COLAB
San Luis Obispo County
The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

Weekly Update
Nov. 9 - 23, 2026

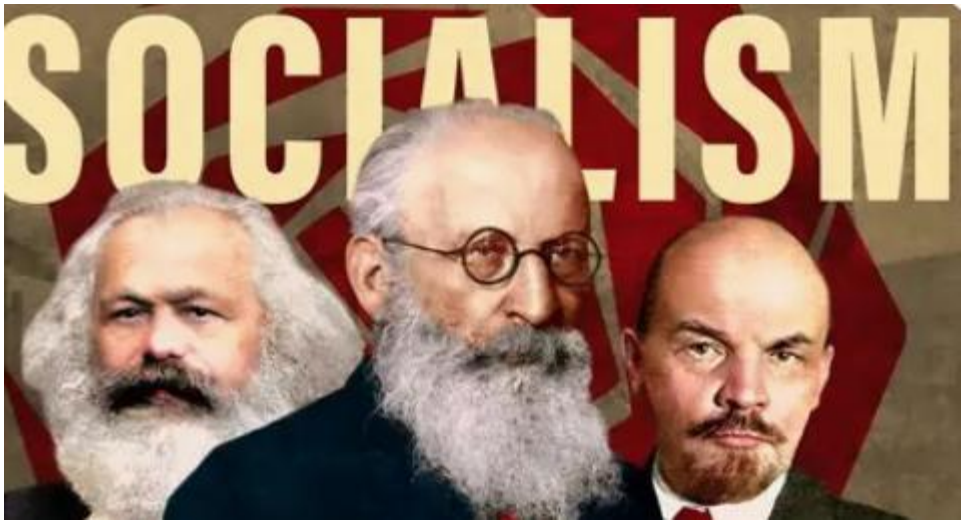
Heavy Bumage

There is not much to say about the election that hasn't already been covered, but there are plenty of questions. Our society apparently is ok with higher taxes, bigger government, more restriction and regulation and class envy driven punishment of success. Is that really what voters want?

It's hard to understand the contradiction that so many people made by declaring that the election was all about affordability and yet voters elected to raise taxes and support candidates wanting more (expensive) government. We are fast becoming a society seeking to mooch off of others. Higher taxes, more services, less accountability and socialism were the true victors in this election. Were those really the goals of the electorate?

The bold lessons from socialism everywhere else it has been tried beg to be learned, but are ignored instead. Whether it be California's death spiral or our national infatuation with socialism, it is clear that we are choosing a direction that history has illustrated as complete failure.

Let's stop lying to ourselves. Democratic Socialism is an oxymoron. One cannot survive in the presence of the other.



National heros?

We agree with Vice President Vance when he blames the Iran war for so many voters swerving left and are glad to see President Trump feels the same way. Vance, however, needed to pull up short in his analysis. We would add that the war itself is one issue, but the more confounding part was the President continuously glibly dismissing everybody's concern by claiming he had a deal on his desk, or it will be all over by the end of the week. These claims appeared to be out of touch and became tiring especially as gas prices continued to rise.

As much as it sounds like a crutch, a good deal of the blame also goes to the media. Socialists extolled the virtues of their half-baked ideas completely unchecked. Not a single socialist candidate could provide an example of where their favorite form of government thrived. Yet none of the major media outlets made reference to the 100% failure rate of socialism globally.

Midterm elections are famous for big partisan swings. President Trump will be faced with a new type of challenge – using his diplomatic skills to push back on the socialism tendencies of the left by convincing the public to support his path. Can he do that?

Here in California, we are reminded of the election and subsequent recall of Governor Davis. Will Bupkis Becerra do anything recall worthy? Will he do anything at all? Will conservatives spoil their chances of a recall by going after him too early, lacking a compelling enough issue to attract middle of the road voters?



Will Bupkis Becerra do more of nothing – or will he drive us further into debt?

In San Luis Obispo County, keeping common sense is critical. We will have three incumbent County Supervisors up for reelection. Each will face more liberal tax and spend regulatory loving opponents. The County Sheriff and District Attorney will also be on the ballot and will surely face equally left leaning opponents. Will we see common sense prevail or will we get into resource wasting dust ups that ultimately hand the BoS over to the left?

Deep down, the socialists making all the noise know that they need healthy enough capitalism to survive their money hungry quest for utopia. Their challenge is getting as many golden eggs as possible without killing the goose or alerting the public to their hypocrisy. Will their euphoria and pushy political correctness bring the liberals down next time around? Will the right people be ready to step in?

The only way to find answers to these and so many other questions is to be prepared. June 2028 is 17 months away. The election then will either solidify or repudiate far left politics. Now is a good time to begin getting ready.

Candidates Appreciated

We wish to share our appreciation with all those who were brave enough to step up to the challenge of running for office. Yes, even those with whom we seldom agree.

Some people are natural born public speakers. Some people understand marketing. Some people have really good ideas and some people find themselves in the right place at the right time. It's very rare that anybody has more than a couple of those traits.

Having persistence, commitment and a moral compass, along with any of the above, is a good place to start. Wanting to serve to make things better is a great reason.



However, even with all those things, campaigning for office is not easy. Yet, without a good variety of good candidates, we really don't have good elections.

If you have run, or are thinking of running, we are pleased that you have the desire to make a difference and wish you the best of luck.

Ambulance Update

Some confusion existed around agenda item #11 on the November 3 Board of Supervisors. The item read "Request to receive and file updates on the Ground Emergency Ambulance Transport competitive bid process." That's it. The "receive and File" part of the motion was apparently overlooked by nearly 25 public speakers at the meeting.

Most of the speakers advocated in favor of San Luis Ambulance (SLA), the existing service provider who has done so for 80 years. Others advocated for a competitive bid that would accommodate an "alliance model" where each community throughout the county serves as the service provider and utilizes a contract service with an ambulance company. The general assumption is that that provider would be American Medical Response (AMR).



San Luis Ambulance has done a great job for 80 years.

Many of the speakers delivered compelling arguments. They pointed out strong performance measures, community activities and personal stories of life saving experiences.

The thing is, this was not the occasion to advocate for either continuing the current contract or going out for a Request for Proposal. That was October 2025 when the BoS chose to pursue a RFP. It will again be appropriate when the RFP document has been approved.

In the meantime, the RFP process is being reviewed by the state. According to county staff, the review is expected to be completed in Januaray or Feburary of 2027. However, as Supervisor Peschong pointed out, a new state administration will be seated in Janurary, which could result in a significant delay.
Supervisor Moreno made a motion to create a parallel path to the RFP process which would allow the County Administrative office to conduct an assessment of precisely what would be expected from a new contract and determine how those needs are or could be reflected by the current service provider. The motion passed unanimously. It's unfortunate that when Moreno made a similar motion at the onset of the original RFP discussion, her idea was rejected. That idea might have been a path to achieving the goals that everybody seems to share without going through the current very challenging and uncertain process.



As we understand the next steps, they are that the state will approve a recommended RFP in early 2027. The bidders that respond will be evaluated by a third party (non conflicted) committee of emergency service providers from other areas of the state. It was not made clear whether the BoS will have any discretion over that committee's ranking, or even whether the BoS could suspend the RFP process before it is issued. We would expect that until the formal RFP is released, the BoS should have some discretion.

It is also important to realize that Supervisor Gibson will have left the BoS. His support of the RFP process has been clear, and we would assume he is supportive of the more government-centric alliance system. Where Supervisor Elect Dantona stands is not clear.

We hope the parallel approach suggested by Moreno brings some clarity to the process and offers options to the BoS as they continue to wrestle with this very important subject.

Budget Status a Cautionary Tale

Item 23 on the BoS agenda read: Consideration of a report regarding the County's Fiscal Year 2027-28 and Multi-Year financial forecast and provide direction as deemed necessary.

Our main observation continues to be the same: county revenues are being outpaced by expenditures. We are too big for our britches. Not critically so, but we are certainly are not in fine shape.

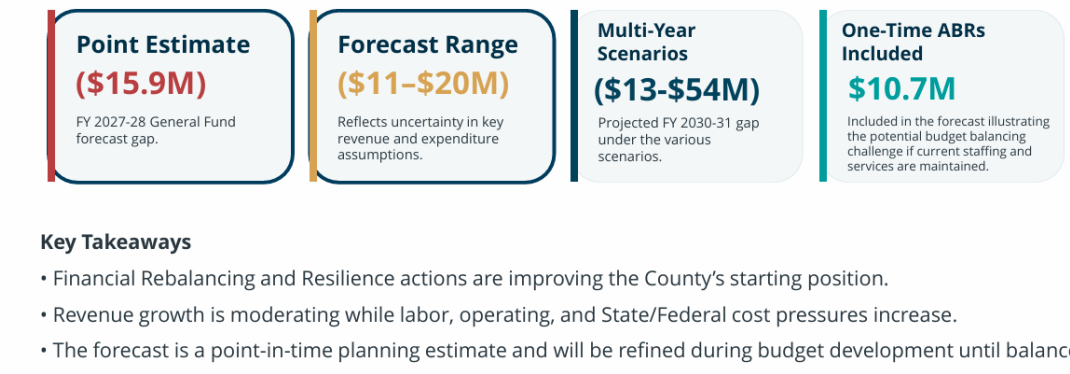
In many ways, the report seemed very much like the one last year at this time. It essentially concluded that our county is at risk of running a deficit of around $15 million plus or minus ish. The forecast was about the same last year, and we ended up finishing the fiscal year with a $9 million surplus.

This does not mean we take the forecast lightly. The forecast is based on a whole lot of assumptions which could be characterized as best guesses.

Some of these variables include state funding and reimbursements primarily in the Health and Human Services categories (but other state funded programs as well) along with federal funding in similar categories.
It also makes projections about labor costs that in many cases have not yet been negated.

One of the federal fund impacts will be the changes to H.R.1 which tightens Medicare eligibility and clamp downs on fraud. With recipients being cut from the program or having benefits trimmed, many will turn to county services to make up the difference. The BoS will have a report on anticipated impacts of the cuts at their November 17 meeting.

Here are some of the details that the Executive staff presented to the board:



While $15ish million doesn't seem like a lot against our nearly $1.2 billion budget, it gets pretty scary when projected out over multi-year scenarios. That said, our state constitution requires county budgets to be balanced and actually carries some liability when budget responsibility is ignored.

FY 2027-28 General Fund Forecast

Point estimate based on currently available information.

Financing Sources

$812.2M

Revenues, FBA and cancelled reserves.

Financing Uses

$828.2M

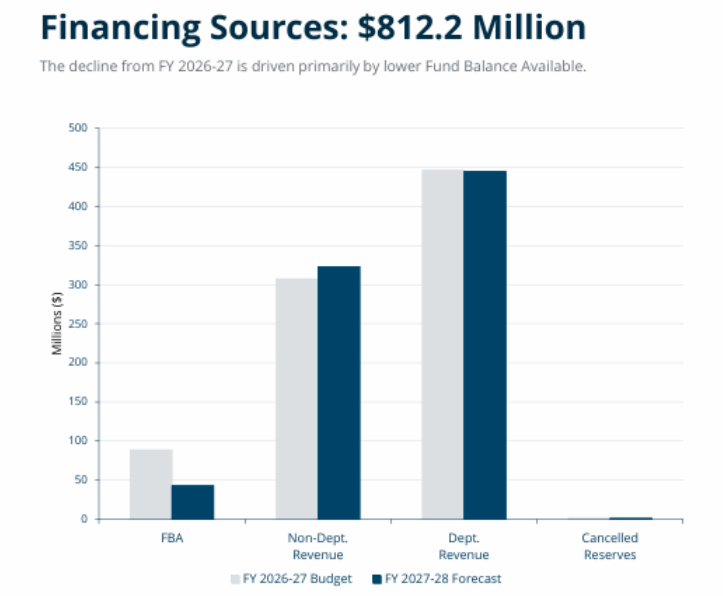
Labor, non-labor, contingencies and new reserves. Includes $10.7M of ABR-supported costs carried forward for forecasting purposes.

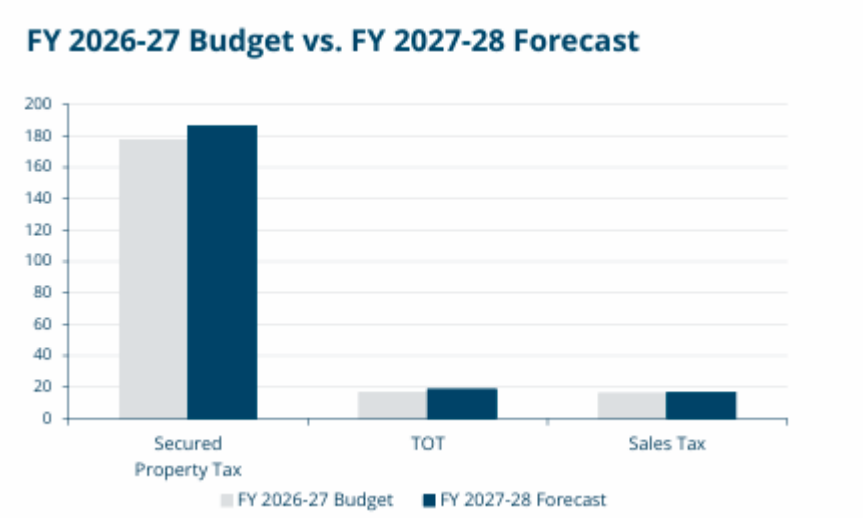
Point Estimate

($15.9M)

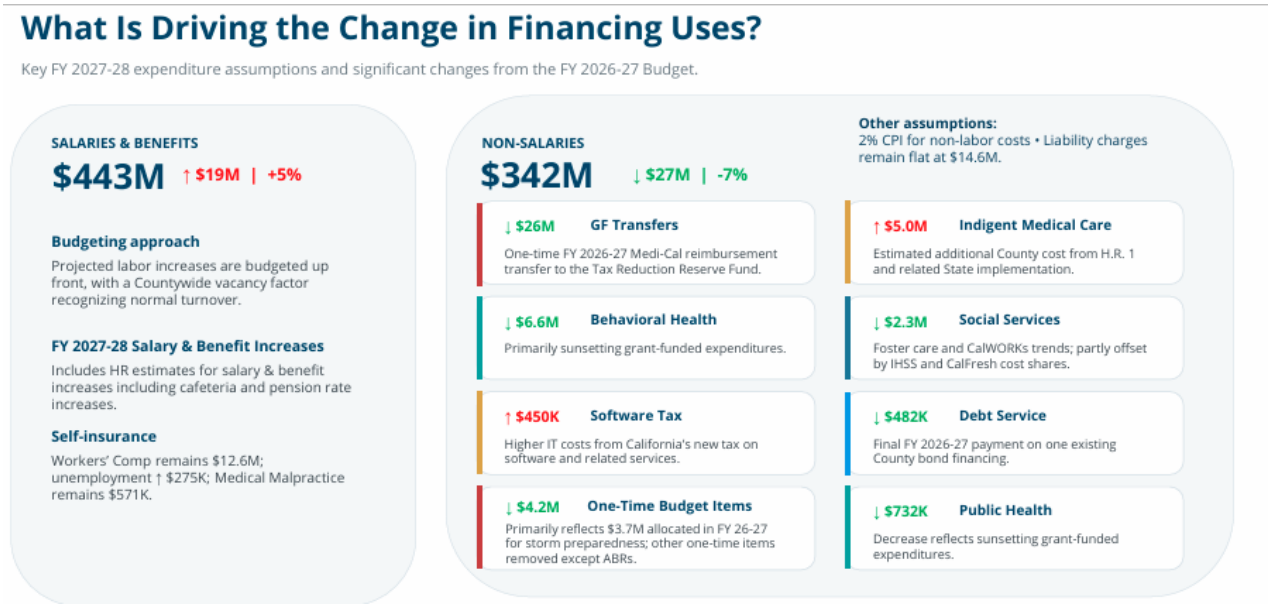
Forecast General Fund gap, inclusive of ABRs.

The graph below illustrates the growing gap between the current year budget verses the revenue forecast.





Main drivers for budget increases are listed below: As we mentioned, personnel salaries and wages are subject to negotiations. Predictability is never strong in this category, so educated guesses are the best that can be done.

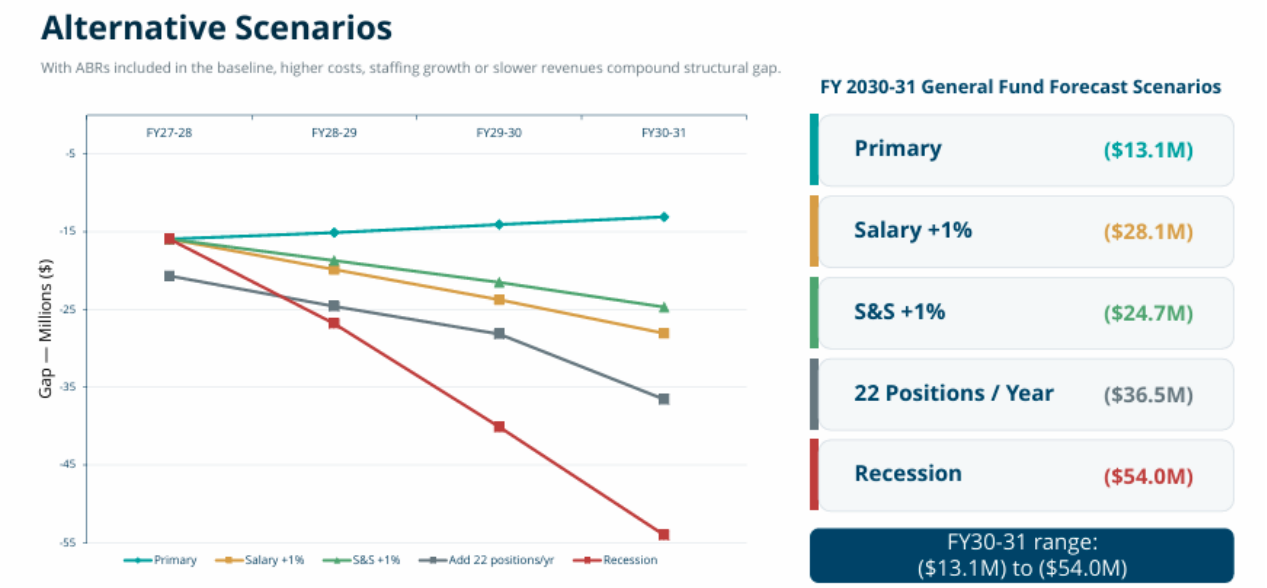


Even less predictable are the state and federal governmental funding sources. Technically, the state is also required to have a balanced budget, but politicians long ago learned tricks to manipulate the budget process to reflect a balanced budget when it was in fact way into the red. Of course on the federal side, all they do is print more money.



Re-emphasizing our point that we are spending more than we're bringing in, the following two graphs show how spending is outpacing our revenues.





Short of finding new ways to increase revenues, there really is no alternative for county government except to run as lean as possible. The problem there is that county leadership may balk at the idea of trimming budgets. It's far more popular to be Santa Claus than Scrooge. This is a particularly big deal considering there are three members of the Board of Supervisors up for re-election in 17 months.

The 27-28 budget cycle has already begun. Listed below is the timeline that will be followed to develop that budget.



We will keep you apprised of developments as they occur during this budget process. Expect some very difficult times for those depending on county support for their programs.

ICE Haters Again

It was no surprise to see a couple of ICE haters show up and make a fuss at the BoS meeting when an item came up regarding a grant that the Sheriff department received for upgrading their internal security systems.

The ICE Haters accused the Sheriff Department of using the updated security to somehow ruin the lives of the poor woebegone violent offender migrants who are not legally in our country.



Typical SLO ICE Hater

When it was explained that the security system upgrade was entirely for internal use applicable to all day-to-day activities, and had absolutely no connection what so ever to the direct handling of inmates (legal or illegal), the ICE haters continued to cackle and moan about the evil and illegal activities going on at the jail and how allowing ICE to arrest violent criminals as they are released from the jail is a horrible, terrible thing. One hater, in her diatribe, said that ICE is an illegitimate agency.



As usual, with no regard to the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution (or the recent 9th Circuit Court decision upholding that clause), they demanded that our Board of Supervisors tell ICE that they can't operate in San Luis Obispo County.

As they angerly yacked on about the awful treatment of violent illegal migrants, we were reminded of a recent story in Cal Coast News that enumerated some of the offenses of the people the ICE haters are so desperate to protect. Here is the list of noteworthy San Luis Obispo arrests from that October 19 story:

ICE arrests in San Luis Obispo, including charges

- Lam Le – homicide, assault
- Juan Marin-Hipolit – homicide
- Miguel Pere – homicide
- Chue Vue – homicide, assault weapons charges
- Jose Rod Odriguez Erazo – homicide, driving under the influence
- Marcelino Martinez Francisco – homicide, vehicular manslaughter
- Francisco Martin Esteban Roda – homicide
- Rafael Gamez-Sanchez – homicide

- Francisco Meza Cardena – assault, domestic violence
- Omar Estrada Catala – rape, strongarm
- Carlos Fernando Urre – sexual assault, robbery
- Eulises Castro Rodrigue – drug trafficking
- Juan Salgado Aguirr – false imprisonment, assault
- Esau Ballestros Diaz – vehicle theft, burglary
- Herwar Pineda Rio – robbery, vehicle theft
- Olueaseun Okuw – fraud
- Carlos Marbal-Pere – shoplifting
- Gabriel Guevara Moreno – molesting a child
- Ociel Del Carmen Calixto – burglary, vehicle theft
- Noe Tapia Sandova – assault, weapons
- Cristian Pardo Tirad – burglary
- Ruth Aleman Lopez – larceny, drug trafficking, assault
- Cristian Melgar Cermen – burglary
- Xian Ou, larceny, fraud
- Jesus Chavez-Radill – burglary
- David Maldonado Gonzales – child molestation
- Alejandro Dimas Ruela – sexual assault
- Jose Martinez Riz – vehicle theft
- Luis Aguilera-Martinez – burglary, larceny
- Norberto Arguelles Re – burglary, vehicle theft
- Felix Antoino Cru – extortion, threats
- Joel Esquivel Cruz – assault
- Jesus Garcia Alej – assault
- Gabriel Netz – arson, larceny
- Nestor Hernandez Sanchez – drug trafficking, vehicle theft
- Genaro Cortez Beltra – assault, false imprisonment
- Daniel Hernandez Sanchez – assault, robbery, violence
- Fabian Khamo – robbery, battery
- Walter Omar Castillo – sex assault, larceny, rape

We wonder how many of the above offenders would have been invited for Thanksgiving dinner at the homes of the ICE haters had they not been (thankfully) removed from our community.

The Countdown is at 3

With only three more Bos meetings to go before his retirement, we find ourselves wondering what more Supervisor Gibson has up his sleeve as he finishes out his 19 year run in office. We also wonder who we will have as an example of extreme out of step thinking, rudeness for public servants or long-winded circular soliloquies.

Most of all, we wonder what he will do to maintain his liberal bonafide's without COLAB picking on him from time to time.



Gibson always has a point to make … eventually.

We will venture a guess at his next vocation. He would fit right in as a member of the California Coastal Commission, but we don't see a path there. He would make an energetic advisor to the Newsom for President campaign, but that may be a little too uncertain. He might take some role with the County Supervisors Association of California, but his unfriendly disposition may hold him back there. So, our prediction, based on nothing but speculation, is that he joins forces with his close friend Tom Fulks in the political consulting business. They say doing what you love isn't work, and Gibson would certainly love electing more liberal big government types. After all, we all aren't paying our fair share in taxes and fees, so what would be better (in his mind) than electing more tax hungry (mis)representatives?

This Weekly Update will be on Hiatus Next Week, but Will Return on November 23.


COLAB
San Luis Obispo County
SAVE the DATE
18TH ANNUAL
DINNER &
FUNDRAISER
THURSDAY MARCH 18TH
5:30 PM
MADONNA INN EXPO CENTER
WATCH FOR DETAILS!

Last Week

Attention: Last Minute Voter

If you have not yet cast your ballot, please try to either vote in person at your polling place or put your ballot in a certified drop box. Relying on the post office cost nearly 100,000 voters throughout our state their vote in June due to late received ballots.



Voting in person is a pleasant experience.

According to San Luis Obispo County Clerk-Recorder, Elaina Cano; "Ballots mailed at the last-minute risk getting a late postmark or arriving past the deadline, and we can't count those."


Don't mail your ballot too late!

Your polling place is listed on your ballot. Voting in person takes about 5 minutes and it's the best way to be sure your vote is counted. Just take your mail-in ballot and trade it for an in-person ballot at your precinct polling place. If you are in a hurry, you can drop your completed mail-in ballot at your polling place in their certified drop box.



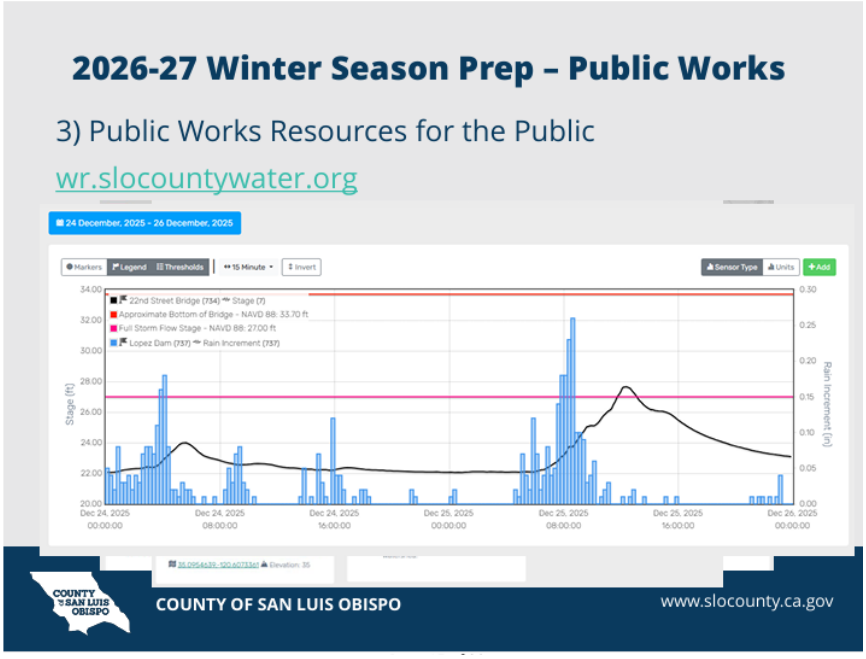
Use a drop off box if you can't vote in person.

For more information, including a list of drop box locations and polling places, FAQs, and more, visit SloVote.gov/November2026.

Singing in the Rain

As we reported last week, the San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Works has undertaken the "Super El Nino" winter storm threat very seriously. We covered some of their initial steps for winter storm preparedness last week which illustrated many of the activities done every year for winter storm prep.

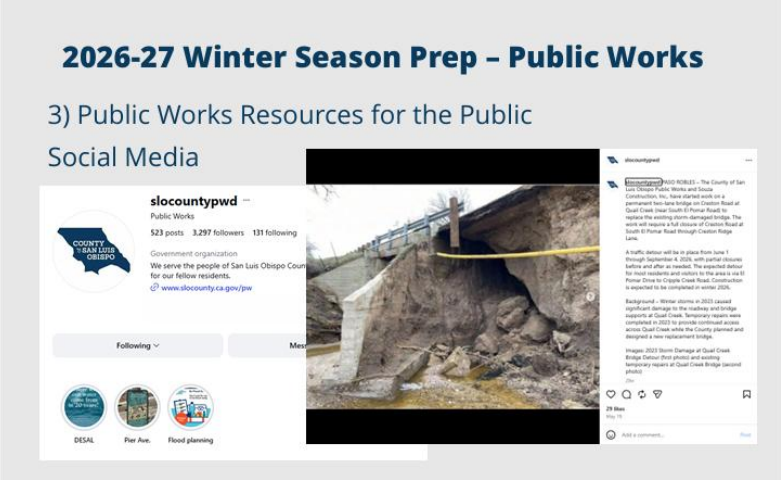
This week we are following up with more details about the extra work being put in to ensure preparedness. These slides were presented to the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors at their October 20 Board of Supervisors meeting. The whole report can be found at slocountywater.org.



According to Public Works," Since 2023, staff have mapped nearly 33 miles of storm drainpipes and over 1,000 inlets—giving teams better tools to identify vulnerabilities before, during, and after major storms."



They report "Crews have upgraded access, drainage, generators, and storage tanks, and finalized key emergency action plans. Major FEMA and Cal OES-funded permanent and temporary repairs— including at Lopez Reservoir, Salinas Dam, and the Nacimiento Pipeline—are complete, while multimillion-dollar mitigation projects continue to permanently relocate at-risk pipelines, improve access roads, and strengthen watershed protections."





Public Works have completed repairs on 85-90% of the 307 damaged sites along roadways and bridges throughout the county. Notable completions include Chimney Rock Road bridge and Creston Road bridge, with the Cecchetti crossing served by a temporary bridge until the permanent bridge is installed in 2027.



It is comforting to see the forward thinking and preparedness being exercised by Public Works and hope that their efforts lead to an easy winter storm season for SLO County.

Ag Gets Some Love

October 20 was a big day for agriculture in San Luis Obispo County. It began with the Board of Supervisors recognizing Dale Evenson as the SLO Cattleman of the Year and hanging his photo in the gallery of his peers in the Hall of Administration. This was followed by a luncheon for Cattlemen with most of the members of the BoS at the Madonna Inn.



Warren Voss introduces Dale Evenson to the BoS – an exercise entirely unnecessary!

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CATTLEMEN'S
ASSOCIATION
EST. 1944



A good-looking bunch of Cattlemen and Cattlewomen.



A well-deserved honor for Dale Evenson.

On the evening of October 20, the SLO Farm Bureau held its 104th Annual Meeting. Guests enjoyed an excellent BBQ dinner and program at the El Pomar Estates in Templeton.



Good food, fine company and a great cause.

The Future Farmers of America assisted with details throughout the evening which was planned and organized by Jesslyn Blank Membership & Social Media Manager of the Farm Bureau.



Guest Speaker California State Treasurer (and Lieutenant Governor candidate) Fionna Ma talked about the need to generate public awareness about agriculture and its role in California.



California State Treasurer Fiona Ma loves agriculture.



Lots of deserving recognition from Supervisors Ortiz Legg and Moreno.

Shelter Crisis Continues

With winter approaching, another preparation underway is shelter for the homeless population. At the November 3 BoS meeting, Supervisors are expected to adopt a

resolution continuing the status of having a “shelter crisis”. This started in 2018 and was renewed every year since.

According to Mr. Googly, “In California, a **“shelter crisis”** is an official designation used when there is a severe shortage of available emergency shelters for people experiencing homelessness, making it impossible to meet basic shelter needs for all in need”.

The most recent San Luis Obispo countywide Point-in-Time Count and Survey, which took place on Jan. 26, 2026, identified 1118 homeless individuals of which 452 were sheltered and 666 were unsheltered.



There never seems to be enough beds.

To address the crisis, the county adopted the following: “the local minimum building and life safety standards are adopted within the County of San Luis Obispo during the pendency of the shelter crisis. These standards and the suspension of law shall only apply to emergency shelters installed on: (i) property owned or leased by the County of San Luis Obispo; or (ii) an emergency shelter installed at the real property located at 10660 Los Osos Valley Road, San Luis Obispo, which is overseen and managed through the San Luis Obispo Superior Court through the County’s Receivership Action (San Luis Obispo Superior Court Case No. 22CV-0163) or by Restorative Partners subject to the prior written approval by the County Director of the Planning and Building Department. “

“An emergency shelter that is established pursuant to this Ordinance may only be operated for a twelve-month period commencing from the first day an individual uses the shelter for housing. In the event the shelter is proposed to be used longer

than twelve months, the local Chief Building Official and Fire Marshall shall have the right to establish more restrictive standards".



A sight nobody wants to see.

While we applaud the efforts of so many working to address the issue of homelessness in our county, and while we understand the complexity of working with people suffering from mental illness and drug addiction, we still can't help but wonder what the total annual expenditure of all homeless programs would be on a per person treated basis? We wish there was a more cost-efficient way to address the challenge.

The Beans Add Up

The Bean Counters are happy. Item 2 on the November 3 BoS agenda reads: Request to receive, review, and file the CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (CLA) Independent Accountants' Report on the County Treasury's cash balance and accountability for the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27.

The firm CliftonLarson LLP was contracted by our county to perform an Independent Accountants' Treasury Report Q1 FY 2026-27. As we understand it, this is a regular independent verification of the methods and systems used to manage the county funds and ensure that the balances all reconcile.

JAMES W. HAMILTON, CPA, COUNTY TREASURER
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
TREASURER'S DAILY REPORT

DATE: 03-Aug-26
2:41:01 PM

DISBURSEMENT SUMMARY:	
US Bank Control Disb.	1,235,955.38
EBT	331,555.74
FSA	6,091.50
Oceano Drainage Proj	22,613.39
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS:	1,596,216.01

Approved: Melissa Blackthorn Date: 8/03/26

INVESTMENT PURCHASE SUMMARY:	
CalTrust (daily balance)	140,000,000.00
LAIF (daily balance)	75,000,000.00
PIMMA (daily balance)	95,207,123.21
PLCMT DEP (daily balance)	75,000,000.00
AGENCIES	
SUPRANATIONALS	
TREASURIES	
TOTAL INV. PURCHASES:	385,207,123.21

COMBINED POOL INVESTMENTS:	
CalTrust	140,000,000.00
Agencies	655,613,060.44
LAIF	75,000,000.00
PIMMA	95,207,123.21
PLCMT DEP	75,000,000.00
Supranationals	306,816,292.06
Treasuries	420,250,520.18
INACTIVE TOTAL	1,767,886,995.89

BALANCE FORWARD	1,793,621,907.01
Receipts for Day	9,487,689.56
Returned Cks JE 1-2789564	(14,099.14)
Disbursements for Day	(1,596,216.01)
BALANCE	1,801,499,281.42

CURRENT MONTH RECEIPTS	
BALANCE FORWARD	0.00
Receipts for Day	9,487,689.56
Returned Cks JE 1-2789564	(14,099.14)
MONTH TO DATE	9,473,590.42

CURRENT MONTH DISBURSEMENTS	
BALANCE FORWARD	0.00
Disbursements for Day	(1,596,216.01)
MONTH TO DATE	(1,596,216.01)

BALANCE 1ST OF MONTH	1,793,621,907.01
Receipts for Month	9,473,590.42
Disbursements for Month	(1,596,216.01)
BALANCE	1,801,499,281.42

BANK ACCOUNTS:	
Banc of California	5,076,024.33
US Bank- Main	25,862,973.74
US Bank- EBT	968,092.69
US Bank- Deferred Comp	0.00
US Bank- SSDD	26,884.56
US Bank- US Govt. Loans	100.00
US Bank- Elec. Cr. Card	967,031.68
US Bank- FSA	166,109.67
OFFICE FUNDS:	
Vault Currency	59,900.00
Vault Coins	
Dollars	
Halves	
Quarters	230.00
Dimes	75.00
Nickels	26.00
Pennies	23.50
Vault Cash Drawer	
Currency: (100/50's)	2,000.00
" (20's)	2,320.00
" (10's)	550.00
" (5's)	355.00
" (2's)	0.00
" (1's)	84.00
Coin: Dollars	15.00
" Halves	8.50
" Quarters	10.00
" Dimes	4.90
" Nickels	1.70
" Pennies	0.42
TOTAL OFFICE FUNDS	65,604.02
Online Payments for Collection	479,464.84
Returned Items	0.00
BALANCE ON HAND	33,612,285.53
BALANCE	1,801,499,281.42

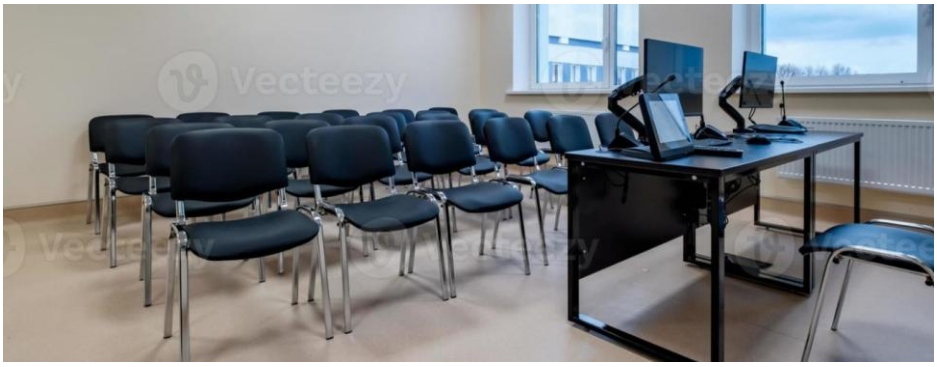
CLA included the following statement in their report:

We are required to be independent of the County of San Luis Obispo and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our agreed-upon procedures engagement.

The report found no issues with the accounting procedures as they relate to the various revenue streams for the county.

Local Control Going Down the Drain?

We have covered the lack of enthusiasm by members of the public to serve on special districts on several occasions. Of concern, the San Simeon Community Service District (and their financial woes) along with the now defunct Templeton Area Advisory Group (and their discord). We have been asking the question about whether the issues with these two boards are indicative of a bigger problem around our county.



Are we facing empty meetings from local boards?

Here is a complete list of special boards that need to have BoS appointments because nobody filed to run, or in some cases, only one person filed and it is cheaper to appoint than have an election for one person.

For the following Districts, nominees filed Declarations of Candidacy, and are to be Appointed In-Lieu of Election to the following positions:

Community Services Districts Heritage Ranch Community Services District Director – Michael Camou, Masen Yaffee, Bill Barker, Jr.
Los Osos Community Services District Director, Division 1 – Chuck Cesna Los Osos Community Services District Director, Division 4 – Chris Womack
San Simeon Community Services District Director, Area B – Michael Donahue
San Simeon Community Services District Director, Area E – Karina Tiwana
School Districts Allan Hancock Joint Community College District, Governing Board Member Trustee Area 5 – Gregory Pensa Atascadero Unified School District

Governing Board Members – Vy Pierce, Denise Mcgrew-Kane, Rebekah Koznek, Tracy Ellis-Weit
Cayucos Elementary School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 1 – Kerry Friend Cayucos Elementary School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 3 – Gretchen Ross
Coast Unified School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 3 – Lourdes Vargas Nilon
Pleasant Valley Joint Union Elementary School District Governing Board Member – Suze Evenson, Aaron Borden
San Luis Coastal Unified School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 4 – Mark Buchman San Luis Coastal Unified School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 5 – Catherine Slaughter
San Luis Obispo County Community College District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 3 – Scott R. Lathrop
San Luis Obispo County Board of Education Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 2 – Kathryn Madonna San Luis Obispo County Board of Education Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 4 – Juan Olivarria
San Luis Obispo County Board of Education Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 5 – Scott Knuckles
San Miguel Joint Union School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 1 – Aaron Hamilton
San Miguel Joint Union School District Governing Board Member, Trustee Area 2 – Jennifer Hanna
Shandon Joint Unified School District Governing Board Member (Partial Term) – Juliane Starks
Special Districts
Cambria Community Healthcare District Director, Division 2 – Laurie Mileur
Cambria Community Healthcare District Director, Division 3 – Bruce Nii Cayucos Sanitary District Director, Division 1 – John Curti Port San Luis Harbor District Commissioner, Division 3 – Mary Matakovich Port San Luis Harbor District Commissioner, Division 5 – Drew Brandy
Santa Margarita Fire Protection District Directors – Elizabeth Gorrill, Joel Switzer
Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District Director, Division 3 – Keith Hadick

For the following positions, there were no Declarations of Candidacy filed by the close of the nomination period. Therefore, pursuant to Elections Code §10515(b), each respective District submitted nominees and have requested that these persons be appointed to the following positions:

Community Services Districts Avila Beach Community Services District Directors – Pete Kelley, Ara Najarian, John Janowicz
Independence Ranch Community Services District Director – Cinde Stark Linne
Community Services District Directors – Ron Brown, Annette Feliciani, Mike Helmuth
Los Osos Community Services District, Governing Board Member, Division 2 – Thomas W. Maier
Oceano Community Services Director, Division 2 – Daniel Contreas Squire
Canyon Community Services District Director – Fernando Campos
Special Districts
Cambria Community Healthcare District, Division 4 – Debra Henderson Addis
Garden Farms Community Water District, Governing Board Members, Charron Sparks, Cory Pereria, and Jay Jamison Unfilled positions:
San Simeon Community Services District Director, Area C (Partial Term) San Simeon Community Services District Director, Area D Squire Canyon Community Services District – Partial Term Cayucos Sanitary District, Division 2 Cayucos Sanitary District, Division 3 (Partial Term)

Are public meetings becoming too acrimonious? Are toxic people clogging up the process so bad that reasonable people have no desire to deal with rude, cantankerous complainers who always seem to have gripes but never seem to have constructive solutions? Perhaps volunteers are growing tired of being yelled at, accused of awful things or just plain disrespected.



Whatever the cause, lack of participation on these special district boards and districts means a loss of local control and a lack of sufficient oversight. We will endeavor to publish the list of special districts before the filing deadline of the next election in hopes that more commonsense people would be willing to step up and serve.

Fall Forum Gets Better

The report last week on our Fall Forum wasn't up to snuff. It contained a couple of misspelled names (of people we care deeply about) and the photos weren't the best. So, we fixed it and are including it here again this week. If you were there, hopefully this will refresh good memories. If you missed it… well, read it and weep. (Just don't miss the next one!)

The COLAB Fall Forum, held on October 21 at Thousand Hills Ranch in Pismo Beach, was a tremendous success. Guest speaker Jon Coupal, President of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, shared his expertise about taxes in general and especially the impact of Propositions 43, 42 and 41.

The 100 or so attendees who braved the rain were treated to good company, fine refreshments and a great deal of insight. We appreciate their attendance.



The venue: Thousand Hills Ranch



COLAB President Jeanne Helphenstine brings the event to order.



Former Congresswoman and Central Coast Taxpayer Association President Andrea Seastrand introduces Jon Coupal.


Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association President Jon Coupal talks taxes and urge's support of Props 41, 42 and 43.



Ben Higgins fields questions from the audience.



Plenty of fine refreshments.



Thanks to Debbie and Steve Arnold for the Vintage Cowboy wine.



Great boardmembers, great bartenders!

"Special thanks to hosts Allan and Cee Teixeira, COLAB Directors and first-class bartenders Mike Frederick and Tyler Riley, COLAB Director and MC extraordinaire Ben Higgins for the Q&A and former Congresswoman Andrea Seastrand for the great introduction. Also, special appreciation to those in attendance who joined COLAB."

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California Electricity Rates Are Going Ballistic

Reminder: The last page of this newsletter has a membership application. Please join COLAB.

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Steve Hilton: Californians Still Want Change

'Two-thirds of Californians want change, and yet roughly two-thirds voted for more of the same'

By Katy Grimes, November 5, 2026

"Californians still want change," Steve Hilton said at a press conference Thursday in Sacramento. "I want to see the things I argued for happen in California." He reiterated that the desire for change in California has not gone away with the election.

"I love this state," Hilton said. He plans to take a few weeks off, "but I will be back."

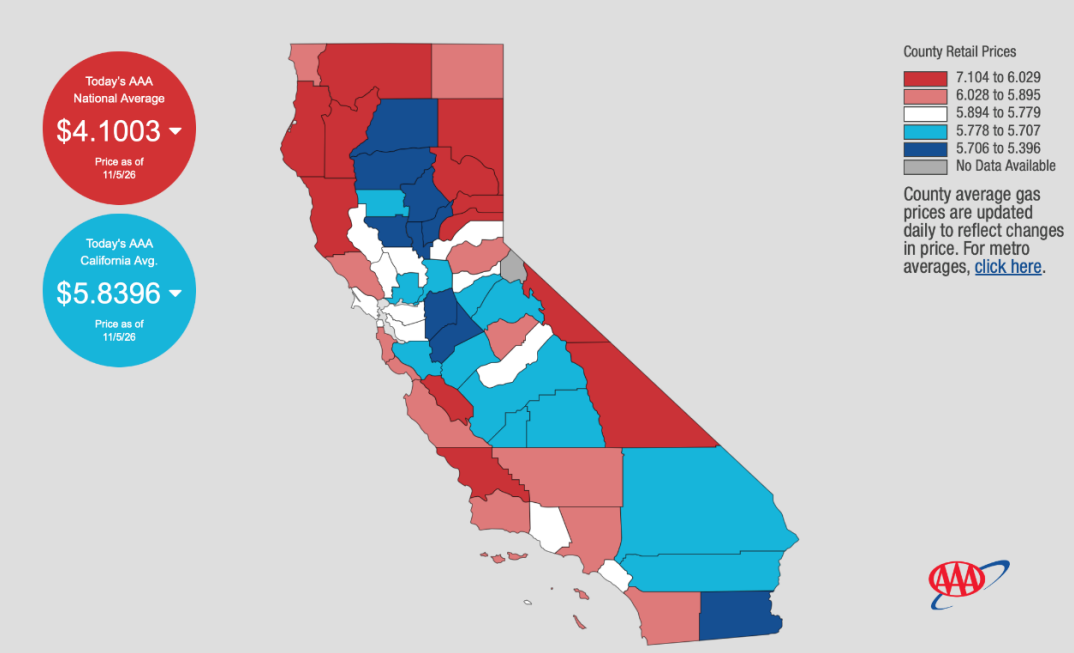
Hilton thanked the media for covering the campaign, the team that built it, and the supporters and volunteers who joined. He noted the campaign was positive and focused on solutions rather than only complaining about what has gone wrong.

"Two-thirds of Californians want change, and yet roughly two-thirds voted for more of the same," Hilton said. "That has not changed the fact that people still want something different. I wish Xavier Becerra well, and I hope he brings the change we fought for."

The test for Becerra, Hilton said, is whether he actually brings costs down. He pointed to gas prices at or below the national average, lower housing costs, and relief on electric bills, groceries and insurance as clear measures.

"There is no reason Xavier Becerra can't bring gas prices down, with an even bigger supermajority," Hilton said gesturing toward the State Capitol. He said Becerra could at the very least cut gas prices in California to the national average.

Today AAA reports that the national average price for a gallon of gas is $4.10. California's average price for a gallon of gas is $5.84 per gallon.



At $4.10 per gallon, a tank of gas is $82.00. At $5.84 per gallon, a tank of gas is $116.80 – a $34.80 difference.

$34.80 can buy milk, bread, eggs, meat, peanut butter and broccoli.

“You want to help working class people – cut gas prices,” Hilton said.

Hilton discussed affordability – the buzzword of the election. “We all agree that is the issue,” Hilton said. “They [Democrats] are in a position to deal with that.” He noted that California has the highest cost of living, highest grocery costs and highest gas prices. “We can measure that and see how they do.”

Hilton said his campaign put forward practical ideas and built from nothing an army of small-dollar donors. Hilton called it a model for lifting up working people and small business owners with positive solutions.

Hilton was everywhere, criss-crossing the state every day, during his campaign. He was accessible, met thousands of regular working people, and heard their concerns, while Xavier Becerra hid in Joe Biden’s basement.

“Regular working people in California are at breaking point,” Hilton said. “That is what I have heard for a year and a half. I hope the people who control policy in this state understand it.”

“California should be the best place to start and raise a family, and start and run a business,” Hilton added. “Millions of people left California during Gavin Newsom’s two terms. I’m confident we will elect a Republican governor in the next election.”



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.

Another Troubling Case Involving a Violent Illegal Immigrant Highlights the Real Problem With Sanctuary Rules

The case surrounding Leomar Alexander Lopez Zambrano, and how he’s managed to slip loose from captivity

By Michael Letts, November 5, 2026

There are a lot of people online that ask the question, “Well, what good are ICE agents doing?” They’re quick to point out the “mistakes” agents make while in the field, without actually looking at the progress that’s being made. What’s worse, they see violent illegal immigrants as their equals, when, in fact, they’re responsible for harming – or even killing – innocent civilians. It doesn’t make any sense. Obviously mass media has its role in painting ICE in a negative light, as do hundreds of thousands of social media users who insist they have a “bead” on what’s going on. But the truth of the matter is this – ICE is out there making outstanding progress in stopping some of the worst of the worst criminals out there, from child molesters to murderers to rapists.

And if you need a prime example of a particular case where ICE is stepping up as others back away, look no further than the case surrounding Leomar Alexander Lopez Zambrano.

Zambrano initially entered the United States through Texas back in June 2023. At the time, he was arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol, but, thanks to the laziness of the Biden Administration at the time, he was released *into the country*. Not sent back to his own country, mind you. Into *ours*.

Since that time, Zambrano has been arrested and convicted of two counts of third-degree child molestation. That's right, since Biden felt the need to release him into our fold, Zambrano sexually attacked children. He has since been convicted and sentenced to 15 months in Seattle, where he's currently serving his sentence.

Now the case is already problematic enough as it is. But hang on, because it's about to get worse.

See, Washington officials consider themselves a sanctuary state. For those unfamiliar with that statement, sanctuary states essentially act in favor of illegal immigrants, protecting them from outside prosecution – no matter how heinous their crimes are.

Back in October, ICE filed a retainer asking Washington authorities to not release Zambrano upon completion of his sentence. However, they have not heard back, and should he complete his term before it's given consideration, he'll be released. Which means he'll be free to commit even more heinous crimes against children or whoever else he goes after.

That's a real problem. Some of these politicians feel the need to apply their sanctuary rules over common sense. We're talking about sending a criminal back *out* of the United States, where he belongs, before he can harm any other innocent civilians. But these leaders would rather turn a blind eye just to prove they're right, instead of actually delivering true justice.

And the Department of Homeland Security is in full agreement with me here. They noted in a statement, "This illegal alien has been convicted on TWO counts of child molestation, yet sanctuary politicians in Washington are refusing to honor the ICE detainer and hand this disgusting criminal over to us after he finishes his prison sentence," DHS Secretary Markwayne Mullin noted.

"Sanctuary politicians care so much about illegal aliens that they'd rather release a convicted child molester than cooperate with federal law enforcement. DHS is calling on Washington authorities to honor this detailer and cooperate with us so we can make sure this pedophile can never again roam our streets and harm American children."

Absolutely. The blind eye these leaders are turning is absolutely problematic, and the harm that may come to the victims of Zambrano – as well as anyone else he could possibly hurt – will come back on them.

This is just another reason that Trump should look into punishing sanctuary cities and states that follow their own rules instead of working closely with the federal government to stop these dangerous criminals. If they won't learn on their own accord, then it's up to our President to keep our children safe and tell it as it should be.

Remember, sanctuary is about keeping *everyone* safe. Not a selective process that takes care of dangerous criminals.



Michael Letts
Michael Letts is the Founder, President, and CEO of InVest USA, a national grassroots non-profit organization that is helping hundreds of communities provide thousands of bulletproof vests for their police forces through educational, public relations, sponsorship, and fundraising programs. He also has over 30 years of law enforcement experience under his belt, hence his pro-police stance for his brothers and sisters in blue.
Those interested in learning more about Letts can visit his official website at https://investusa.org/our-team

California Electricity Rates Are Going Ballistic

Ratepayers are revolting against the high rates of the LA Department of Water and Power

By James Enstrom and Ronald Stein, November 5, 2026

California electricity rates are the highest in the continental US, double the national average. The City of Los Angeles electricity rates have risen about 45% since 2023,

far outpacing inflation, as the utility has made several rate increases to address deferred maintenance, aging equipment, and new infrastructure projects. Now politicians decry the rate machine they built for these high electricity rates. Furthermore, Los Angeles ratepayers are revolting against the high electricity rates of LADWP.

One reason for the escalating electricity rates that has not received proper attention is LA100, the costly renewable energy program that began in 2021. The "Net Zero" goal of LA100 is 100% renewable (solar and wind) electricity in Los Angeles by 2035 in order to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a way to combat the "climate crisis." LA100 is much more aggressive than the California's SB100 (The 100 Percent Clean Energy Act of 2018), which has a goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2045.

However, Net Zero ideological policymakers within California and the City of Los Angeles remain oblivious to the reality that the State of about 40 million residents, and the City of Los Angeles with a population of about 4 million, are minuscule players contributing to the world's climate and GHG emissions.

Realities that California Net Zero ideologs are oblivious to:

- With a population of about 40 million, of the 8 billion living on this planet, 99.5% of them DO NOT live in California.
- GHG reduction is a symbolic effort because California generates less than 1% of world GHG emissions.
- Diffusion of GHG emissions globally means that local reduction of GHG emissions will barely reduce GHG exposure in California.
- California has no control over the increasing worldwide GHG emissions, like those from China.
- California residential electricity rates are the highest in the continental United States and are nearly double the national average rate.

Realities that the City of Los Angeles Net Zero ideologs are oblivious to:

- With a population of about 4 million, only 0.05% of the 8 billion on this planet live in the City of Los Angeles.
- Los Angeles is the only major US city attempting a costly transformation to 100% renewable energy by 2035.
- The goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035 is impossible because it requires complex transformation of the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity.
- Energy reliability is reduced because solar and wind are not 24/7 sources of electricity.
- The current LADWP electricity rate per kWh is already among the highest in the US at 32 cents compared to the US average rate of 18 cents and the lowest state rate of 13 cents.

- LA100 is projected to increase LADWP electricity rates 3 to 4 times by 2035.
- A large portion (25%) of LADWP ratepayer accounts are already in arrears and the portion is much higher in the poorest parts of Los Angeles.
-

Both SB100 and LA100 have increased the cost of electricity in California and Los Angeles, and these costs to ratepayers will be increasing significantly in the years ahead. The cost of the Net Zero policies is born by ratepayers at a time when their top concern is the high cost of living, not climate change. A high rate relief plan has just been approved by the LADWP Commissioners. However, this plan is only temporary and many LADWP policies, like LA100, need to be reassessed and changed in order to reduce electricity rates being paid by ratepayers

Please share this information with teachers, students, and friends to encourage Energy Literacy conversations at the family dinner table.

Click this Link to **Sign up for Energy Literacy from Ronald Stein**

Dr. Enstrom can be reached at jenstrom@ucla.edu



James Enstrom and Ronald Stein

James Enstrom, PhD, MPH, is a retired UCLA Research Professor, President of the Scientific Integrity Institute, and CO2 Coalition Team Member. He has doctoral level training in both physics and epidemiology. He strongly promotes the need for integrity in environmental science and a proper balance of environmental factors and lifestyle factors in human health.

Ronald Stein, P.E. is an engineer, columnist on energy literacy at America Out Loud NEWS, and advisor on energy literacy for the Heartland Institute and CFACT, and co-author of the Pulitzer Prize-nominated book "Clean Energy Exploitations". He has been featured in Fortune Time Magazine as one of The Most Influential Voices Driving Energy Literacy in 2026

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bgibson@co.slo.ca.us

SLO County Supervisor Heather Moreno
805-781-4339 District
hmoreno@co.slo.ca.us

SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg
805-781-5450 District
dortizlegg@co.slo.ca.us

SLO County Supervisor Jimmy Paulding
805-781-4337 District
district4@co.slo.ca.us

SLO County Supervisor John Peschong
805-781-4491 District
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