



**COLAB**  
San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

**Weekly Update  
June 8-15, 2026**

**More Bad Drugs to Steal Kids' Lives**

The tragic impacts of drug addiction are known by almost everyone. Family, friends, colleagues and even classmates – it seems everybody has seen the impacts of drug addiction. When we think about those additions, cocaine, heroin and fentanyl often come to mind. However, two fully legal compounds that are dangerous and addictive are currently flying under the radar. Nitrous Oxide and Kratom/7-OH are addictive, deadly and available to anybody at convenience stores, smoke shops gas stations and even grocery markets.

**Retail Availability**

- Tobacco/vape specialty shops
- Convenience stores, gas stations
- Liquor stores, cannabis retailers
- Online marketplaces
- Grocery stores (legitimate N<sub>2</sub>O food use)



Note: product images are select illustrative examples and do not represent the full scope of Kratom or 7-OH products on the market. Image sources: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously at their June 2 meeting to begin the process to regulate those substances. The measure began as a submittal of a report regarding emerging substances of concern, including potential regulation of nitrous oxide, review of pending state legislation, and consideration of additional substances of concern.

Some of the local health impacts from the subject substances include:

### **Kratom/7-OH:**

- Nationally, 1200% increase in kratom related calls to Poison Control
- Locally, 40% of intakes at a local drug treatment center are for kratom/7-OH
- Nine (9) kratom/7-OH-involved overdose deaths, 2020-25

### **Nitrous Oxide:**

- 14 EMS calls, nearly all required hospitalization 2023-2026
- Approximately six (6) admissions to the Sobering Center, 2025
- 2-8% of high school students report using an inhalant, CHKS 2023-24

While these substances clearly present significant public danger, they are not yet regulated on a state or federal level. The FDA has signaled a strong concern but has yet to bring regulatory framework forward. There are several bills in our state legislature, but nothing has emerged yet to facilitate local regulation.

Here are the steps anticipated to establish the needed restrictions:

#### **State law ≠ local enforcement**

- State legislation may set rules, but local ordinance is typically needed to enable enforcement

#### **Leverage existing County presence**

- Tobacco Control, Environmental Health, Code Enforcement and Sheriff have roles in retail settings

#### **Potential Enforcement Framework**

- Flexible tools: criminal and administrative penalties
- Clear authority: inspection, seizure, nuisance abatement
- Efficient model: hybrid approach leveraging existing staff

In the meantime, the Board voted to adopt the following recommendations from the County Health Department:

- Develop an ordinance prohibiting the retail sale and distribution of nitrous oxide products except for defined lawful uses;
- Monitor pending kratom/7-OH legislation and prepare for potential local ordinance development following the conclusion of the 2026 legislative session, and;
- Engage in state legislative advocacy, in coordination with the Executive Office, consistent with Board direction, regarding pending legislation related to nitrous oxide, kratom/7-OH, and additional substances of concern.

We hope that our state legislature can see the terrible impacts of these two addictive and destructive substances and develop common sense restrictions that can save lives.

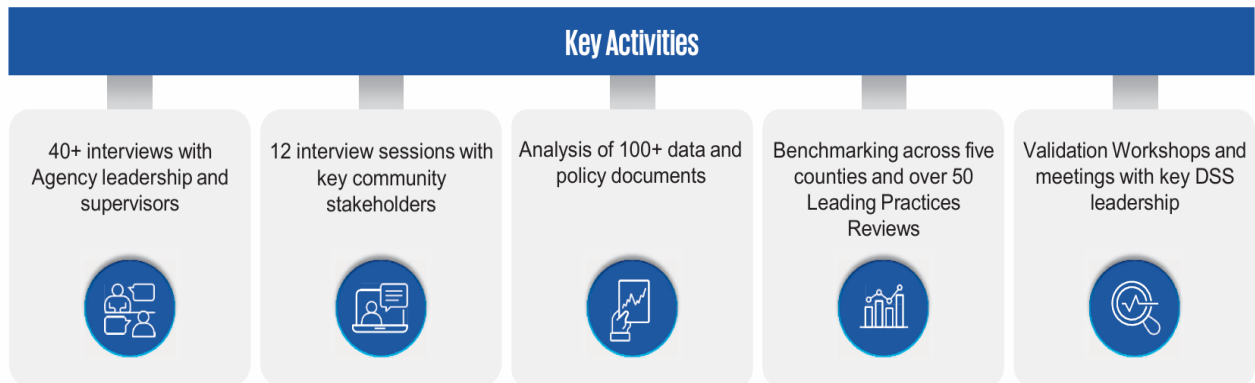
## **Social Services Sees Suggestions**

The KPMG audits of each department continue to be fruitful. Item 25 on the June 2 Bos agenda read: Presentation from KPMG considering recommendations regarding KPMG's Operational Performance Review of the Department of Social Services.

So far two departments have been audited. The Health Department has gone through substantial adjustments including breaking Behavioral Health off into its own department. Planning and Building have also been making significant adjustments to its procedures.

The purpose of the audits is to make the departments more efficient, effective and more user friendly. We applaud this approach and appreciate the changes that are forthcoming as a result.

The 76-page report from KPMG on the Department of Social Services covers a lot of ground. The graphic below illustrates the areas of focus:



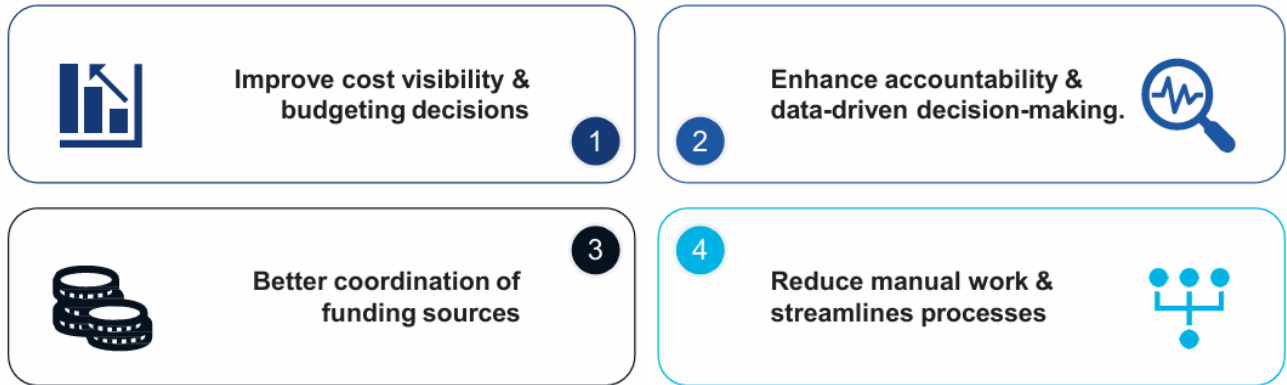
At the onset, the KPMG audit report emphasized the strengths of the department:

- 01 Continuous improvement through dedicated innovation committees.
- 02 Strong collaborative efforts with Community-Based Organizations .
- 03 Strengthening families and kinship has decreased the number of children entering care.
- 04 Implemented HMIS to improve tracking and system reporting.

KPMG did not indicate findings that rise to the level of scandal or mismanagement, but it did find many areas of fiscal accountability that could be substantially improved.

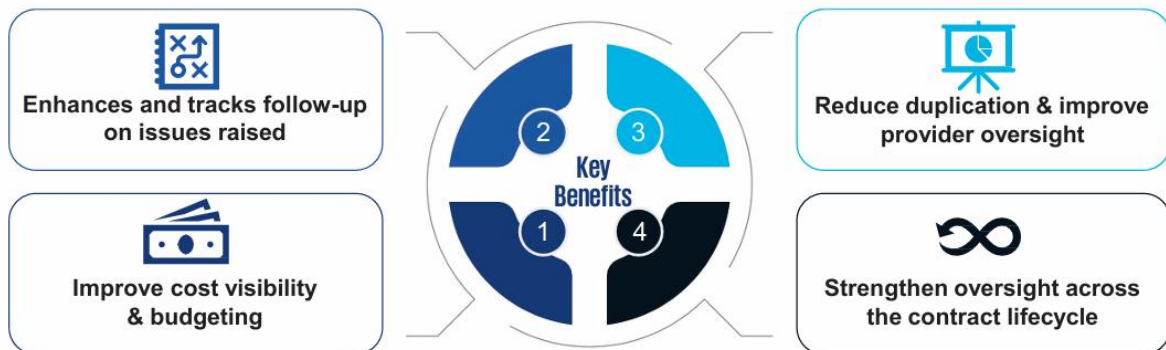
## Improve program-level financial visibility to strengthen fiscal oversight.

### Key Benefits



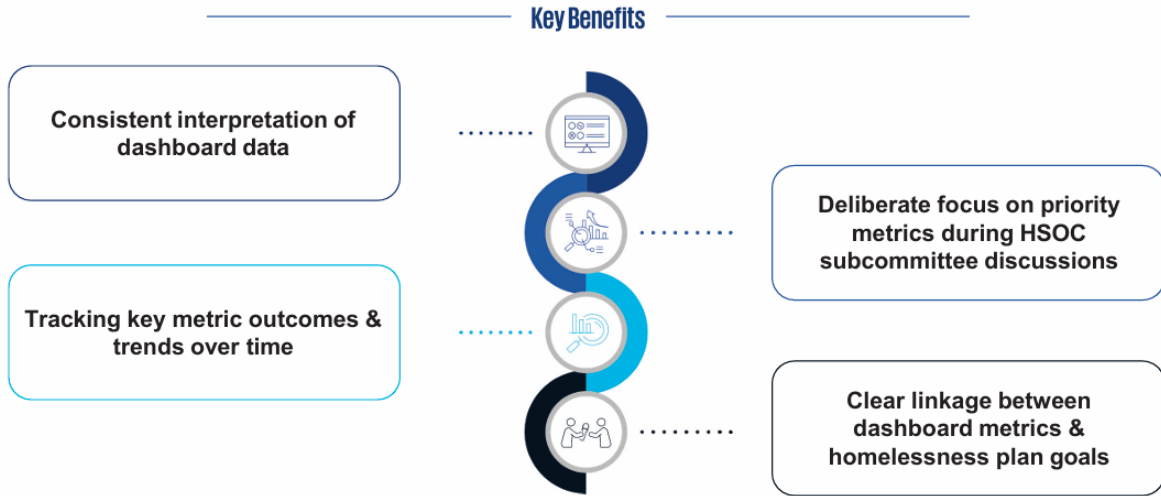
The audit also produced several areas where improved data management and the use of AI could streamline operations.

## Define roles, leverage AI & cross-department coordination for contract management



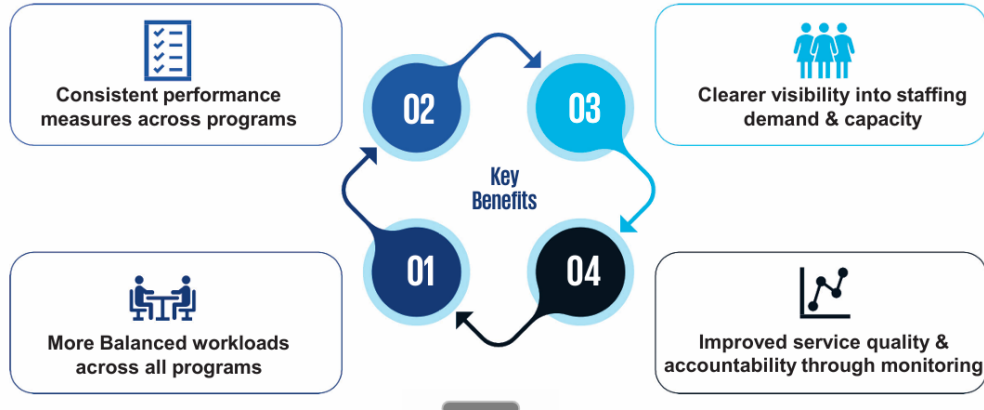
Improved data management and greater transparency will lead to improved funding source communications as well as providing better metrics for decision making.

**Standardize data review for HSCO to drive data-informed funding, coordination & accountability.**



Staff management practices also indicate room for improvement.

**Implement a performance management framework across all programs**



Overall, the report seemed to indicate that the department has become complacent in many areas. Like many large bureaucratic organizations, it has become siloed. The Department has a wide range of duties and responsibilities. Departments don't appear to be working together enough causing redundancies, overlaps and gaps. Resource management is not well coordinated throughout the organization. The old "that's the way we have always done it" management style looks like it is too prevalent.

The Department has outlined a plan to implement recommendations.

**The Department has:**

- ✓ Agreed on all opportunities.
- ✓ Designated a timeline for completion per opportunity.
- ✓ Assigned a Primary and secondary owner per opportunity.

**Tracking Outcomes:**

- ✓ Progress tracker created for the CEO and BOS.

**Report Out:**

- ✓ Monthly progress reporting to the CEO's office.
- ✓ Semi-annually progress reporting to the BOS.

It appears that the BoS will see a great deal more activity from the Department as it refines its practices.

## One Point Two Billion Reasons to Pay Attention

The one billion, two-hundred-million-dollar 2026/27 San Luis Obispo County budget will be addressed in special budget hearings June 8 – 10, from 9:00 AM through the afternoon of each day.



Spending will be big, and requests for additional funds will be big. Acknowledgement that it's all Other People's Money will be tiny.

## Will the Water Wars ever End?

Tensions over water issues in the Paso water basin are not new, but a new chapter in the everlasting struggle is being written. As we have covered, the Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority implemented a “fee” on May 27 that applies to irrigated ag land. The “fee” is designed to raise \$1.1 million just to “keep the lights on”.

We wonder how these fees will impact the local grape growing industry that is already under financial stress.



PASO ROBLES AREA GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY

### FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 GROUNDWATER FEE NOTICE AND APPEAL PROCESS

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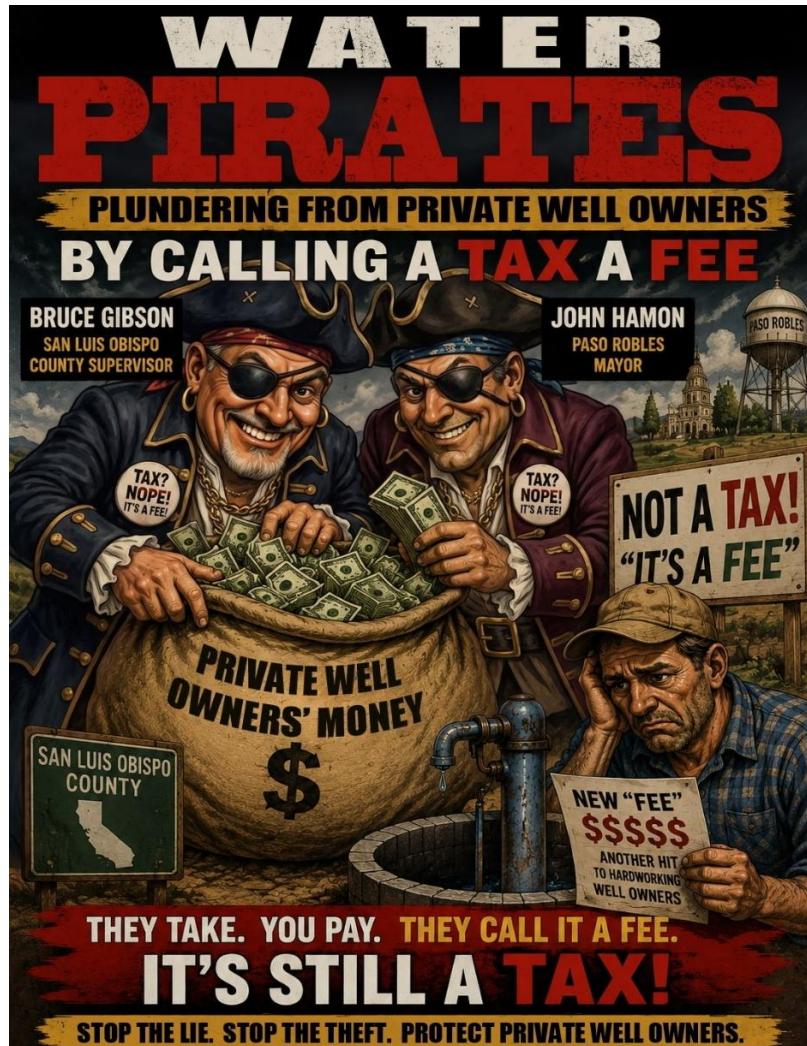
Dear Paso Basin Landowner,

The Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) is implementing a groundwater fee under California Water Code Section 10730 to fund groundwater management activities, including its Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027) in the Paso Robles Subbasin in compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).

The fee is based on consumed (i.e. “net”) groundwater use for Water Year 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025) and will be calculated by dividing the approved FY 2026-2027 budget amount (\$1,095,446) by Water Year 2025 consumed groundwater use in the basin, which is detailed in the draft fee report released on May 7, 2025, and posted on the PRAGA website at: [pasoroblesAGA.org/](http://pasoroblesAGA.org/).

On May 27, 2026, the PRAGA Board will hold a public meeting to consider adopting a resolution to set this fee and place charges on the County tax roll. Prior to this action, PRAGA is providing a 20-day public review of the Water Year 2025 consumed water use data and an appeals process to correct any inaccuracies with the consumed groundwater use calculations. **You are encouraged to review your data and submit an appeals form, if applicable, by June 8, 2026.** All supporting data and materials are available at: [pasoroblesAGA.org/](http://pasoroblesAGA.org/).

Public pushback is already underway. It is unclear whether a lawsuit will be filed, but opponents claim to have evidence on several levels that PRAGA has not followed legal procedure and does not have the authority to impose such a fee.



PRAGA opponents have created artwork to tell their story.

PRAGA has based its fee on estimates of groundwater usage from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025, and has generously allowed fee payers until June 8 to appeal such estimations.

Water activists continue to claim that the recently approved housing project in San Miguel is also unlawful based on out-of-date EIR filings and faulty water service procedures. It is not clear about what next steps they may take, but they are

passionate about having everybody follow the same rules. When they see subjective interpretations or applications of water rules, they will fight.

## **Election Results**

Wait – it isn't Christmas yet. You didn't really think we would have results to report, did you? One thing you can say about our irregularity plagued County Clerk is that she has one big regularity. She regularly brings up the rear when it comes to ballot counting.

We will check in one of these days when there are results to discuss.

## **Hidden Problems with Election Day**

As dissatisfied as we are with our current County Clerk and her long list of irregularities, the slow vote count isn't entirely her fault. The real fault lies with voters who are comfortably complacent and sanguine about the idea of being able to cast their vote any old day from a month before election day until the very last minute by relying on the postal service.

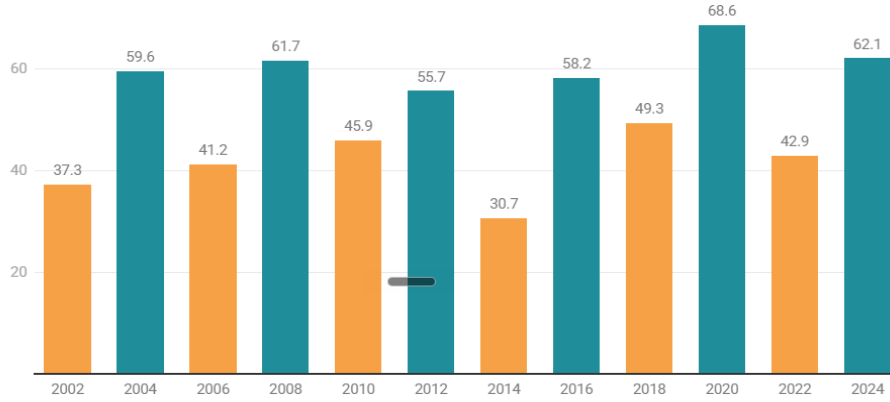
This process of going out of our way to accommodate lazy voters comes with a huge expense. It means that votes not cast in person must go through a formal reception process and through a complicated system of being verified before they can be counted. Each of the steps in the verification takes time.

We all love to hearken back to the days when we had the election results before midnight on election day. Unless we go back to in-person voting on Election Day, we'll never see that kind of a return again.

Is the concept that making voting easier for everyone will increase participation and maybe even awareness beginning to look a bit naïve? Below are two graphs of voter turnout from Ballotpedia ([Voter turnout in California - Ballotpedia](#)) that illustrate turnouts by recent election year.

### California voter turnout rates, 2002-2024

Showing California voter turnout rates in **midterm** and **presidential** elections since 2002. The rate used here is an expression of total ballots counted divided by the total number of eligible voters.



Source: [United States Elections Project](#)

BALLOTEDIA

Vote by mail became a universal practice in California in 2020. Since then, reliance on the vote by mail system has grown:

☰ Voter turnout by method of voting, 2020-2022		
YEAR	↕ VOTED IN-PERSON ON ELECTION DAY	↕ VOTED BY MAIL
2022	9.5%	87.4%
2020	6.3%	81.9%

The natural question is while we have changed the process for casting ballots, have we actually increased participation, and at what cost.

Finding data to indicate how many ballots are not counted each election because they did not get the requisite date stamped cancellation from the post office on or before election day is nearly impossible. Those numbers should be highlighted by the Secretary of State. We know that each county receives hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of such ballots every election. These are from voters who have been fooled (conned?) into thinking their vote was counted. We do know that the Los Angeles Times reported eight out of every one thousand ballots cast statewide in the Prop 50 special election last fall were disqualified for being too late, and

according to the Sacramento Bee, California rejected 122,480 vote-by-mail ballots cast during the November general election, or 0.9% of all mail-in ballots.

There are also significant numbers of voters whose signatures either didn't match well enough with their original registration form or somehow forgot to sign the envelope before mailing. Again, these numbers should be tracked and disclosed.

Then, there are the "ballot harvesters" who collect ballots from voters without any real obligation of turning them in. These could be family members, well-meaning volunteers or neighbors. But they could also be partisan campaign workers. There is no system of verifying whether they are playing by the rules.

So, these variations that are designed to get more people to vote are costing the system in terms of credibility, security, exposure to outside influences, loss of votes being counted and less practical, accountable vote tallying.

The system needs careful and fulsome reevaluation. Like the Bullet Train, are we getting what was sold to us? Is this a good system? Would we prefer something better run, with tighter procedures and more certain outcomes?

The answer really comes down to whether we are prepared to go back to in-person voting on election day. If we are better off with the current dubious system, then we will likely be stuck with all of the foibles that come with it. But, if the evidence becomes clear that we are better off with the more traditional method, then perhaps election day will be a more positive experience for everyone.

## **Bye Bye Business**

It's rarely a surprise anymore when the news reports that another major company is leaving California. It's painfully obvious that our regulatory climate and our greedy tax system, combined with a general attitude that capitalism is somehow evil makes doing business in our state unpleasant.

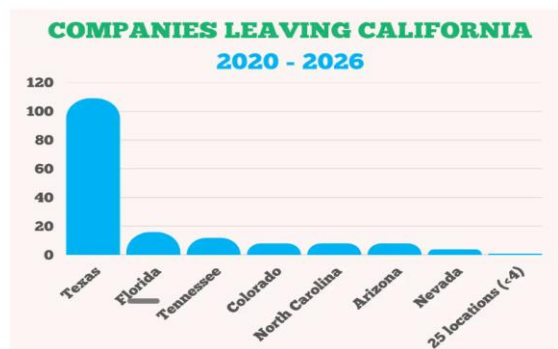
Here is a short list of some of the top businesses that have recently announced a move out of California:

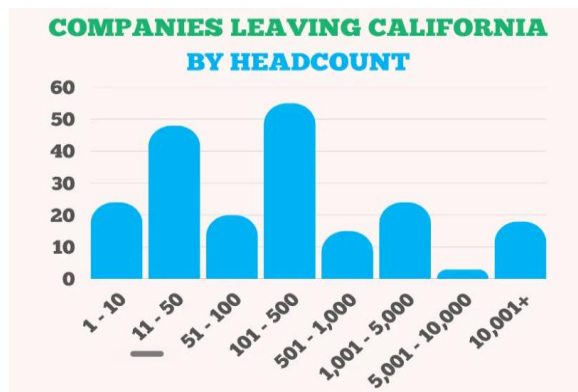
- **Oracle** - Moved its headquarters to Austin, Texas, seeking a more business-friendly environment.
- **Tesla** - Relocated its headquarters to Texas, citing operational flexibility and lower costs.
- **HP Inc.** - Announced its move to Houston, Texas, as part of a broader strategy to reduce costs.
- **Charles Schwab** - Shifted its headquarters to Westlake, Texas, to take advantage of lower taxes and a favorable business climate.
- **Palantir Technologies** - Moved its headquarters to Denver, Colorado, for a more favorable regulatory environment.
- **Dropbox** - Announced plans to shift its headquarters to Austin, Texas, focusing on a more affordable living situation for employees.

Perhaps the most compelling case is the announcement from Chevron that it is leaving California for Texas. Having founding roots dating back to 1879, Chevron has always been a California based company.

In 2024, Gover Newsom, perhaps distracted by fantasies about his future, declared war on oil companies and called a special session of the legislature specifically to make business more complicated (expensive). Now, with refineries closing and prices rising, we are seeing the fruits of his, and the legislature's, labors.

Buildremote ([Every Company Leaving California: 2020-2026 | Buildremote](#)) tracks data on companies moving headquarters and offers the following graphs that tell a concerning story. The first illustrates the number of large-scale companies that have left and where they are moving to, and the second illustrates the number of jobs that they are taking with them.





What is far more difficult to track is the number of smaller companies closing or leaving our state. They may be selling, moving or simply shutting down. As difficult as our business climate is for large companies, an argument can be made that small firms have it even worse. Absorbing regulatory and liability costs, along with high labor expenses and high rents makes being competitive nearly impossible. An identical business operating in most other states can easily afford to offer services or goods much cheaper than those from California.

According to an analysis of the general small business environment nationally by Bank of America [Small Business Checkpoint: A roadmap across the country](#), practically every small business is facing challenges:

- Small business profitability fell 1.3% year-over-year (YoY) in April, marking the weakest reading in two years, according to Bank of America small business account data. Small business sentiment has fallen as sales have slowed, suggesting higher prices are weighing on margins.
- Gasoline spending growth per small business client jumped nearly 31% YoY in April, adding to inflationary pressures. Still, payroll growth held up in agriculture and transportation, likely reflecting operational necessity and seasonal demand rather than a labor market upswing, according to Bank of America small business payments data.
- In many states, small businesses account for a significant percentage of employment, underscoring their importance in local economies and net job creation. Several cities in the South posted the strongest payroll

gains in April, led by San Antonio. In contrast, payroll growth deteriorated sharply across major Western metros, with Las Vegas showing the steepest decline.

The question of how does a small business thrive, sell or close comes to mind. Are the proprietors retiring? Perhaps there has been a death or serious health challenges. Perhaps the California Curse has become too much to overcome or maybe the owner just wants to try something different.

Fortunately, one local business (that has no plans to close) is offering workshops to address the challenges of surviving and/or selling.

JOIN FOR AN IN-PERSON WORKSHOP TO EXPLORE HOW TO TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS

**Central Coast**  
— VALUE NETWORK —

**LIMITED SEATS**

**THE CLEAR PATH TO  
BUILD A BUSINESS  
WORTH KEEPING —  
OR SELLING**

**For Business Owners**  
Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> 3pm - 5pm, Atascadero  
Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 8:30am to 10:30am, Arroyo Grande  
**Limited Tickets Available**  
\$25 pre-register/\$50 at the door

**Value Network Panel Speakers**



  
**BARRY FISHER**  
CEO, Blaze 'N Bear  
Insurance Services, Inc.

  
**ERICKA SCOTT**  
Founder, Book a COO &  
Strategic Plan Now

  
**JACOB ROTHMAN**  
Principal,  
Rothman Investment  
Management

**Gain clarity, increase business  
value, and create long-term  
wealth and freedom.**

  
**JAKE FREDERICK**  
Moderator, BBSI

FOR MORE INFO: 805-270-0007      CENTRALCOASTVALUENETWORK@GMAIL.COM

Being strategic in California means more than having the best product. It means understanding the regulatory environment, being aware of your options and leveraging any asset you might have to survive, a system that clearly doesn't care if you make it or not.

## Last Week

### Election Wishes

We have a wish list for election day. Naturally, the top of that list is the success of common-sense candidates. Not the goobers who confuse being aspirational with being unreasonable, nor the ones who have no regard for Other Peoples' Money while mistakenly believing that expensive government has all the answers.

Aside from that, we hope for a clean election. No election day arbitrary closures of precinct polling places due to mismanagement by the County Clerk. No confusion among staff that leads to voters losing their rights or having to struggle just to be able to cast their vote. No cheating or abuses with “ballot harvesting.”



We hope that only live people cast ballots – and only once each. We hope that the vote tally matches exactly with the number of ballots cast. We hope that attentive poll watchers are afforded their legal right to observe every aspect of ballot counting.

We hope to have complete results before Thanksgiving... or Christmas. We hope that there are no “irregularities” with the voting machines.

As much as we hope to see a strong turnout, we hope that no precincts show up with almost every voter having cast their ballot for the very same candidate.

Most importantly, we hope that boxes of uncounted ballots don't suddenly appear in the final moments of a close election.

Some in our county would accuse us of being conspiracy crazies for even mentioning such outlandish things. That's fine. Concern about these kinds of problems is based on reality. However, that each past "irregularity" is easily dismissed by a certain quite predictable crowd is troubling. Those who deny the reality of the long list of past problems suggest there is nothing to be concerned about. But we all should be concerned when elections don't go 100% perfectly. Anything less creates distrust, and we already have plenty of that.

Believe it. Don't believe it. Either way, let's hope there is nothing for either conspiracy theorists or irregularity deniers to talk about after June 2.

## **Does a Half Cent Tax Measure Have Half a Chance?**

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Board of Directors will meet on Wednesday, June 3. On the agenda is the fate of the half-length sales tax measure for transportation that has been in development for some time.

Many have expressed concern that polling indicates the measure will not gain the two-thirds majority required for passage. Others believe that with enough advocacy, the measure has a chance of passage.



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES  
ARROYO GRANDE | ATASCADERO | GROVER BEACH  
MORRO BAY | PASO ROBLES | PISMO BEACH  
SAN LUIS OBISPO | SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026**

**San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors Chambers  
KATCHO ACHADJIAN GOVERNMENT CENTER SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, California 93401**

**PLEASE NOTE THE TIME:**

**9:00 A.M.**

*The AGENDA is available/posted at: [www.slocog.org](http://www.slocog.org)*

Below is the list of SLOCOG Board members:

**President: Carla Wixom**

**Vice President: Heather Moreno**

**Board Members:**

John Peschong (First District - SLO County)  
Bruce Gibson (Second District - SLO County)  
Dawn Ortiz-Legg (Third District - SLO County)  
Jimmy Paulding (Fourth District - SLO County)  
Heather Moreno (Fifth District - SLO County)  
Aileen Loe (Arroyo Grande)

Heather Newsom (Atascadero)  
Kassi Dee (Grover Beach)  
Carla Wixom (Morro Bay)  
Fred Strong (Paso Robles)  
Ed Waage (Pismo Beach)  
Erica A. Stewart (San Luis Obispo)  
Scott Eades (Ex-Officio, Caltrans District 5)

The SLOCOG rule to put the measure on the ballot requires eight yes votes. People counting are suggesting the votes are there to move forward.



While November seems like a long way off, it appears that the group that formed to put the citizen initiative on the ballot (but had to stop due to technical reasons) will fundraise and run an advocacy campaign. It's not yet clear whether they will continue with their committee called Better Roads for All, but their website can be found at:

<https://betterroads4allsloco.com>

Their advocacy is expected to be centered on our county becoming a “self-help” county that will qualify us for many millions of dollars in state grants. It’s only a half cent – not a big burden for a really big return. That and the fact that our roads are crumbling and the current majority on our BoS don’t seem to care.

It looks like the opposition will be organized by the Central Coast Taxpayers Association. They can be found at:

[centralcoasttaxpayers.com](http://centralcoasttaxpayers.com)

<https://www.centralcoasttaxpayers.com>

The argument against the tax will likely focus on the cost of living, and how the current majority of the BoS don’t seem to care about the condition of our roads, so why should taxpayers be required to make up for such malfeasance? More economic burden on a county that is struggling economically.

Other impacting factors on the horizon are possible school bond measures that may be on the same ballot, the new PRAGA water fee in the Paso Water Basin, increased fees for almost every county service and increases in water bills in south county. Much of the revenue that the state uses for the above-mentioned transportation grants comes from the gas tax. There might be a few voters slightly frustrated with gas prices and unwilling to hand over any additional money to the government.

How much extra are SLO County voters willing to pay in taxes and government fees? If the measure fails in November, does that pretty much eliminate the self-help option for SLO County for a few more years?

We will report on the outcome of the June 3 meeting.

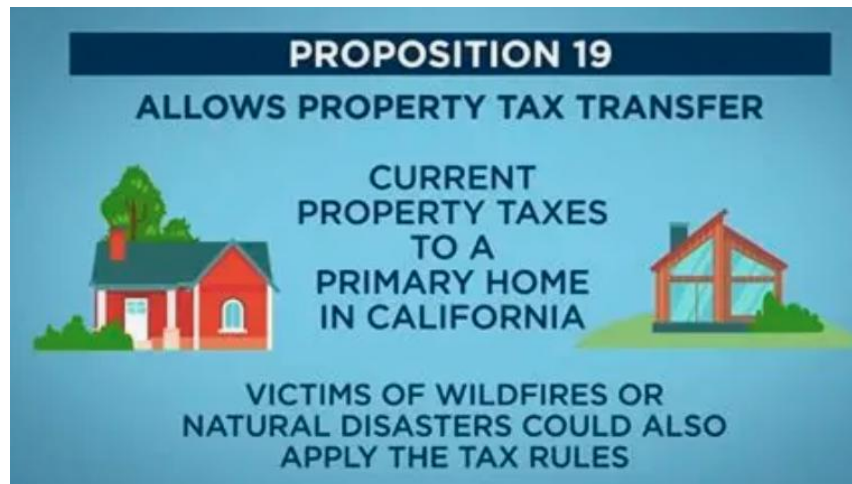
## Keeping Family Farms in the Family

How should we define a family farm? A few fruit trees in the yard. a homestead property with a big garden for family sustenance, occasional grazing land or a full commercial operation?

San Luis Obispo County Assessor Tom Bordonaro Jr. wrestles with these questions as he seeks to protect the ag community in dealing with inheritance issues created under Proposition 19.

Like most ballot measures, the proposition that passed in 2020 has a good side and a bad side. The good side is that it gives seniors and victims of natural disaster portability of their Proposition 13 baseline property tax if they buy a different home anywhere in California. The bad side is that it limits the family exemption when a family farm is inherited triggering a reassessment and often forcing a sale due to the increased tax burden.

When Proposition 19 was debated, the minor part that impacts inheritance was left out of the discussion. One of the biggest advocates was the California Association of Realtors who enthusiastically supported the tax portability aspect. Few were even aware of the unintended consequences that we are now facing.



Bordonaro’s concern is that the limited exemption that remains could be eliminated or deeply restricted for some due to the vague definition of what constitutes a “family farm.” Currently, the family farm exemption is usually applied to agricultural operations that are clearly understood to be covered. However, people are beginning to abuse the family farm rule by claiming that an inner-city home with a few fruit trees or a berry patch is a “farm”.



Assessors throughout California are finding themselves without clear guidelines defining what qualifies. Bordonaro is working within the State Assessors Association, along with local ag leaders, to come up with a workable definition before it becomes a problem. In his words, “We would rather be helping craft the solution ahead of the issue than be behind and scrambling to respond.”



SLO County Assessor Tom Bordonaro, Jr.

Bordonaro believes the solution would be to put a reasonable definition of a family farm into statute that could then be used by assessors, and he wants the ag community to assist in developing the language for such a statute. As a former member of the State Assembly, he has very little confidence in the legislature creating a reasonable definition on their own. He is even more uneasy about the possibility of litigation, where a judge would end up defining what is a family farm.

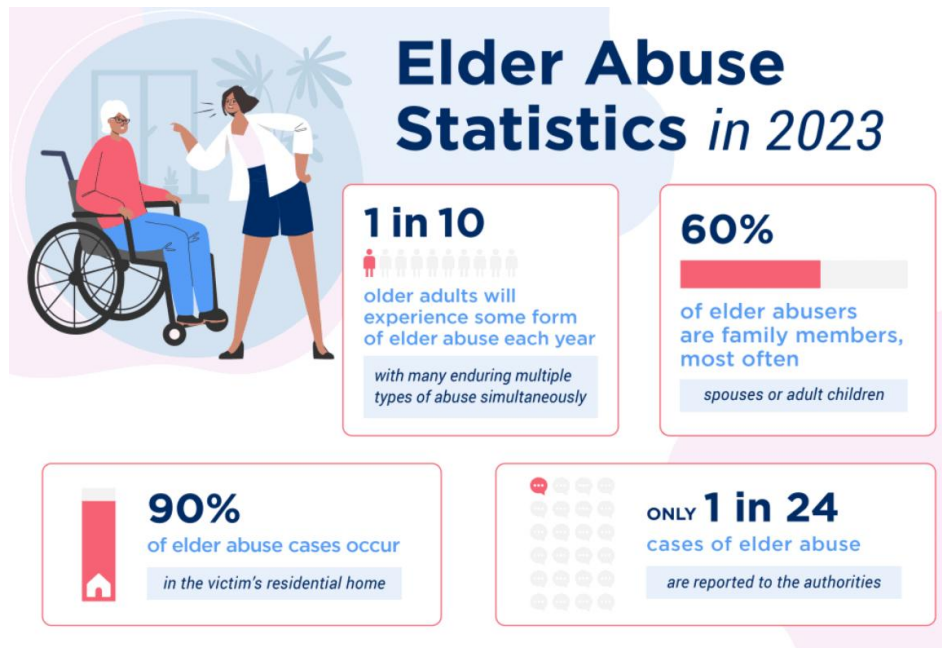
## DA Request

San Luis Obispo County District Attorney Dan Dow is seeking grassroots help with outreach to the County Board of Supervisors regarding support for five positions within his office.



Have an opinion about people who commit fraud?

As we covered last week, Dow is facing a dramatic workload increase from several sources including the prosecution of crimes restored by Prop 36, the ever-growing challenge of time-consuming digital evidence handling and the exploding number of elder abuse and fraud cases.



Elder abuse statistics are growing annually.

The Prop. 36 issue is especially confounding. Voters approved the measure in 2024 to restore some criminal penalties that were essentially eliminated under Prop 47 in 2014.

Specifically, Prop 36 allows felony charges for possessing certain drugs and for thefts under \$950—both formally chargeable only as misdemeanors (thanks to Prop 47) with two prior drug or two prior theft convictions, as applicable and it increases sentences for other specified drug and theft crimes.

Our Governor, perhaps distracted by fantasizing about his future, has refused to provide any funding to implement Prop 36, despite the fact that it passed by about 70% of the vote.

Now, our own DA is having trouble getting the funding needed to prosecute local cases. What is the use of making public safety our top priority if it is impossible for the justice system to hold criminals accountable?



District Attorney Dan Dow

Dow asks that people contact their own Supervisor or the entire Board by email, phone calls or even better, in person at the June 2 Board of Supervisors meeting.

A Roster of elected official contacts is included at the end of this newsletter.

## **What's Up with the San Miguel Project?**

Item 30 on the June 2 Bos agenda reads: Continued hearing from May 05, 2026 to consider an appeal (APPL2026-00004) by Scott Raven of the Planning Commission's approval of a request by Rivers Edge Development for a Phased Tentative Tract Map (Tract 3207) and Conditional Use Permit (N-SUB2022-00047) to subdivide a 43.26 gross acre parcel into a Cluster Subdivision/Planned Unit Development consisting of 181 residential parcels of varying sizes, configurations, and housing types, approximately 3.8 acres of commercial development, 3 utility parcels, and approximately 12 acres of park and open space for a total of 190 parcels along with various onsite and offsite improvements. The project includes a request for 1 concession under California Density Bonus Law (California Government Code Sections 65915) in exchange for including moderate-income affordable housing. The proposed project is located on the bluff overlooking the Salinas River at 3000 Indian Valley Road near the intersection of N River and Cross Canyon Roads in the community of San Miguel

and is consistent with the San Miguel Community Plan. The site is located within the Salinas River Sub-Area of the North County Planning Area. (Planning and Building).

As we covered a couple weeks ago, this appeal was heard by the BoS and essentially denied. However, Supervisor Gibson expressed concern about whether some of the details were documented correctly and requested that the final decision on the appeal be held over to allow those details to be correctly addressed.



The San Miguel Housing Project Proposal Location

We have heard a great deal of concern from activists on the Paso Water Basin issue that this project is not in compliance with restrictions currently in place within the basin. Doubts about timing involving applicable wastewater plant improvements continue. Activists are frustrated that the rules seem to have been bent to accommodate the project. They also believe that the 181 units proposed do not accurately reflect the potential for far more homes through the use of additional dwelling units, thus skewing water needs.

It remains to be seen whether Gibson's concerns lead to further questions. Stay tuned for details as they emerge.

## **Preparing for Budget Hearings**

The schedule for the June 8 – 10 budget hearings was published as item 8 on the June 2 BoS consent agenda. Included with the 37-page report is a list of supplemental budget adjustments. Those adjustments include \$4,885,623 in new

anticipated revenue and \$5,067,039 in newly listed expenses for a net increase of \$181,416 to the proposed one billion, two-hundred-million-dollar budget. Also listed in the report are 16 pages of the FY 2026-27 Supplemental Budget Document Summary Request Form that aligns various department employee categories. These will be reviewed in detail at the June 8 – 10 budget hearing.



It should be noted by anyone looking forward to three action packed days of thrilling accounting explanations regarding line items and miscellaneous minutia during the budget hearing that last year the BoS was able to review all the details it needed in one day. We do not know what to expect for this year’s hearing, but days two and three might not be necessary. Plan accordingly.

## **Wah Wah Wah – Poor Abused Criminals**

Item 9 on the June 2 BoS consent agenda is the Annual Military Equipment Report for each type of military equipment that is available to the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office and District Attorney’s Office.

The report is a product of Assembly Bill (AB) 481 signed into law in 2021 which establishes protocols for law enforcement agencies regarding the funding, acquisition, use, and reporting of specified law enforcement equipment items, and mandates that law enforcement agencies obtain approval of their governing bodies, by ordinance of military equipment use and related policies.

The result of the law is that the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff Department adopted their own internal Policy 707 which complies with the full disclosure of the acquisition and use of “military equipment” by the department.

“Military equipment” can include armored vehicles, night vision goggles, protective vests and clothing, drones and other tools useful in protecting public safety. Each of these items has actually been used locally and are credited in saving lives.



The annual report to the BoS typically brings out a parade of whining, hand wringing, pearl clutching complainers concerned more about keeping criminals comfortable than protecting law enforcement and the public. They go on and on about how unnecessary it is that law enforcement has the tools needed to deal with the likes of armed criminals out to kill and injure innocent people.

Sheriff Ian Parkinson does an excellent job of accountability and maintaining patience amongst the wild unfounded accusations from the criminal sympathizers and ICE haters.

## **\$1.1 Million to Keep the Lights On!**

It’s no surprise that the Paso Robles Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) has implemented their “keep the lights on fee.” They had a fast-approaching deadline where they either had to establish revenue or disband.

What most people don’t know is that “customers” can appeal their fee assessment, but the appeal must be filed by June 8. Below is the notice for filing an appeal:



**FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027  
GROUNDWATER FEE APPEAL FORM**  
For the Proposed Paso Robles Subbasin Groundwater Fee Program

*Instructions:* If you have an appeal to the Water Year 2025 consumed groundwater use calculations, please complete the below form and attach supporting documentation, if applicable. Please submit a completed form and any supporting materials by email to [info@PasoRoblesAGA.org](mailto:info@PasoRoblesAGA.org) or by mail to PO Box 82, Paso Robles, CA 93447, by **June 8, 2026**.

PRAGA continues to frustrate. It remains to be seen whether a legal challenge will be forthcoming, but property owners could be in for an unpleasant surprise when they get their property tax bill.

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**Death by Permit**

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**California Dethroned: Fortune 500 Crown  
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# Death by Permit

*California's regulatory apparatus has always excelled at one thing: extracting fees. Protecting property — or people — is a different matter entirely*

**By Jay Rogers, June 6, 2026**

California's regulatory apparatus has always excelled at one thing: extracting fees. Protecting property — or people — is a different matter entirely.

In 2005, the Supreme Court handed down *Kelo v. City of New London* and the country erupted. The government used eminent domain to condemn a working-class neighborhood in Connecticut and transfer the land to a private developer. Forty-five states enacted stricter laws in response. The outrage was proportionate to the offense.

What didn't make the headlines was the quieter version happening every day in California: the one where no one issues a condemnation notice, no one writes a check, and no one concedes a taking occurred. The government simply regulates the land until it's no longer worth what you paid for it. Then it goes home.

I know this version firsthand. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, I worked the coastal markets for Wells Fargo Bank across Pacific Palisades and Malibu, where enormous property values met the most aggressive regulatory apparatus in the country. My clients understood market risk, construction risk, and financing risk. What they didn't understand was regulatory risk: that the California Coastal Commission and the Los Angeles City Building Commission could extract years of delays, six-figure fees, and mandatory engineer signoffs on modifications no reasonable person would call significant, without triggering a dollar of constitutional compensation. The Coastal Commission's jurisdiction runs roughly a thousand feet inland from the mean high tide line, but its practical reach extends as far as its staff can find a nexus to coastal resources, which turns out to be nearly everywhere worth building. The legal framework enabling this is the Penn Central balancing test. Under *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City* (1978), regulatory takings claims turn on three factors: economic impact on the owner, interference with investment-backed expectations, and the character of the government action. Each factor sounds principled. Each, in practice, is a trapdoor. Economic impact gets measured against what the property is still worth, not what was lost. Investment-backed expectations get measured against what a reasonable buyer should have anticipated, which in

California means you should have known the Coastal Commission existed before you signed the deed. Character of government action almost always favors the regulator. Three factors. Three ways to lose.

My clients didn't lose in a single ruling. They lost incrementally: a permit delayed eighteen months, an engineer's sign-off required for a routine modification, a coastal development permit conditioned on a redesign that cost more than the improvement was worth. Every modification of consequence required a union-referred engineer's signature, which meant a fee, which meant the regulatory clock and the labor clock ran simultaneously. Some clients sold at a loss because the process cost more than finishing.

In 2019, the Supreme Court gave property owners one genuine procedural win. **Knick v. Township of Scott** held that landowners can bring **federal Takings Clause** claims directly in federal court without first exhausting state remedies, overturning a 34-year procedural barrier. It helped. It didn't fix the underlying problem: Penn Central's three-factor test remains the governing standard, and regulators win it at a rate that should embarrass anyone who reads the Fifth Amendment as written.

The **SpaceX** case showed this logic scales. The Commission voted 6-4 to block the expansion of Falcon 9 launches from Vandenberg Space Force Base, a federal military installation. Commission Chair Caryl Hart said at the public hearing: "We're dealing with a company whose head has aggressively injected himself into the presidential race." By April 2026, the Commission had settled, issued a formal apology, and acknowledged its members made "improper" statements about Musk's political beliefs. The First Amendment doesn't permit agencies to condition approvals on an applicant's political silence.

Then came January 7, 2025. The **Palisades Fire** ignited. Firefighters found the **Santa Ynez Reservoir**, a 117-million-gallon facility, offline and empty since February 2024, closed for repairs the **Los Angeles Department of Water and Power** had not completed. Twelve people died. Nearly 7,000 structures burned. City Councilwoman Traci Park said the reservoir had been offline "including on the one day in history it was needed most." Mayor Karen Bass, who later called the trip "absolutely a mistake," was in Ghana attending a presidential inauguration. Her aides had been warned of "high confidence in damaging winds and elevated fire conditions" the day before she left.

The fire wasn't even fully out before Sacramento moved on the land. **California Senate Bill 549**, authored by Senator Ben Allen and passed by the State Senate on a 28-10 party-line vote in May 2025, would have created state-funded "Resilient

Rebuilding Authorities” empowered to purchase fire-destroyed lots and build low-income housing on a portion of them. In Pacific Palisades, where the median home listing price is \$4.9 million, residents did not take the proposal as an abstract policy debate. More than 23,000 signed letters opposing it. Jessica Rogers, president of the Pacific Palisades Residents’ Association, called it “a land grab.” **Allen paused the bill** in July 2025 after the backlash. It remains stalled in the Assembly. The same residents who spent thirty years fighting the Coastal Commission for the right to modify their own homes are now watching the state eye the lots where those homes used to stand.

What the Coastal Commission, the DWP, Bass’s aides, and Sacramento share is an institutional reflex that treats process as the product. The actual result, whether a client’s buildable land, a launch schedule, a functioning reservoir, or the right to rebuild, is an afterthought.

The Fifth Amendment says government cannot take private property without just compensation. Penn Central turned that into a probability exercise regulators almost never fail. The homeowners who lost land value to regulatory attrition didn’t know they’d been taken. The ones who lost their homes to fire found out what the government had been doing with all those years and all those fees.

Not much. And not one dollar of compensation.



### **Jay Rogers**

Jay Rogers is a financial professional with more than 30 years of experience in private equity, private credit, hedge funds, and wealth management. He has a BS from Northeastern University and has completed postgraduate studies at UCLA, UPENN, and Harvard. He writes about issues in finance, constitutional law, national security, human nature, and public policy.

# DOJ Announces Multiple California Election Fraud Investigations, Voter Rolls Audit Advances to Ninth Circuit

*Essayli: 'Protecting the integrity of California's elections is a top priority for my office. California's election system has serious structural vulnerabilities'*

**By Megan Barth, June 5, 2026**

First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli confirmed Friday that his office is conducting multiple active election fraud investigations in coordination with the FBI's Los Angeles field office.

In a public statement, Essayli said: "Protecting the integrity of California's elections is a top priority for my office. California's election system has serious structural vulnerabilities. Universal vote-by-mail with no voter ID requirements creates conditions where fraud can go undetected and unpunished, eroding public confidence."

Without naming specific cases, Essayli pledged to "follow the evidence wherever it leads and prosecute any violations of federal election law to the fullest extent." His office is also teaming up with Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon on a sweeping audit of the state's voter rolls, a probe the Golden State has fought tooth and nail. The state has resisted efforts to verify that only eligible U.S. citizens are registered, and the matter is now before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

"The state has stonewalled every effort to verify that only eligible U.S. citizens are registered to vote," he wrote. "My office will not look the other way. We will investigate and prosecute. Every legal vote deserves to be counted. Every illegal vote cancels one out."

This isn't Essayli's first rodeo on election integrity. When he served in the California State Assembly, he was removed from the Democrat-led Elections Committee after advocating for voter ID and election integrity measures. *California Globe* reporting has documented **persistent issues** with out-of-state ballots under the state's universal mail-in system. Just yesterday we **reported** on a Virginia resident who contacted the Secretary of State's office twice over a decade requesting that ballots stop being sent to his former California address, yet they continued to arrive. Such cases highlight ongoing challenges with voter roll maintenance in a system that automatically mails ballots to registered voters without ID verification.

Essayli's **announcement** today follows **prior DOJ actions**. Federal prosecutors recently charged a Marina del Rey woman with paying homeless individuals to register to vote using fake addresses, or using her address to register them to vote. Her **fraudulent operation** spanned decades, until undercover journalists exposed the scheme.



Brenda Brown from Marina Del Ray exchanges cash for voter registrations on LA's Skid Row (Screenshot from OMG's undercover video)

In a related development, **Judicial Watch** recently filed a federal lawsuit against California Secretary of State Shirley Weber, alleging that 873,092 voter registrations have remained continuously inactive for at least two general federal elections, and some for stretching far beyond federal statute. The suit was brought

on behalf of plaintiffs Don Wagner, an Orange County Supervisor and Republican candidate for Secretary of State, and the American Independent Party of California. California operates one of the nation's most expansive vote-by-mail and ballot-harvesting systems, enacted by the Democratic supermajority Legislature and signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, the state has faced **documented fraud across multiple government sectors**, including public contracting, unemployment insurance, SNAP, healthcare programs, and infrastructure spending—including the ~\$300M high-speed bullet train.

Critics point to the obvious disparity: California has documented fraud across numerous government entities, yet California Democrats insist election fraud is almost nonexistent.

As primary election results in several high-profile races remain in the tabulation phase that will take weeks, President Donald Trump weighed in on the issue Thursday, stating on Truth Social: “The Democrats are at it again! They are trying to STEAL THE GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA PRIMARY, AND THE MAYOR OF LOS ANGELES, PRIMARY, AWAY FROM TWO GREAT REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES. Here we go with the very late and massive numbers of MAIL IN BALLOTS. There's BIG cheating by the Democrats in California. Votes are all tied up. May not be in for weeks. Under investigation by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Los Angeles. Why the vote counting DELAY???”

Trump also told reporters that Democrats are “rigging the election” in California.

Newsom's office responded: “Trump is lying about California again — time to take the phone away from grandpa and put him to sleep.”

The governor's press office followed up with an additional post addressing the slow vote count: “There is a lot of misinformation floating around about California's election — including from the President.”

They shared a CNN explainer video on the state's vote-by-mail process and added: “And yes, for the record: we wish the votes were counted faster, too.”

*The Globe will continue to follow and report on the ongoing litigation and primary election,*



### **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.

## **California Dethroned: Fortune 500 Crown Goes to Texas**

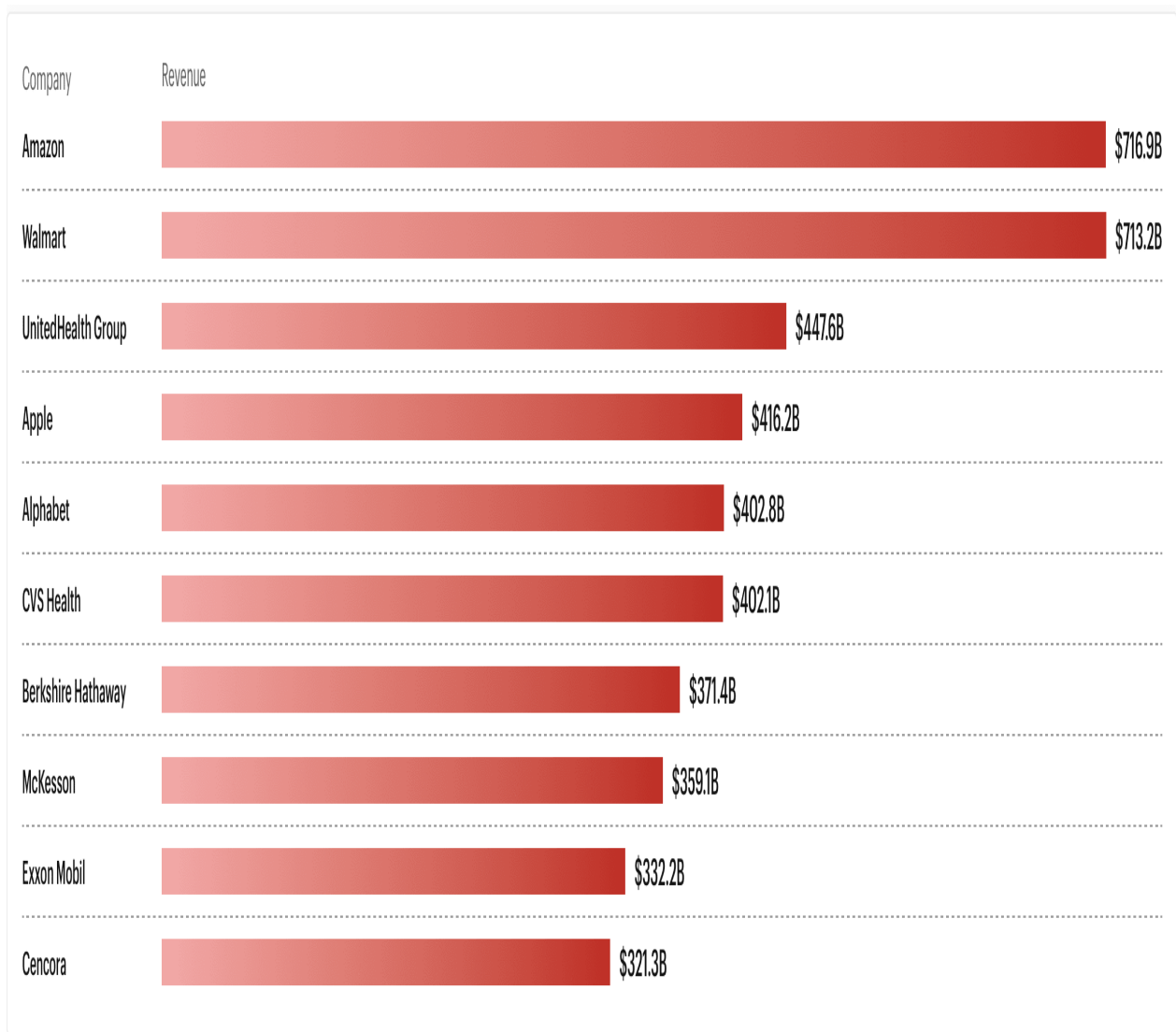
*Billionaire Tax threat looms large as California businesses still fleeing the once Golden State*

**By Katy Grimes, June 5, 2026**

The 2026 Fortune 500 list shows Texas leading California in Fortune 500 companies 57-56.

Data from the 2026 Fortune 500 list show Texas leading with 57 headquarters, compared with California's 56, marking a reversal from two years ago, when California held the lead, Fox Business reports.

"Additionally, corporations in Texas generated \$2.8 trillion in revenue, while those in California reported \$2.7 trillion in revenue."



Largest U.S. Corporations. (Photo: Fortune magazine)

“Texas is the undisputed headquarters of headquarters,” Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said in a press statement. “The world’s leading businesses invest with confidence in Texas because of our welcoming business climate, predictable regulatory environment, and skilled and growing workforce. People and businesses are choosing Texas because Texas works.”

California has been **bleeding residents** and their tax revenue for many years with moves to states with no income tax or very low income tax: Florida, Texas, Arizona, Idaho, Tennessee, South Carolina, Nevada, and even Washington State. And this isn’t “California Derangement Syndrome” as Gov. Gavin Newsom claims. This is the economic reality by businesses to California’s toxic business climate.

While California has been losing small, medium and large businesses for years due to high taxation and business killing regulations, there is another problem in paradise: **California billionaires** are leaving the state in record numbers, and taking their billions with them. According to one billionaire, more than \$1 Trillion has already left.

California Democrats are pushing a **retroactive billionaire tax** targeting the roughly 220 billionaires residing in California in 2025, ignoring that these individuals are the most financially mobile and can live anywhere. Expecting them to remain in the state as if they will happily and willingly hand over even more of their wealth surely must be facetious.

And Gov. Gavin Newsom is doing nothing to oppose the billionaire tax, which is a position in and of itself.

SEIU is sponsoring the “**2026 Billionaires Tax Act.**” The measure will impose a one-time 5% tax on individual wealth exceeding \$1 billion, Marc Joffe wrote for the Globe.

One-time tax... right.

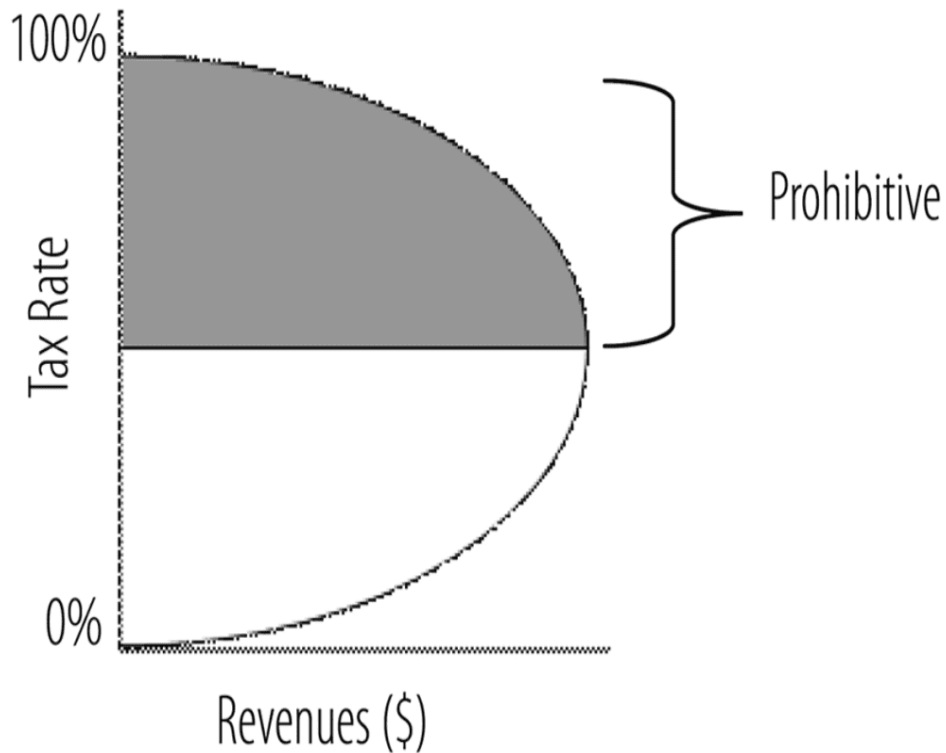
Chamath Palihapitiya **posted** this warning to X in January:

Unfortunate update as of today: More calls from friends. The total wealth that has left California is now \$1T. We had \$2T of billionaire wealth just a few weeks ago. Now, 50% of that wealth has left – taking their income tax revenue, sales tax revenue, real estate tax revenue and all their staffs (and their salaries and income taxes) with them. In other words, by starting this ill conceived attempt at an asset tax, the California budget deficit will explode. And we still don’t know if the tax will even make the ballot. California billionaires were reliable tax payers – 13.3% every year. They were the sheep you could shear forever. Now California will lose this revenue source FOREVER. Unless this ballot initiative is pulled, we will not stop the billionaire exodus. With no rich people left in California, the middle class will have to foot the bill.

As we **reported**, entrepreneur **David Sacks** weighed in explaining, “To be clear, the Billionaire Tax Act in California is not (just) an unrealized gains tax. It’s a 5% across-the-board confiscation of net worth. It applies even if one has already realized and paid taxes on the entire amount.”

This is double taxation and unconstitutional, and California’s billionaires know it.

Gov. Gavin Newsom might find that lowering tax rates results in higher rather than lower tax revenues, as the Laffer Curve has shown time and time again.



Art Laffer, who created the Laffer curve, an economic hypothesis that shows the relationship between tax rates and the amount of tax revenue collected by governments, left California more than two decades ago for Tennessee. The Laffer curve shows that there is a certain point between 0% and 100% where tax revenues are maximized. He saw it coming and tried to warn us.

California's out-migration exceeds inbound migration, as **U-Haul's January report** shows. More Californians rented one-way U-Haul trucks to leave the state in 2025, than residents of any other state.

California's own **Chevron Oil Company** moved its headquarters to Houston, Texas from San Ramon, CA where it has been based since 1879, one of the biggest businesses to flee the Golden State. Chevron is in good company joining X/Twitter, Space X, Oracle, Hewlett Packard, Charles Schwab, and Toyota Motor North America, Nissei America, Inc., Yamaha Motor Corp. U.S.A., The Joe Rogan Experience, Gordon Ramsay North America, The Rubin Report, Ruiz Foods, Blue

Diamond Growers, Leprino Foods, Anheuser-Busch, GAF Energy, to name just a few of the businesses leaving California because of the state's leftist/Marxist politics and regulatory environment.

California has also seen more than 1,040 fast food restaurant closures since the fast food minimum wage increase to \$20 per hour in April 2024.

As the Globe reported earlier this year, California ranks dead last once again in Chief Executive Magazine's Best & Worst States For Business 2025 – the 14th year in a row. Tennessee ranks #1 once again, and “The Volunteer State” was the recipient of another of California's oldest and one of the best known businesses in the country: After 77 Years in California, In-N-Out moved to Tennessee. Where did these companies go?

Most went to Texas for its “business-friendly climate—with no corporate or personal income tax—along with a highly skilled and diverse workforce, easy access to global markets, robust infrastructure and a reasonable regulatory environment,” Texas Governor Greg Abbott said when he announced that California-based Ruiz Foods was moving its corporate HQ to Frisco. “With an unrivaled business climate and skilled, diverse workforce, Texas is America's #1 economic destination....”  
And California is not.



### **Katy Grimes**

Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses? and a contributor to "Taxifornia 2016."

A California native and Navy mom, Katy lives in Sacramento, CA.

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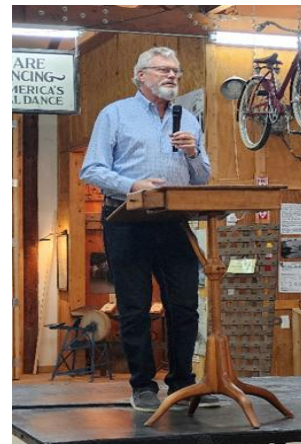
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[assemblymember.addis@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.addis@assembly.ca.gov)

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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

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