economic rankings, recently sinking to 47th place for economic outlook in the 2024 edition of Rich States, Poor States. This is no surprise, given the state's sky-high tax burden and oppressive regulatory environment, which stifles innovation and growth.

The differences between California and Texas could not be more pronounced. On one hand, Texas has embraced a model of low taxation, limited regulation, and fiscal responsibility. This approach has not only attracted businesses like Chevron but has also made Texas a top destination for individuals seeking a better economic future. In 2022 alone, Texas gained a net \$10 billion in adjusted gross income from new residents, while Florida, another low-tax state, gained a staggering \$35 billion. These figures highlight the power of pro-growth policies in attracting both businesses and individuals, as millions of Americans vote with their feet in search of economic opportunity.

On the other hand, California continues to pursue policies that drive businesses and residents away. Governor Gavin Newsom's recent "margin penalty" law, aimed at limiting the profits of energy companies, is just one example of the state's misguided approach. Rather than fostering a competitive business environment, California seems intent on punishing success through price fixing, an approach that has proven disastrous in socialist economies around the world.

Chevron's departure should serve a wake-up call for California and other high-tax states. The movement of people and wealth across state lines is not just a coincidence—it's a direct result of policy decisions. States with favorable economic policies are winning the battle for businesses and residents, while those that cling to outdated, punitive approaches are losing out.

*California Political Review, September 3, 2024*



## Item 2 - Enviro Grift: California Lawmakers Pass Ban on ‘Reusable’ Plastic Grocery Bags

‘We are literally choking our planet with plastic waste’

By Katy Grimes, September 2, 2024 7:34 am

After forcing California grocery shoppers into “reusable” plastic bags at .10 cents apiece, flighty lawmakers have voted to ban them outright. California lawmakers have voted to do away with reusable plastic bags – again.

Assembly Bill 2236 and Senate Bill 1053, authored by Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda) and Senator Catherine Blakespear (D-Encinitas), proposed to ban **any kind of plastic bag** at food stores and convenience stores. Both bills are an expansion of SB 270, a 2014 bill that was approved of by voters in 2016 as Proposition 67, which banned all “one time use” plastic bags, and only allowed thicker plastic bags to be purchased in stores. Now those thicker bags are banned if Gov. Gavin Newsom signs the bills.

Together, both bills would order stores to solely use paper alternate bags, despite laws made decades concerned about “deforestation.”

Note to self: products made from trees are made of a 100% renewable resource.

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. We hear this daily and see those orders nearly everywhere. Paper or plastic? Separate out your wet garbage and put it in another recyclable food bin. Separate bottles and cans. Compost. Rinse. Repeat.

Yet none of this has reduced landfills.

And don’t lawmakers Bauer-Kahan and Blakespear have more important issues they should be addressing instead of pretending to care about plastic bags: Escalating crime, a growing drug-addicted homeless population, increasing energy costs, energy shortages, failing public schools, pro-Palestine protesters on college campuses threatening Jewish students... oh, and a \$55 billion to a \$80 billion budget deficit?

“If you have been paying attention – if you read the news at all in recent years – you know we are choking our planet with plastic waste,” said Senator Blakespear at a press conference earlier this year.

CalRecycle reports legislation signed by Gov. Newsom requires all packaging be recyclable or compostable by 2032, with 65% of it recycled by 2032, shifting the burden from the consumer to the packaging producer. Expect prices to go up – again.

And now comes more legislation to ban plastic bags. But banning plastic grocery bags does not reduce disposal and recycling costs, studies over the last 9 years have shown.

The Globe reported in May:

Both lawmakers claim plastic bags are still causing environmental damage, and that a total ban is the only way to stop it. Some coastal cleanup surveys also found that volunteers have collected over 300,000 plastic grocery bags in the last three decades.

Only there are no links to those supposed studies. They also still claim many people dispose of plastic bags after just one or a few uses. Yet most people tell you they use plastic bags multiple times, for myriad uses – especially after being forced to pay for them.

A report from Ocean Conservancy claims many people dispose of plastic bags, after just one or a few uses. But in the report they say the AG Rob Bonta and the California Department of Justice have sent letters to seven top plastic bag manufacturers in the state asking them to substantiate claims that their bags are recyclable. This sounds like the real motive behind Assemblywoman Bauer-Kahan’s and Senator Blake spear’s bills.

According to a study by the National Center for Policy Analysis, an examination of the bag bans and budgets for litter collection and waste disposal in San Francisco, San Jose, the City and County of Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Brownsville and Austin, Texas, showed no evidence of a reduction in costs attributable to reduced use of plastic bags.

I have been covering the disingenuous plastic bag ban since the mid-2000.

In 2009, when plastic bag bans were all the rage in cities around the country, and paper bags were considered tree killers, I reported in the Washington Examiner:

San Francisco’s ban on plastic bags has not provided the environmental results it expected. Anticipated environmental gains resulting from the ban were “nonexistent at best,” and the ban likely did more harm than good. Consumers just switched from single plastic to double paper bags; few consumers remembered reusable totes, which caused delays in checkout; and recycling bins were hard to find or nonexistent.

Additionally, A recent microbiological study found unacceptably high levels of bacterial yeast, mold and fecal bacteria counts reside in the reusable bags ([nastysack.com](http://nastysack.com)).

The study found that 64 percent of the reusable bags tested were contaminated with some level of bacteria, and close to 30 percent had elevated bacterial counts higher than what’s considered safe for drinking water. Further, 40 percent of the bags had yeast or mold, and some of the bags had an unacceptable presence of fecal intestinal bacteria when there should have been zero.

They are only now realizing that their low-carbon footprint bag is also filled with nasty bacteria if not washed regularly. A recent microbiological study found unacceptably high levels of bacterial yeast, mold and fecal bacteria counts reside in the reusable bags.

Yet, Sen. Blakespear said upon the introduction of her bill, “[Studies show] that the plastic bag ban that we passed in this state in 2014 did not reduce the overall use of plastic. It actually resulted in a substantial increase in plastic. We are literally choking our planet with plastic waste.”

You just can’t make up this drivel.

All of the Globe’s previous articles about California’s ongoing plastic bag ban drama have brought out the ire in voters, with readers commenting, including:

- Let's put an initiative the ballot to move election day to the same week as tax due day. April 15. Then watch those little Marxist toadies change their tune.
- I wonder how a politician can make laws like this. They work for us not the other way around.
- Ridiculous. This governing body is the laughing stock of the country, while our governor is being called a @!#\*! behind his back.  
Push back Californians!
- My guess is that these two elitists never step into a grocery store. They have their paid nannies do the shopping for them. I also wonder if their servants are legal citizens and/or being paid cash under the table.
- When are we going to put an initiative on the ballot mandating a part-time legislature?
- How many Californians are clamoring for this legislation? Few to none? Yet, here we have two wealthy Democrat lawyers who live like royalty in coastal communities like Senator Catherine Blakespear and Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahan who think that banning plastic bags is one of the most pressing issues facing struggling Californians? Both of these wealthy Democrat women probably never have to schlep to the store to buy anything and they have everything delivered to their mansions where their household staff deals with it?
- Environmental groups need to get these little things done so everyone can feel good about the important work they are doing and continue drawing a paycheck! Look what we did to save the planet! Send more \$\$! ... it's how Coastal Elites feel good about themselves. Take a hit on the bong of power.

*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?*

### **Item 3 - California's Legislature Has Turned on the People**

## **Malfunctioning Legislature now works against good governing and the will of the people**

By Katy Grimes, September 3, 2024

Have you ever been stabbed in the back by a friend? You trusted them, supported them, and they turned on you. You never saw it coming. And you ask "what happened?"

California's Supermajority Democrat lawmakers now work against governing the state, and work against the will of the people. Did you see it coming, or were you caught off guard?

These are just a few of their most recent policies that no voter ever asked for:

Criminal justice "reforms."

Escalating crime, retail theft, sex trafficking, violent crime.

Hundreds of thousands of homeless drug-addicted vagrants living on California streets.

Reparations: granting preferential treatment and taxpayer-funded cash payments based on race.

Overtuning the ban on affirmative action policies and practices despite voters reaffirming the ban in 2020.

Oil and gas ban.

State proposed takeover of oil and gas industry.

Price controls of oil and gas industry.

California to become the first state to ban natural gas heaters, water heaters, and furnaces by 2030.

All-Electric grid, electric appliances, electric car mandates, “carbon-free buildings” – that means all-electric.

Newsom administration saddles ratepayers with another \$300 annually in electricity costs despite California’s highest electricity rates in the country.

Allow “worst of the worse” criminals serving a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole to apply for early release.

Ballot measure in November to change the state Constitution to ban the practice of forced labor in jails and prisons,” calling it “slavery.”

New categories of grievances: Racial wealth gap. Racial terror. Racial trauma. Race-based traumatic stress.

Democrats plan to give “payback optional” \$150k loans, funded by California taxpayers, to illegal immigrants for a downpayment on a home purchase.

University of California system to hire illegal immigrant students.

Employment Development Department to provide illegal immigrants unemployment benefits if they lose their job.

Prohibit local governments from requiring voters to show ID at polling places.

Climate change hysterics.

Insurance crisis.

These policies are evidence of elected lawmakers working for special interest groups, against governing for the people who actually elected them. This isn’t about running a state any longer, this is the willful betrayal of our Democracy.

Probably the most blatant policy issue aside from Gov. Newsom’s Venezuela-like State proposed takeover of California’s oil and gas industry, is the ballot initiative to amend Prop. 47, California Proposition 36, the Increase Drug and Theft Penalties and Reduce Homelessness Initiative. Prop. 36 will be on the November 2024 ballot, despite Democrats in the Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom’s attempts to kill it... and despite the important legal fixes Prop. 36 will make to California’s outrageous crime problems.

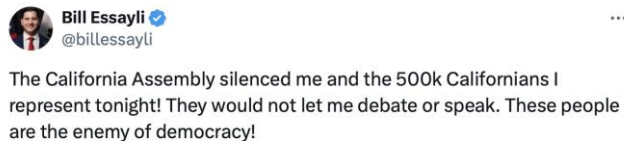
The Governor even threatened to place his own competing voter initiative on the ballot, despite the more than 900,000 signatures collected to place the initiative on the November ballot. Newsom recanted that idea under a lot of really bad press.

This is a failure of government when the people have to place so many policy initiatives on the ballot to correct detrimental laws.

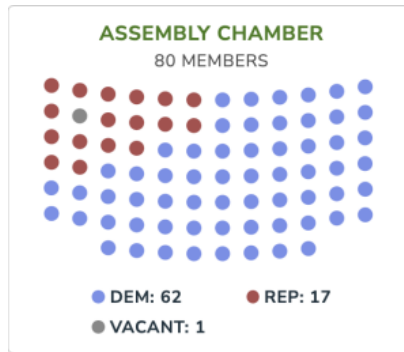
Over the weekend the dysfunctional California Legislature met late into Saturday night, passing bills rapid fire. As Assemblyman Bill Essayli (R-Corona) correctly noted, this year’s session began in January. “There is zero reason Sacramento Dems should have waited until last night’s constitutional deadline to pass hundreds of bills. It’s all by design to rush through terrible bills without public scrutiny. You get it yet?”

But it got worse. As reporters covering the late night session described, Democrats limited debate on each bill to 30 seconds, which was no actual debate at all. And then, according to a Capitol staffer, the Assembly Speaker cut off their mics even before the 30-seconds was up if they opposed the bill about to be voted on.

The Capitol staffer told the Globe that Democrats were even violating their own rules, which they had illegally passed that night by making new rules on the spot. They also cut off Assemblyman Essayli when he made a counter motion pointing out their errors. “The California Assembly silenced me and the 500k Californians I represent tonight! They would not let me debate or speak. These people are the enemy of democracy!” Essayli Tweeted.



With 62 Democrats and 17 Republicans in the Assembly (one vacant seat), the dangerous imbalance of one-party rule has led to Democrats making up the rules as they go, while kicking voters to the curb.



This is no laughing matter. This is not representation.

One-party states include North Korea, China, the Soviet Union, Eritrea, Cuba, and the Nazi Party in Germany.

What is happening in California is horrific. And it is deliberate. Just think about what could happen to the rest of the country if California collapses.

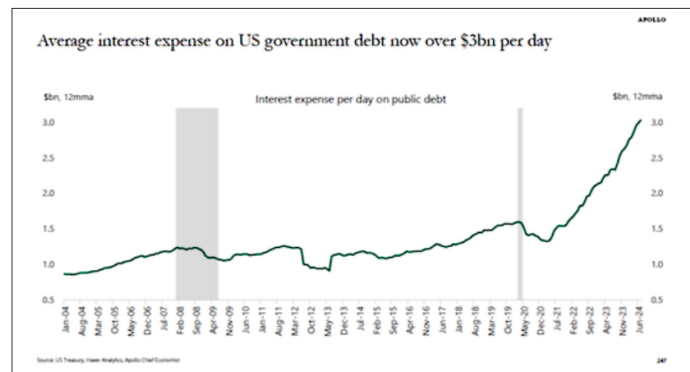
*Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?*

#### Item 4 - Federal Debt Interest \$3 Billion Per Day

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 4, 2024 BY JOHN HINDERAKER IN FEDERAL DEBT AND DEFICIT

#### \$3 BILLION A DAY

That is how much the federal government is now paying in interest on the national debt. This chart shows how interest payments have surged, essentially since the beginning of the Biden Administration. It comes from Scott Bessent of Key Square Capital, via Stephen Moore's Committee to Unleash Prosperity:



Stephen Moore notes that evaluating debt requires consideration of the purposes for which it has been incurred. Unfortunately:

*In recent years, we've been spending money on three Biden-Harris priorities: welfare and income redistribution programs, green energy flops, and student loan bailouts.*

Our federal government is careening toward fiscal collapse, and half of our voters think the most important policy issue is abortion.



## **Item 5 - California to get first new national marine sanctuary in 32 years, banning offshore oil drilling along 116 miles of coast**

A long-running effort by native tribes and environmentalists to establish the first new national marine sanctuary along California's coastline in 32 years — the aquatic version of a new national park — where offshore oil drilling would be prohibited forever, reached a key milestone Friday.

The Biden administration published the [final environmental impact statement](#) for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, selecting boundaries that will stretch along 116 miles of coast in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

The area, which includes popular spots like Pismo Beach and the Gaviota Coast, is home to humpback whales, sea otters, leatherback sea turtles, kelp forests, rocky reefs and more than 200 shipwrecks. Under the proposal, the new sanctuary will cover 4,543 square miles — an area nearly four times the size of Yosemite National Park — and extend out to 60 miles offshore.

The Biden administration said Friday that it plans to publish final rules in October, with the designation officially finished by the time President Joe Biden leaves office in January. Former President Donald Trump, during his time in office, attempted to allow new offshore oil drilling along California, Oregon and Washington. The plans never came to fruition, however, due to local and state opposition, including a law former Gov. Jerry Brown signed in 2018 banning the construction of new pipelines, terminals, and other oil drilling equipment in state waters out to three miles off the coast.

The Chumash sanctuary will be the first national marine sanctuary in the nation proposed by a Native American tribe. The Northern Chumash Tribe, based in Los Osos, near Morro Bay, began advocating for the idea in 2015.

“This is a huge moment for the Chumash People and all who have tirelessly supported our campaign over the years,” said Violet Sage Walker, chairwoman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, on Friday.

Walker, whose late father, tribal Chief Fred Collins, led the campaign until his death in 2021, noted that tribal members “will always be connected to past, present and future by this special stretch of coastline and the true magic its waters hold.”

Chumash and Salinan people have lived along the Central California coast for thousands of years.

Under the proposed rules, tribes will be involved with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in managing the new sanctuary. As with most sanctuaries, offshore oil and gas drilling, along with undersea mining, will be prohibited. No new rules are proposed for commercial or recreational fishing.

Nevertheless, many commercial fishermen in the area have opposed a new sanctuary.

“We’re worried about new regulations. What are we in for here?” said Tom Hafer, president of the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen’s Organization. “There are already so many rules we have to abide by. This is another thing we have to worry about.”

Hafer fishes for black cod and spot prawns from his 43-foot boat, the “Kathryn H.” He said there are about 35 other commercial fishermen in the Morro Bay area who catch salmon, rockfish, abalone Dungeness crab, all of whom already fall under strict state and federal regulations.

“We are a little wary, a little scared,” he said Friday.

America has 15 national marine sanctuaries. They can be established by Congress or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under a law signed in 1972 by former President Richard Nixon.

California has four: Monterey Bay, which stretches from the Golden Gate Bridge to Hearst Castle, Channel Islands off Southern California, Gulf of the Farallones off San Francisco, and Cordell Bank off Marin County.

The last national marine sanctuary to be established in California was Monterey Bay, by George H.W. Bush in 1992, which ended years of political battles after former President Ronald Reagan proposed to allow offshore oil drilling off Big Sur, the San Mateo coast and other parts of Northern California.

One of the main controversies in the Chumash sanctuary, which involved years of public hearings and more than 100,000 public comments, involved offshore wind farms.

Originally, sanctuary supporters proposed that its boundaries abut the southern edge of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, near Hearst Castle.

But Biden and Gov. Gavin Newsom have supported the construction of floating offshore wind farms off Morro Bay and Humboldt County to provide clean energy. In selecting Friday’s proposed alternative, NOAA left a gap around Morro Bay out of the new sanctuary to allow undersea cables to connect future offshore wind turbines to the state’s electrical grid.

Tribal leaders and environmental groups have suggested that once the wind farms are built, the sanctuary boundaries could be enlarged.

On Friday, one of California’s top environmental officials voiced support for that idea.

“There is an interest in a second phase that could expand the sanctuary northward once cables are laid,” said Wade Crowfoot, California’s secretary of natural resources. “We need to cross that bridge when we come to it, but I support a focused discussion on how we can expand the boundaries.”

Crowfoot said the Newsom administration is very pleased that the sanctuary is at the finish line.

“It’s a huge deal,” he said. “That part of the coast is really important environmentally. It’s where the Southern Current meets the Northern Current. There is a remarkable ecological richness. Biologically it’s a really sensitive and important place, and culturally, it’s also very, very important. This coast that will now be protected is fundamental to the Chumash people.”

**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**

**LABORING UNDER A DELUSION**

*America is in a Culture War. Détente is not an option, and surrender is unconscionable, for it would mean the end of our free republic.*

**BY THADDEUS G. MCCOTTER**

As the presidential campaign speeds past what was once its traditional kickoff date, Labor Day Weekend, many on the right continue to argue that engaging in the “Culture War” is either a distraction or that it is already lost. In both instances, waging the good fight to protect and promote a virtuous culture will ineluctably lead to the Right’s electoral defeat.

Instead, they aver, dispense with cultural issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, protecting parental rights, etc., and focus solely on the economy, immigration, and the weaponization of government. If these Republican Cassandras prevail upon the Trump campaign and GOP down-ticket campaigns to stand mute on critical cultural issues, what will victory in November accomplish for MAGA and conservative populists? The disintegration of our free republic by an erosion rather than an avalanche. And, in truth, the erosion would prove more painful by not only being slower but by being done by our own Republican hands.

A vibrant, virtuous culture of life is indispensable to the liberty and prosperity of Americans and, indeed, all of humanity. To attempt to divorce culture from democracy and the economy is to agree with the left: government and the economy are essentially mechanistic, materialistic, and deterministic—shaping the human person more than the individual shapes these institutions.

This explains why the left injects its ideology and uses the tools of both government and the economy to indoctrinate the citizenry into its collectivist ideology, and, in its secular atheism, denigrates and often infringes upon the liberty and property of dissenters who cherish faith, family, community, and country—people who are committed to defending and expanding a virtuous culture of life.

The left is waging a culture war on America—indeed a war against the very concept of truth, itself—that aims to impose its collectivist, materialist, secularist ideology upon society; and subordinating and suppressing traditional culture and its adherence to moral truths. Since the left believes it is winning, if largely by default, and is hellbent on finishing its mission, in this Culture War the Republican Cassandras are laboring under the delusion they are seeking a

Détente. What they are really calling for is unilateral disarmament on the path to unconditional surrender and serfdom.

In his masterful biography, *The End and the Beginning: Pope John Paul II – The Victory of Freedom, the Last Years, the Legacy*, George Weigel examined the late pontiff’s social magisterium and, notably, his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus* [The Hundredth Year], which issued a clarion call for a “free and virtuous society and the priority of culture;” and warned of “the dangers that awaited democratic polities and free-economies that cut themselves loose from sturdy moral-cultural moorings.”

Per Weigel, the crux of John Paul II’s argument was tripartite:

*The free and virtuous society [is] composed of three interlocking parts: a democratic polity, a free or market-centered economy, and a robust public moral culture. The third component part, [John Paul II] insisted, was the key to the proper functioning of the political and economic sectors. It took a certain kind of people, possessing certain virtues, to make democracy and the market work so that human beings were ennobled by their participation in free political and economic life.*

Yet, what was it that enabled an individual and their society to thrive within democratic states and free market economies? “As always, recognition of the truth about the dignity of the human person was the key to the ultimate success of any human activity.” States that incorporated and protected these moral truths, for example, human rights, by circumscribing the powers of its government; and that allowed for the flourishing of human creativity and responsibility within a free market, would engender the most virtuous and salubrious citizenry.

But, John Paul II was acutely aware of what would happen when secular atheism and/or virulent moral relativism in “democracies that declared wrongs to be rights” impaired a society’s ability to adhere to the moral truths that spurred its virtuous accomplishments.

As Weigel noted, John Paul II discerned the problem at its post-modern root, namely “a world striving for freedom had not learned to live freedom nobly because it had lost touch with the nobility of the human person, which consists in our ability to know, choose, and adhere to the truth.”

And the historical horrors humanity wrought and suffered provided a crystalline vision of where a Godless, vice-addled society would dead end.

*John Paul II located the deepest wound of modernity in a defective humanism that had left the world morally adrift and had created a global charnel house in which great hopes had been burnt to ashes. Life had become fragmented and atomized. The alienation experienced by the men and women of late modernity was far deeper and more complex than the alienation analyzed by Karl Marx: men and women had become alienated from their own interiority, having lost sight of a transcendent spiritual and moral horizon against which to live their lives. This deeper alienation had profound public consequences. Like his friend Henri de Lubac, Wojtyla was convinced that defective humanisms had created a situation in which men and women could only organize the world against each other. Ultramundane humanism inevitably became inhuman humanism.*

St. John Paul the Great wrote this in 1959. Sixty-five years later, the inhuman humanism has metastasized throughout our country and our world, in which we are more rapidly and readily being organized against each other in a death of a thousand keystrokes in a cyber-cesspool of disinformation, envy, and animus.

Yet there is life, and yet there is hope. The hope for John Paul II, Weigel wrote, was that “the truth about the human person was ultimately revealed in Jesus Christ, in whom we discover the truth about the merciful Father and the truth about ourselves.”

Thus, in 1976, it was this conviction that led then Cardinal Wojtyla to declare that he and his peers stood “in the front line in a lively battle for the dignity of man.” A quarter century later, the Cold War was over. Through the grace of God and the work of his earthly servants, the “conscience revolution” that affirmed the primacy of everyone’s human dignity had destroyed the evil empire of the totalitarian Soviet Union and its communist satellites.

Today, over thirty years, America is in a Culture War. Launched and waged by the left, it is a Culture War without quarter. Détente is not an option, and surrender is unconscionable, for it would mean the end of our free republic and all we have cherished for generations and hope to bequeath to future generations.

In brutal truth: we cannot make America great again unless we make America good again.

Thus, the heirs of Lincoln and Reagan must dismiss the Republican Cassandras, and engage and win the Culture War. We must proclaim our support for a free and virtuous culture of life and moral truths. We must trust in the innate decency of our fellow citizens. And we must realize that whatever the immediate electoral danger, the greatest danger is to abandon our principles. For we will not only lose our liberty and prosperity.

We will lose the truth about ourselves.

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*An American Greatness contributor, the Hon. Thaddeus G. McCotter (M.C., Ret.) served Michigan’s 11th Congressional district from 2003-2012, and served as Chair of the Republican House Policy Committee. Not a lobbyist, he is a frequent public speaker and moderator for public policy seminars; and a Monday co-host of the “John Batchelor Radio Show,” among sundry media appearances.*



## **THE MEDIA LIES ADD UP**

***FOR SOME NINE YEARS, THE MEDIA AND THE LEFT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FED THE COUNTRY A SUCCESSION OF RANK DECEPTIONS AND CONSPIRACIES***

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

The US is exhausted after a decade of chronic untruth from the left-wing and its media.

The 2016 presidential campaign will be long remembered for the false allegation that Donald Trump colluded with the Russians to warp the election.

Citing the bogus “Steele dossier,” loser Hillary Clinton and other Democrat grandees claimed that the victorious Trump was an “illegitimate The public” president.

Almost immediately, the left and media then pushed for the appointment of special prosecutor Robert Mueller. He assembled a ‘dream team’ of partisan prosecutors to prove Trump-Russian collusion.

Some 22 months later, Mueller found no evidence that Donald Trump improperly won the 2016 election with help from any colluding Russians.

More hysteria followed when Trump was impeached in December 2019.

The left claimed he had pressured the Ukrainian government to look into the family of Joe Biden (then a potential 2020 election opponent) for its corruption with Ukrainian oligarchs—as a condition for releasing military aid designated to Kyiv.

Yet Hunter Biden was paid nearly \$1 million a year by a Ukrainian energy company to enlist his father, Vice President Joe Biden, for quid pro quo services.

In turn, Joe Biden himself later bragged he had pressured Ukraine to fire its prosecutor, Victor Shokin—who happened to be looking too closely into the various shady schemes of the Biden family.

The deceptions and lies continued.

On the eve of the first 2020 debate, Biden aide and now Secretary of State Antony Blinken helped to round up “51 former intelligence authorities” to claim falsely that Hunter Biden’s abandoned laptop—full of incriminating evidence of felonious Biden family behavior—was fabricated by the Russians.

Yet the FBI already had the laptop and had authenticated it as genuine.

The FBI was also actively enlisting Silicon Valley social media companies to suppress accurate news accounts of the laptop's embarrassing contents—ostensibly to aid the Biden campaign.

The signees of the false letter included former intelligence kingpins such as Leon Panetta, James Clapper, and John Brennan. None has ever apologized for deliberating lying to the country in a (successful) attempt to help alter an election.

During the summer of 2021, top military officials, at least publicly, parroted the Biden administration's lie that it was safe to abruptly withdraw all troops from Afghanistan.

The Biden plan was to take political credit for ending the two-decade-long war on the 20th anniversary of 9/11 and the American invasion of Afghanistan.

Yet many intelligence officials in and outside the Pentagon had warned both Biden and the Pentagon top brass that any such reckless and total withdrawal would collapse Afghanistan.

They rightly also advised that sudden flight would give terrorists a windfall of equipment and infrastructure.

But they were ignored and during the subsequent Biden misadventure, thirteen American Marines were needlessly killed.

After the greatest military humiliation in a half-century, Biden and many in the media lied that the mission was nevertheless a successful withdrawal.

But that was not all. For the first time in history, a presidential candidate, Donald Trump, was subjected to numerous criminal and civil suits in an election year.

Yet the federal prosecutor, Jack Smith, met with Biden officials. A high-ranking Biden Justice federal attorney joined the New York municipal prosecution. The Georgia prosecutor met stealthily with Biden's legal counsel. And a major Biden donor funded the civil suit.

The once collusion-hungry media ignored all such lawfare and rank collusion.

During the 2020 Democratic primaries, the general election, and throughout the first three years of the Biden administration, it was evident that Joe Biden was physically and mentally incapable of serving as president.

Yet his aides and the media all misled the American people. They insisted that Biden was vigorous and sharp.

Then suddenly in June 2024, within a 24-hour period, Biden was declared by these same insiders as unfit to continue as the Democratic nominee.

Their new problem with Biden was not just his long-standing embarrassing dementia. Rather bad polls increasingly warned that voters no longer believed their lies and thus would likely not reelect Biden but would instead punish most Democrats in the upcoming 2024 election.

So, a new media narrative arose: the once-hale Biden was forced to resign as the Democrat nominee. His once widely caricatured vice president, Kamala Harris, just as abruptly was coronated as his replacement candidate by an equally suddenly gushing and colluding media.

In sum, for some nine years, the media and the left have successfully fed the country a succession of rank deceptions and conspiracies.

They did so because they proclaimed Donald Trump too dangerous to be president and therefore any means they employed to stop him were to be justified. And they are doing so yet a third time in 2024.

As they continue, they have all but destroyed democracy, ruined the reputation of the media, alienated the public—and embarrassed their country before the world.

*Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004, and is the 2023 Giles O'Malley Distinguished Visiting Professor at the School of Public Policy, Pepperdine University. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush, and the Bradley Prize in 2008. Hanson is also a farmer (growing almonds on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author of the just released New York Times best seller, The End of Everything: How Wars Descend into Annihilation, published by Basic Books on May 7, 2024, as well as the recent The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won, The Case for Trump, and The Dying Citizen.*

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