



**COLAB**  
San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

## **Weekly Update** **April 13 - 20, 2026**

The April 7 San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors meeting covered a lot of ground addressing 41 items before lunch. Item 42, the sole after lunch business, required two and a half hours of deliberation. It was no surprise, considering the unrealistic views of the ICE protesting crowd.

The next BoS meeting is scheduled for April 21.

As a reminder, this weekly update will be on pause until May 4.

### **Ungrateful Immigrant Advocates**

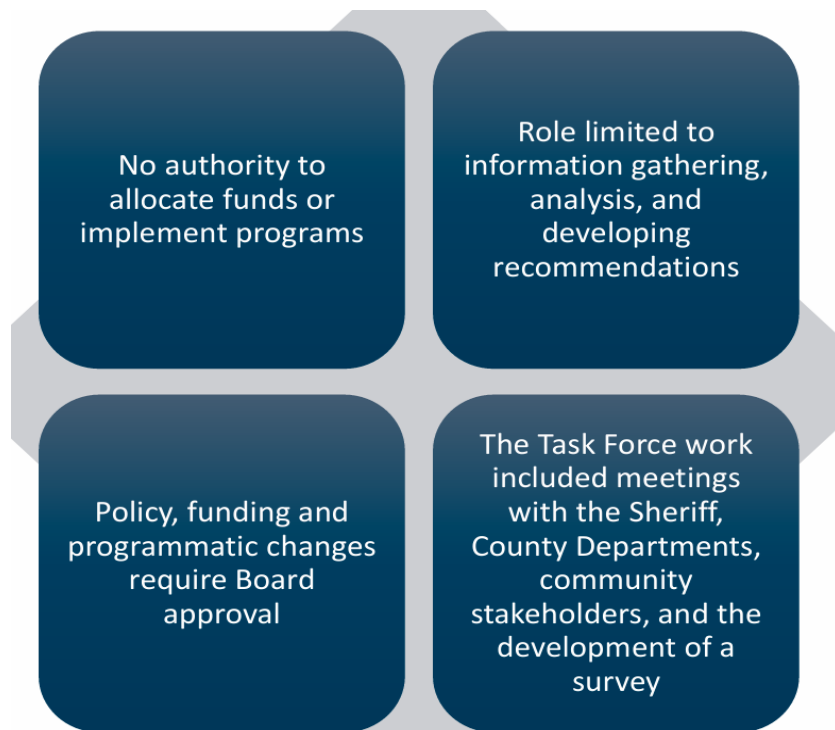
The quote by John Lydgate; “You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all of the people all of the time” is true most of the time. However, in the case of the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors, trying to please anybody on the issue of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) appears to be impossible. It seems that nobody is pleased with their most recent actions.

It all started with an attempt to calm advocates for the immigrant community following the January 27 marathon “truth Act” session of the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors. An ad hoc committee was formed and charged with further

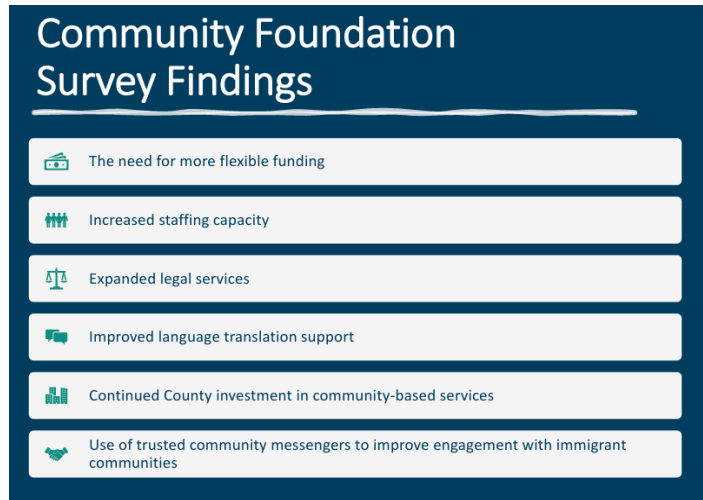
investigation to determine possible support for families of immigrants impacted by ICE enforcement.

The committee consisted of Supervisors Dawn Ortiz-Legg and Jimmy Paulding. They were given 60 days to investigate possibilities and report back to the full Board. The April 7 Board of Supervisors meeting served as their report date.

The committee met with service providers, the Sheriff and numerous agencies that regularly interact with the migrant community as well as migrant leaders. Below is a graphic illustrating the operating parameters of the ad hoc committee:



The ad hoc committee worked with the Community Foundation to conduct a survey of service providers and key stakeholders. Here is a summary of their findings:



Here is a summary of the community stakeholder feedback:

- Need for stronger coordination among service providers
- Support for resources to address gaps in language access, legal services, housing stability, and healthcare access
- Support for a resource center or mobile hub to strengthen system alignment and coordination
- Potential partnership with the County on a program coordinator

The ad hoc committee also had direct feedback from the county departments that regularly interact with the migrant community. Here is a summary of that feedback:

No decrease in client participation or clinic utilization

No increase in unaccompanied minors due to ICE enforcement

Reported increase anxiety, fear, and absenteeism among students

Available online options for persons to apply for Medi-Cal and other benefits

Ongoing public outreach to immigrant communities

Along with the survey, the ad hoc committee worked with the Sheriff to clarify procedures for interactions with undocumented inmates and ICE. The Following is a summary of the policy that resulted:

## Sheriff's Office Agreements

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Post a FAQs brochure, in both English and Spanish, on their website

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Provide quarterly reports on their website

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Update the Jail ICE access notice form to include a recommendation to contact a family member

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Development of an educational video explaining the Sheriff's Office role in the community

The Sheriff's office also shared a brochure that they just finished developing that addresses the most frequently asked questions regarding these issues:

## RESOURCES

### County of San Luis Obispo Immigration Resources: Know Your Rights

Website:  
[www.slocounty.ca.gov/home/immigration-resources](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/home/immigration-resources)

- Online Resources in English & Spanish
- Printable Red Card
  - Caregiver's Affidavit
  - Guardianship Petitions (through SLO Legal Assistance Foundation)
  - Step-by-step Family Preparedness Guide
  - Guide for Talking About Immigration with Your Children

### 211 SLO County

Website: [211slo.org](http://211slo.org)  
Phone: 2-1-1

- Online Resources in English & Spanish
- Connections to legal, health, housing, and immigration services.
- Call to speak with a Contact Specialist for personalized assistance.
- Free & confidential, 24/7

## CONTACT US

San Luis Obispo County  
Sheriff's Office  
1585 Kansas Avenue  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Phone: (805) 781-4550  
Website: [slosheriff.org](http://slosheriff.org)



We welcome you to contact your local Sheriff's Station for a 60 total questions or concerns. You can locate station contact information at [www.slosheriff.org/contact/](http://www.slosheriff.org/contact/)



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SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## IMMIGRATION INFORMATION GUIDE

Information and Resources



[www.slosheriff.org](http://www.slosheriff.org)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How does SB 54 (California Values Act) define the Sheriff's Office responsibility for immigration enforcement?

Answer: SB 54 prohibits state and local law enforcement from using their resources to investigate, interrogate, detain, or arrest people for civil immigration enforcement purposes. The law limits cooperation with federal immigration authorities to specific, legally defined circumstances. Transfers and information sharing to ICE are only authorized under the narrow exceptions provided by SB 54. They are further outlined in Government Code §7282.5.

### Does the Sheriff's Office comply with detainers from ICE?

Answer: The Sheriff's Office does not comply nor recognize detainer requests to hold someone up to 48 hours after eligible release. Notifications of release dates only occur in compliance with California Values Act (SB 54). We only comply with immigration authorities in situations explicitly permitted under California Law. We do not hold or detain any individual past their scheduled release date and time for immigration purposes.

### Under what circumstances does someone in jail get transferred to ICE?

Answer: Transfers and information sharing to ICE are only authorized under the narrow exceptions which include the following:

- A valid arrest warrant signed by a magistrate.
- Certain qualifying criminal convictions, such as serious or violent felonies as defined under California Penal Code §1192.7 or §667.503.
- Certain qualifying convictions that can be charged as a felony or a misdemeanor (misdemeanors) that are defined under Government Code §7282.5(a)(3).

#### Additional requirements:

- Agencies must not detain a person past their release date/time for ICE.
- Agencies must provide the individual a copy of any ICE request and document the decision to comply or not (as required by the Title 18 Act).

### What prompts ICE involvement when the Sheriff's Office responds to a call for service?

Answer: ICE is not notified during routine calls for service. Immigration status is not a consideration when deputies respond to calls or make arrests in the field.

#### ICE involvement may only occur if:

- The person is subject to a judicial arrest warrant.
- The individual's criminal history or charges meet the qualifying exceptions under SB 54 as outlined above.

Deputies do not ask about immigration status during calls for service or traffic stops. The department's goal is to ensure public safety and uphold trust within the community.

### How and where are incarcerated persons released from custody? What if ICE is in the parking lot in front of the jail?

Answer: All incarcerated persons at the county jail are released through the public lobby once they are legally eligible for release. This may occur for various reasons, including potting bail, completion of their sentence, or other lawful release conditions. The public lobby and adjacent parking lot are public areas, and as such, the Sheriff's Office does not control who may be present in those spaces. If representatives from ICE or any other agency are in these areas, they are legally permitted to be there, but their presence does not indicate or imply communication or coordination with our agency.

All incarcerated persons are released in the same manner, in accordance with law and departmental policy, ensuring a consistent and lawful release process for every individual.

### Does the Sheriff's Office assist ICE with immigration enforcement operations?

Answer: No. The Sheriff's Office does not participate in or assist ICE with immigration operations. Our job is to keep the community safe by responding to calls for service, engaging in community policing, and staffing the county jail. We are focused on protecting everyone in our community, not enforcing immigration laws.

The question of what the County can do to boss around ICE and the Federal Government was also explored:



- County has authority to prevent use of County property for federal immigration operations
- Existing authority already allows this without additional Board action
- Several counties adopted explicit anti-commandeering policies

In all, the work product for just 60 days of interviews and surveys was substantial. While the committee had no authority to make policy or spend money, it did make the following recommendations:

- Receive and file the report on the County's authority and the Task Force's findings
- Approve the \$100,000 allocation from FC-106 to the Community Foundation SLO and authorize the CEO (or designee) to execute required documents
- Provide direction to staff on implementing available options for managing federal immigration access in County facilities

At the conclusion of the report, about 30 or 40 community members spoke during public comments. Every speaker expressed dissatisfaction with the committee's findings. Most said that the recommendations didn't go far enough. Many continued to declare Sheriff Parkinson guilty of numerous crimes. Some criticized the method of the survey and asked why it didn't ask questions directly from the migrant community. Almost everybody said the funding was inadequate.



Ortiz-Legg was clearly frustrated with the reaction from the crowd. She reiterated the fact that our county government cannot tell the federal government how to do its business, and that the Sheriff is following state law as prescribed by SB 54. She suggested that those claiming to have proof of illegal activities by the Sheriff should take their case to the Attorney General.

Paulding pointed out that the people being picked up on warrants by ICE are criminals. He questioned why that was not recognized by the protesters.

Supervisor Bruce Gibson expressed his thought that \$100,000 was not enough.

Supervisors John Peschong and Heather Mareno both questioned the spending aspect of the recommendations. They pointed out that the funding seemed to be earmarked for programs that are already funded.

In the end, the BoS adopted the recommendations with Peschong and Moreno voting no.

So, for two months of work and a genuine effort to address needs, fill gaps and foster greater understanding of the process, all Paulding and Ortiz-Legg got for their best of intentions was a big razzberry from the migrant support community.

The migrant support community did themselves no service with their unreasonable demands and lack of understanding of the process. Insisting the county do things it simply has no authority to do, asking for funding beyond the means of the county budget, accusing law enforcement of crimes based on a gross misunderstanding of the law and criticizing those public officials most sympatric to their cause doesn't exactly create an atmosphere for accomplishment.

Worse, however, is that the atmosphere that these actions do create is one of unrealistic expectations and fear amongst the migrant community. Activists spend a lot of time discussing the fear created by what they describe as "kidnapping" by ICE. But when they stomp around declaring the Sheriff is breaking the law or accuse the BoS of being unsupportive (essentially accomplices) by not declaring SLO County to be an Ice-Free Zone, they add to fear, misunderstanding and distrust.

On top of that, when the Bos spends taxpayer money without careful consideration of overall needs and priorities within the community, it creates an even higher level of distrust.

In many ways, migrant supporters appear to be spending more energy fighting the existing system rather than either finding ways to comply or fostering productive changes. Reality can be a cold-hearted pain in the neck, but it usually prevails.

## Mobile Home Cha Ching

If you live in a mobile home located in a mobile home park, have lower than average income and experienced storm damage to your home from the 2023 storms totaling over \$3,000, you may have just hit the jackpot.



Item 37 on the April 7 BoS agenda read: Presentation of the Manufactured Home Replacement and Elevation Program (MHRE) funded by the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) which aims to replace mobile homes / manufactured homes (MHU) damaged in the December 2022 – January 2023 storms. (Social Services)



What that translates to is this program has \$9.29 million in Other People's Money to buy 29 new homes for a select few. Here are the details:

- \$9.29 million in HUD CDBG-DR funding is available to the County through the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).
- The program is for the replacement and elevation of damaged manufactured homes located in parks impacted by the **December 2022 – January 2023 severe winter storms**, including flooding, landslides, and mudslides.
- Limited funding; complete applications reviewed in the order received.

Here are the conditions:

- Homeowner occupied a manufactured/mobile home at the time of the winter storms as their primary residence.
- Household income at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- Located in a mobile home park in San Luis Obispo County
- At least \$3,000 in storm-related damage and no outstanding loans or liens

This is the process for getting a new mobile home with Other People’s Money:



This is what you get with a big chunk of \$9.28 Million of Other People’s Money:



**New Home**

Replaces  
damaged home



**Full Installation**

Move-In Ready



**Safer Home**

Elevation, if  
needed,  
for reduced  
flood risk



**Grant Funding**

No repayment  
required

Credit to Supervisor Gibson who questioned the fairness and logic of the program. He pointed out that some people with only \$3,000 of damage stood to get an entire new home, while others with potentially far greater damage might be completely left out. Further, he questioned the math, pointing out that \$9.29 Million divided by 29 comes to \$320,344 per unit – far more than the average cost of a new mobile home considering there is no land purchase involved.

Supervisor Moreno questioned why someone with \$3,000 in damage should get a whole new home and wondered if the program shouldn't gauge need before determining who gets the deal of the day.

We question why someone with significant storm damage from three years ago wouldn't have repaired that damage by now, or why minor damage would warrant an entire new home and who in the Federal Government felt such an out of balance approach was a good way to spend Other People's Money. It is too easy to forget that federal grant funds are really taxpayer funds and should be treated with a fiduciary approach. It's most frustrating to know that some bureaucrat in Washington DC probably gets a promotion or bonus for coming up with the concept.

The April 7 San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda consists mostly of administrative business. Several of the agenda items involve adoption of

contracts for services. Eight items require a 4/5ths vote and a few are Health Department organizational or personnel related.

## \$2 Million Whoopsie

In a colossal miscalculation, the County Regional Parks Department presented its latest accounting of revenues and expenses to the BoS on April 7, disclosing a nearly two-million-dollar shortfall.

Agenda item 38 read as follows: Request to: 1) receive a report on the Regional Parks fund financial deficit and provide direction as necessary; 2) direct staff to return to the Board with long-term operational funding and cost recovery recommendations; 3) authorize a budget adjustment up to \$2 million from General Fund Contingencies to Fund Center (FC) 305 Regional Parks to mitigate the FY 2025-26 operating deficit, by 4/5 vote. (Executive Office)

The report leads off with the divulgence that fees year to date are only at 48% of expectations in the current budget, with an expectation of reaching 77% by the end of the fiscal year. Expenses at the end of the fiscal year are expected to exceed budget. The combination of less than anticipated revenue, combined with higher-than-expected expenditures puts the program roughly \$1.9 million upside down.

	Current Status	FY 2025-26 YE Forecast	Variance from Budget
<b>Operating Revenue:</b>			
Charges for Current Services	48%	77%	(\$1.6M)
<b>Operating Expense:</b>			
Salary and Benefits	71%	102%	\$58,596
Services and Supplies	86%	107%	\$270,918
<b>YE Net:</b>			<b>\$1.9M</b>

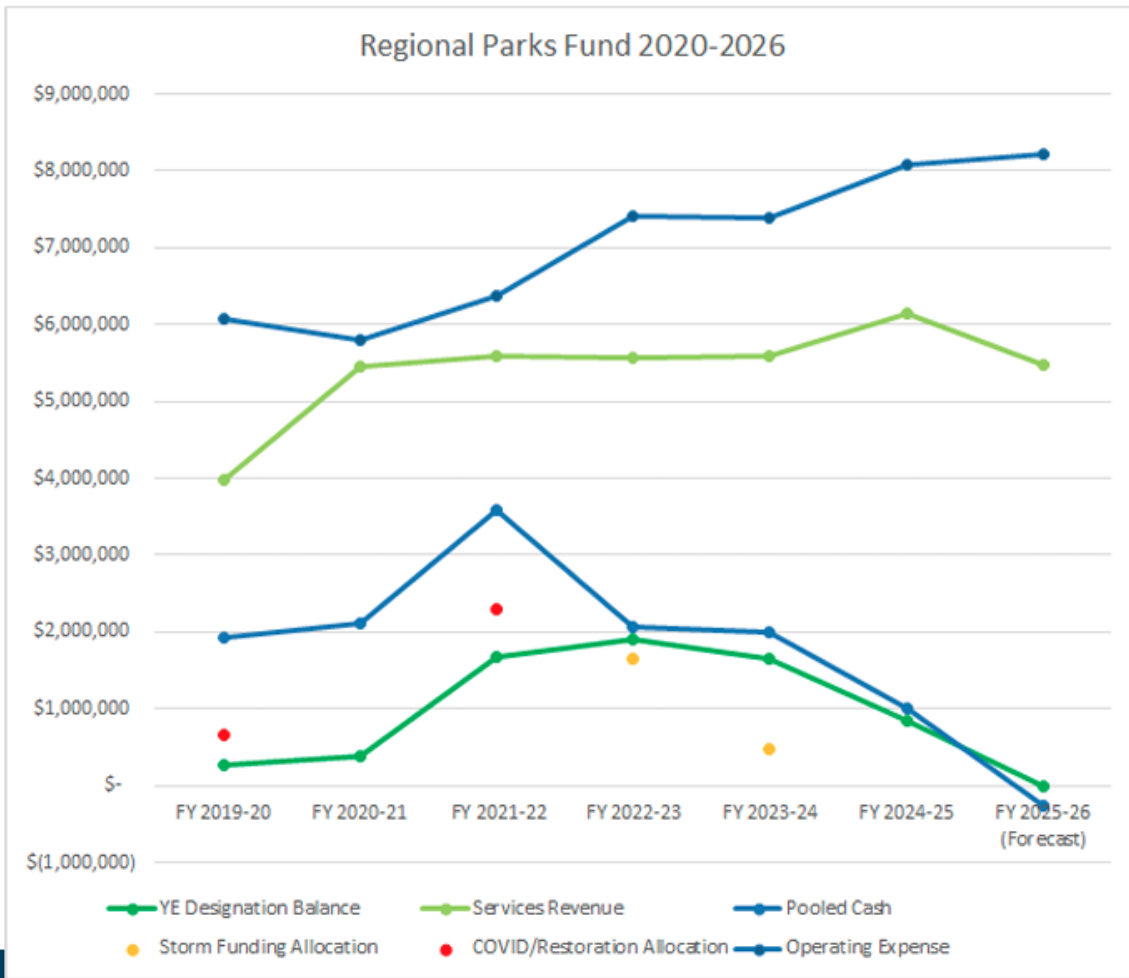
Of the many troubling aspects of the report. The amount of miscalculation is amazing. Could demand for the various revenue generating sources really have dropped off so dramatically from last year's performance? Was last year's performance even evaluated when forecasting this year's budget? Did they not anticipate real; life revenues?

Primary Contributing Factor	FY 2025-2026 YE Forecast Impact	Variance from Budget
Daily Passes Revenue	(\$519,700)	(52%)
Group Use Fee Revenue	(\$337,751)	(92%)
Camping Fee Revenue	(\$250,000)	(6%)
Administrative Services	(\$176,147)	(44%)
Other Services Revenue Accounts	(\$329,494)	(38%)
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>(\$1.6 million)</b>	<b>(23%)</b>
Professional Services (Maintenance)	\$256,493	(37%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.9 million</b>	

Another deeply troubling aspect of this calamity is that it took a two million deficit before the Board heard anything about it. Obviously too late, in an attempt to reduce the hemorrhaging, the following steps have been taken:

Action	FY 2025-26 YE Forecast Impact
Fee Increases (Camping, Boating, Day Use, Admin Fees)	\$225,000
Vendor Contract Savings	(\$45,000)
Holding Staff Vacancies	(\$109,182)
Reduced Routine Maintenance	(\$102,587)
Campground Service Reduction	(\$24,000)
<b>Total Impact</b>	<b>\$505,769</b>

The following graph illustrates financial performance over the last six years:



The recommended action from the Department is listed here followed by the plan to rectify the budgeting performance:

### FY 2025-26 Action:

Approve up to \$2 million in General Fund Contingencies

### Structural Issue:

1. KPMG review (financial and operational)
2. Return with long-term operational funding and cost recovery recommendation

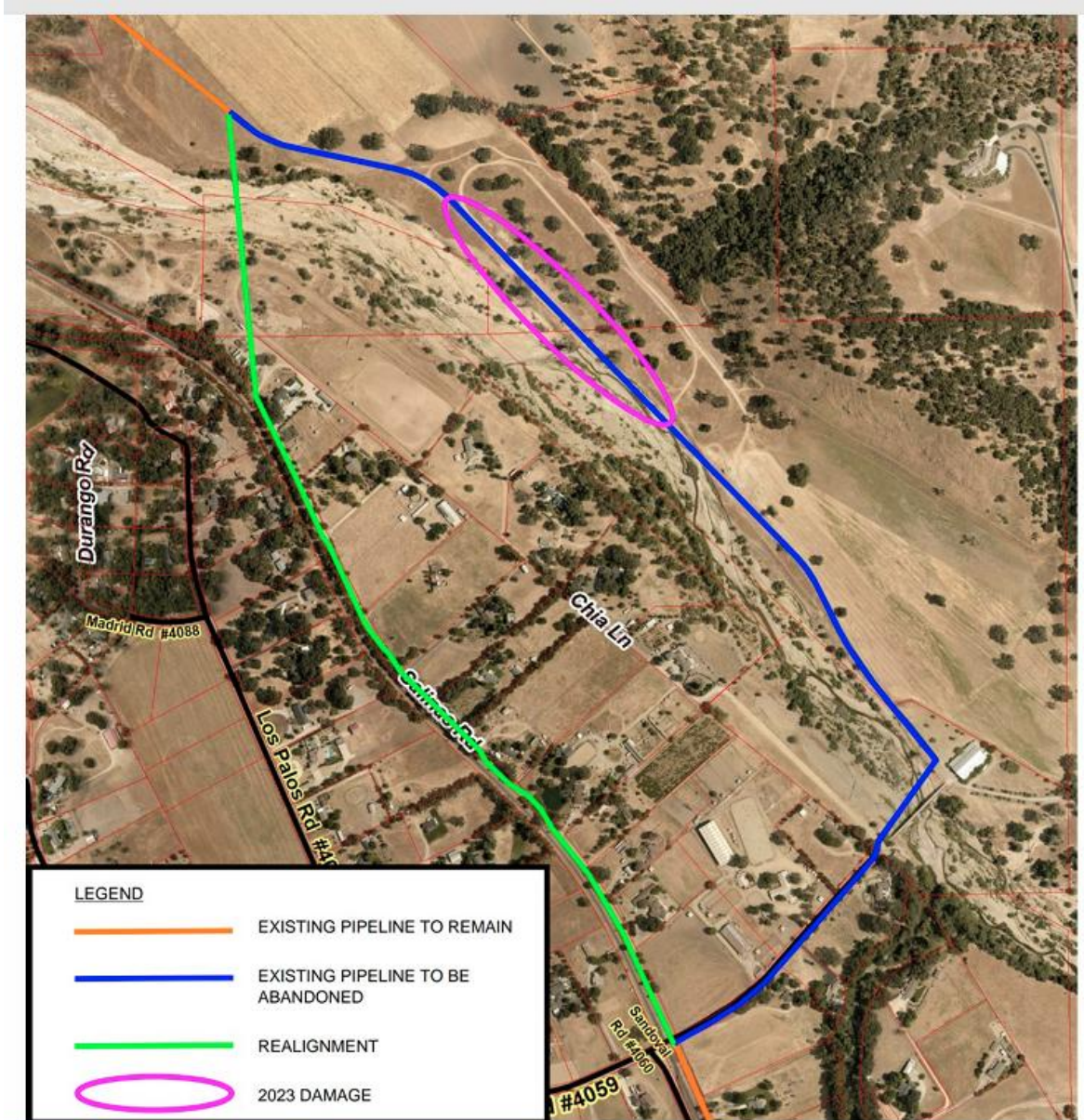
The “adjustment” was approved with promises that they will do a better job of assessment. We used to wonder how our county budget got to one billion dollars, but revelations such as this make it very clear. We hope that a KPMG audit will uncover details that will result in a much more accurate and accountable process.

## **Eminent Domain vs Property Rights**

Item 40 on the agenda presented a challenging property rights issue. It read: Hearing to consider adoption of a resolution of necessity for the acquisition of real property interests required for the Nacimiento Water Project Pipeline Unit G Repair Project, Atascadero, by 4/5 vote. (Public Works)

The situation calls for a careful look at eminent domain. It is about the Department of Public Works determining that it needs to run a pipeline through a horse ranch property. It appears to be a very special ranch, and it seems that the owners have rejected an offer from the county for purchase.

Here is an aerial photo of the property:



Public Works make their case for eminent domain as follows:

Realignment of the pipeline is necessary and in the public interest:

- Nacimiento Water Project water is a key source of the City of San Luis Obispo's drinking water
- Ensure the long-term reliability of this critical water supply and restore essential water service to San Luis Obispo County communities.
- Reduces the likelihood that this water service is interrupted in the event of future storms, floods, or other emergency situations

Public Works requested the following:

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Open and conduct a hearing on the adoption of the Resolution of Necessity
2. Adopt a Resolution of Necessity authorizing the chairperson to execute all necessary documents
3. Authorize Director of Public Works to complete the actions necessary to close the transaction

We know nothing about the family that owns the property but imagine the possibility that it is a treasured place that holds many great memories. It certainly is not easy to find similar properties and values must be at a premium.

Supervisor Moreno expressed concern over the use of Eminent Domain and requested that the process be continued until May 5 to allow more negotiation time in an effort to find an equitable solution acceptable to both parties.

We appreciate Moreno's common sense approach and hope that a reasonable solution can be reached.

**This weekly update will be on pause for the weeks of April 20 and 27 but will resume for the May 4 edition.**

## Last Week

### Supervisor Candidates Confer

The San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau hosted a forum with County Supervisorial candidates on March 31. All four candidates, two each from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> districts respectively, participated.



**All four candidates participated and were quite candid about their positions.** Farm Bureau Executive Director Paul Clark and his team presented a timely list of questions for the candidates. Forty or fifty people attended in person at the Farm Bureau offices in SLO, with about 40 more watching online.



**Paul Clark asks the tough questions.**

This was not a debate, but rather, an in-depth interview that offered the opportunity to directly compare different points of view. The discussions naturally had an agriculture focus.



**Every candidate was respectful and (mostly) stuck to the subject of the questions.**

While contrast was slight, we did learn a few things about each candidate. Listed here are some of the points that stood out from each:



**Jimmy Paulding** stressed that storm recovery projects to local roads have been a high priority for the Board. Spending and other resources dedicated to such reinforce the high priority that the Board has put on transportation. He does not believe the Sheriff has violated any law in dealing with ICE but promotes a better understanding in the immigrant community and impacts on areas such as the ag industry. Supports exploring a large-scale desalinization program, possibly located

at the old Phillips 66 site to address water needs. Is proud of his efforts to bring a Sheriff substation to south county and to increase staffing on emergency fire equipment. Supports the half cent sales tax measure. Says he loves his work as a Supervisor.



**Adam Verdin** seeks to protect the Williamson Act and find better ways to protect the Paso Water Basin. Wants to see the desalinization plant built out at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant to supply water, as well as connect some of the water services in south county to improve coverage and encourage increased water storage including developing settling ponds for groundwater recharge. Called for a quarterly update from the County CEO to report on improvement projects identified by recent department audits. Said the county can do better, needs to partner with the community rather than hinder it. Business background offers valuable insight for county policies. Expressed frustration that the county has allowed the transportation system to get so bad that we need a sales tax.



**Micheal Erin Woody** says his engineering background will give him an advantage in guiding county staff to become more efficient. Wants to partner with ag community and seeks its guidance and expertise. Voiced concern over the number of consultants the county hires for practically every task. Adamantly opposed to offshore wind energy along the San Luis Obispo County coast, and the industrialization of our ports. Supports the half cent sales tax, but only if it includes programs for alternative transit such as bile paths and trails. Believes the current federal administration emphasis on tariffs puts extra pressure on immigration, creating extra uncertainty. Is confident our Sheriff is doing everything correctly.



**Jim Dantona** wants to improve County interaction with the community to make processes more efficient and user friendly. Is open to offshore wind energy, but not industrialization of our ports. Believes there are some gray areas on immigration issues that offer opportunity for improvement by the Sheriff. He is frustrated that the many water agencies throughout our county do not collaborate and therefore miss opportunities for mutual support and efficiency. Supports the half cent sales tax. Says the Williamson Act is important and will support it.

Throughout the discussion, every candidate showed respect for the questions, the audience and each other. There were no accusations or dramatic attempts at outrage (which always end up looking silly anyway). Most of all, each candidate was fully aware of the issues and offered thoughtful ideas about how to address them.

It would be more entertaining to cover some outlandish remark or position taken, but it is reassuring that, so far, the campaigns are about the issues. We thank the Farm Bureau for putting the event on and appreciate the candidates for participating and giving straightforward remarks.

If you would like to see the forum, the Farm Bureau has made it available at: [SLO County Farm Bureau Supervisor Candidate Forum March 31, 2026](#)

## **Respect for Crime Victims**

April is once again designated as Crime Victims Awareness week by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors.

It is interesting how many support programs exist for offenders. Rehab, counselling, legal services, job or vocational training and of course, physical fitness. If they lead to a safer community for all, then perhaps these are good

things. But what rarely gets mentioned in public discourse is what crime victims are forced to manage as they try to recover.

We are fortunate to have a District Attorney's office that recognizes the many challenges that victims face and are dedicated to assisting.



**District Attorney Dan Dow**

According to District Attorney Dan Dow, "The time is now to remember the horrific and lasting effect crime inflicts on its victims and to reaffirm our commitment to give them honor and respect throughout the process and to secure JUSTICE as the result. Here in San Luis Obispo County, we refer to the system as the "Criminal AND Victim Justice System" to help ensure that victims are never again subtly forgotten while at the Capitol the laws are being watered down and violent offenders are being released early from prison. San Luis Obispo County has over 11,000 criminal cases per year, and we provide direct support to thousands of crime victims each year. While we cannot turn time back or completely restore the victims of crime, we work tirelessly to ensure that their rights as victims are protected and that they are treated with dignity and respect. To learn more, visit: [slocounty.ca.gov/da](http://slocounty.ca.gov/da) "



"Our Mission is to bring justice and safety to our community by aggressively and fairly prosecuting crime and protecting the rights of crime victims."

Jessica Yates, Victim Witness Assistance Center Director, says via the DA website that in order to help empower victims, the DAs office informs victims of their legal rights and how to exercise those rights. They help reduce the trauma and suffering following the crime, and offer a wide variety of special crisis and support services to victims, including linking them with other local and state services. For District Attorney Witnesses, they confirm court appearances, relay updates on cases and otherwise assist witnesses with their appearances in court to help reduce inconvenience and frustration.

Again, San Luis Obispo County is fortunate to have a District Attorneys office that is proactive in presenting programs that make a positive impact on the quality of life in our community.

## **Sales Tax Measure Qualifying Underway**

The “Citizen Initiative” Better Roads for All committee to put the half cent sales tax on the November ballot reports that they are about halfway through gathering the 12,400 valid signatures required to qualify. At this stage, they are guardedly optimistic about the progress towards meeting the April 17 deadline.



While there is nothing official, the expectation at the County Board of Supervisors seems to be that if the Citizen's Initiative qualifies, they will not move forward with the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) measure.

Should the citizen effort qualify for the ballot, most indications are that the measure will probably pass in November with about 55-60% in favor.

The SLOCOG measure has been in development for a couple of years involving a great deal of community input, polling and focus groups. The resulting language is mirrored by the citizen group. The only difference between the two is that because government would be placing the measure on the ballot, the SLOCOG version requires a 2/3rds vote in November to pass. The citizen measure only needs a simple majority. At this point, there doesn't seem to be organized opposition to the sales tax measure. The Central Coast Taxpayer Association has taken a critical look, as has the Republican Party of San Luis Obispo County. However, it is unclear whether either will mount a fully funded campaign.



One aspect that could work against the sales tax measure will be the dynamics of the November ballot itself. It is expected that both the Reform California Voter ID measure and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association Save Prop. 13 measures will be before the voters. It is even remotely possible that the jungle primary system could produce a two Republican candidate ballot for Governor.



These dynamics will bring out more conservative voters. Should most of the GOP slate mailers in San Luis Obispo County contain messaging urging a no vote on the sales tax measure, along with support for the two aforementioned sitewide measures, we could see a bump in no votes.



The opposite could also play out, should a strong grassroots campaign develop locally to oppose the statewide measures, and should the primary produce at least one Democrat Gubernatorial candidate.

## **Power in Motion**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has granted the Diablo Canyon Power Plant a 20-year operating permit, concluding the debate about whether the plant is

safe to operate for the next two decades. This is not, however, the final hurdle for continued operations until 2045.



The next -and hopefully last - hurdle will be getting an enabling bill passed through the state legislature and signed by the Governor.

The April 2 announcement by the NRC met with a note of optimism from Governor Gavin Newsom. He said: “When the Legislature and I partnered to extend Diablo Canyon’s operation past 2025, we made a commitment to Californians that tackling extreme weather and supporting a reliable grid are essential to building a safe, affordable, and resilient future for our state. Today, I welcome the Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s approval as we continue California’s clean energy transition, creating good-paying jobs, fighting climate change, and cementing the Golden State as a global powerhouse.

A little fluffy perhaps, but a good signal that getting the needed legislation passed is possible.

As good as the future looks for the long term operations of the power plant, three non-profit groups; San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, the Committee to Bridge the Gap, and the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club filed a petition with the California State Water Resources Control Board to limit the Clean Water Act certification so that it will expire in 2030, not 2045 as it was originally passed recently. The groups claim that since the current operating license for the Diablo Canyon plant is only valid until 2030, the Board has no authority to grant a permit beyond that time.

It remains to be seen whether the effort will get traction, but we wonder if the three groups are prepared to answer to consumers should their efforts succeed and the grid proves to be insufficient after 2030. We also find ourselves wondering if there are any mothers not for peace, or what having sufficient electricity to power homes, schools, hospitals, tech centers, electric cars and appliances and dozens of other non-war related activities have to do with promoting peace. Perhaps it will seem peaceful during brown outs when all the things we depend on so much grind to a hard stop.



**A religious sect of aged out hippies with their anti-nuclear rants.**

As we have said in the past, the anti-nuclear power movement has become a religious sect of aged out hippies. They no longer have science, or even public support for their irrational urges to fight clean power. Their selfishness prevails primarily because they need something to wail against, and the mantras of the 70s have sunk deep enough into their psyches that they feel accomplished by maintaining the rant. They double down on their religious faith - first that they are right despite the science that says otherwise, and that somehow enough solar panels and windmills, along with all the battery storage facilities needed will magically appear and be affordable.

While everybody has a right to their own opinions, those few out on extreme ends - either end – should not prevail over the majority that feel differently. This is especially true when such significant consequences are at stake.

The legislative effort will not be easy. Nothing is gained in the state legislature without a cost. Deals, agreements, tradeoffs, scheming, back scratching and horse trading happen daily with large pieces of legislation.

Public pressure will be helpful. As we get details regarding a bill author, and dates for committee hearings, we will pass them along. We hope that locals will let the elected officials in Sacramento know how important the long-term operations of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant are to our community and to the entire state.

## **Doh... It Was 4H!**

Life has its occasional oopsies and every now and then major blunders. We made one of the latter last week when we mistakenly identified a fine group of 4H kids as Future Farmers of America members. Not that there is anything wrong with FFA, but the kids that did the beautiful flag presentation at our annual dinner were dedicated to 4H. We thank them for their service that evening and hope to see more of them.



## **A Few More Photos**



**Molly Pasutti of the Estero Bay Republican Women Federated gave a resounding National Anthem at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual COLAB Fundraising Dinner**



**Jeanne Helphenstine wrangles an excited crowd**



**Andrea Seastrand, as President of the Central Coast Taxpayers Association, presented the 2025 Hero of The Taxpayers Award to Katy Grimes**



**Katy Grimes says she loves San Luis Obispo**

**Photos by Brooke Borchard**

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# California hit by much higher oil prices as Iran war stresses refiners

By [Arathy Somasekhar](#) and [Nicole Jao](#)

March 13, 2026 10:03 AM PDT Updated March 13, 2026

- Summary
- Companies
- California now more dependent on costlier fuel imports from Asia
- West Coast refineries account for about 50% of Middle East crude imports to US
- Prices spike for alternative barrels of crude due to Asia demand
- 

HOUSTON, March 13 (Reuters) - Fuel costs in California are soaring even more than in the rest of the U.S. due to several unique factors, with fallout from the [war in Iran](#) forecast to push pump prices in the state to \$10 a gallon and jet fuel prices jumping 47% in just two weeks.

California's mandated gasoline blend and lack of pipeline access isolate it from the rest of the U.S. market, making it heavily reliant on energy imports from Asia that are being held up by closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

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Consumers in the state already face the highest gasoline prices in America, with more pain on the way.

"The U.S. West Coast will become the poster child for the consequences of the attacks on Iran," energy economist Philip Verleger wrote in a note, adding that California drivers can expect gasoline and diesel shortages soon and prices possibly above unprecedented levels of \$10 per gallon.

Over the past month, average regular gasoline prices in California jumped more than 18%. The pump price hit \$5.42 per gallon on Friday, much higher than the

national average of \$3.63 per gallon, according to AAA, the American Automobile Association. Jet fuel prices in Los Angeles, a major aviation hub, have soared more than 47% to about \$3.85 a gallon since the conflict in the Middle East started, according to OPIS data.

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West Coast states will need to reduce their gasoline and diesel use by 20%, Verleger added, if nations that export fuel to the region restrict or ban flows to protect domestic markets.

## VULNERABLE TO SUPPLY SHOCKS

California, once a top oil producing state in the U.S., has in recent years become more dependent on crude and [fuel imports](#) as some [refineries shut](#) or converted to produce renewable fuels amid a shift away from fossil fuels. That reliance has left the state more vulnerable to supply shocks, some analysts warned.

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A shortage of Middle Eastern crude has forced refineries in China, Korea and India to [cut back production](#), with some declaring force majeure — a legal move that allows companies to halt deliveries during emergencies. Some countries, including China and Thailand, have [suspended fuel exports](#).

The U.S. West Coast imported a record amount of 128,000 barrels per day of motor gasoline and additives last year, with most coming from South Korea and India.

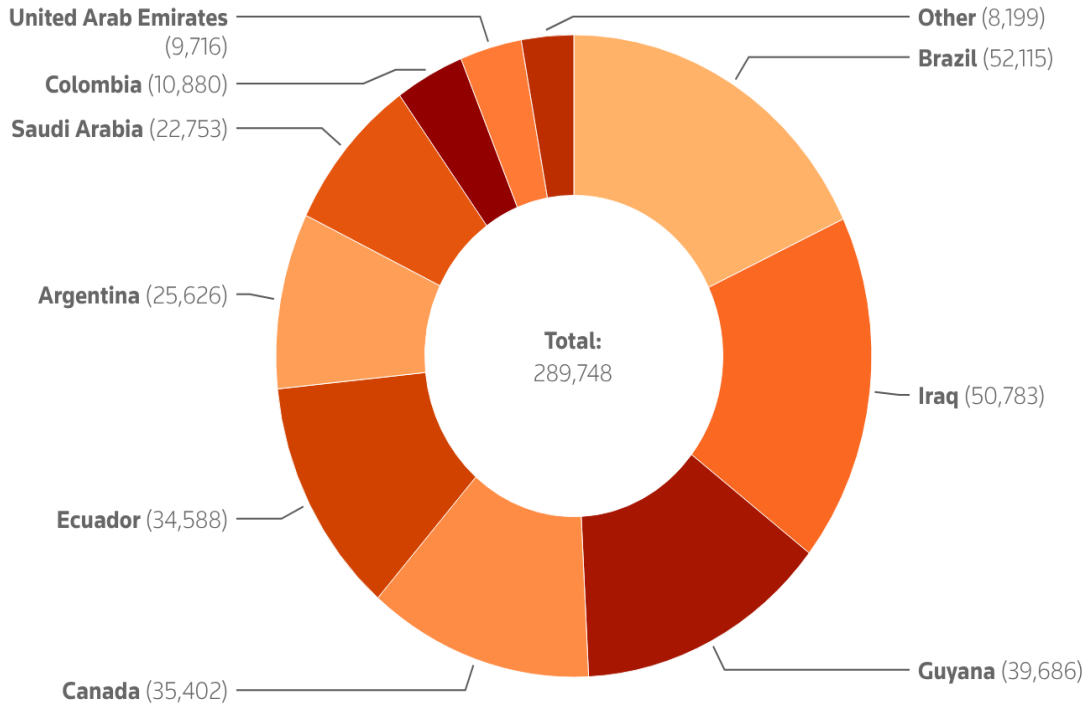
California also imported about 54,000 bpd of jet fuel, nearly a third of which came from South Korea, according to ship tracking firm Kpler.

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Korean imports will dry up for a while, and neighboring Washington state does not have much more spare refining capacity, said Randy Hurburun, head of refining at Energy Aspects.

West Coast refineries also imported about 230,000 barrels per day of Middle Eastern oil, according to Kpler, accounting for about 50% of Middle East crude imports to the United States.

## Foreign sources of crude oil imports to California



Note: thousand barrels

Source: California Energy Commission | Nicole Jao

### Foreign sources of crude oil imports to California

The refineries must now seek alternative barrels, which will cost more now. Heavy crude prices have spiked as refiners globally scramble to secure enough oil.

"All the crude that West Coast refiners import from the Middle East is at risk," said Matt Smith, an analyst at Kpler, adding that the refineries will be forced to buy crude oil from Canada or Latin America.

Chevron-owned ([CVX.N](#)), [opens new tab](#) refineries in Richmond and El Segundo and Marathon Petroleum's ([MPC.N](#)), [opens new tab](#) Los Angeles facility were California's largest importers of crude in 2025, EIA data showed.

A spokesperson said Marathon was meeting all contractual obligations, but declined to comment on crude sourcing or refining. A Chevron spokesperson declined to comment on daily operations but noted the refineries continue to supply customers in the region.

## FEW ALTERNATIVES

Availability of alternative crude oil is also limited due to strong demand from Asia. At best, just about half a million barrels of Canadian oil is available to West Coast refiners due to constraints on Canada's Trans Mountain Pipeline, and to demand from Chinese buyers, Kpler's Smith noted. Asian refiners may also try to buy more Latin American crude from Ecuador or Guyana.

"There is not a great deal of incremental supply available to U.S. West Coast refiners," Smith said.

West Coast refiners will try to maximize Alaska North Slope crude supply, redistribute Canadian supplies, and may buy Venezuelan oil despite the shipping challenges, Rystad's Bell said.

President Donald Trump is considering temporarily waiving a [shipping rule](#) called the Jones Act, which requires domestic crude to be shipped on U.S.-flagged tankers, making it more expensive for California refiners to ship from the U.S. Gulf Coast. This step could provide some price relief.

"All other regions are also needing barrels at this point due to a widespread panic of availability," said Debnil Chowdhury, head of refining and marketing at S&P Global Energy. "There's competition now for the barrels."



Arathy Somasekhar  
Thomson Reuters

Houston-based energy reporter focused on oil markets and energy companies. Arathy closely tracks U.S. crude supply and its impact on global markets, ever changing crude oil flows, and reports on U.S. shale producers and oilfield service companies.

# California Supreme Court Orders Riverside Sheriff Chad Bianco to Pause Election Probe, Preserve Seized Ballots

*The order halts further examination of more than 600,000 ballots seized by the Riverside County Sheriff's Office as part of a probe into a citizen complaint about vote-counting issues in the special election on Proposition 50*

By [Megan Barth](#), April 8, 2026

The [California Supreme Court](#) on Wednesday directed Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco to immediately pause his ongoing investigation into alleged discrepancies and potential irregularities in the November 2025 special election ballots and to preserve all seized materials while legal challenges proceed. The order, issued by the state's highest court, halts further examination of more than 600,000 ballots seized by the Riverside County Sheriff's Office as part of a probe into a citizen complaint about vote-counting issues in the special election on Proposition 50, the controversial redistricting measure advanced by Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic leaders.

Sheriff Bianco, a Republican candidate for California governor in 2026, obtained judicial warrants to seize over 1,000 boxes of election materials after his department identified what it described as significant mismatches in county records to state records. Local election officials had previously dismissed the complaint as unfounded, but Bianco pressed forward, arguing the probe was necessary to verify the accuracy of the results.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, who has [aggressively challenged](#) the sheriff's actions, praised the Supreme Court's decision. "What the Sheriff says and what he does are often two different things," Bonta stated. "Today's decision by the California Supreme Court reins in the destabilizing actions of a rogue Sheriff, prohibiting him from continuing this investigation while our litigation continues." The ruling marks the latest development in a series of lawsuits filed by Bonta's office, a voting rights group represented by the UCLA Voting Rights Project (on

behalf of four Riverside County voters), and others who argue that state election law reserves custody and handling of ballots exclusively to county registrars and prohibits sheriffs from seizing or examining them in this manner.

As previously reported by the *California Globe*, Sheriff Bianco held a press conference accusing Attorney General Bonta of attempting to intimidate his office and derail the investigation after discrepancies surfaced between Riverside County’s internal handwritten logs showing 611,428 ballots cast in the Prop 50 special election and the higher certified totals released by Secretary of State Shirley Weber. The sheriff obtained search warrants from a Riverside County judge and seized the ballots to conduct a forensic review, a move Bonta and Democrats labeled as overreach and a threat to the electoral process. Bianco has maintained the investigation was lawfully authorized and aimed solely at uncovering facts about potential irregularities in the high-stakes redistricting referendum.

The Supreme Court’s order requires Bianco and his office “to pause the investigation into the November 2025 special election and preserve all seized items.” The case has now been returned to lower courts for further proceedings, with the high court retaining oversight.

Critics of the decision, including supporters of election transparency efforts, have decried the ruling as yet another example of California’s one-party political establishment shielding itself from scrutiny—especially given the political implications of Prop 50, which many conservatives rightfully argued was a Democratic power grab to gerrymander congressional districts in the state’s favor.

*The California Globe will continue to monitor developments in this case.*



**Megan Barth**

Megan Barth is the Executive Editor of The California Globe and former, founding editor of the Nevada Globe. Specializing in investigative reporting, her work has appeared in national and local news. The highlights of her career include interviewing President Donald Trump, Vice President J.D. Vance, and FBI Director Kash Patel. When she isn’t editing, writing, or talking, you can find her hiking and relaxing in Northern Nev

## **Ringside: Floating Offshore Wind – A Financial and Environmental Catastrophe**

*Achieving 25 gigawatts of capacity would require 2,083 of these monstrosities floating in the water offshore*

By Edward Ring, April 9, 2026

Earlier this year, the California Coastal Commission released a report titled “Statewide Strategy for the Coexistence of California Fishing Communities and Offshore Wind Energy.” In addition to providing a “guiding framework” to protect California’s fishing communities, it “presents a roadmap for proposed offshore wind projects to become consistent with California’s relevant Coastal Act policies that recognize and protect marine resources.”

Before considering the immensity of that challenge, let’s review the projected total financing cost per kilowatt-hour for floating offshore wind installations.

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), the cost to procure and install floating offshore wind is \$7,349 per kilowatt of capacity. It is cited on pages 7, 40, and 43 in the NREL publication “NREL Cost of Wind Energy Review: 2024 Edition.” This cost is based on economies of scale, insofar as the NREL report is specifically evaluating costs for the “Pacific Coast floating project,” assuming 12 megawatt turbines.

California’s official state goal for floating offshore wind is to develop 25 gigawatts of capacity. That equals a construction cost of \$184 billion dollars. Add to that the California Energy Commission’s estimate of \$12 billion to construct and upgrade ports and staging areas, and, from the California Independent System Operator, \$36.5 billion to install the required new transmission lines, substations, and grid interconnections. Finally, an absolute best case scenario for the necessary battery storage to achieve baseload power, based on NREL data, is another \$16 billion.

Altogether, the total project cost for California’s planned offshore wind developments is \$248 billion, or not quite \$10 billion per gigawatt of capacity. The financing cost for this sum at 4 percent interest and a 20 year term is \$18.3 billion per year. If we assume a 40 percent yield for these intermittent sources of energy (that’s optimistic, when onshore wind farm yields are closer to 25 percent), the completed project will produce 10 gigawatts of baseload power, which is equal to 87,600 gigawatt-hours per year. That is 87.6 billion kilowatt-hours, generated at an annual project financing cost of \$18.3 billion, and that’s equal to \$0.21 per kilowatt-

hour. This is a best case wholesale price, before construction cost overruns, ongoing costs for operations and maintenance, and retail markups (adding about \$0.20/kWh) to cover distribution, utility overhead, and regulatory charges.

Compare this to the financing cost per kilowatt-hour to build a modern combined cycle natural gas power plant. The latest estimates from U.S. EIA put the construction cost at \$2,500 per kilowatt of capacity, and baseload natural gas power plants can easily deliver uptimes of 90 percent. Under the same terms, the financing cost for natural gas is \$0.05 per kilowatt-hour, one fifth as much. As for fuel costs? They're surprisingly low, ranging between \$0.02 and \$0.4 per kilowatt-hour, depending on market prices.

But offshore wind isn't just a financial catastrophe quietly moving toward realization. At 12 megawatts per turbine, achieving 25 gigawatts of capacity would require 2,083 of these monstrosities floating in the water offshore. Each would be 800+ feet high from the waterline to the tip of a rotor blade in vertical position. Each would require tethering cables to the ocean floor, more than 4,000 feet down, as well as high voltage underwater cables to transmit electricity 20 miles to onshore substations.

It does not require an expert to appreciate the mess this is going to make, but experts have critiqued the impact of offshore wind farms. A 2024 report claims underwater noise from surveying and installation reaches 200–240 decibels, enough to deafen marine mammals and cause fatal injuries to fish. It also points to North Sea data suggesting major fishery declines following wind development, along with concerns about ocean contamination from turbine blade corrosion releasing toxic substances like bisphenol A.

A separate August 2023 report from a New England fishermen association highlights additional risks. Wind farms increase sea surface temperatures and alter upper-ocean hydrodynamics in ways scientists do not yet understand. They create wakes several kilometers in length that may disrupt phytoplankton, the base of marine food chains. Operational noise from turbines, concentrated in low frequencies (between 2-200 Hz), overlaps with the sounds fish use for communication, mating, spawning, and navigation. Electromagnetic fields from high-voltage undersea cables generate magnetic and electromagnetic fields that distort the drifting paths of haddock larvae and cause birth deformities in juvenile lobsters.

These studies primarily examine offshore wind impact in the North Sea and off the U.S. East Coast. So where are California's powerful environmentalists? Where is

Greenpeace? Where is the Surfrider Foundation? Why are they silent? How, for example, are migrating whale species expected to navigate an obstacle course hundreds of miles in extent, with thousands of underwater tethering and high voltage cables and nonstop low frequency sound? How can environmentalists who object to virtually anything affecting the earth, sea, or sky, tolerate this abominable, gargantuan industrialization of our coast and coastal waters?

In the California Coastal Commission's recent report, 440 pages long, a search for the words "Cetacean" and "whale" came up with zero results. Yet one of this report's stated objectives is for "wind projects to become consistent with California's relevant Coastal Act policies that recognize and protect marine resources."

The Coastal Commission has aggressively restricted any form of development on the California coast, and yet they take a supportive position on floating offshore wind, a project that by any reasonable assessment is an environmental and financial catastrophe.

That any state agency is still putting resources into support for floating offshore wind development is a stomach churning betrayal of everything Californians are supposed to care about, from opportunities for working families to be able to afford energy, to the precarious health of our marine ecosystems.



**Edward Ring**

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

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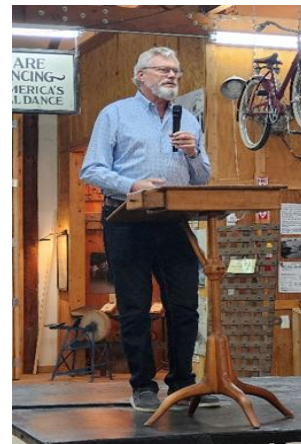
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