



COLAB SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

WEEK OF JANUARY 24-30, 2016



DINNER & FUNDRAISER

2016 - The Year of Opportunity!



Peter Adam

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Chair

How Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties
can Win the Wild West (Coast)

Friday, March 11, 2016

Alex Madonna Expo Center,
San Luis Obispo

5:15 PM - Social Hour, No Host Cocktails

6:15 PM - Filet Mignon Dinner including Wine

Exciting Auction!

LIVE BAND with Dancing!

\$125 per person / \$1100 per table of 10

Reserved seating for tables of 10

For tickets, mail your check to:

COLAB, PO Box 13601,
San Luis Obispo, CA, 93406

For more information call: (805) 548-0340

or email to COLABSLO@gmail.com

Don't Miss One of the Biggest Parties in San Luis Obispo County!
Cocktail Attire Optional



POWERFUL AND PROVOCATIVE, DEAD HARVEST DOCUMENTS HOW FEDERAL LAWS AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAWSUITS ARE DEVASTATING CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY, WHERE A QUARTER OF AMERICA'S FOOD IS PRODUCED.

ALSO EXPOSES STATE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT HYPOCRISY

(Please share this with everyone you know)

[CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW TO WATCH THE DOCUMENTARY](https://vimeo.com/149917045)

© 2015 National Alliance for Environmental Reform

<https://vimeo.com/149917045>

THIS WEEK

**APCD TO HIRE CIVILITY FACILITATOR
AND
RETAIN ITS DIRECTOR WITH A RAISE
AND
TO ELECT CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

COUNTY SALARIES ON AUTOMATIC PILOT?

END OF PASO WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**PLANNING COMMISSION TO CONSIDER
PROJECTS IN NIPOMO AND TEMPLETON**

SLO COLAB IN DEPTH

(SEE PAGE 13)

AN ENGINEERED DROUGHT

THE ARTICLE TIES TO THE DEAD HARVEST VIDEO AVAILABLE AT THE TOP OF THIS WEEKLY UPDATE

LAST WEEK

**NO BOARD MEETING LAST WEEK
(OTHER AGENCIES DORMANT AS WELL)**

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, January 26, 2016 (Scheduled)

Items 9, 10, and 11 - Approval of Resolutions Granting Salary Increases to Various Employee Classes. Item 9 is minor and adjusts the salaries of a very small group of rank and file employees who are in position classes which are normally in unions but are excluded because they work in sensitive areas such as Human Resources and have access to data that can impact labor negotiations. Because of the potential conflict they were not included in raises previously negotiated by the unions. This adjustment gives them salary parity with their colleagues who are in unions.

On the surface, Items 10 and 11 would not seem to be a huge issue because the raises involved are a relatively small amount when viewed in the context of the County's \$546 million annual budget. Item 10 raises add \$38,024 to the County's ongoing costs and Item 11 adds \$353,057 to ongoing costs.

“Prevailing Wage”: The more significant issue is the underlying cause for granting these raises. In addition to regular collective bargaining mandated by state law, under which the County and its employees negotiate wages, health benefits, pension benefits, hours, and conditions of work, the County operates under a self-imposed local mandate entitled “Prevailing Wage.” This provision, approved by the county voters in 1984, enshrines the pernicious government practice of selectively adjusting wages and benefits to be equal to those in “comparable” jurisdictions. San Luis Obispo County's ordinance is displayed below:

- **2.48.180 - Prevailing wage.**

In fixing compensation to be paid to persons in the county's employ, the board of supervisors and every other authority authorized to fix salaries or wages, shall provide a percentage change in compensation at least equal to the percentage change in compensation for the same quality of service rendered to persons, governmental agencies, firms or corporations under similar employment.

Prevailing salaries or wages shall be determined by negotiations between the county's employer representatives and the recognized employee organization(s).

In case such prevailing salaries or wages cannot be agreed to by parties, the matter may be submitted to a mutually selected arbitrator who shall make advisory recommendations to the negotiation parties.

(Ord. 1260 § 4, 1973: amendment adopted by the voters 11/4/84)

Note that in the section highlighted in green, the unions are required to be participants in the determining prevailing wages, which in turn means in determining the “comparable jurisdictions.” The currently negotiated list is displayed to the right.

Note that virtually every County on the list (except Eldorado, which is only slightly larger) is substantially larger than SLO County. Several are in the high wage SF Bay Area labor market, and one (Fresno, population - almost 1 million) hosts a metropolitan city. Of course, Placer serves as both the affluent bedroom and corporate campus community for Sacramento and contains the north shore Tahoe elite resorts. Conveniently the only city included is San Luis Obispo, which is renowned for its high labor costs and rich staffing patterns. Generally the County HR Department establishes an arithmetic mean for comparable positions in these counties and then determines how much below that mean San Luis County employees are paid in salary, in benefits, and in total compensation. A sample page from the table illustrating this calculation is displayed on the next page. The entire table is too long to reproduce here but can be accessed at the link:

| Survey Agency |
|-------------------------|
| Cal Poly |
| City of San Luis Obispo |
| El Dorado County |
| Fresno County |
| Kern County |
| Monterey County |
| Placer County |
| San Luis Coastal USD |
| Santa Barbara County |
| Santa Cruz County |
| Sonoma County |
| State CA |
| Ventura County |
| Private Sector ERI |
| San Luis Obispo County |

<http://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/agenda/sanluisobispo/5568/QXR0YWNoWVudCBFIC0gU2FsYXJ5IFN1cnZleS5wZGY=/12/n/55641.doc>

Please continue on the next page.

SLOCEA Big Unit
Salary Survey

San Luis Obispo County
Agricultural Inspector/Biologist II

| Survey Agency | Comparable Class | Range Max. | EE Ret Contrib | Cash Cum. | Health EE | Health EE + 2 | Avg. Health | Inc. Cum. | Uniform | Ed. Incent. | Total Comp |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|-------------|----------------|---------|-------------|----------------|
| Cal Poly | No Comparable Class | | | | | | | | | | |
| City of San Luis Obispo | No Comparable Class | | | | | | | | | | |
| El Dorado County | AG Biologist/Standards Inspector II | \$4,607 | -\$138 | \$4,469 | \$919 | \$2,311 | \$1,615 | \$6,084 | | | \$6,084 |
| Fresno County | Agricultural/Standards Specialist II | \$4,645 | -\$469 | \$4,176 | \$483 | \$700 | \$592 | \$4,768 | | | \$4,768 |
| Kern County | Ag Biologist/Weights And Measures Inspector II | \$4,356 | -\$123 | \$4,233 | \$1,083 | \$1,083 | \$1,083 | \$5,316 | | | \$5,316 |
| Monterey County | Agri Inspector/Biologist II | \$5,664 | -\$396 | \$5,268 | \$704 | \$1,654 | \$1,179 | \$6,447 | | \$8 | \$6,455 |
| Placer County | Agricultural & Standards Inspector II | \$5,433 | -\$410 | \$5,023 | \$810 | \$2,017 | \$1,414 | \$6,436 | | | \$6,436 |
| San Luis Coastal USD | No Comparable Class | | | | | | | | | | |
| Santa Barbara County | Agricultural Biologist II | \$5,123 | -\$190 | \$4,933 | \$1,148 | \$1,148 | \$1,148 | \$6,082 | | | \$6,082 |
| Santa Cruz County | Ag/Wgts & Meas Ins II | \$5,526 | -\$387 | \$5,139 | \$705 | \$1,736 | \$1,220 | \$6,360 | | | \$6,360 |
| Sonoma County | Agricultural Biologist/Standards Specialist II | \$5,560 | -\$658 | \$4,902 | \$626 | \$626 | \$626 | \$5,528 | | | \$5,528 |
| State CA | Associate Agricultural Biologist | \$5,752 | -\$460 | \$5,292 | \$572 | \$1,478 | \$1,025 | \$6,317 | | | \$6,317 |
| Ventura County | Agricultural Inspector III | \$4,151 | -\$395 | \$3,756 | \$644 | \$644 | \$644 | \$4,400 | | | \$4,400 |
| Private Sector ERI | Biologist | \$6,380 | | \$6,891 | | | | \$6,982 | | | \$6,982 |
| San Luis Obispo County | Agricultural Inspector/Biologist II | \$5,195 | -\$326 | \$4,869 | \$751 | \$751 | \$751 | \$5,620 | | | \$5,620 |
| | Median | \$5,433 | | \$4,833 | | | | \$8,084 | | | \$8,084 |
| | % +/- Median | -4.8% | | -1.3% | | | | -8.3% | | | -8.3% |

As a result of the so-called “prevailing wage” provision, current labor contracts for over 1460 employees contain the following language:

8.2.2 Effective the pay period that includes July 1, 2015, wages shall be increased by An additional amount for those classifications determined to be under market by more than 5%. The additional adjustment for under market classifications shall be funded through a pool of 0.3% of payroll (base pay plus wage-related rollup costs) for the entire bargaining unit based on actual bargaining unit payroll effective the payroll including January 1, 2015. The under market classifications and the additional adjustments for those classifications shall be determined through negotiations commencing on or before March 1, 2015.

Note that the provisions are retro-active: One of the most important tried and true management rules of collective bargaining is: **Never agree to retro-activity.** Once the unions know that they can obtain retro-active payments, they have no incentive to settle and will drag out negotiations until they get what they want.

The Board letter indicates that the general contract for some of the affected employees was retro-active to July 1, 2014.

Some questions and recommendations:

1. Why would the voters have locked the County into such a cost driver?
2. Most government employees are not going to run up to Fresno or Sonoma to change jobs. Nor are they going to jump into the private sector, which does not have defined benefit pensions, lock step raises, Cadillac health insurance (the Obama Care term), and the double protection of civil service and unions.

3. Is there any data that indicates that the County is having trouble recruiting and retaining civilian employees? If not, why are the taxpayers being subjected to this automatic pilot provision?
4. Given the vast expansion of State and local government's intrusive and costly expansion since 1984, a popular ballot measure would be to rescind this ordinance.
5. Ask your supervisorial candidates what they think of this one.

Item 24 - Termination of the Paso Water Basin Advisory Committee. The term of the 26-member Committee is scheduled to sunset. The Committee is not requesting to be continued. If the new Paso Basin Water District is approved by the voters, some of the members will have a new venue and something to fill their evenings. After all, the new local control district would never consider meeting in the daytime, when the public is at work and cannot attend, would it?

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Meeting of Wednesday, June 27, 2016 (Scheduled)

Item A-1: Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for 2016. The staff report states:

The APCD Board Rules of Procedure require that, at the first regular meeting of the calendar year, a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the majority vote of the members present and shall preside in those positions for one year. On January 28, 2015, Adam Hill, Supervisor from District 3, was elected to Chair the APCD Board and Noah Smukler, City of Morro Bay Councilmember, was elected as Vice Chair; both have served in those positions throughout 2015.

The custom established by past Boards has been to alternate the Chair and Vice Chair between members from the Board of Supervisors and members from the cities, with the Vice Chair of the prior year, if still on the Board, traditionally being elected as Chair for the succeeding year. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Immediate Past Chair also serve on the Board Executive Committee, with the Board Chair serving as Chair of that committee.

Past Chairs

| | |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| 2010 | Karen Bright, City of Grover Beach |
| 2011 | Bruce Gibson, Supervisor, District 2 |
| 2012 | John Hamon, City of Paso Robles |
| 2013 | Paul Teixeira, Supervisor, District 4 |
| 2013 | Roberta Fonzi, City of Atascadero |
| 2014 | Roberta Fonzi, City of Atascadero |
| 2015 | Adam Hill, Supervisor, District 3 |

Past Vice Chairs

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| Bruce Gibson, Supervisor, District 2 |
| John Hamon, City of Paso Robles |
| Adam Hill, Supervisor, District 3 |
| Roberta Fonzi, City of Atascadero |
| Adam Hill, Supervisor, District 3 |
| Adam Hill, Supervisor, District 3 |
| Noah Smukler, City of Morro Bay |

Item C-9: More Social Engineering - Replacement of Wood Burning Fireplaces. Wood burning fireplaces are now regarded as pollution, bad smoke particle generating sources, and evil CO₂ global warming contributors. Accordingly, the APCD is launching a program to pay private individuals and commercial businesses to trade out their wood burning fireplaces for natural gas or propane fired alternatives. The write-up states in part:

2016 Wood Burning Device Change-out Incentive Program The proposed 2016 Wood Burning Device Change-out Program would provide \$264,166 in incentive funding to replace residential wood fireplaces and woodstoves in four communities with clean, heater-rated natural gas or propane fireplaces and stoves. The District will partner with local vendors of wood burning appliances to promote the Program and increase public awareness about the health benefits of reducing neighborhood wood smoke emissions. Both residential and commercial property owners will be eligible for this voucher incentive. Table 1 summarizes the funding availability for change-out projects in the four communities and Figure 2 shows the eligible physical ZIP codes where change-outs can be funded:

| Community | Eligible Physical ZIP Codes | Available Project Funding | Air Quality Mitigation Funding Source |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| San Luis Obispo | 93401 & 93405 | \$130,435 | SLOTF |
| Nipomo | 93444 | \$31,245 | Guad |
| Morro Bay | 93442 | \$102,486 | Gateway |
| Los Osos | 93402 | | |

TABLE 2

| Incentive Amount | Existing Wood Burning Device |
|------------------|---|
| \$2,000 | Open Hearth, Masonry or Factory-Built, Traditional Wood Burning Fireplace |
| \$1,000 | Any Woodstove, Including Pellet Stoves |

The program is funded from “mitigation fees” collected from Chevron to future air quality impacts attributed to the trucks hauling material from the SLO tank farm site cleanup and restoration. Funds will also come from mitigation fees for trucks removing material from the Guadalupe oil field.

It’s not clear why north county is not included. Perhaps it’s too distant from the activities providing funding.

You would think the money would be spent on something useful, such as keeping the homeless warm at night. Great, I’ve got my \$2.89 million ocean view estate house in Blue Heron (Avila) and now I can pipe in some gas supply to my 3 fireplaces with government funds extorted from oil companies. Cool!

Watch Out For the Next Step:

The SF Chronicle reports:

Plan to require fireplace retrofits at Bay Area homes for sale heats up smoke debate

By Denis Cuff dcuff@bayareanewsgroup.com

In a move that could burn a hole in the pocket of property owners looking to sell or rent their homes, Bay Area air quality officials are ratcheting up their campaign against smoke pollution with a proposal aimed at phasing out the old-fashioned fireplace.

Bay Area homes with wood-burning fireplaces could not be sold or rented unless they were equipped with cleaner devices, such as gas, under the first proposal of its kind in California. Retrofit costs could range from hundreds of dollars to \$2,000 to \$3,000 or more -- depending on the home and device installed.

Air officials also propose banning all wood-burning devices -- whether or not they're certified by the federal Environmental Protection Agency -- in new construction, effective Nov. 1. Currently, only open hearth fireplaces in new buildings are banned.

Item D-3: Update on Dunes Dust Mitigation. The write-up does not contain the actual report or substantive information. Will Gibson move for more radical action?

Item D-4: Consultant/Facilitator Proposed (\$12,000) To Make the APCD Board More Civil: The Board letter states:

It is recommended the Board approve the staff recommendation to hire a consultant to conduct a special meeting of the Board, with the primary goal of improving Board interactions and effectiveness and the development of policies and procedures designed to achieve that goal.

This item results from public complaints and APCD Board embarrassment which was attendant to the treatment of a public speaker by Supervisor Bruce Gibson, Supervisor Adam Hill, and SLO City Mayor Jan Marx during a Board meeting last fall. The APCD Board was to take the matter up in November but kicked the can down the road - probably because it is such a hot potato. Remember, one of the key offenders, Adam Hill, is in a seriously contested election primary.

This proposal is a dodge to avoid the issue until after the June primary. By the time they select and contract with the consultant, get agreement from all the members and the consultant on a date, and actually hold the "training," the primary election will be long over.

Given that the behavior problems are pretty much confined to Supervisors Gibson and Hill, some of the quotes from the APCD Board letter betray the true purpose and hypocrisy underlying this failure of leadership:

At the November 18, 2015 APCD Board meeting, staff recommended, and the Board approved, deferring the development and consideration of a draft policy to the January 27, 2016 meeting due to the large number of items already on the November Board agenda.

And:

The County Board of Supervisors, and nearly every local city council, have also addressed this issue, with the local League of Women Voters spearheading a countywide campaign to improve civil discourse in public meetings. It is a common concern, with much thought and research devoted to ways to improve the process. At the January 6, 2016 Executive Committee meeting, staff discussed the concept of a facilitated Board workshop on governance and communication and received approval to bring this recommendation forward to the Board for consideration.

Some potential topics suggested by subject matter consultants that could be discussed in a facilitated workshop include:

- The Basis, Evolution and Obligation of Board Membership,*
- Board Member and Staff Roles and Responsibilities,*
- Board Governance/Process,*
- Board Team Membership,*
- Working the Relationship between Board and Staff, and*
- Communicating as a Board Member*

And:

In addition to addressing the topics above, one of the proposed outcomes of this special session would be the development of a mutually agreed upon set of Board procedures or “norms,” to formalize some of the key concepts discussed in the workshop to help enhance Board interactions with each other, staff and the public and to improve the overall effectiveness of the decision-making process. It is hoped a draft set of norms could be discussed at the special session and brought back at the next meeting for approval and adoption by the Board; the aforementioned policies on ex parte communications and representation disclosure could also be developed as part of this process.

Save the money: COLAB Government Affairs Director Mike Brown is a trained facilitator as well as a certified adult trainer with 42 years of experience leading large complex local government organizations with highly contentious issues. COLAB would donate his services. The training could take place in the County’s dedicated employee university space on the first floor of the Administration Building.

Logistics: A one and one-half day session should be sufficient. Perhaps a Friday 8:30-4:30 and half a Saturday (8:00-1:00) would work best. It is recommended that the APCD provide coffee and light breakfasts, lunches, and snacks and that Friday evening be reserved for an informal (no host) social dinner for the participants in a comfortable venue.

There would be pre-session homework, and the APCD would be responsible for copying and collating materials. The training room would need to have PowerPoint capability, flip charts, and video play/projection capability.

The public could sit in a peanut gallery and observe the proceedings. In fact some members could serve as resources for the segment on building public trust.

Item D-5: Contract Extension for the Air Pollution Control Officer. The APCD Board voted in closed session to extend the APCO's contract. Formal public approval in open session is required. The write-up states:

The Air Pollution Control Officer's (APCO) employment contract expires on February 1, 2016. The APCD Executive Committee met with the APCO on January 6, 2016 to discuss his performance evaluation and proposed contract renewal. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend to the full Board that the APCO contract be renewed for a period of one year, with a Cost of Living Adjustment of 4.8%, equivalent to the COLAs approved by the Board last year for APCD staff.

It is not known where the individual Board members stand. Someone on the Board should ask the APCO, on the record, if he will commit to opposing any regulations banning or restricting operation days of wood burning fireplaces. Similarly, will he commit to preserving recreational use of the dunes, including ATV riding?

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, January 28, 2016 (Scheduled)

In General: The Commission will consider applications for three projects outlined in items 4, 6, and 7 below, which suggest that the economy is growing and that investors and developers are becoming more active. Planning staff recommends approval of all three of the applications.

Item 4-Nipomo Motel: A request by **ROB MARINAI** for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a three-story 83-unit motel, with a total of 38,500 square feet of floor area and 12,800 square-foot of subterranean parking. The applicant is also requesting a modification to the sign ordinance. The project will result in the disturbance of approximately 1.2 acres of a 1.2 acre parcel. The proposed project is within the Commercial Retail land use category and is located on the south side of Hill Street (at 549 Hill Street), approximately 300 feet west of South Frontage Road, in the community of Nipomo. The staff recommends approval. However, the applicant requests a continuation because he or she will not be able to attend.

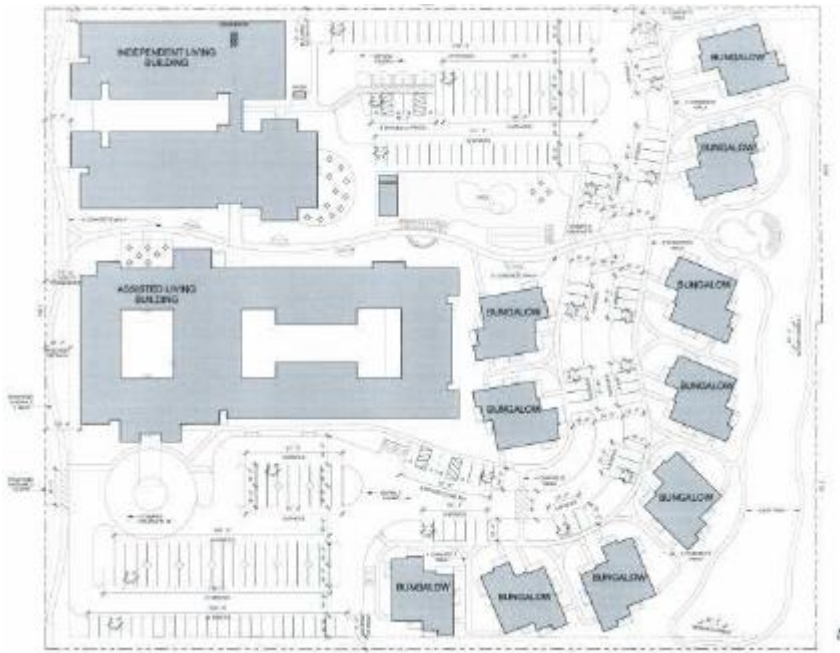


Item 6-Templeton Senior Care Facility. This is a separate project from the private mental hospital and assisted living facilities in Templeton that were approved last week by the Planning Commission.

The applicant seeks a conditional use permit for the construction of a senior housing development including: *a 70,000-square foot assisted living building including 90 beds and a memory care facility; a 70,000-square foot independent living building including 67 studios; and ten 2,650-square foot independent living bungalows (totaling 26,500 square feet), including 40 units* The project includes the construction of an internal access road and 203 paved parking spaces. Additional improvements include 4-foot and 5-foot wide concrete walkways throughout the development, landscaping, and reconstruction and restoration of an existing drainage feature to serve as a retention basin. The request includes a modification to the height standards (35 feet) to allow height of 44 feet (all heights are measured from average natural grade - ANG) for the independent living building. The project is within the Office and Professional land use category, and is located on the south side of Las Tablas Road, approximately 1/2 mile west of Bennett Road in the Community of Templeton, in the Salinas River Sub Area of the North County Planning Area.

A rendering submitted with the application and plot plan are illustrated below.





Templeton residents are concerned that they are ground zero for dense new development in the unincorporated county because of the smart growth policy, which significantly limits new development to Templeton, Nipomo, San Miguel and Oceano. Also water moratoria in both the north county and Nipomo will have the effect of directing development to Templeton.

Abutting cities have snagged

most of the area's high value commercial development (sales, property, and TOT taxes), thus foreclosing Templeton's potential to become a City and control its own development destiny. Will Templeton thus become a sort of reservation for health and social services institutions? Separately, is it becoming the go to site for various types of government subsidized housing?

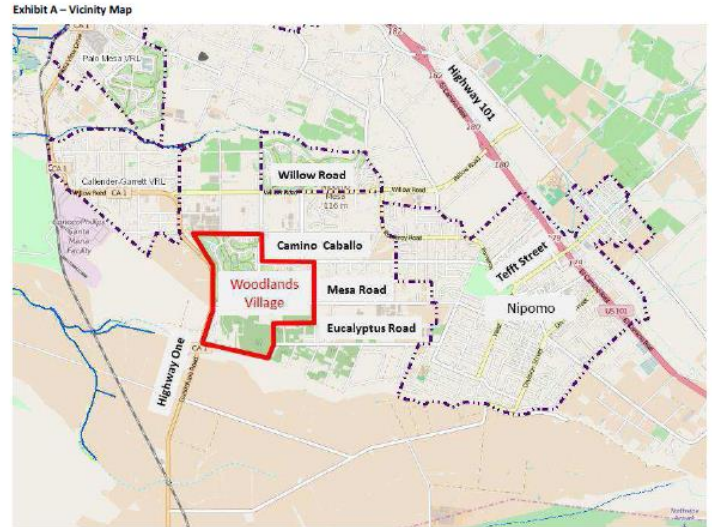
COLAB sued the County in 2010 because it failed to conduct an environmental impact report (EIR) on the potential impacts of its "smart growth" (stack and pack) General Plan on existing communities. The courts denied the COLAB concerns. The chickens are now coming home to roost.

In the COLAB case the County promised that it would conduct such reviews as the specific projects came forward.

Item 7: Monarch Dunes Conditional Use Permit (this item is not scheduled until 10:30 AM or after).

This project is a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to develop Phase 2A of the Woodlands Specific Plan. (In Nipomo) Phase 2A is 159.9 acres in area and would be developed with 242 single family dwelling units over 63.8 acres, a nine-hole golf course would occupy an additional 76 acres, and the remaining 20.1 acres consists of a perimeter buffer, trails, neighborhood parks and common landscape areas.

There does not seem to be any major opposition, and the Planning staff recommends approval. The homes are desperately needed in a County where government rationing (water restrictions, “smart growth”, high permitting fees, high exaction fees, and lengthy entitlement process) has severely restricted the housing supply and inflated prices.



LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

There was no Board meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2016, as it was the day after a national holiday (Martin Luther King's Birthday).

SLO COLAB IN DEPTH

In fighting the troublesome, local day-to-day assaults on our freedom and property, it is also important to keep in mind the larger underlying ideological, political, and economic causes and forces.

AN ENGINEERED DROUGHT

The article below supplements the **Dead Harvest** video available at the top of this Weekly Update.

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

An Engineered Drought

Shortsighted coastal elites bear most of the blame for California's water woes.

April 2, 2015

PHOTO BY [COWGIRL JULES](#)

California governor Jerry Brown had little choice but to issue a belated, [state-wide](#)



[mandate](#) to reduce water usage by 25 percent. How such restrictions will affect Californians remains to be seen, given the Golden State's wide diversity in geography, climate, water supply, and demography.

We do know two things. First, Brown and other Democratic leaders will never concede that their own opposition in the 1970s (when California had about half its present population) to the completion of state and federal water projects, along with their more recent allowance of massive water diversions for fish and river enhancement, left [no margin for error](#) in a state now home to 40 million people. Second, the mandated restrictions will bring home another truth as lawns die, pools empty, and boutique gardens shrivel in the coastal corridor from La Jolla to Berkeley: the very idea of a 20-million-person corridor along the narrow, scenic Pacific Ocean and adjoining foothills is just as unnatural as "big" agriculture's Westside farming. The weather, climate, lifestyle, views, and culture of coastal living may all be spectacular, but the arid Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay-area megalopolises must rely on massive water transfers from the Sierra Nevada, Northern California, or out-of-state sources to support their unnatural ecosystems.

Now that no more reservoir water remains to divert to the Pacific Ocean, the exasperated Left is damning "corporate" agriculture ("Big Ag") for "wasting" water on things like hundreds of thousands of acres of almonds and non-wine grapes. But the truth

is that corporate giants like "Big Apple," "Big Google," and "Big Facebook" assume that their multimillion-person landscapes sit atop an aquifer. They don't—at least, not one large enough to service their growing populations. Our California ancestors understood this; they saw, after the 1906 earthquake, that the dry hills of San Francisco and the adjoining peninsula could never rebuild without grabbing all the water possible from the distant Hetch Hetchy watershed. I have never met a Bay Area environmentalist or Silicon Valley grandee who didn't drink or shower with water imported from a far distant water project.

The Bay Area remains almost completely reliant on ancient Hetch Hetchy water supplies from the distant Sierra Nevada, given the inability of groundwater pumping to service the Bay Area's huge industrial and consumer demand for water. But after four years of drought, even Hetch Hetchy's huge Sierra supplies have only about a year left, at best. Again, the California paradox: those who did the most to cancel water projects and divert reservoir water to pursue their reactionary nineteenth-century dreams of a scenic, depopulated, and [fish-friendly environment](#) enjoy lifestyles predicated entirely on the fragile early twentieth-century water projects of the sort they now condemn.

It's now popular to deride California agriculture in cost-benefit terms, given that its share of state GNP (anywhere from 4 percent to 8 percent, depending on how one

counts related industries) supposedly does not justify its huge allotted consumption of state water (anywhere from 65 percent to 80 percent). But note the irony: California supplies a staggering percentage of the nation's fresh vegetables and fruits; it's among the most efficient producers in the world of beef, dairy, and staple crops. One can purchase an iPhone 6 or a neat new Apple watch, but he still must eat old-fashioned, pre-tech food. There are no calories in Facebook, and even Google can't supply protein. On the other hand, I can live without an iPad. Who is to say which industry is essential and which isn't? Insulin and antibiotic production constitute a micro-percentage of GDP, but is their water usage

less important than Twitter's? Is a biologist who studies bait-fish populations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta really more important than a master tractor driver whose skill gives broccoli to thousands?

We're suffering the ramifications of the "[small is beautiful](#)," "spaceship earth" ideology of our cocooned elites.

Californians have adopted the ancient peasant mentality of a limited good, in which various interests must fight it out for the always scarce scraps. Long ago we jettisoned the can-do visions of our agrarian forebears, who knew California far better than we do and trusted nature far less. Now, like good peasants, we are at one another's throats for the last drops of a finite supply.

Victor Davis Hanson

This article first appeared in the April 2, 2015 City Journal. Dr. Hanson has spoken at COLAB events in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. He has appeared on the Andy Caldwell radio show.

THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW

The only local talk show to cover the entire Central Coast!


Central Coast Government watchdog, taxpayer, business and traditional values advocate Andy Caldwell interviews leaders and scholars on a variety of local, state and national issues.

Andy is Live Monday Thru Friday 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Call in 1-888-625-1440

Visit www.theandycaldwellshow.com for more information

Streaming Live on www.am1440.com and www.newspress.com



AM1440
KUHL • the information station

AM 1290
Santa Barbara News-Press Radio

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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

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

Sustaining Member: \$5,000 +q \$ _____

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

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

MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio q Internet q Public Hearing q Friend q

COLAB Member(s) / Sponsor(s): _____

NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

For those who choose not to join as a member but would like to support COLAB via a contribution/donation.

I would like to contribute \$ _____ to COLAB and my check or credit card information is enclosed/provided.

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

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check q Visa q MasterCard q Discover q Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: _____ Signature: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

TODAY'S DATE: _____