



COLAB
San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

Weekly Update March 9 - 16, 2026

After four weeks without a meeting the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors will get back to business on March 10 with a very full agenda. Among the 34 items for consideration are departmental organization matters and budget reports. Following this meeting there will only be six more before the budget process takes place. This means we can anticipate some pretty heavy agendas over the next few months.

Healthy Reorganization

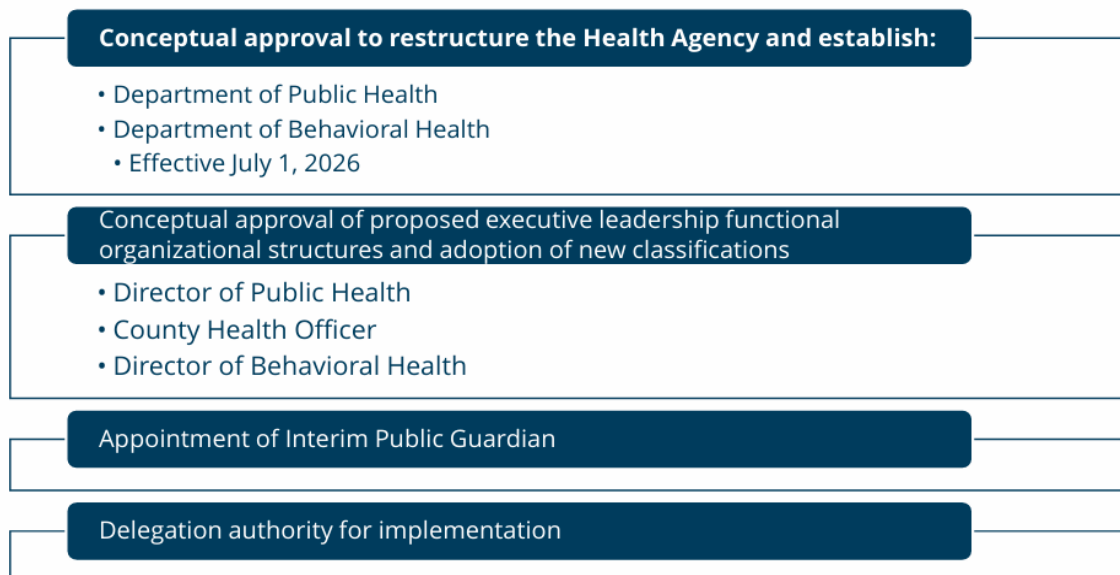
One of the biggest action items for the Board of Supervisors in a long time is a reorganization proposal that is coming up this week at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

Listed as the last agenda item of the day, number 32 reads: “Request to 1) receive a presentation from the County Executive Office and authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or designee, to proceed with the steps necessary to conceptually implement the restructuring of the Health Agency and creation of the Department of Behavioral Health and the Department of Public Health, effective July 1, 2026, and provide staff direction as necessary; 2) Conceptually approve the proposed executive leadership functional organizational structures for the Department of Behavioral Health and the Department of Public Health; 3) Adopt a resolution

establishing the new executive classifications, salary range, and bargaining unit placement for the Director of Behavioral Health, Director of Public Health, and County Health Officer; 4) Receive and file an update regarding the appointment of Interim Health Agency Director and Interim Behavioral Health Administrator; 5) Approve the appointment of Kristin Ventresca as the Interim Public Guardian; and 6) Delegate authority to the CEO and the Human Resources Director, or their designees, to take the necessary administrative actions to implement the approved organizational changes, including finalizing and refining the organizational charts, consistent with Board direction. (Executive Office)”

While it may seem complicated, this reform is something COLAB has advocated for many years. This proposal brings greater accountability and efficiency while eliminating redundancy. Taxpayers benefit by knowing that their money is spent wisely. Employees benefit by having a more defined mission. Clients of the health system benefit by experiencing a service better designed to meet their specific needs. Here is the proposal overview:

Overview: Proposed Health Agency Restructuring



Here are the main objectives:

Executive Office Review



Diffused accountability across peer leaders



Complicated decision-making structure



Increased Executive Office operational intervention



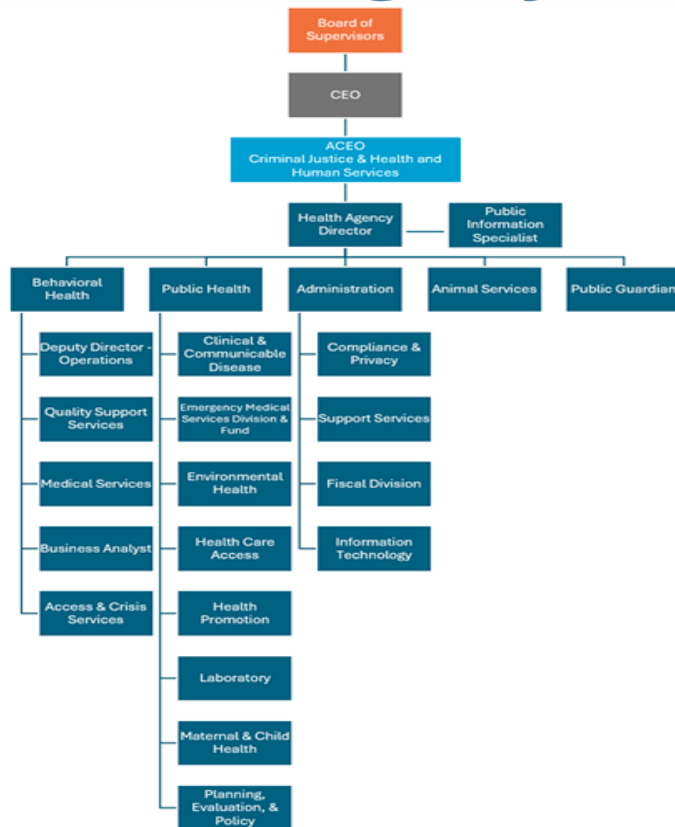
Barriers to fiscal stewardship & performance improvement



Ability to implement independent management audit recommendations

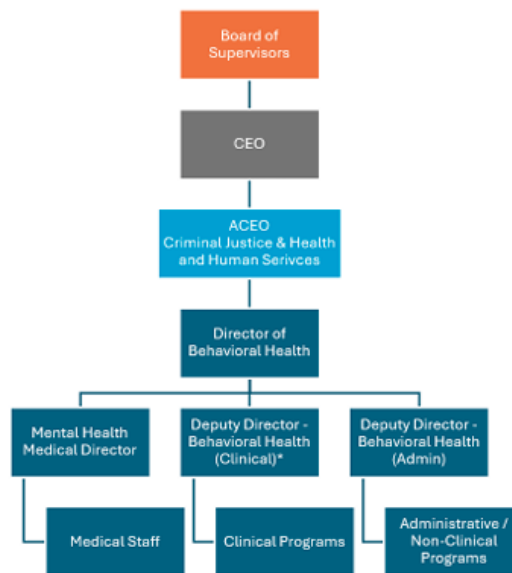
A quick look at the current organizational chart for the County Health Agency reveals an overly complicated structure.

Current Health Agency Structure



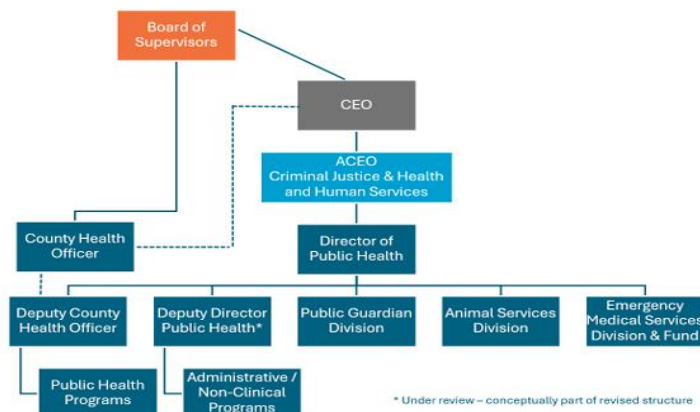
Managing both regular and behavioral health within one department must be a cumbersome nightmare. The proposed reorganization is designed to give each category the leadership and decision-making process that it deserves. Here are the proposed structures:

Department of Behavioral Health



* Under review – conceptually part of revised structure

Department of Public Health



* Under review – conceptually part of revised structure

Here is a summary of the request and a proposed transition timeline if the measure is approved:

Requested Board Actions

1. Conceptually approve reorganization of the Health Agency
2. Conceptually approve proposed executive leadership functional organizational structures
3. Adopt resolution establishing executive classifications & salary ranges
4. Receive and file interim leadership update
5. Appoint Kristin Ventresca as Interim Public Guardian
6. Delegate authority to CEO & HR Director to implement administrative changes

Transition Plan & Timeline



Through June 30, 2026

Current reporting structures remain
Interim leadership assignments in place
Recruitments for new classifications



Prior to July 1, 2026

Return with County Code amendments
Process position changes in FY 2026–27 Budget



Effective July 1, 2026

Departments formally established

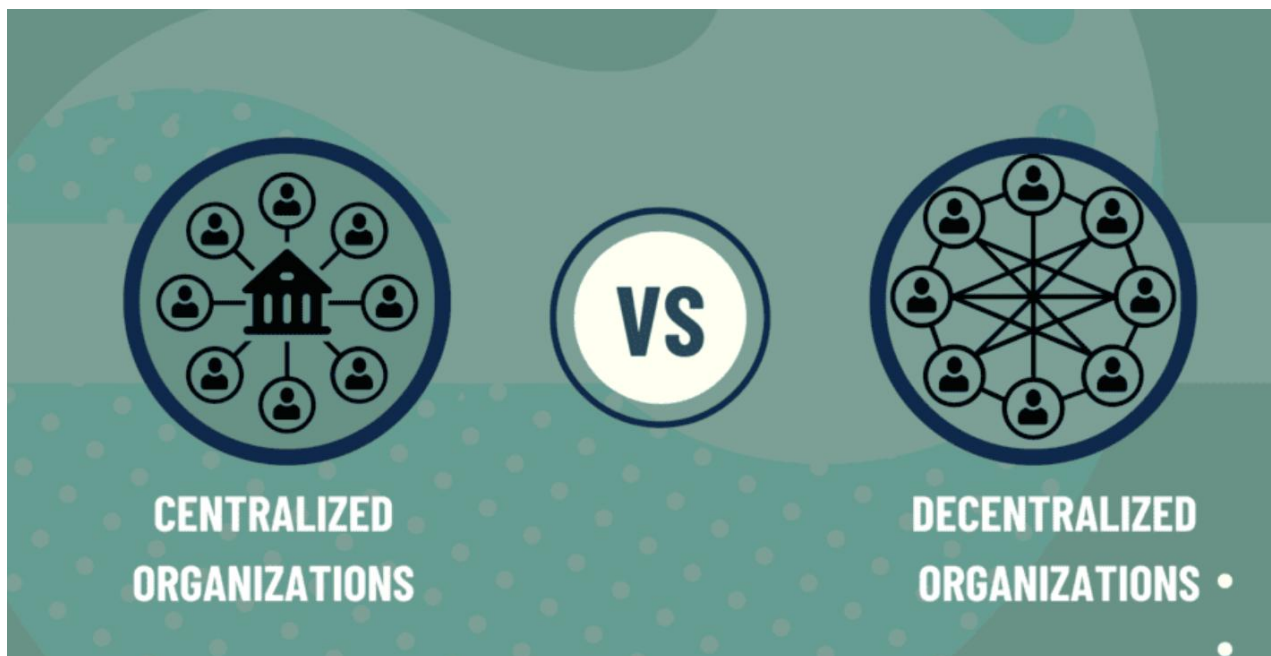
It is unclear whether this proposal is a direct result of the KPMG audits that were done on the Health Department last year. It's also unclear how the board will react to such a reorganization. However, if we're going to find efficiencies in this county, it's going to

take some serious thought to the way we're spending resources. This proposal is an excellent example of how we can trim up the organization, do more with what we have, and do it by spending less taxpayer money.

Tidying Up the System

Item I on the agenda reads: Hearing to consider an ordinance amending Chapters 2.11 and 2.36 of the San Luis Obispo County Code related to the organizational transition of moving the Central Services Department into the County Executive Office.

This measure essentially affirms the powers that a County Executive Officer should have in order to conduct the business of the county by establishing a central services office.



It calls for the CEO to supervise and evaluate the performance of assigned staff and oversee all personnel matters, including hiring, reassignments, discipline and separation of employees as appropriate. As well as to act as the purchasing agent, plan, organize, and direct the activities of the central services office including but not limited to fleet services, purchasing and property management.

These steps are consistent with the goals of the Board of Supervisors when they chose to elevate Matt Pontes from Chief Administrative Officer to Chief Executive Officer. With the new system, departments report directly to the CEO, creating a clarity of mission as well as improved accountability.

The actions outlined in this measure align with the greater responsibility assigned to the CEO. Interestingly, Supervisor Bruce Gibson has been reluctant to support the shift to a CEO system. Apparently, he is uncomfortable with the level of authority bestowed on the CEO and prefers a more decentralized system. His reaction to this agenda item could be interesting.

One Fee Goes Down

It's rare that any kind of cost of government goes down. Whether bridge tolls, dog licenses, parking tickets or income taxes, they all seem to increase regularly. Even postage stamp costs increase regularly.

So, when the San Luis Obispo County decreases a fee for the cannabis industry, it seems odd.

In fact, part of the fee that has been charged included a California Cannabis Association (CCA) membership, and since that organization has been disbanded, the portion of the fee that covered that membership needs to be refunded and future fees reduced to no longer charge for a service no longer provided.

As a reminder, here is the definition of a fee:



a : a fixed charge

b : a sum paid or charged for a service

According to item 3 on the Board of Supervisors agenda, “The Auditor-Controller has certified to this Board that the overhead rates are calculated in accordance with accounting standards set by the Federal a Government's Office of Management and Budget, in accordance with Title 2 in the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II, part 225

In order to maintain consistency with the County’s cost-recovery principles, the FY 2025-26 Cannabis Tax Compliance Program fee should be reduced to exclude the component attributable to California Cannabis Association (CCA) membership since the CCA’s dissolution on December 31, 2025.”

The Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector is authorized to issue partial refunds of the CCA fee component (\$1,045 per license) to any cannabis license holders who paid the full \$4,324 fee for licenses renewed between July 1, 2025, and December 31, 2025; and B. The Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector is authorized to issue refunds of the CCA fee component (\$2,090 per license) to any cannabis license holders who paid the full \$4,324 fee for licenses renewed on or after January 1, 2026.

Fee Detail					FY 2025-26 FEE SCHEDULE		Fee Detail
Fee Indicator #	Fee Category	Fee Description	Board Discretion Type	Authority	Fee Amount	Unit Desc.	Fee Detail
4000		Specific License Fee:					
4006	Decreased	Cannabis Tax Compliance Program	Partial	BL Ord. 6.00.005 & 6.12.04 & 6.90	\$2,234.00	each	Footnote # 1 and Footnote #13

Department Name: Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector
Fund Center: 117

Footnote #	Footnote Narrative
1	The department reviewed the time studies, pertinent code sections, and reasonableness of the current fees. Direct costs have been added where applicable.
13	The fee recovers the costs of operating the County Cannabis Tax Compliance Program. The costs recovered include TTC Division and AC Division staff time, and the costs conducting cannabis tax audits Per Board direction, these costs are to be passed on to cannabis license holders.

It will surely be confounding to some, but as a result of the Sheriff's Department finding ways to conduct cannabis licensing and enforcement in a more cost-efficient way, the cannabis industry has seen an overall decrease in compliance costs locally. Regulation of the cannabis industry is unique in that the legislation that legalized the product gave counties discretion in the matter. We wish that such discretion could be applied to other industries as well.

Most Fees Go Up

Speaking of fees, the Board of Supervisors is required to update its fee schedule relating to capital improvements every five years for fees charged to developers as “impact fees”.

Item 5 on the agenda reads:

“Request to receive and file 1) FY 2024-25 annual report for the Public Facilities Fees Program, 2) the five-year report for the Public Facilities Fees Program; and approve a resolution adopting findings in accordance with Government Code Sections 66001 and 66006 with respect to the San Luis Obispo County Public Facilities Fees Program.”

County staff explain that the Facilities Plan describes the impacts of new development projects on existing public facilities and improvements within the unincorporated area of the County of San Luis Obispo, and analyzes the need for new public facilities and improvements required by said new development projects, and sets forth the needed public facilities and improvements, and the estimated costs of those public facilities and improvements.

Here are the Development Impact Fees charged for 2024 compared to 2025:

2024 PUBLIC FACILITIES FEES							
ADJUSTED	RESIDENTIAL (per unit)				NON-RESIDENTIAL (per 1000 Sq')		
Fee Category	Single Family		Multi-Family		Commercial	Office	Industrial
Parks	\$2,778	\$1,230	\$1,954	\$865	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sheriff	\$826	\$366	\$574	\$255	\$291	\$646	\$208
General Gov't	\$1,238	\$549	\$862	\$382	\$436	\$967	\$310
Fire	\$2,415	\$1,070	\$1,679	\$744	\$852	\$1,888	\$608
Library	\$830	\$368	\$595	\$263	\$84	\$187	\$60
Admin Fee 2.0%	\$162	\$72	\$113	\$50	\$33	\$74	\$24
Total Fees	\$8,249	\$3,655	\$5,777	\$2,559	\$1,696	\$3,762	\$1,210

2025 PUBLIC FACILITIES FEES							
ADJUSTED	RESIDENTIAL (per unit)				NON-RESIDENTIAL (per 1000 Sq')		
Fee Category	Single Family		Multi-Family		Commercial	Office	Industrial
Parks	\$2,838	\$1,257	\$1,996	\$884	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sheriff	\$854	\$378	\$593	\$264	\$301	\$668	\$215
General Gov't	\$1,280	\$568	\$891	\$395	\$451	\$1,000	\$320
Fire	\$2,497	\$1,106	\$1,736	\$769	\$881	\$1,952	\$629
Library	\$858	\$380	\$615	\$272	\$87	\$193	\$62
Admin Fee 2.0%	\$167	\$74	\$117	\$52	\$34	\$76	\$25
Total Fees	\$8,494	\$3,763	\$5,948	\$2,636	\$1,754	\$3,889	\$1,251

Below is a chart listing all of the different capital projects that fees are expected to cover over the next five years:

Functional Area	Requesting Department	Project Title	Project No.	Estimated Total Project Cost	Prior Years
General Gov't	Public Works	PW-COC-Custodial Offices - Building 1200, PIC02	CIP-PW25-04	\$ 468,000	—
General Gov't		Gen Govt-SLO-Courthouse Conceptual Plan, PTB02/03	CIP-PW25-05	\$ 300,000	—
General Gov't	Public Works	ADA Transition Plan Implementation Program	CIP - ADA Program	\$ 3,222,000	\$ 1,422,000
General Gov't	Public Works	Facility Condition Assessment ("FCA") Program	CIP - FCA Program	\$ 63,038,000	\$ 26,448,000
General Gov't		Gen Govt - Various - Small Workplace and Remote Monitoring Program	350197	\$ 386,000	\$ 181,000
General Gov't	Central Services	Central Services - COC - Fuel Station Canopy, PIC25	320222	\$ 1,220,000	\$ 100,000
General Gov't	Public Works	Gen Gov't - COC - Parking and Road Improvements	320126	\$ 3,042,920	\$ 995,000
General Gov't		Gen Govt - COC - Water Lab Cabinets and Countertops, PIC19	320230	\$ 579,000	\$ 325,000
General Gov't		Gen Govt - COC - Install Water Quality Lab Generator, PIC06-19	320203	\$ 460,000	\$ 400,000
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Nipomo - Jack Ready Imagination Park	305RADJREADY	\$ 8,282,500	\$ 2,282,500
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Morro Bay - Toro Creek Property Acquisition - Phases 3+	CIP-PA24-01	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 4,750,000
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Oceano - Coastal Dunes RV Park Electrical Repairs, PPD12	320249	\$ 2,036,000	\$ 412,000
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Santa Margarita - Yerba Buena Creek Trail	380009	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 3,146,801
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Morro Bay to Cayucos Connector of the CA Coastal Trail	320054	\$ 13,362,492	\$ 1,592,600
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Nipomo - Nipomo Community Park - Perimeter Trail, POB20	CIP-PA24-02	\$ 6,000,000	—
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Oceano - Oceano Memorial Park - Play Structure Replacement	320240	\$ 969,000	\$ 769,000
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Templeton to Atascadero Connector	320056	\$ 8,796,499	\$ 1,496,499
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Morro Bay - Toro Creek Property Acquisition - Phase 2	CIP-PA23-09	\$ 5,500,000	—
Parks	Parks And Recreation	Parks - Avila Beach - Bob Jones Trail - Octagon Barn to Ontario Road	320096	\$ 41,442,427	\$ 10,084,427
Public Safety		Sheriff/Probation - COC - Electronic Access Controls, PIC20,30,32,35,42	CIP-SH/PROB25-01	\$ 5,000,000	—
Public Safety		Sheriff - COC - Divide Jail Max Yard, PIC42	CIP-SH25-03	\$ 694,000	—
Public Safety	County Fire Department	Fire - Santa Margarita - Feasibility Study for New Fire Station	CIP-CF25-01	\$ 250,000	—
Public Safety	Public Works	Fire - SLO - Replace Building 1666 at Camp San Luis (Drill Grounds)	320202	\$ 2,000,000	\$ 367,448
Public Safety		Sheriff - COC - Remote Flush Systems, PIC32	CIP-SH25-01	\$ 725,000	—
Public Safety	Sheriff Coroner	Sheriff - Nipomo - Construct New Substation	320215	\$ 11,123,000	\$ 1,200,000

Five-year Capital Improvement Plan

It is a bit misleading to call these fees “developer fees” because as we all know, the developer simply passes them along to the customer. As our county leaders continue to yammer on about the cost of housing in our county, we encourage them to take a careful look at the costs that they are contributing to already expensive new housing.

Clearing the Air in South County

In another unusual move for the county government, we are actually losing a department. Item ___ calls for the decommissioning of the South County Air Quality Mitigation Fee Fund. And ending the fee collection. It further calls for transferring the remaining funds of the fee to the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works.

The Report previously concluded that by establishing a mitigation fee of \$204.00 per dwelling unit, the County would be able to provide for certain public transit improvements, park and ride lot improvements, and/or acquisition, and ridesharing subsidies to encourage vehicle trip reduction.

The Program currently collects approximately \$225 per single-family residence and \$142 per multi-family residence, generating a total fund balance of approximately \$752,947 as of 2026; and new development projects are individually analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act to determine project-specific and cumulative air quality impacts, rendering continued fee collection unnecessary and outdated; and

Freking Fracking Horse Puckey

As silly or desperate as it seems that several candidates are continuously beating the drum about the non-existent threat of offshore oil drilling, we now have at least one candidate making a big fuss over fracking. As we discussed last week there are a whole host of reasons why offshore oil drilling is highly unlikely off the coast of San Luis Obispo County.

It's equally as unlikely that fracking is going to come to the coastal regions of San Luis Obispo County – especially in residential areas.

Inventing a threat and using it to foment fear among the electorate just for votes is a cheesy move. It telegraphs a lack of self-confidence and desperation more than anything else. We're not sure where these candidates are getting their advice, but they should think twice before they accept such folly.



There are plenty of serious and important issues - based in reality - that should be discussed by our candidates. None of these misguided candidates are superheroes and we don't need their wannabe superhero powers to protect us from non-existent

threats. We do need to know how they're going to address some of the issues that are real and that do impact our lives on a daily basis.

Any candidate who truly believes that offshore drilling or fracking is a real threat should show us the evidence. Point out the geologic reports that indicate large enough volumes of oil fields to make it worthwhile to drill. Show us the companies that want to come in and invest in drilling and extraction efforts. Show us what they would do with the oil once they got it from the seabed or from local coastal lands. Show us the refineries that would take that oil and turn it into useful products for California consumers.

What these candidates are showing us is that they are worried about their position on real issues. They are worried about being compelling enough to grab the attention of the voters. Or maybe they are worried that voters won't appreciate their positions. They should be worried about the voters' reaction when they learn the truth about all the fertilizer being spued over nonsense.

There is nothing wrong with having a position on oil drilling or extraction, but suggesting that it is a threat, and then insinuating that voters should make decisions based on the candidate's ability to reduce or eliminate that threat is dishonest at best.

Dantona Woody Debate

A second candidates' debate of the season was once again hosted by The San Luis Tribune on March 4. The first debate was held on January 15 and featured 4th Supervisorial District candidates Adam Verdin and Jimmy Paulding. While one or two questions seemed a little biased, most viewers found it informative and fair. The format was more of an interview than a debate, but it offered good insight about the two candidates.

The March 4 debate between Jim Dantona and Michael Allen Woody was much the same.

The district 2 race is wide open, with Bruce Gibson retiring. Civil Engineer Michael Allen Woody and county staffer Jim Dantona are each running to fill the seat. Like the 4th district race, election day is June 2, 2026. In both cases, it appears to be a two-man race, so whomever gets a majority of the vote in June wins. The winner takes office in January 2027.

The March 4 debate included a variety of topics, including campaign donations (Their moms were among the highest for each), Los Osos water and construction issues, water conservation, growth management, ICE enforcement and of course, offshore wind energy.

The latter topic was the only real contrast between the two, with Dantona wanting to keep the door open to the concept while Woody expressed steadfast opposition to the concept.

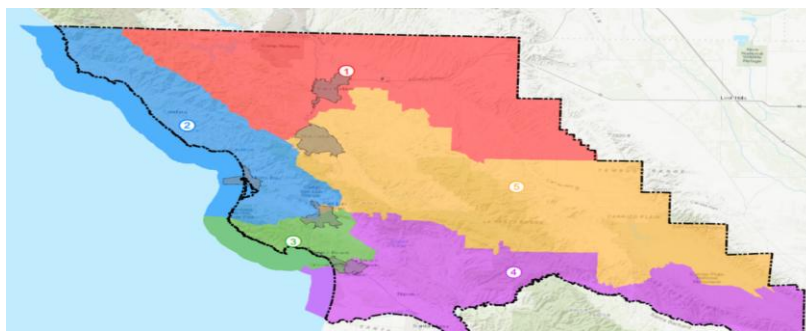
It was disappointing to hear Dantona repeatedly raise the “threat of the Trump Administration wanting to destroy our environment with offshore oil rigs”. He used this as a dodge when asked about offshore wind energy. Perhaps he should read the conditions of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary or the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary to avoid sounding so uninformed.



Jim Dantona



Michael Allen Woody



The 2nd Supervisorial District shown in blue.

The Tribune staff couldn't resist at least one jab at locals working for common sense. They asked a question about partisanship becoming a problem. We somehow doubt that they were referring to the rent control efforts in San Luis Obispo, frenzied people demanding ICE free zones, the efforts to shut down the Diablo Canyon power plant or the boys in girls' locker rooms question. We are fairly certain that they didn't have local newspaper coverage in mind either...

We applaud both candidates for their interest in running and for participation in the debate. Both presented as reasonable candidates dedicated to keeping San Luis Obispo County a beautiful place. And we appreciate the Tribune for presenting the opportunity to compare the two candidates.

The March 26 COLAB Annual Dinner is almost here. Enjoy a fun evening with a great dinner, lively auction, open bar and lots of friends while supporting a great cause. Investigative reporter and Editor in Chief of The California Globe, Katy Grimes will enlighten us with important details that you will not find in mainstream media. Get your tickets today at COLABSLO.org . We hope to see you there.

Last Week

Green Light for Diablo Canyon

The last California State agency permit hurdle for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) was achieved when the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) voted on February 26 to grant a renewed Once Through Cooling Discharge Permit under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and a Federal Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification.

The passage of these two items (along with the Coastal Commission permit granted in Dec., 25) clears the way for the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to finalize renewals to DCPP's reactor operating license through 2030.



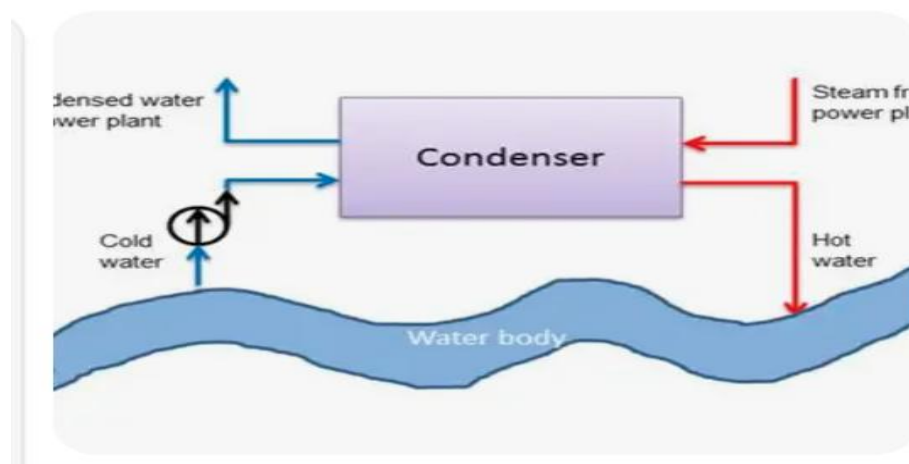
The Diablo Canyon Power Plant

The hearing was held at the RWQCB offices in San Luis Obispo and was attended by about 70 people. Discussion on the subject began at about 8:45 AM and lasted until 1:00 PM. At the onset of the discussion, the Board Chair made it clear that seismic and nuclear waste issues were beyond the scope of the board and attempted to bring a focus to just water quality.

Despite that effort, the discussion frequently went beyond the day's subject. Mothers for Peace strove to live up to their name by peacefully objecting to nuclear power. The Sierra Club unsuccessfully attempted a bit of subterfuge by making a fuss about different dates for various licensing stages and requested that the board require a formal and final end date of 2030 be listed on all paperwork including any applications to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. One coastal conservatory group claimed that operations at the power plant had caused all sea life to die off for miles in either direction along the coastline leaving nothing but baren rocks. This, despite reports from biologists with data and photos of sea life flourishing in that area.

It seemed that opposition to relicensing ran about a third compared to support which was about two-thirds of the public commenters. County Supervisors Ortiz-Legg and Moreno both testified in support as did COLAB.

One of the biggest issues discussed was the once-through cooling system. This is a process that draws ocean water in, runs it across tubes that need to be cooled, and then returns the seawater back to the ocean. When the seawater is returned it's an average of 20 degrees warmer than the ocean water that it was drawn from.



Once through cooling system example

Some requirements for nuclear operations include the use of best technology available. There was a great deal of discussion about whether there were better technologies for cooling than the once-through system. Ultimately consensus seemed to fall with that system being the most efficient for Diablo Canyon. The main alternative would be the giant cooling towers that we sometimes associate with other nuclear facilities built in the 70s.



Nobody wants cooling towers at Diablo Canyon

As an observation (perhaps wishful thinking) it seems as though opposition to ongoing operations at Diablo Canyon is diminishing. Perhaps the reality is setting in that renewable (or green) energy growth is not keeping up with demand for our electric grid. While it is true that at times, our state produces significantly more power than it needs (primarily from solar), we are lagging in storage capacity. Further, during night times, periods of severe heat and even some winter months, we simply cannot produce enough renewable energy to power the grid on a reliable and sustainable basis.

Most forecasts for grid demand show needs increasing dramatically in the next decade, which equates to a need for enormous growth in renewable energy production and storage. Realistically, few industry experts feel confident that such growth is deliverable. The following graph produced by the California Energy Commission illustrates their anticipated growth in energy demand over the next decade:

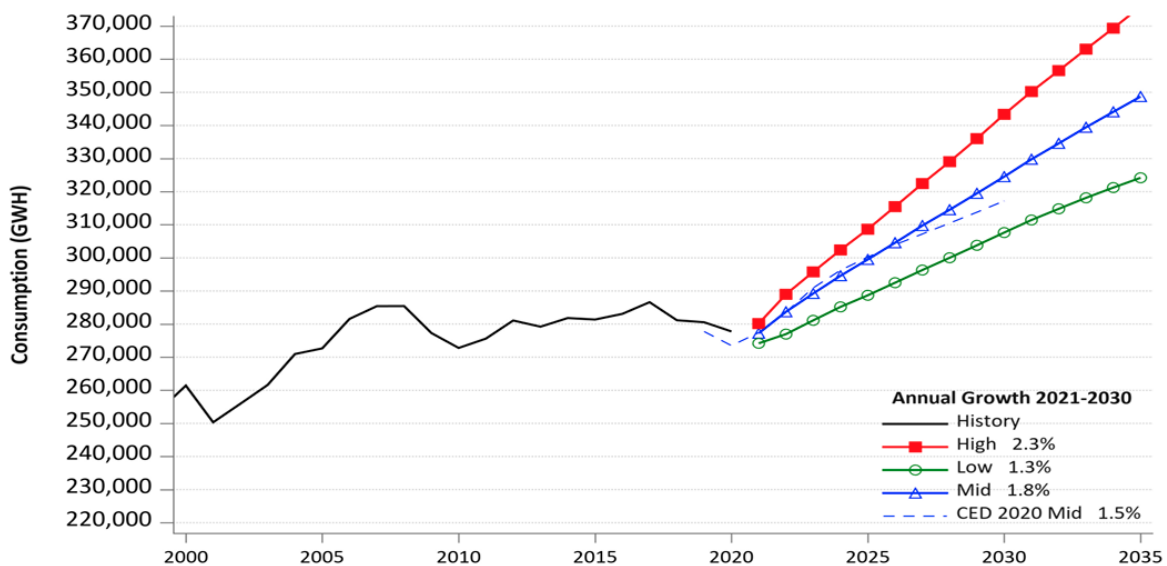


Figure 1.1. Predicted growth in electricity demand by 2035 compared to historical electricity consumption trends. Model includes low, medium, and high demand scenarios that reflect differing assumptions about key variables such as electric vehicle adoption and economic growth rates.

Source: California Energy Commission. (2022). Final 2021 Integrated Energy Policy Report Volume IV Energy Demand Forecast.

Since Diablo Canyon produces just over 9% of the state power grid (about 17% of the carbon free power generated) and is considered a base source, meaning it produces 24 hours a day all year round regardless of weather, it's impossible to illustrate how the power it contributes to the grid could be replaced in the next many years by renewable sources.

This is precisely why Governor Newsom opted to extend the original closure date from 2025 to 2030. Now, many of his fellow liberals are recognizing the same reality.

Energy costs are also a factor. With the Diablo Canyon power plant, little to no new investment is needed. Energy costs from that source don't need to pay for capital investment and start-up costs. With affordability being a key concept in current policy making, many green energy expenses are becoming unbearable for the average ratepayer.

With the RWQCB permits out of the way, it is now up to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to grant final approval for continued operations. The NRC has already done a safety inspection approval for 20 years of operation but needed to have the Coastal Commission and Water Board approvals before considering final operating licensing.

At this point, PG&E seems to be committed to getting everything in place to operate until 2030. It also seems that they have a strong desire to achieve a 20-year operating plan. We would expect that PG&E has a two-step approach in place designed to get the first step accomplished while keeping the second step from getting in the way. We have high hopes for the success of both steps.

Misleading Claims About Offshore Oil Drilling

What do you call it when candidates make a big fuss over non-existent issues? Fear-mongering, misdirection, fraud or outright fibbing? Some just call it campaigning.

One such issue keeps popping up around San Luis Obispo County lately. It's the silly suggestion that the only thing protecting us from offshore oil drilling are a few smart liberal politicians conquering the evil Trump Administration with meaningless resolutions and misleading stump speeches.



They attempt to conjure up visions of oil rigs dotting our coastline and fears of oil spills - all tools of the trade for such campaigners.

The reality is offshore oil drilling off San Luis Obispo County is not a reality.

To begin with it's not likely that there are any oil fields worth tapping off our coast. There's no interest in acquiring any new offshore oil leases by the oil industry. There is no onshore support or infrastructure to facilitate offshore oil drilling. And a significant part of our coast has now become off limits to drilling with the new Chumash Marine Sanctuary.

The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary became official on November 30, 2024.



According to the all wise Artificial Intelligence sources;
 “The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, established by the Biden administration, prohibits offshore oil drilling in the area. This sanctuary covers 4,543 square miles and extends 60 miles offshore, protecting a diverse ecosystem including humpback whales, sea otters, leatherback sea turtles, kelp forests, rocky reefs, and over 200 shipwrecks. The sanctuary's boundaries were selected after extensive environmental impact statements and consultations with Native American communities. The sanctuary's designation is a significant step towards environmental protection and conservation along California's coast.”



Assuming this is true, any candidate attempting to take credit for fighting against offshore drilling is either purposely misrepresenting the issue or is simply ignorant.

The next time you see a candidate puffing about offshore drilling, ask them to move on to real issues like local roads or government inefficiencies and overreach.

Rent Control Looming

As we reported last week, the San Luis Obispo City Council is pursuing the establishment of a rental registry. This is a move that requires landlords to file a great deal of information about their business and their properties with the city.

A Rental Housing Study Session was held on February 24 to “explore the issue”. To many in attendance, however, the idea seemed to be more of a forgone conclusion.

Advocates stressed the need for a registry as a means of improving rental conditions, combating gender inequality and fighting global warming.



The concept has had signals of approval from all five city council members. Naturally, cost is a consideration and is expected to be addressed in the forthcoming budget planning sessions. Don't be surprised to see hefty fees associated with registering, as well as heavily punitive fines for noncompliance.

For the council to pretend that this is anything but a direct move towards rent control is pathetic. It puts city government in the way of private property owners entering into private agreements with tenants. It assembles private information and makes it public. It is able to design data gathering to achieve pre-determined or desired outcomes that may or may not reflect the true nature of the rental business in the city. It creates an income stream and a force for increasing regulation by city staff. It opens the door for mandated rent control.

Seeing these kinds of government excesses in authority and activity makes one wonder where it all stops. How much government meddling is too much? When do liberals promoting such heavy-handed policies pause and choose to preserve some modicum of independence for the citizenry? Is there a straw that breaks the camel's back when it comes to being a landlord? When does it become more attractive to invest in things other than rental property?

The next scheduled San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting is Tuesday, March 10.

THE BIG EVENT

Don't wait to get your tickets for the 17th annual COLAB SLO Fundraising Dinner. This special evening takes place on Thursday, March 26 at the Madonna Inn Expo Center. It features a fantastic filet mignon dinner, an open bar, fine wines on the table, an exciting auction and guest speaker Katy Grimes, Editor in Chief of The California Globe. The room will be filled with community leaders, elected officials and people just like you. We hope to see you there. Contact COLAB at COLABSLO.ORG for details.



17TH ANNUAL DINNER & FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026
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Rep Kevin Kiley Files for Reelection as ‘No Party Preference’ in Bid to Combat Gerrymandering

Kiley stated, ‘Gerrymandering is a plague on democracy, one that Gavin Newsom has brought back to California’

By Megan Barth, March 7, 2026

California Republican Congressman **Kevin Kiley** announced Friday that he is seeking reelection in the newly redrawn Sixth Congressional District as a “No Party Preference” candidate, a move he frames as a direct response to partisan gerrymandering spearheaded by Governor Gavin Newsom.

In a video posted to X, Kiley stated, “Gerrymandering is a plague on democracy, one that Gavin Newsom has brought back to California. But there’s a way we can fight back and protect our democracy from his partisan games: by removing partisanship from the equation.”

The announcement comes amid the fallout from **Proposition 50**, a voter-approved measure in November 2025 that redrew California’s congressional districts, favoring Democrats in several seats, including those held by Republicans like Kiley.

Kiley, who previously represented the Third District, highlighted his frustration with hyper-partisanship in Congress, citing issues like the longest government shutdown in U.S. history, rising healthcare costs, and the ongoing **reports of fraud, waste and abuse** in California government. He emphasized that running without party affiliation aligns with nonpartisan local offices in California, such as mayors and sheriffs, and positions him as an “independent voice” accountable to constituents rather than party leaders.

Kiley acknowledged the race will be “more challenging” but expressed confidence in building a “winning coalition for common sense.”

The Sixth District, encompassing parts of the Sacramento area, leans blue, prompting some analysts to view his shift to independent status as a strategic pivot

to appeal to moderate voters. This decision resolves months of speculation about his political future, with reports indicating he considered multiple districts amid the redistricting upheaval.

The move underscores broader tensions in California politics following Prop 50, which targeted five Republican-held seats, including Kiley's former district. As the 2026 midterms approach, Kiley's independent bid could test voter appetite for nonpartisan representation in a deeply divided state under one-party control in the legislature and executive branch.

This sets up a high-stakes primary clash with Democratic candidates like Sacramento County District Attorney Thien Ho, former state Sen. Richard Pan (a name is synonymous with coercive public health policy and state overreach), and others vying for the seat.



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.

Chevron Warns of Irreversible Harm to California's Economy and Energy Security in Letter to Newsom

Democrats and Gavin Newsom stubbornly cling to carbon taxing – not because they are true believers – because it's a revenue-generating tax

By [Katy Grimes](#), March 4, 2026

Chevron just sent a letter to California Governor Gavin Newsom and the California Air Resources Board warning them of deep concerns and strong opposition to the CARB- proposed amendments to the Cap-and-Invest (formerly cap and trade)

regulation, that the state's few remaining refineries can't survive, and the California economy could be crippled.

“The proposed regulation will cripple the survivability of the state's remaining refineries, which will result in California losing the entire industry to this misguided program. This regulation will increase transportation and aviation fuel prices for consumers. It will risk significant job losses, including many high-paying union jobs, while reducing funding for essential public services. It will upend California's fuels market and threaten critical energy and national security assets.”

Over the weekend, the Globe reported that PBF Energy Inc. also warned CARB about “the stark reality the impacts the current CARB Cap & Investment program would have because of the state's remaining 7 refineries. And, CARB's “Proposed Amendments will only worsen the current state of the program, making costs skyrocket further. If enacted as written, the Proposed Amendments will inevitably drive in-state refining capacity to zero.”

The gist of Chevron's message to the governor and Air Resources Board is that California's economy and energy security cannot survive another refinery shutdown.

What is Cap and Invest (formerly cap and trade)?

California's cap-and-trade (invest) program places a “cap” on aggregate greenhouse gas emissions from businesses and utilities deemed “polluters” by the California Air Resources Board, which the CARB dubiously claims are responsible for most of the state's greenhouse gas emissions.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has taken a great deal of liberty, particularly with its interpretation of AB 32, California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. The CARB devised the cap-and-trade system whereby it holds a quarterly auction program requiring selected California employers to bid significant amounts of money for the privilege of continuing to pollute — or be faced with closing their doors.

The Air Resources Board issues carbon allowances, and businesses are forced to buy or sell these in the open market. Several other countries including Spain and Australia have already acknowledged carbon taxing does not work, but California's Air Resources Board, Democrats, and Gavin Newsom stubbornly continue on with carbon taxing – not because they are true believers – because it's a revenue-generating tax.

The CARB continues to push for more stringent regulations and taxes on California businesses and taxpayers, and lie that the goal is a reduction in greenhouse gasses. This is just another sizable tax on businesses. And instead of actually reducing carbon emissions through the cap and trade program, a business can merely purchase the get-out-of-jail credits to be able to continue (polluting) doing business.

It's really just a shakedown of California businesses.

Oil and gas and energy producers warn that the CARB's latest proposed regulations will increase costs on all refiners will devastate the state's energy economy.

In the letter, Chevron President Andy Walz cautions that the price of gasoline will increase by more than a dollar a gallon by 2030 as a result of this regulatory change, as well as 536,770 petroleum industry jobs could be lost in the state if CARB's proposal is authorized.

Walz continues:

The California energy industry's economic, industrial, environmental, and national security benefits have been the foundation of a healthy, prosperous state and nation. Adversarial policies at local, regional and state levels have eroded that foundation. These proposed regulatory changes threaten to destroy it. Chevron urges policymakers and regulators to reconsider and revise the proposed regulation before it causes lasting and irreversible harm to California's economy and energy security and broader vital American interests.

As the Globe has reported for years, CARB operates like no other state agency. The rogue agency conducts its business in private, without the scrutiny of the public it is accountable to. Despite legislative and public outrage over the shroud of secrecy at CARB, then-Assembly Speaker John Perez was said to have crafted the language for SB 1018, which specifically exempted CARB from open meeting rules in cap-and-trade auctions, allowing CARB's WCI Inc. to manage carbon trading auctions without any public scrutiny.

Gov. Newsom says CARB's cap and trade "puts cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health — particularly among communities and households facing greater economic and environmental challenges." But it's really a shakedown of businesses

the CARB deems “polluters” to pay for their unproved climate programs across the state.

And now Newsom, CARB and Democrats are about to crash California’s economy.



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.

The field is set: Meet the candidates officially running for California governor



BY YUE STELLA YUMARCH 6, 2026

It’s official: Eight Democrats and two Republicans say they have filed paperwork for the June 2 primary ballot in the California governor’s race, setting up a wide-open contest in which two Republicans who have consistently led in polls could shut out all other Democrats.

Here are the 10 candidates:

- Xavier Becerra, Democrat, former U.S. Health and Human Services secretary and former California Attorney General
- Chad Bianco, Republican, Riverside County Sheriff
- Steve Hilton, Republican, Fox News contributor and former adviser to conservative British prime minister David Cameron
- Matt Mahan, Democrat, mayor of San Jose
- Katie Porter, Democrat, former U.S. representative representing Orange County
- Tom Steyer, Democrat, billionaire entrepreneur and former presidential candidate
- Eric Swalwell, Democrat, U.S. representative from the Bay Area
- Tony Thurmond, Democrat, state superintendent of public instruction
- Antonio Villaraigosa, Democrat, former mayor of Los Angeles and former Assembly Speaker
- Betty Yee, Democrat, former state Controller

Steyer became the last to officially file on Friday, the deadline for submitting candidacy paperwork.

Former Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon exited the race earlier this week, endorsing Swalwell instead.

What's next?

The secretary of state's office says it will verify the paperwork their campaigns submitted and publish an official list of primary candidates by March 21.

The top two vote recipients in the primary, regardless of party, will advance to the general election. But the two Republican frontrunners enjoy more consolidated support from their base than their Democratic counterparts, who risk fragmenting the Democratic vote. At the February state Democratic Party convention, delegates were so split that no candidate earned enough votes for the party endorsement.

With the current field, there's a 27% chance of a Republican faceoff in November, according to statistical modeling by Democratic strategist Paul Mitchell.

The prospect is worrisome for many Democratic leaders, including state party leader Rusty Hicks, who earlier this week penned an open letter calling for those without a “viable path” to victory to drop out before the Friday deadline to file paperwork. And for those who remained, he pleaded, drop out by April 15 at the very latest if they couldn’t make “meaningful progress.”

The call appeared to fall on deaf ears, as eight of the nine announced Democratic candidates stayed in. Even if someone drops out now, their name will still appear on the primary ballot as long as they qualify, risking siphoning votes away from other Democrats.

Discounting the risk

When asked about the risk of a November shutout at a Thursday gubernatorial forum, several Democratic candidates brushed it aside while insisting they each would be voters’ best choice.

Villaraigosa told CalMatters the GOP base will coalesce behind just one candidate when President Donald Trump makes an endorsement.

“When that happens, that person is going to surge up and the other (Republican is) going to go down, it’s as simple as that,” he said.

Of the Democratic attendees at the forum, only Porter acknowledged the risk of a crowded field of Democrats.

“I think it is terrifying to think about what Trump would do to Californians if we had a governor who at every turn cooperated with him rather than stood up for our California values,” she said. “So I don’t think it’s a certainty, but I do think it’s a risk, and I think the stakes are very, very, very high.”

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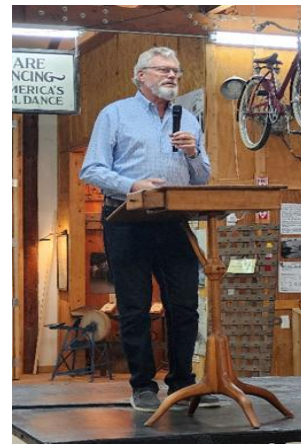
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