



**COLAB**  
San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

## **Weekly Update April 6 - 13, 2026**

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.

### **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 bike 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**

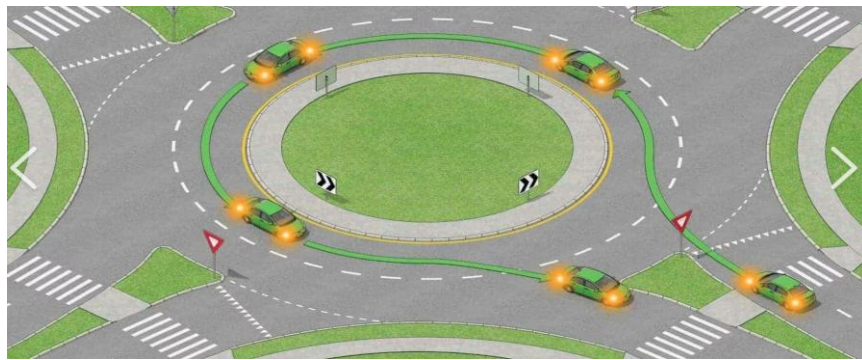
**Photos by Brooke Borchard**

**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

### Roundabout Goes Flat

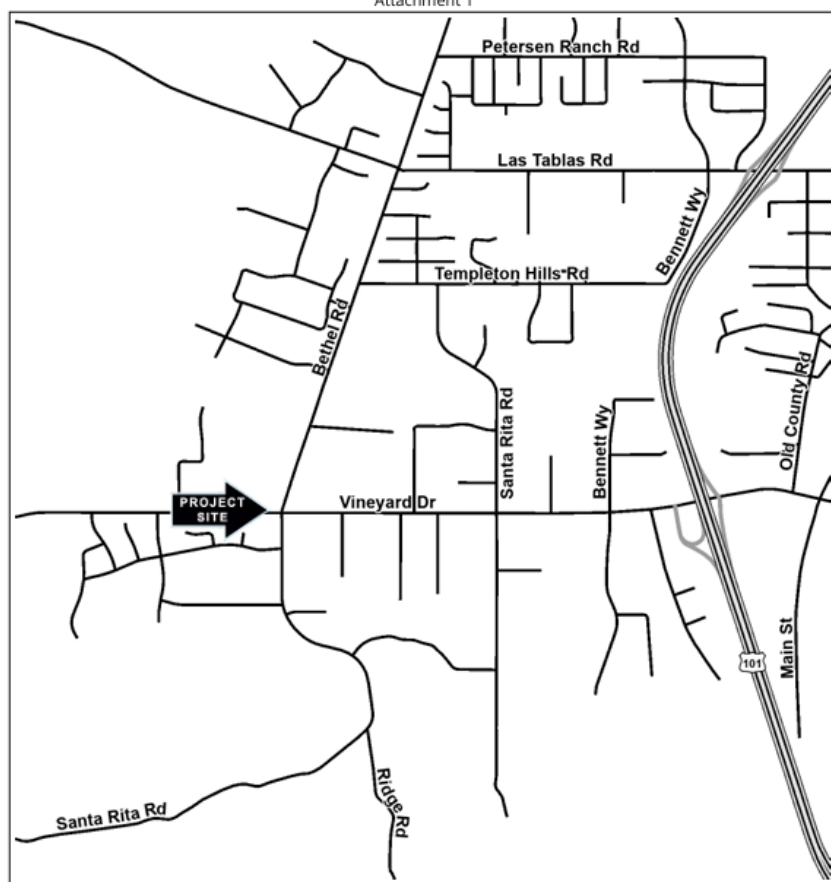
The February 24 Board of Supervisors meeting began with a large crowd of Templeton residents there to speak in protest about a proposed roundabout on Vineyard Avenue. Nearly two dozen residents voiced their concern in opposition to the proposal during public comment. The main thrust of their concern was that two times a day, just before and just after school, there's about a three-minute delay getting through the intersection of Vineyard and Bethel.



They are quite passionate that such a minor delay does not warrant a roundabout at that intersection. County Public Works has designated that intersection as problematic. Public Works says that Vineyard is a thoroughfare or corridor and should not have that kind of delay.

Residents also voiced concern about kids walking or riding their bikes to school and having to navigate a roundabout. Many also expressed concerns about the potential for eminent domain proceedings against the four homeowners who live

on those corners. Should a full-scale roundabout be constructed, it would require taking some of each of their properties.



**The proposed roundabout location**

The current proposal was for a temporary roundabout designed as a demonstration project to illustrate how a permanent project might improve traffic flow. But all the people speaking against the roundabout were convinced that if a temporary roundabout was built, it would almost automatically lead to a permanent project.

Supervisor Peschong was especially adamant against the roundabout and said that he has had many conversations throughout the community with people opposed to the project but not a single one in favor. He referred to it as a solution in search of a problem.



The temporary roundabout would be funded through a federal transportation grant of \$200,000. But the estimate for a permanent roundabout was \$3 million. Many speakers pointed out that three million in today's dollars would probably mean at least six million dollars in two or three years when the roundabout was actually constructed.

Supervisor Gibson was dismissive of the concerns raised by the residents. He pointed out that often roundabouts have a lot of opposition until they're built and then suddenly many people like them.

The rest of the board was more sympathetic and voted to accept the \$200,000 federal grant only if it could be applied to other locations and other projects.

## **Silly Fuss**

Item 39 on the board agenda started out as a language clean-up item that didn't look like it would bring about much discussion or debate. However, it turned a little awkward near the end. The measure read as follows.

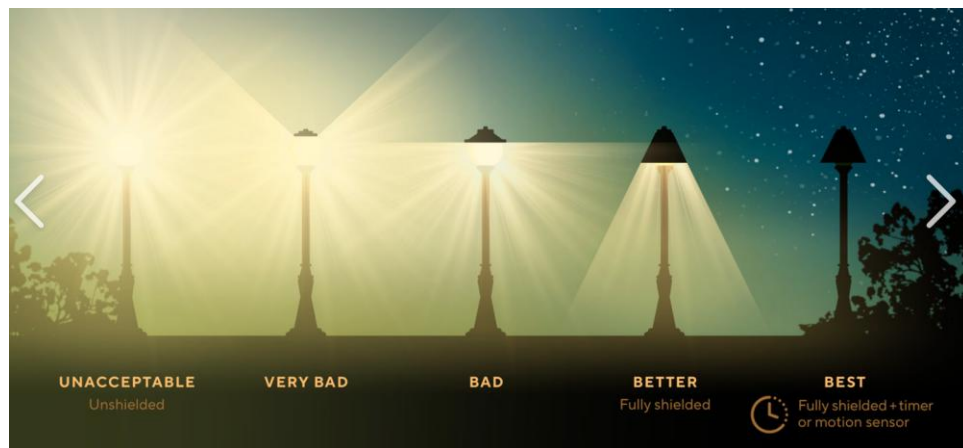
Hearing to consider an amendment to the Inland and Coastal Land Use Ordinances to: [A] Amend Section 23.04.320 Outdoor Lights and 22.10.060 Exterior Lighting and Sections 23.11.030 and 22.80.030 Definitions for light source; [B] Amend Sections 22.70.060 and 23.01.060 to increase noticing radius requirements to 1,000 feet for projects located outside of urban and village reserve lines, and 1,000 feet for energy storage facilities; [C] Amend Sections 23.08.094 and 22.34.050 to

require approval by a majority of votes for the granting of a permit, lease or authorization for construction, installation or expansion of onshore support facilities for offshore gas and oil activities in compliance with Measure A; and [D] Expand school district housing in the Public Facilities Land Use Category to the Coastal Zone. (County File Number: LRP2025-00012). (Planning and Building)

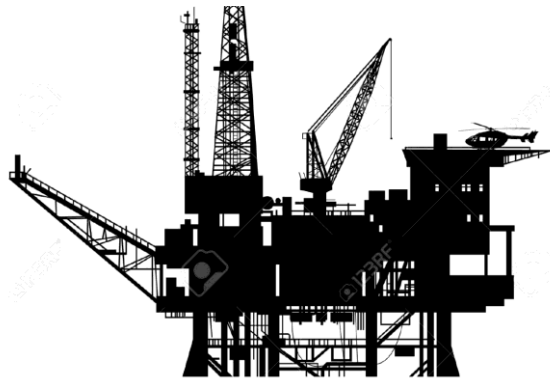
There were four parts making up the motion. They were:

- Lighting – updating lighting standards
- Public Hearing Noticing – expanding noticing radius for energy storage facilities and projects outside of urban and village reserve lines
- Measure A – clean up for consistency with existing legislation
- School District Housing – expanding inland use standards to Coastal Zone

The lighting matter was of no concern to the BoS. It received no pushback or substantive discussion.



The Measure A cleanup didn't raise an eyebrow either. This despite a few local politicians continuing to bloviate and thump their chests while claiming that they have put on their big boy pants and bravely stood up against the threat of thousands of offshore drill rigs that would otherwise cover our coastline. Measure A, which passed in 1986, requires that construction of any onshore support infrastructure be put to a vote of the people, thus making it highly unlikely that any drilling offshore of San Luis Obispo County will ever occur – even if there was oil (there isn't) and even if our entire shoreline wasn't protected by marine preserves that prohibit drilling (which it is). So much for the phony heroics!



The controversy came with the discussion of the 1,000 foot notification requirement for certain construction projects.

First, Supervisor Paulding went out of his way to push for the 1,000 foot notification to apply to battery energy storage facilities. This, because of the controversy over the Caballero battery facility built in Nipomo which he insists he had nothing to do with.



We can't disagree with the need to notify neighbors when such a facility is being planned, but we can't help but wonder if 1,000 feet is enough? Can being 1,000 feet downwind of a battery storage fire be safe?

Nobody voiced concern about that, or the school district housing element.

However, as the discussion was wrapping up, supervisor Ortiz-Legg made a request on behalf of Avila Beach, which is in her district. She made the point that because the village is surrounded by hills, is in a compact area serviced by one road for ingress/egress and that because every large-scale construction project impacts the entire community, she requested that the 1,000-foot noticing requirement be applied to the entire community.

This brought about an odd response from Paulding saying that if Ortiz-Legg got the 1,000-foot notice, he would want the same for Nipomo.



**Avila Beach**

While Ortiz-Legg’s request seemed reasonable, in the end Paulding’s demand killed any hope. The measure passed without the special carveout for Avila Beach.

## **County Parks Master Plan**

Parks are an important part of any community. As John Muir said: “Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.”

Parks serve as recreation centers for old and young, places of solitude, community gatherings and relaxing open space that break up urban environments or opens up space for exploring. They also serve as land preservation and conservation.

So, they are of value to the community they serve.

San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation feel the need to have a master plan in order to better manage our parks system. Item 36 read: Request to receive,

review and file the status update on the development of the systemwide Parks and Recreation Master Plan. (Parks and Recreation)



While having a clear vision of success for a given department is a good thing, we wonder how much time and money is going into the effort. Have they hired consultants and how much are they paying? How much staff time is diverted from running parks to devising power point presentations?

We ask, because their presentation put a strong emphasis on funding – with heavy hints that they don’t have enough.

The report began with a timeline for the development of the master plan. Here is a graphic presentation of that timeline. The process is about a third of the way finished:



The following graphic represents the prioritization of their efforts in the preparation of the master plan:



Gathering the necessary data to guide their decision-making process looks like this:



To date, they have a basis for some of the data driven assumptions. Those assumptions are as follows:

## Overall high satisfaction!

---

**Parks are widely used**, with local parks and trails forming the backbone of everyday recreation

---

Greatest importance: **access to natural areas, coastal amenities, trails, and local parks**

---

**Maintain and improve existing parks and facilities**

---

**Sensitivity to fee increases** and direct user costs

---

**Limited funding and resource constraints** - we need to find new approaches

---

**Unincorporated communities** rely on the County for close-to-home parks, recreation opportunities, and a sense of community

---

What the report didn't mention was exactly how the budget that is so wanting is actually managed. There was no figure on how many parks the department manages, nor how many employees it has to manage those many parks.

There was no data indicating exactly how much it costs to run the parks, or how much revenue park fees generate.

This brought us to visit the County Parks website which is found at: [Parks & Recreation - County of San Luis Obispo](#). Unfortunately, while the site is full of great information, little was available for how the department is actually run. The pages listing fees for various services and programs left most of the actual fee information blank. Again, we are left wondering about the total inventory of what the Parks and Recreation actually manages.

We are impressed by the variety. Lakes, camping, aquatics, fishing, golf, trails, dog parks, wedding sites and gathering sites are just some of the services offered. But we are left wondering about the actual nuts and bolts of the department.

A quick look at the current San Luis Obispo County Budget gives us these figures for a 24-employee count. It is unclear whether employees running special seasonal programming are included in the data:

**222 - Parks and Recreation - Community Parks**

---

**Permanent**

---

907	ACCOUNTANT I OR II OR III	1.00
914	ACCOUNTING TECHNICIAN	1.00
2203	ADMIN ASST SERIES	1.00
8795	ADMIN SERVICES MANAGER	1.00
8892	ADMIN SERVICES OFFICER I OR II	0.00
242	DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION	1.00
1203	PARK OPERATIONS COORDINATOR	1.00
1223	PARK RANGER AIDE OR I OR II OR III	9.00
1210	PARK RANGER SPECIALIST	3.00
1251	PARKS SUPERINTENDENT	1.00
2802	PLANNER I OR II OR III	1.00
884	SECRETARY II	1.00
603	SR PLANNER	1.00
928	SUPV ADMIN CLERK II	0.00
1204	SUPV PARK RANGER	2.00
<b>Permanent Totals</b>		<b>24.00</b>

---

According to the 2025/26 county budget, the department currently costs taxpayers a little more than \$6.5 million. Again, this is not reflective of the revenues from fees.

**Summary of Total Budget and General Fund support for General Fund Departments**

Fund Center	General Fund Support		Total Budget (Expenditures)		
	FY 2025-26 Recommended GFS	GFS Change from FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget	Budget Change from FY 2024-25	% Change from FY 2024-25
222 - Parks and Recreation - Community Parks Fiscal and Administrative	5,564,381	(282,136)	6,658,993	(399,997)	-6%

We love our parks and recognize their role in our community. We are hopeful that this interim report sought only to inform the BoS of their progress towards achieving a useful master plan, and that future reports will provide much more fulsome data about how the department is doing the most with the budget that it has.

We also hope that the master plan that is finally adopted has a level of ability to adjust according to available resources and changing community needs. Master plans are great for establishing priorities and setting goals but should not limit or restrict the vision of leaders five or ten years into the process who have differing management approaches.

## Fundraising Dinner Gratitude

The March 26 COLAB FUNDRAINING DINNER was a great success. As our only fundraiser of the year, we rely on the generosity of so many people, and they all came through in a big way. From attendees buying single tickets to those buying tables, the turnout was truly heartwarming.

The famous auction may have been the best in our 17-year history. Auction item donors offered fantastic goods, services and experiences. Donors responded with vigorous and generous bids. Auctioneer Todd Ventura and his crew, aided by

Supervisor John Peschong and Andy Caldwell, kept the room on the edge of their seats.



**Auctioneer Todd Venture stirs up the crowd**



**The Ventura crew found a room full of generous bidders**



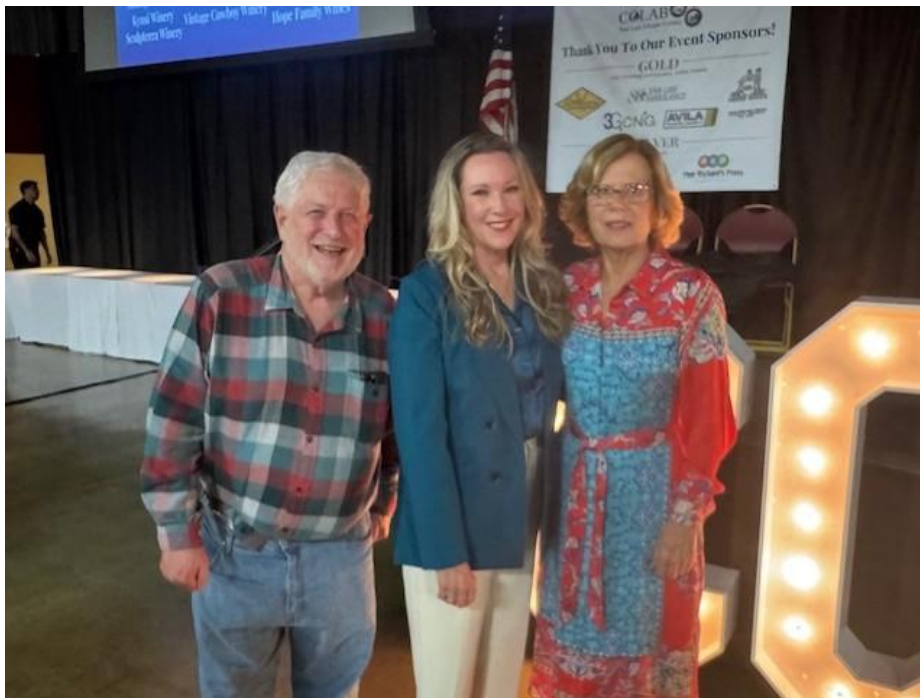
**Supervisor John Peschong narrated the great items up for auction**

The food was excellent as always. We are so very appreciative of the several wineries that donated excellent product for the tables. The bar was as popular as ever. Socializing was so lively that it took a half dozen requests to get people seated for the start of the program. Molly Pasutti of the Estero Bay Republican Women Federated gave a rousing rendition of the national anthem following a stirring flag presentation from the Future Farmers of America. COLAB veteran Mike Brown gave a touching invocation.

Ben Higgins was masterful in his interview of guest speaker Katy Grimes. We learned more about Gavin Newsom than we even suspected. Katy was a wonderful speaker and thoroughly enjoyed hanging out with COLAB. We hope to see her again in the future.



**Ben Higgins asks compelling questions of Katy Grimes**



**Katy Grimes with COLAB veteran Mike Brown and President Jeanne Helphenstine**

for her work exposing fraud and abuse by our state government.

This event wouldn't have been possible without the dedicated support of many volunteers. Each and every person who pitched in made a big difference.

Perhaps the most humbling aspect of this great evening was the feeling in the room that we are one big family. The enormous level of participation from many different industries, and the great level of support all contributed to a jovial atmosphere that reminded us that COLAB is an important and appreciated part of San Luis Obispo County.

In an ironic twist, we had a minor medical situation just before the start of the program. One of our sponsors, San Luis Ambulance, responded quickly and aided in a positive conclusion that was hardly noticed by guests.

We are especially appreciative of all of our sponsors for the evening:





# Poor Richard's Press

SINCE 1947



Again, our most sincere thanks to all who participated.

**Emergent Trends**  
**Page 34**

**Gavin Newsom Blows \$20 Million on  
Insider Consultants to 'Cut Waste'**

**Gubernatorial Rivals Agree: California Got  
This Farmworker Law Wrong**

**COLAB in Depth**  
**Page 39**

**No, Sorry, the War Doesn't Mean "Renewables" Will  
Replace Oil.**

## Valued Sponsors



TRAFFIC CONTROL SOLUTIONS ▲ EQUIPMENT RENTALS & SALES

**CENTURY 21**

Century 21 Hometown Realty

F. Byron Grant

Office: 805-481-4297

Cell: 805-441-2560

Fax: 805-481-0273

CA DRE#00985985

102 Bridge St.

Arroyo Grande (CA) 93420

byron-grant@c21home.com

www.byron-grant.com



**H**  
**HEARST**  
RAN CH

**A-1**  
**GLASS**  
*For All Your Glass Needs*  
AUTO • RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL

---

---

## Gavin Newsom Blows \$20 Million on Insider Consultants to ‘Cut Waste’

*California's exposure to fraud, waste, and improper payments totals roughly \$435 billion over recent years; Boston Consulting Group might deliver \$810 million in savings*

By Megan Barth, April 3, 2026

In yet another masterclass in Sacramento-style “reform,” Governor Gavin Newsom has handed up to \$20 million to the Boston Consulting Group — the same elite firm that now employs his former Cabinet Secretary and Department of Finance Director Ana J. Matosantos — to play detective on government bloat. This is the same Gavin Newsom who loves to brag that California was “cutting waste and improving efficiency long before Elon Musk.” If that were the case, the number of government agencies flagged as “high risk” by the state auditor wouldn’t have doubled under his tenure.

The target? Not the entire sprawling state bureaucracy. Not the fraud epidemic documented across California’s major programs. Not the eight state agencies flagged as “high risk.” Just three giant agencies: the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Social Services, and Health Care Services.

The bold promise? Deliver \$2 billion in savings by fiscal year 2028-29.

The embarrassing reality? Just \$810 million projected now — less than half the target — with legislative analysts already signaling it could shrink even more.

Republican Assemblyman Tom Lackey captured the growing frustration perfectly: “This whole Boston Consulting Group contract has me mystified... We were told that’s what we were going to get, but we haven’t even come close to that.”

Even Democratic Assemblyman Nick Schultz admitted the bad optics: “At a time when we might be asked to cut part of the social safety net back, I think everyone’s rightfully looking at saying, ‘What are we getting for \$20 million?’”

What are we getting, Nick? Rearranged deck chairs on the \$435 billion Titanic. California’s exposure to fraud, waste, and improper payments totals roughly \$435 billion over recent years. That’s nearly identical to the entire GDP of Colombia (approximately \$438 billion in 2025), larger than the entire GDP of 130 countries, and equivalent to about 1.42% of the entire U.S. economy — enough money to run an entire mid-sized country for a year, yet Sacramento treats it like spare change.

Here’s how the staggering total breaks down across major programs (according to our extensive reporting):

- **Medi-Cal: \$95–\$146 billion** (because when you hand out hundreds of billions in healthcare dollars with minimal or zero verification, overbilling, ineligible recipients, and kickback schemes tend to flourish).
- **Unemployment Insurance (EDD): \$31–\$55 billion** (including \$20–\$32.6 billion in confirmed fraudulent claims during the pandemic funneled to prison inmates, out-of-state scammers, and imaginary claimants — all while real Californians waited months for a check).
- **Homelessness & Housing Programs: \$25–\$37 billion** (billions flushed into the homelessness industrial complex with little to show except more tents, more excuses, and persistent questions about where the money actually went).
- **CalFresh (Food Stamps): \$20–\$25 billion** (high error rates that risk billions in federal matching funds because eligibility checks are apparently optional in Sacramento).
- **Capital Projects & Infrastructure: \$30–\$50 billion** (cost overruns, mismanagement, and good old-fashioned waste in megaprojects — because why build efficiently when you can just keep spending?).
- **Other health care, welfare, and miscellaneous programs**: The rest of the rotting pile that brings the grand total to a jaw-dropping **\$312–\$435 billion**.

As the *California Globe* has chronicled for years, this staggering figure has turned the Golden State into the undisputed Fraud Capital of America, or in U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli’s words, California is the “Kingdom of Fraud.”

Instead of aggressive internal reforms or full-scale accountability, Newsom’s answer is another pricey consultant report limited to just three departments — all

while the state grapples with a **\$2.9 billion projected deficit for 2026-27** (per the Governor’s own proposal) and *looming multiyear structural shortfalls estimated as high as \$20–\$35 billion annually in the years ahead.*

While federal prosecutors under **Bill Essayli** aggressively pursue fraud rings in hospice, homelessness funds, and beyond, Sacramento’s alleged fiscal watchdogs are out to lunch.

California’s State Controller Malia Cohen (D) “has the sole power to audit state agencies and local governments receiving state funds, investigate waste and fraud, and ensure proper disbursement before a single warrant is issued. No other office is uniquely endowed with this combination of independence, auditing authority, and day-to-day fiscal oversight.”

Yet, in 2021, Cohen’s business, Power Forward, had its license suspended by the Franchise Tax Board for failure to file returns and pay taxes. More than a decade ago, her San Francisco condo went into foreclosure,” as **revealed** by Herb Morgan, who is running to replace her.

Sometimes the jokes just write themselves... and write \$20 million checks to insiders.



### **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 Nevada.

# Gubernatorial Rivals Agree: California Got This Farmworker Law Wrong

*Farmworkers can work longer hours during peak seasons, not as a loophole, but as a lifeline*

By Hector Barajas, April 2, 2026

Political agreement is rare. What happened this week at Fresno State demands attention.

On April 1, 2026, Republican and Democratic candidates for governor shared the stage and acknowledged a hard truth: California's elected leaders got it wrong. The Legislature and the Governor enacted a law that is now hurting the very farmworkers it was supposed to help.

That kind of consensus is unusual. It signals something undeniable. The damage is real, measurable, and no longer defensible.

Assembly Bill 1066, backed by the Assembly Bill 1066., was presented as a way to increase wages by changing how overtime is calculated in agriculture.

Farmers and farmworkers warned of what would happen. They asked the state to reconsider. Those warnings were ignored. Once the law took effect, the outcome was exactly what they had feared.

A UC Berkeley study confirmed it: the law "is not benefiting the workers it intended to protect." Farmworkers' take-home pay dropped by about 30 percent. Hours were cut. Work became less available. Paychecks shrank.

The individuals and organizations who pushed for AB 1066 misunderstood the nature of the work.

Agriculture does not follow a fixed schedule. Crops don't wait for an eight-hour workday. Harvests occur when they are ready, driven by weather, timing, and risk. When a crop is ready, every hour counts. When it isn't, there might be no work at all.

For generations, California understood that reality. Farmworkers can work longer hours during peak seasons, not as a loophole, but as a lifeline. Those weeks of

intense work made it possible to earn enough to support their families through the rest of the year.

AB 1066 **broke** that system.

The consequences are real and tangible. They show up in kitchens and on bills. Families are choosing what to delay and what to go without. Rent, groceries, utilities, and medical care. Workers are earning less when they need to earn the most.

That is why the moment at Fresno State matters.

When leaders from both parties agree that a policy has failed, the question is no longer who supported it. The real question is whether anyone is willing to fix it.

Other states faced the same issue and responded with more care. Oregon and New York combined overtime changes with tax credits to protect workers' income and keep jobs safe. California **did not**. Farmworkers here are paying the price for that choice.

There is no reason to allow this to go on. Each delay increases the damage.

The responsibility clearly rests with the Legislature and the Governor. They made this decision and have the power to **correct it**. Admitting a mistake isn't a weakness; refusing to fix it is.

The path forward isn't complicated. Restoring hours, safeguarding earnings, and aligning policy with the realities of agricultural work are essential.

Farmworkers are not requesting new promises. They are urging the state to fulfill its commitments.



**Hector Barajas**

Hector Barajas is a communications strategist who advises companies, associations, and campaigns on public affairs and policy issues. He is the founder of Amplify360 Inc., a strategic communications firm, and a frequent commentator on politics, legislation, and Latino issues in English and Spanish-language media.

# No, Sorry, the War Doesn't Mean "Renewables" Will Replace Oil.

## EDWARD RING

Director, Water and Energy Policy



April 1, 2026

Right on schedule, the climate activists and their corporate backers are capitalizing on wartime fuel shortages to claim that now, finally, we can get serious about fighting climate change. On March 15, *The New York Times* weighed in with an article titled "How War in Iran Could Remake the Global Energy Landscape." Claiming the oil crisis could "spur countries to invest in wind, solar, and other renewables," the article quotes UN "Climate Chief" Simon Stiell, saying, "If there was ever a moment to accelerate that energy transition, this is the time."

This is the same Simon Stiell who, in April 2024, claimed that the energy industry had only two years left "to save the world" by making "dramatic changes in the way it spews heat-trapping emissions, and it has even less time to act to get the finances behind such a massive shift."

It's difficult to know where to begin in the face of such ghoulish opportunism. Increasing numbers of credible observers have begun to question the apocalyptic urgency of the climate emergency narrative, but now that refineries are blowing up and ships are sinking in the Persian Gulf, there's a new compelling reason to accelerate the transition to "renewables."

So, now that the climate industrial complex discovers new momentum thanks to a catastrophic war, maybe, by the numbers, it's also time for another reality check.

We can start by acknowledging that there is a direct connection between energy and prosperity. If we accept that premise, then here's an immutable fact based on data reported in the 2025 edition of the Energy Institute's Statistical Review of World Energy: For everyone on earth to have access to *half* the energy per capita that Americans consume, global energy production will have to more than *double*.

To document that fact, about a year ago, in an in-depth analysis titled "The Delusions of Davos and Dubai," I reported per capita gigajoules of energy consumption in the world, comparing Americans to the global average, and related that to total global energy consumption, measured in exajoules. Not much has changed.

Yearly per capita energy use by Americans, according to updated 2024 data, averaged 268 gigajoules. The UN estimates the global population will peak later this century at 10.3 billion people. If every one of them consumed an average of 134 gigajoules—half what Americans consume—the total energy required worldwide to deliver that much energy would be 1,381 exajoules. In 2025, total energy production in the world was 592 exajoules.

When it comes to delivering enough energy to assure prosperity around the world, that's what we're up against. Proponents of renewables often also support new technologies to deliver energy more efficiently. They're right, and that's why the 1,381 exajoules that we're going to need someday will amount to *half* as much energy as Americans consume per person. Can we do even better? Deliver efficiency gains of more than 50 percent? OK. Fine. Let's set our total global energy production goal at 1,000 exajoules. That's a good round number, and it's the *minimum* amount of energy we're going to need.

The real question is how, since renewables are evidently our future, will they fill the gap, much less contribute to massive increases in global energy production, if oil, natural gas, and coal are removed from our energy landscape?

Here's how those exajoules stacked up by fuel source in 2024. Of the 592 exajoules produced (EJs), 199 came from oil, 165 came from coal, and 149 came from natural

gas. That constitutes 87 percent of all energy consumed. The share of global energy produced by oil, coal, and gas is *rising*, not falling. Nuclear energy produced 31 EJs, hydroelectricity produced 16, and “renewables” altogether produced 33 EJs, but five of those were from biofuel.

So let's imagine we're going to come up with 1,000 exajoules of energy to power global civilization mid-century, and let's suppose we're going to do that without the 513 EJs we currently get from oil, coal, and gas. We can rule out biofuel as a major contributor. There are already over 400,000 square miles of biofuel plantations in the world, where total arable farmland only totals around six million square miles. Biofuel production has devastated rainforests throughout the tropics, from Brazil to Indonesia. Even doubling biofuel production would wreak a catastrophe on the environment and only bring us 10 exajoules out of the 1,000 that are needed. The same goes for hydroelectric energy. It is difficult to imagine even doubling output; most of the best rivers have already been harnessed for hydroelectricity. Figure hydroelectric potential maxes at around 30 EJs. If biofuel and hydroelectricity—both problematic if vastly expanded—could be doubled in capacity, we would still have 960 EJs to go.

That brings us to our remaining wild cards: nuclear, geothermal, solar, and wind. Shall we double our nuclear power output? Or triple it, which was the goal set at the COP28 summit? Let's be wildly ambitious and anticipate nuclear power becoming common. Small modular reactors, thorium reactors, innovation galore, and voilà, we will have more than quintupled our nuclear output. That means we are now producing 200 EJs per year (160 nuclear, 30 hydroelectric, and 10 biofuel). We still have to go find another 800 EJs of power, and we're left with geothermal, wind, and solar.

We can debate the scalability of these three sources of energy all we like, but the chances they expand from 28 EJ's today to 800 EJ's by mid-century are slim. It would require output to expand by 30 times. Do we actually expect to construct 30 times as many wind farms, 30 times as many solar farms, and 30 times as many battery farms as we have today? Let's not forget that all this conversion to

electricity isn't finished once we successfully generate that much power, even if it were possible. There are the batteries, stationary and mobile, and an entire infrastructure that has run on combustible fuels.

Solutions commonly offered are revealed upon analysis to be glib. Shall we create hydrogen via electrolysis? Then throw away improved efficiency. Electrolysis only extracts, best case, about 70 percent of the electricity input in the form of hydrogen output. If the hydrogen is then turned back into electricity using a fuel cell, once again, only 70 percent of the energy in the hydrogen turns back into electricity. And, of course, it takes another 10 percent of energy input to compress the hydrogen into usable storage. Worse still, hydrogen can't be moved through existing pipelines, as the metal becomes brittle from exposure to pure hydrogen. And what about geothermal? Current worldwide electrical production from geothermal is estimated at 0.4 EJ's. It has potential, but it has a long way to go.

All these facts are known. Replacing oil, coal, and gas would require a massive surge in mining because "clean" energy technologies use far more mineral resources. Onshore wind farms require about nine times more mineral input per megawatt than gas-fired plants. Wind, solar, batteries, and grid infrastructure require, for example, lithium, nickel, cobalt, graphite, rare earth elements, and copper in quantities that are already stretched. The idea that we can scale our extraction of these minerals by a factor of 30 is absolutely ridiculous.

Anyone confronting these numbers honestly must wonder how proponents of renewable energy can possibly demand that, within only a decade or two, we shall stop using fossil fuels. Perhaps much of the true motivation of the special interests

promoting renewables is as old as humanity and is to be expected: a desire for power and profit. There is no credible moral case for renewables, because if they begin to serve more than a niche of the world's energy needs, they will then inflict environmental harm that rivals or exceeds anything we've yet seen from oil, coal, or natural gas.

The math is simple and immutable. Fossil fuels aren't going anywhere. Someday, somehow, technological innovations will displace them, but it may take centuries. When politicians, pundits, and the marketing arms of renewable developers use the "climate emergency," or a terrifying war, as their justification to, for example, industrialize the supposedly off-limits California coast with thousands of floating windmills, each of them a thousand feet tall, consuming an obscene amount of resources, costing an obscene amount of money, and wreaking an obscene genocide on cetaceans and other marine life, see them for who they are: either opportunists who exploit fear to further their own aggrandizement or innumerate fanatics whose good intentions pave a road to hell.

*Originally published by American Greatness.*

*Edward Ring is the Director of Water and Energy Policy at California Policy Center.*

###

# THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW NOW LOCAL IN SLO COUTY

Now you can listen to **THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW** in

***Santa Barbara, Santa Maria &  
San Luis Obispo Counties!***



**1290/96.9 Santa Barbara and AM 1240/99.5 Santa Maria**  
**The show now covers the broadcast area from Ventura to Templeton -**  
**THE only show of its kind on the Central Coast covering local, state,**  
**national and international issues**

You can also listen to The Andy Caldwell Show LIVE on the [Tune In Radio App](#) and previously aired shows at: **3:00-5:00 PM WEEKDAYS**

We are pleased to announce that The Andy Caldwell Show is now broadcasting out of San Luis Obispo County on FM 98.5 in addition to AM

**SLO County updates with Greg Haskin every Monday at 4:30**

## **COLAB: A Place for Thought**



**VICTOR DAVIS HANSON  
ADDRESSES A COLAB FORUM**



**MIKE BROWN ADVOCARES  
BEFORE THE BOARD OSF  
SUPERVISORS**



**DAN WALTERS EXPLAINS SACTO  
MACHINATIONS AT A COLAB FORUM**



**AUTHOR & NATIONALLY  
SYNDICATED COMMENTATOR/RADIO  
HOST BEN SHAPIRO  
APPEARED AT A COLAB ANNUAL  
DINNER**



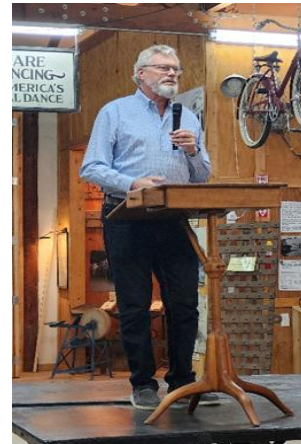
**NATIONAL RADIO AND TV  
COMMENTATOR HUGH HEWITT AT  
COLAB DINNER**



**EXPERTS DISCUSS ENERGY  
ISSUES AT THE  
FALL FORUM**



**BOARD MEMBER BEN HIGGINS  
WITH SUPERVISORS ARNOLD  
AND PESCHONG AT THE  
ANNUAL DINNER**



**COLAB EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR GREG  
HASKIN**

**KEEP HANDY \* CONTACT YOUR ELECTEDS**

**ON ISSUES OF CONCERN!  
THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

**Elected Officials Representing San Luis Obispo County**

**Governor Gavin Newsom  
916-445-2841 Sacramento**

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/contact/>

**Senator Alex Padilla  
202-224-3553 DC\**

<https://www.padilla.senate.gov/contact/>

**Senator Adam Schiff  
202-224-3841 DC**

<https://www.schiff.senate.gov/contact/>

**Representative Salud Carbal  
202-225-3601 DC**

**805-546-6348 District**

[carbajal.house.gov/contact](http://carbajal.house.gov/contact)

**Representative Jimmy Panetta**

**202-225-2861 DC**

**831-424-2229 District**

[panetta.house.gov/contact](http://panetta.house.gov/contact)

**State Senator John Laird**

**916-651-4017 Sacramento**

**805-549-3784 District**

[senator.laird@senate.ca.gov](mailto:senator.laird@senate.ca.gov)

**State Assembly Member Dawn Addis**

**916-319-2030 Sacramento**

**805-549-3001 District**

[assemblymember.addis@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.addis@assembly.ca.gov)

**SLO County Supervisor Bruce Gibson**

**805-781-4338 District**

[bgibson@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:bgibson@co.slo.ca.us)

**SLO County Supervisor Heather Moreno**

**805-781-4339 District**

[hmoreno@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:hmoreno@co.slo.ca.us)

**SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg**

**805-781-5450 District**

[dortizlegg@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:dortizlegg@co.slo.ca.us)

**SLO County Supervisor Jimmy Paulding**

**805-781-4337 District**

[district4@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:district4@co.slo.ca.us)

**SLO County Supervisor John Peschong**

**805-781-4491 District**

[jpeschong@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:jpeschong@co.slo.ca.us)

**JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE TO COLAB ON THE NEXT PAGE**  
**Join COLAB or contribute by control clicking at:**  
[COLAB San Luis Obispo County \(colabslo.org\)](http://COLAB San Luis Obispo County (colabslo.org)) or use the form below:

Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business  
San Luis Obispo County  
"Your Property - Your Taxes - Our Future"  
PO Box 13601 - San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 / Phone: 805.548-0340  
Email: colabslo@gmail.com / Website: colabslo.org

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:**

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

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

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

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

**MEMBER INFORMATION:**

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

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

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

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

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

**How Did You Hear About COLAB?**

Radio  Internet  Public Hearing  Friend

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

**NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:**

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

Donations/Contributions do not require membership though it is encouraged in order to provide updates and information.  
Memberships and donation will be kept confidential if that is your preference.  
Confidential Donation/Contribution/Membership

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

Check  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  Amex NOT accepted.

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

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

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