



**WEEKLY UPDATE  
DECEMBER 8-14, 2024**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**DEBBIE ARNOLD'S RETIREMENT PARTY**  
**SEE FULL FLYER ON PAGE 47 BELOW**



**THIS WEEK  
SEE PAGE 5**

**PENSION TRUST MEETING**  
**EVERYONE IS BENEFITING FROM RECORD STOCK MARKET**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**  
**FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT**

***LIABILITY COSTS UP - LOST TOO MANY LAW SUITS?***

**COUNTY MAXIMUM GROWTH RATE AND ALLOCATION  
FOR NEW DWELLING UNITS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2025  
*A POINTLESS EXERCISE - HARDLEY ANY PERMITTED***

**CENTRAL CALIFORNIA RURAL REGIONAL ENERGY  
NETWORK (CCR-REN)  
*HUGE SCAM TO TAX THE ELECTRIC RATE PAYERS AND  
THEN USE THE MONEY TO FEATHER THE NESTS OF LARGE  
CONSULTING FIRMS - A PATRONAGE FEAST***

**PLANNING AND BUILDING ACTIVITIES  
PROVIDEDIRECTION ON PRIORITY PROJECTS  
ENDLESS WORK FOR STAFF & CONSULTANTS**

**LOS OSOS HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN  
A HUGE COSTLY BRIBE TO THE COASTAL COMMISSION**

**REQUEST TO DECLARE THE RESULTS OF THE  
NOVEMBER 5, 2024, CONSOLIDATED GENERAL ELECTION  
SLO COUNTY VOTERS SELF-DESTRUCTIVE**

## **CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY**

**PROFIT MARGIN TIGHTER-RATE INCREASES IN SPRING?**

**SUPERVISOR ORTIZ-LEGG NOMINATED FOR VICE-CHAIR**

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION  
MULTIPLE LAWSUITS REFLECT CONTINUING ABUSES**

**LAST WEEK  
SEE PAGE 24**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COUNCIL OF**  
**GOVERNMENTS - SLOCOG**

**APPROVED NEW SALES TAX SCHEME**  
***WILL SEEK ENABLING LEGISLATION TO REMOVE CAP***  
***VERY DISAPPOINTING - THEY EQUATE MORE TAXES***  
***WITH “QUALITY OF LIFE”***

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

**COUNTY EDUCATION OFFICE SEEKS TO GET INTO**  
**HOUSING BUSINESS FOR TEACHERS**  
***A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT - WHAT ABOUT OTHER***  
***GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES?***

**EMERGENT ISSUES**

**SEE PAGE 28**

**COUNTRIES WHERE YOU CAN DRINK THE TAP WATER**

**CALIFORNIA SETS INITIAL STATE WATER PROJECT**  
**ALLOCATION AT 5% FOLLOWING HOT, DRY STRETCH**

**EXPENSIVE CLIMATE POLICY IS DEAD. THAT’S A BIG**  
**OPPORTUNITY**

***MONEY SAVED AS COUNTRIES BACK AWAY FROM GREEN NEW DEALS***  
***CAN FUND RESEARCH INTO MAKING GREEN FUEL CHEAP,***  
***WHICH WILL MAKE IT GENUINELY POPULAR***

**THE GREEN ENERGY APOCALYPSE- PLUNGING**  
**OURSELVES INTO EXTINCTION**

## COLAB IN DEPTH

SEE PAGE 36

### IT'S TIME TO TAKE BACK THE PEOPLE'S POWER - IN CALIFORNIA AND DC

***GAVIN NEWSOM'S SEEMINGLY BOLD, PROGRESSIVE STANCES  
ARE MERELY DESIGNED TO RAISE HIS PUBLIC PROFILE - HE  
ALWAYS WANTS TO BE THE FIRST TO DO SOMETHING***

**BY KATY GRIMES**

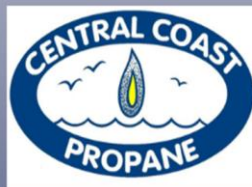
### THE FUMES OF THE 2024 ELECTION *THE LAST GREAT HOPE TO STOP THE MADNESS*

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

### THE CORRUPTION OF DEMOCRACY, CALIFORNIA STYLE *ELECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA ARE A TRAVESTY, AS IS CALLING WHAT JUST HAPPENED PROGRESS FOR THE STATE'S REPUBLICAN PARTY*

**BY EDWARD RING**

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# THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

## San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, December 9, 2024 (Scheduled)

The Fund should end the year above its 6.75% assumption rate, benefiting from strong stock market gains. This will help to reduce recommended increases in the contribution rates to the County and employees. November (not yet reported) was a great month for the stock market. The DOW hit 45,000 for the first time in history on several days.

### Agenda Item 16: Monthly Investment Report for October 2024

	1-month	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Fund (%)							
(Gross)	(0.90)	6.8	8.9	(8.0)	15.2	8.9	16.3
Policy Index (%)	(1.40)	7.9	10.2	(9.7)	12.8	10	16.4

	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Market Value						
(millions)	\$1,788	\$1,694	\$1,614	\$1,775	\$1,552	\$1,446

Policy index as of Nov. 2021 Strategic Asset Allocation Policy with 2024 Interim targets:

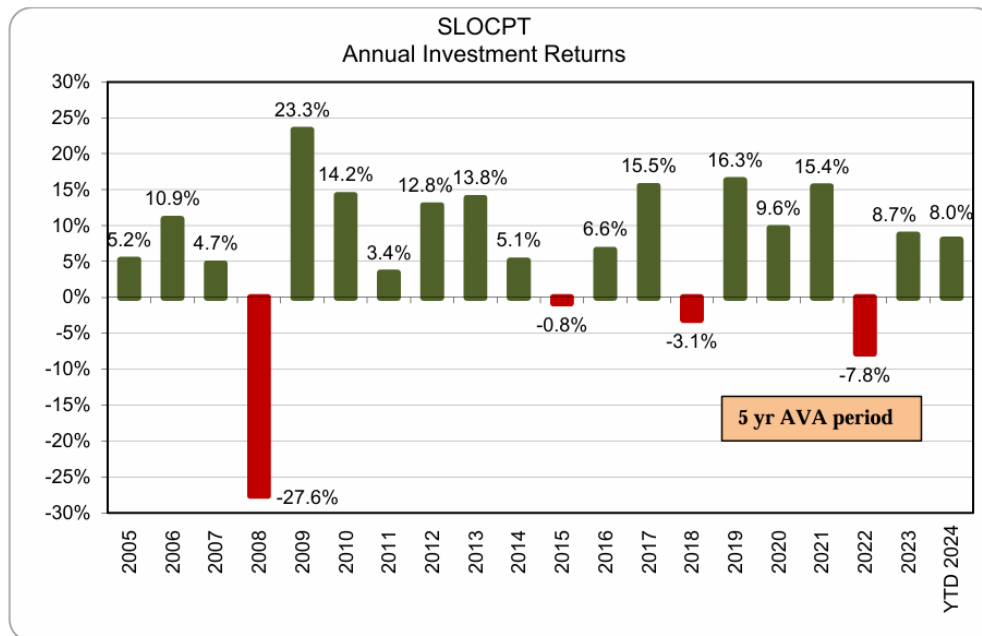
- Public Mkt Equity- 20% Russell 3000, 17% MSCI ACWI ex-US
- Public Mkt Debt- 4% Bloomberg/Barclays US Aggregate,
- Risk Diversifying 8% Barclays 7-10yr Treasury, 7% Barclays 5-10yr US TIPS
- Real Estate Infrastructure- 14% NCREIF Index (inc. Infrastructure)
- Private Equity- 12% actual private equity returns
- Private Credit- 10% actual private credit returns
- Liquidity- 8% 90-day T-Bills

Pending annual updates to interim targets.



### Agenda Item 15: Quarterly Investment Report for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2024

Attached is the 3 24 investment report from SLOCPT's investment consultant - Verus. Scott Whalen of Verus will present and discuss the quarterly report. The history of SLOCPT investment returns, gross of fees, is shown below.



### Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, December 10, 2024 (Scheduled)

**Item 3 - Submittal of the FY 2024-25 First Quarter Financial Status Report and request to approve various financial actions as detailed in the recommended actions (one or more actions require a 4/5 vote).** The County is on track to live within its FY 2024-25 adopted budget. The summary states:

*Based on the evaluation of the financial information provided by departments for the first quarter, most departments report that they anticipate remaining within their budgeted General Fund level for the year. Notable issues as of the first quarter are included in Section 1 of the Report and include status reports on Sheriff-Coroner, Human Resources, and Human Resources – Liability.*

Table 2 Summary of Notable Issues Included in the Attached Report Issue Status Updates		
Department	Issue	Potential Impact to General Fund
<b>Public Protection</b>		
136 – Sheriff-Coroner	Projected to exceed General Fund support level by \$2.9 million at year-end primarily due to \$3.6 million in unbudgeted salary and benefit expenses and a projected \$442,371 revenue shortfall.	\$2.9 million
<b>Support to County Departments</b>		
112 – Human Resources	Property insurance premiums \$1.2 million higher than adopted budget	\$183,843
409 – Human Resources – Liability	County Liability Insurance Program reserves significantly underfunded	None

The insufficiency in the Liability Fund Reserves is disturbing, in that it could signal increased lawsuit losses of various types.

*At the end of the first quarter, the department is not projecting the need for additional mid-year charges or General Fund support by year-end for the Fund Center (FC) 409 – Human Resources – Liability Self-Insurance program. FC 409 – Liability is an internal service fund (ISF). Industry norms, including guidelines set by the County’s excess insurance carrier PRISM, recommend the fund reserve level for excess insurance programs be maintained between 70% (minimum) and 90% (conservative) confidence levels so sufficient funds are available to pay projected claims. Setting and maintaining reserve levels is done in conjunction with annual actuarial studies.*

They already had to provide a special \$3.4 million appropriation at budget adoption time in June.

*As part of the FY 2024-25 Final Budget actions, the Board allocated \$3,012,371 of General Fund Balance Available to Governmental Funds budgets to provide one-time relief and to help offset the \$3.5 million mid-year increase in charges. The program is now projected to end the year without an operating deficit. The Liability program continues to experience an increase in insurance premium costs related to market conditions nationwide and increased claim volume, leading to significant increases in administrative and litigation expenditures. It is estimated that approximately \$3.5 million will need to be added to the FY 2025 26 Status Quo budget to address the new ongoing level of expenditures necessary to support the current level of program expenditures and to build the reserve balance to the minimum confidence level of 70%.*

The Board should set a presentation on the liability fund, liability experience, and the causes. Similarly, it should receive a report on workers comp.

**Item 14 - Request by the County of San Luis Obispo to (1) submit for annual review of the County growth rate for new dwelling units for FY 2023-24; (2) submit for annual review of the County growth rate for new dwelling units for FY 2024-25; and (3) submit a Resolution establishing the County maximum growth rate and allocation for new dwelling units for Calendar Year 2025, in accordance with the Growth Management Ordinance, Title 26 of the County Code. Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).** This is an annual ritual in which the Board sets the annual growth rate for residential units. This is an old planning concept that harks back to the 1970’s, when academics and planners proclaimed that communities should not grow faster than their resources, such as water, sewer, traffic capacity, parks, schools, etc. Had this been law 30,000 years ago we would still be living in caves. Had it been law 10,000 years ago we would still be living in thatch huts. And had it been law 100 years ago we would still be living in tenements.

It is actually government’s job to make sure these resources are available at a cost that is commensurate with the citizens’ ability to pay. In California they have failed miserably since the 1980’s.

After considerable mental mastication, they came up with the table below:

Type of Dwelling Unit	Maximum number of new dwelling units allowed for Calendar Year 2025
<i>Countywide Total*</i>	<i>1,036</i>
<i>Countywide, Single-Family</i>	<i>674</i>
<i>Countywide, Multi-Family</i>	<i>363</i>
<i>Nipomo Mesa Total</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Nipomo Mesa, Single-Family</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Nipomo Mesa, Multi-Family</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Cambria**</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Los Osos Total</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Los Osos (75% Set Aside), Single-Family</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Los Osos (75% Set Aside), Multi-Family</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Los Osos (25% Set Aside), Single-Family ***</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Los Osos (25% Set Aside), Multi-Family ***</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>*Countywide total is for all of the unincorporated county, excluding Nipomo Mesa, Monarch Dunes, Cambria, and Los Osos.</i>	
<i>**Grandfathered in New Units</i>	
<i>*** Outside the Community SSA</i>	

Of course, they have never hit anything like this. The table below displays the current year score card. Note its 12 building permits so far in 2024.

Table 4: Status of Construction Permits with Calendar Year 2024 Allocations, as of November 5, 2024

Construction Permit Status	Number of new dwelling units subject to the GMO associated with construction permit applications submitted Calendar Year 2024, as of November 5, 2024		
	Countywide	Nipomo Mesa (excluding Monarch Dunes)	Monarch Dunes
Finaled	0	0	0
Issued	11	2	0
In Review	75	9	0
Intake	12	3	0
Ready for Issuance	2	0	0
Total	100	14	0

**They have never even permitted anything like 1,036 per year.**



New Dwelling Units <sup>1</sup> by Planning Area/Sub Area, 2005-2021

Planning Area/Sub Area	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21 <sup>2</sup>
Adelaida	24	12	21	11	3	5	3	2	5	5	4	8	5	8	6	4
Carrizo <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0
El Pomar-Estrella	90	53	33	14	9	11	10	20	38	16	28	19	22	26	15	12
Estero	19	15	13	6	10	8	3	6	13	8	7	18	6	10	7	7
Las Pilitas	0	6	5	2	5	1	3	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	2
Los Padres (North)	2	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nacimiento	43	32	18	11	7	9	10	33	50	21	20	25	27	18	14	9
North Coast	14	7	9	1	5	0	3	7	2	3	2	0	0	2	1	1
Salinas River	99	41	33	36	25	16	15	21	45	60	65	207	74	86	65	37
San Luis Bay Coastal	52	22	70	7	15	13	17	34	41	25	30	39	41	9	11	1
San Luis Obispo Shandon-Carrizo (North)	11	9	11	2	4	4	5	6	9	2	4	10	5	8	12	10
South County <sup>4</sup>	28	28	11	5	2	4	6	2	4	0	4	4	3	6	5	12
South County Coastal <sup>3</sup>	71	34	77	19	17	40	35	114	157	116	113	161	131	118	102	116
Total	453	259	301	114	103	113	111	246	366	257	277	492	315	292	238	211

1. Only including units subject to the Growth Management Ordinance. For 20015-2016, based on number of construction permit applications received in fiscal year. For 2017-2021, based on number of construction permits issued in fiscal year.

2. As of April 26, 2021.

3. Carrizo and South County Coastal Planning Areas were added to this chart for FY 21-22 and were not tracked in previous years' annual allocation reports.

4. Huasna-Lopez Sub Area was removed from this chart for FY 21-22 because it is included in the South County Planning Area.

Who knows how many of these were actually constructed?

**Item 15 - Request to: 1) approve a Funding Agreement with Southern California Edison (SCE) in the amount of \$36,339,000 from 2024-2027 to fund the Central California Rural Regional Energy Network (CCR-REN) and authorize the Director of Planning and Building or designee to execute the Funding Agreement as well as any future agreements and amendments that do not result in unbudgeted costs to the General Fund of the County of San Luis Obispo; 2) approve a Resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center (FC) 142- Planning and Building to add 1.00 FTE Limited-Term (LT) Administrative Services Manager through December 31, 2027; 3) approve contracts for professional services with Willdan Energy Solutions for \$320,000; Brandt Energy Opportunity for \$205,000; Willdan Energy Solutions for \$5,700,000 and Rising Sun Center for Opportunity for \$13,700,000 over the specified terms for the detailed program services, respectively, and; authorize the Director of Planning and Building or designee to approve any amendments to these contracts provided the costs for such amendments do not increase the level of General Fund Support; and 4) approve a related budget adjustment in the amount of \$36,339,000 for FC 142 – Planning and Building to provide necessary authority to support the CCR-REN Programs and the County's role as the Portfolio Administrator, by 4/5 vote.** The program is a huge scam to tax the electric rate payers and then use the money to feather the nests of large consulting firms that in turn fund political campaigns. The write-up is incomprehensible and an insult. What does this program do? How long has it been running? What are the results? How much energy has been saved?

The write-up states in part:

*A Regional Energy Network (REN) is a structure that allows local governments to organize, collaborate, and operate as an energy efficiency program administrator to deliver regional-scale energy efficiency solutions and program offerings that help customers access workforce education and training, energy codes and standards training, as well as energy assessments, rebates, incentives and financing options for energy efficient equipment. Comprised of local and regional government agencies, a REN is an alternative to Investor-Owned Utility (IOU) energy management programs. A REN receives ratepayer funding from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to design and implement regional energy efficiency programs. The CPUC's decisions to create and affirm RENs supports local jurisdictions' calls for increased flexibility, innovation, and autonomy in their ability to administer energy efficiency programs that reflect regional needs. RENs are intended to fill gaps where IOUs cannot or will not serve customers, and therefore, focus on serving hard to reach customers. This focus includes, but is not limited to, rural communities, customers with English as a second language, renters, multifamily properties, and low and middle-income communities.*

So what has it delivered specifically?

There is not one specific example described in the board letter or the contracts to the consultants of what the actual products are for this program. This is outrageous, and the Board should reject it immediately. This is a racket.

Table 5. Approved Budget for CCRREN, by Source Fuel

Year	PG&E Electric \$	SCE Electric \$	PG&E Gas \$	SoCalGas Gas \$	Total \$
2024	1,758,000	586,000	410,200	175,800	2,930,000
2025	6,552,931	2,184,310	1,529,017	655,293	10,921,551
2026	6,742,510	2,247,503	1,573,252	674,251	11,237,517
2027	6,749,959	2,249,986	1,574,990	674,996	11,249,932
Total	21,803,400	7,267,800	5,087,460	2,180,340	36,339,000

Community advocate Eric Greening has provided an excellent summary of more reasons to reject this item. (See Below)

A complex item that includes a funding agreement for more than \$36 million dollars does not belong on the Consent Calendar, and needs to be taken off that calendar to be set for a full hearing on a subsequent date. It raises enough questions, and could occasion enough discussion, to potentially distend your morning session, to the disadvantage of the hearing items that follow.

A few of the questions it raises include:

1. Why is Southern California Edison a central agent in this decision by a body representing a county that is outside that utility's service area?
2. To what extent does a decision made at the same time as the unincorporated areas of the county enter into a CCE for energy sourcing align with, disregard, or conflict with the activities of that CCE, or confuse the decision to be made by the ratepayers as to whether to make this change or to opt out?
3. Exactly what practical differences would exist between a future in which you have taken the actions recommended by staff for this item, and a future in which you do not take those actions?

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4. What specific goals would be met by the recommended actions, and are there alternate ways of attaining those goals that might be considered before moving forward?

Again, this complex and consequential item needs a full hearing on a future date, with adequate time set aside for a full staff presentation shedding light on these questions and others, opportunity for your Board and the public to ask questions and receive meaningful responses, and the opportunity for full and informed deliberation by your Board.

Many thanks,

Eric Greening

## Matters After 1:30 PM

**Item 30 - Addendum to item #30 - Request to (1) receives and files a report on Department of Planning and Building activities and provide direction on Priority Projects, as necessary; and (2) receive and file the Annual General Plan Progress Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24. (Planning and Building) Staff is replacing the Staff Report and Attachment #1 to provide updated information regarding the status of Department Initiatives.** Each year the Board must assess which projects should be undertaken by the Planning and Building Department. These include Plan Updates, zoning ordinance modifications, implementation projects, and feasibility projects. Additionally, the Department has an ongoing workload of permitting, etc. This agenda item is the introduction of the issue for the 2025-26 Budget year. The Board will give direction and the Department will return in February with more detail.

There is constant State pressure to update various Plan elements, as well as applications from private citizens to modify the status of their property. The link below goes to a detailed report on the status of these.

**Item 31 - Request for consideration and action on items relating to Los Osos community development: 1. Authorize implementation of the Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan (LOHCP), including: i. Direct the Department of Planning and Building (Planning and Building) to pursue accrual of mitigation credits for habitat conservation through fee title or easement acquisition and restoration projects; ii. Authorize a budget adjustment of up to \$2,000,000 from General Fund Contingencies for an internal loan to ‘jump start’ LOHCP implementation activities, by 4/5th's vote; iii. Adopt a Resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center (FC) 142 - Planning and Building to add 0.50 FTE Senior Planner to implement the LOHCP; iv. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County (The Land Conservancy) for The Land Conservancy to serve as the LOHCP Implementing Entity and authorize the Director of Planning and Building to execute the necessary documents; v. Direct Planning and Building to prepare and circulate a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a qualified consultant to develop an Adaptive Management and Monitoring Plan for the LOHCP; vi. Direct Planning and Building to pursue establishment of an endowment fund with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for post-permit habitat conservation administration, management, and monitoring; and vii. Introduce an Ordinance to establish LOHCP mitigation fees, with hearing date set for February 4, 2025; 2. Receive and file a discussion on the Growth Management Ordinance, Title 26 of the County Code, (GMO) as it relates to the conversion of existing second floor commercial area to residential use in Los Osos, and provide direction as appropriate; and 3. Receive and file a discussion on the GMO, as it relates to the approximately 75-day period to submit complete construction permit applications for properties on the Los Osos Waitlist to Build ‘batches’ and provide direction as appropriate. (Planning and Building) While COLAB disagrees with the State and Federal laws that begat this hugely expensive and complex regulatory scheme, we underscore that the Planning Department staff has persevered over more than a decade in pursuing the matter. The write-up is another great staff job in presenting the history, complexity, and recommended policy actions.**

In the end, the County built a \$200 million sewer treatment plant (\$300 million with debt service). Additionally, it has spent millions and must spend millions more to operate a State mandated Habitat Conservation Plan. In the end, a few vacant lots in Los Osos may be permitted for new homes.

**Summary of Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan Mitigation Costs and Fees <sup>1, 2</sup>**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Acres <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Planning Level Mitigation Total Costs (\$)</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Mitigation Costs</b>
<b>Mitigation Cost</b>			
Administration (permit term)	532	16,683,835	38%
Administration (post-permit)	532	4,060,452	9%
Management and Monitoring (permit term)	386	5,892,370	14%
Management and Monitoring (post-permit)	386	6,899,673	16%
Preserve Start-Up	279	1,944,715	4%
Restoration	46	3,020,422	7%
Acquisition of Fee Title	77	4,934,145	11%
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>43,435,612</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mitigation Fee Summary per Acre</b>			
Restoration /Management/Administration Fee	532	72,435	
Habitat Protection Fee	521	9,467	
<b>Total</b>		<b>81,901</b>	
<b>Mitigation Fee Summary per Square Foot<sup>3</sup></b>			
Restoration /Management/Administration Fee	532	1.66	
Habitat Protection Fee	521	0.22	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.88</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The costs in this table have been updated from the December 2020 version of the LOHCP (Table 7-8). These costs are as of July 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Values may not appear correctly calculated due to rounding error. Total Costs includes County-wide Overhead.

<sup>3</sup> Project fees will be charged by multiplying the area of ground-disturbing activities in square feet by the values listed here. In the text, fees are rounded to the nearest cent for ease of discussion. A 3.8% CPI Adjustment was applied to the fee amounts and updated as part of the fee hearing scheduled on October 29, 2024.

**The PowerPoints below summarize some aspects of the difficult situation:**

## Board Action on October 29, 2024

Board took action to address decades of restricted community development in Los Osos by:

- Lifting the “building moratorium” in Los Osos by accepting the Coastal Commission’s suggested modifications
- Implementing the Coastal Commission-suggested one percent maximum residential growth rate by amending the Growth Management Ordinance to establish a conservative growth strategy

Board directed the Department of Planning and Building to return with the following:

- An implementation package for the Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan
- Discussion on the Growth Management Ordinance, as it relates to:
  - The conversion of existing second floor commercial area to residential use in Los Osos
  - The approximately 75-day period to submit complete construction permit applications for properties on the Los Osos Waitlist to Build ‘batches’

## ‘Stay-ahead’ Provision

- LOHCP requires the County to accrue sufficient mitigation credits before conferring take coverage to project proponents
- This provision ensures that potential impacts resulting from new development will not outweigh the habitat benefits resulting from LOHCP implementation
- Department of Planning and Building to pursue activities identified in the LOHCP to accrue mitigation credits
- County could then confer take coverage in the form of Certificates of Inclusion to project proponents



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## Land Acquisition vs. Habitat Restoration

Land Acquisition	Habitat Restoration
<b>Accrue mitigation credit immediately</b>	Accrue mitigation credit over time
Dependent on willing sellers (private landowners)	<b>Not dependent on private landowners</b>
Not guaranteed acceptable sales prices	<b>Guaranteed viable habitat restoration opportunities</b>
<b>Not dependent on success of field work</b>	Dependent of success of field work
High upfront cost	High costs if habitat restoration unsuccessful

## Phase I implementation package

### Funding and Staffing

- Internal Loan Amount – Up to \$2,000,000
- Loan Source – General Fund Contingencies
- Loan Terms – Drawdown period of three years and payback period of three years
- Repayment Source – LOHCP mitigation fees paid by project proponents
- Position – Senior Planner (new 0.5 FTE)

### **Direction for Phase I**

- Mitigation Credit Accrual Activity – Focus on fee title or easement acquisition for habitat conservation
- County Incidental Take Permit Condition Compliance – Prepare and circulate a Request for Proposals for a qualified consultant to develop an Adaptive Management and Monitoring Plan per U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requirement

### **Collaborating Agencies**

- Partnership – The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to serve as Implementing Entity for the County
- Post-permit Funding – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to administer endowment fund for post-permit habitat conservation administration, management, and monitoring

## **Waitlist Procedures**

Waitlist procedures established in the Growth Management Ordinance provides:

- Phase I (January 1st through June 1st) – First priority to lots on the Waitlist based on Waitlist position ('batches')
- Phase II (July 1st through August 1st) – Then priority to the entire Waitlist
- Phase III (October 1st through December 31st) – Opportunity to all lots
- Waitlist positions are honored and ~75 days are provided to submit construction permit applications, but if those on the Waitlist are not ready to build, allocations will be made available to those that are ready to build

Of course the Los Osos voters continue to support leftist candidates at all levels. They helped make their bed and now must continue sleeping in it. In the end, Gibson's plan to gentrify the place is moving right along.

**Item 32 - Any Supervisor may ask a question for clarification, make an announcement, or report briefly on his or her activities. In addition, Supervisors may request staff to report back to the Board at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter or may request that staff place a matter of business on a future agenda. Any request to place a matter of business for consideration on a future agenda requires the majority vote of the Board.**

**Item 33 - Added Item # 33 - Request to declare the results of the November 5, 2024, Consolidated General Election.** The Clerk recorder summarized the work as follows:

*The County processed a total of 153,432 ballots, which included VBM, precinct, and provisional ballots. At the conclusion of these efforts, the County Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters certified the results of the election on Tuesday, December 3, 2024. This certification, accompanied by the Summary Report of Final Official Election Results and Statement of Votes Cast (Clerk's File), is now presented to your Board. Pursuant to Elections Code Section 15400, the Board is required to declare the results for all offices and measures within its jurisdiction.*

Overall and from the standpoint of State and national races, the SLO County voters again demonstrated their predilection for national and civilizational suicide.

## President and Vice President (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 158 of 158 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	12,196	141,236	153,432 / 182,606	84.02%
Undervotes	149	2,371	2,520	
Overvotes	18	82	100	
Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>KAMALA D. HARRIS TIM WALZ</b>	5,041	76,273	81,314	53.92%
DONALD J. TRUMP JD VANCE	6,607	58,325	64,932	43.05%
ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR. NICOLE SHANAHAN	193	1,995	2,188	1.45%
JILL STEIN RUDOLPH WARE	103	952	1,055	0.70%
CHASE OLIVER MIKE TER MAAT	53	827	880	0.58%
CLAUDIA DE LA CRUZ KARINA GARCIA	31	366	397	0.26%
Total Votes	12,029	138,783	150,812	
	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
PETER SONSKI LAUREN ONAK	1	45	46	0.03%
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

## United States Senator (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 158 of 158 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	12,196	141,236	153,432 / 182,606	84.02%
Undervotes	1,095	6,215	7,310	
Overvotes	0	28	28	
Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>ADAM B. SCHIFF</b>	4,675	72,850	77,525	53.07%
STEVE GARVEY	6,426	62,143	68,569	46.93%
Total Votes	11,101	134,993	146,094	
	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

## United States Representative District 24 (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 105 of 105 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	7,722	90,720	98,442 / 115,696	85.09%
Undervotes	771	3,628	4,399	
Overvotes	0	8	8	

Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>SALUD CARBAJAL</b>	3,675	53,670	57,345	60.98%
THOMAS COLE	3,276	33,414	36,690	39.02%
Total Votes	6,951	87,084	94,035	

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

## State Senator District 17 (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 114 of 114 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	10,064	113,109	123,173 / 145,359	84.74%
Undervotes	1,027	6,073	7,100	
Overvotes	0	14	14	

Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>JOHN LAIRD</b>	3,884	59,848	63,732	54.91%
TONY VIRRUETA	5,153	47,174	52,327	45.09%
Total Votes	9,037	107,022	116,059	

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

## State Senator District 21 (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 44 of 44 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	2,132	28,127	30,259 / 37,247	81.24%
Undervotes	328	1,769	2,097	
Overvotes	1	2	3	

Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>S. MONIQUE LIMÓN</b>	696	13,442	14,138	50.21%
ELIJAH MACK	1,107	12,914	14,021	49.79%
Total Votes	1,803	26,356	28,159	

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

## Member of the State Assembly, District 30 (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 142 of 142 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	11,235	126,680	137,915 / 163,557	84.32%
Undervotes	1,178	7,884	9,062	
Overvotes	1	5	6	
Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>DAWN ADDIS</b>	4,490	66,453	70,943	55.06%
DALILA EPPERSON	5,566	52,338	57,904	44.94%
Total Votes	10,056	118,791	128,847	
	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

An exception here:

## Member of the State Assembly, District 37 (Vote for 1)

Precincts Reported: 16 of 16 (100.00%)

	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Times Cast	961	14,556	15,517 / 19,049	81.46%
Undervotes	186	899	1,085	
Overvotes	0	1	1	
Candidate	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
<b>SARI M. DOMINGUES</b>	522	7,333	7,855	54.43%
GREGG HART	253	6,323	6,576	45.57%
Total Votes	775	13,656	14,431	
	Polling	Vote by Mail	Total	
Unresolved Write-In	0	0	0	

Keep enjoying your mandatory electric car, \$6.00 butter, \$10 dollar bacon, and your kids and grandkids having to move to other states.



**Central Coast Community Energy Authority Policy Board Meeting of Wednesday,  
December 11, 2024 (Scheduled) 11:30 AM**

**Item 7 - CEO Staff Report: Staff proposed review of 2025 rates for potential adjustment.**

The CEO warned that the 3CE may need to raise its rates due to regulatory requirements for power reserves, energy cost volatility, and increased PG&E delivery costs. The staff is analyzing the matter currently and will make recommendations in March of 2025. Our review of monthly financial reports shows that operating margins are slowly narrowing over time.

**CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES  
AND CHANGES IN NET POSITION  
Eleven Months Ended August 31, 2024**

**OPERATING REVENUES**

Electricity sales, net	\$ 487,788,613
Other income	92,537
Total operating revenues	<u>487,881,150</u>

**OPERATING EXPENSES**

Cost of electricity	453,130,808
Contract services	11,976,914
Staff compensation	7,060,915
Other operating expenses	1,541,907
Program incentives	7,288,456
Depreciation and amortization	<u>535,752</u>
Total operating expenses	<u>481,534,752</u>
Operating income (loss)	6,346,398

**NONOPERATING REVENUES (EXPENSES)**

Investment income	10,667,847
Interest and financing costs	(61,404)
Nonoperating revenues (expenses)	<u>10,606,443</u>

**CHANGE IN NET POSITION**

Net position at beginning of period	241,871,325
Net position at end of period	<u><u>\$ 258,824,166</u></u>

**Not a lot of profit for having \$488 million in revenue**



They have piled up \$259 million in reserves over the past 5 years. Watch this metric to see if it begins to erode and causes them to raise rates or eat into the reserves or both. The advantage that they were given in timing energy costs at the beginning 5 years ago (vis a vis the mature investor owned utilities) will narrow over the years. This will happen as the older utilities amortize their original and very expensive green energy contracts and replace them with contemporary more competitive versions.

**Item 10 - Consider and appoint candidates for Policy Board Chair and Vice Chair.**

Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg has been nominated for Vice-Chair of 3CE in 2025. She could accede to Chair in 2026. 3CE bylaws do not require that the Chair be changed each year. With her utility and energy knowledge she could become Chair and remain for a period of years. SLO County should assign an existing staffer with energy and utility knowledge to help her on an as-needed basis. The agendas are quite large and the issues complex. It would be advantageous for the County to maximize her role. The SLO County Board Chair and CAO should be able to figure this one out.

The write-up states in part:

*The Nominating Committee unanimously supported the nominations of both Director Keeley and Director Ortiz-Legg as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Both Director Keeley and Director Ortiz-Legg have confirmed their willingness to serve in the capacity for which they are nominated.*

**California Coastal Commission Meeting of Wednesday, December 12, 13, and 14, 2024**

**There are no specific actions related to SLO County, its cities, or residents.** There are legal cases to be considered in Executive Session that impinge on the County.

Friends of Oceano Dunes v. California Coastal Commission, et al. (Case 16CV-0160), Govt. Code § 11126(e)(2)(A)

Friends of Oceano Dunes v. California Coastal Commission, et al. (Case 17CV-0267), Govt. Code § 11126(e)(2)(A)

Grossman v. California Coastal Commission, Govt. Code § 11126(e)(2)(A)

**There is also a case related to Vandenberg launches.**

**Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (Space X) v. California Coastal Commission, Govt. Code § 11126(e)(2)(A).** This is Elon Musk's promised lawsuit related to the Commission's rejection of the application for more launches, partially on the basis that Musk supported Donald Trump for President. The poor California resident, who simply wants to replace broken steps to the beach and is legally beaten to death by the Commission, can't fight back. Hopefully, Musk will go after them hard. Moreover, with Trump in the White House the Air Force will grow some cojones and fight the Commission to the death.

The fact that the Commission is politically undermining US Defense during a period when we are sliding toward World War III should result in the Commissioners being prosecuted.

#### **Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, December 11, 2024 (Scheduled)**

**Item 7 - Hearing to consider a request by the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education (SLOCOE) for a Land Use Ordinance Amendment (LRP2023-00001) to allow for school district housing on a SLOCOE property (APN: 073-221-021). The project is located at 2450 Pennington Creek Road, on the east side of Highway 1, near the intersection of Gilardi Road and Education Drive in the County of San Luis Obispo. The site is in the San Luis Obispo Sub-Area North of the San Luis Obispo Planning Area.**

#### **More Socialism**

COLAB is covering this item, as it constitutes a new expansion of the role of County Government. The County Education Office is seeking amendments to the land use ordinance to create faculty and staff housing. Previously, the State legislature approved laws to permit and encourage this activity. At this time no specific project is proposed. If approved, this item would include provisions to the Land Use Ordinance that would allow applications for specific permits in the future.

*On September 26, 2023, the Board of Supervisors (“Board”) authorized processing of the SLOCOE request pursuant to the typical analysis. At that meeting, Board expressed their interest in the potential to expand school district housing to other local educational agency parcels and directed staff to develop a framework that may be expanded to other parcels in the future, but for the purpose of this request, would limit school district housing to the project site until otherwise directed by Board.*

*The San Luis Obispo Office of Education (SLOCOE) submitted a request for a Land Use Ordinance (LUO) Amendment (LRP2023-00001) to allow for school district housing on a 1.4 acre portion of a SLOCOE property at 2450 Pennington Creek Road (APN 073-221-021). The request stems from difficulty of retaining faculty and staff due to the high cost and limited supply of housing in the region and a desire by the applicant to provide affordable housing options for current and future employees (Attachment 6). The recommended amendment would allow for residential use on the project site, however, any proposed residential development would be subject to a separate discretionary review.*

The larger policy issue is: Should local governments get into the housing business with units provided for their employees? Some universities have offered faculty housing over the years in an effort to attract and retain both up-and-coming and experienced professors.

However, easing the County and local school districts into a “new business” opens a new level of government activity that could spread to other jobs, including public safety, medical specialties, engineers, planners, social workers, financial experts and others. Over the years more and more housing would be developed and would need to be managed, maintained, insured, receive utility services, etc. Administering the developing personnel issues, including

selection of who receives the housing, when do they have to move out if fired or laid off, labor contract issues, and all the rest. As these groups grow in number, they will become a political interest group protecting their status. Labor negotiations will become even more complex and costly, especially when the unions assert equity issues.

The teachers and other government employees already receive salaries and benefits that exceed those of most of the tax payers who are funding them. They have double protection of civil service and unions.

The problem is that the State, counties, and cities simply refuse to zone enough land for homes in the name of resource unavailability, climate change, and the desire to preserve a leafy and visual pleasing environment.

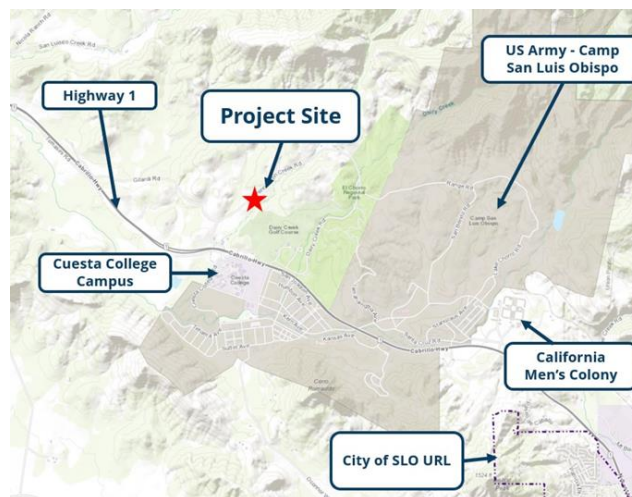
The madness continues.

Go look at the City of Thousand Oaks that was planned and began developing in the 1960's by a private developer (Bill Janns) who converted the Lynn Ranch in the Conejo Valley into a new city. There was no CEQA, no ten year permitting process, no design review, etc. It's much better designed than most of the crap that is being so tortuously planned today by governments.

**As Will Swaim, of the California Policy Center said on Thanksgiving:**

*Our Thanksgiving was a bittersweet reminder — lovely and a little painful — about why I fight for California.*

*Unable to build the lives of their dreams in California, each of our children — good, bright, hardworking, self-sufficient young adults — has left California to pursue their dreams in other places. The cost of buying a house, of subsidizing a state that cares more about the “global climate” than the business climate, the challenge of finding schools that actually educate children ... these had become demanding and all-consuming problems.*





## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

**No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 (Not Scheduled)**

**San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments Meeting of Wednesday, December 4, 2024 (Scheduled)**

**C-8 - Ratify Contract with Wallace Group – Bob Jones Trail Project (RATIFY CONTRACT WITH WALLACE GROUP IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$522,316). Stephen Hanamaikai.** The route modification is necessary, due to a property owner's refusal to sell a right of way to the County for the trail. Supervisors Arnold and Peschong refused to vote for condemnation. The contract provides for design of an alternate segment. Ultimately, the State will have to approve the alternative and agree to the County shuffling the funding around so that the new transportation grant pays for the alternative route segment. If the State declines, the entire project will be dead.

In parallel with this effort, the County is declaring that the trail is a part of its overall transportation plan so that it will qualify for the transportation grant. The theory is that people will use the trail for commuting and not just for recreation.

The write-up stated in part:

*The scope of work includes critical tasks necessary to advance the project toward construction funding allocation anticipated to occur in March 2025. The project is partially funded through the Active Transportation Program (ATP) administered by the California Transportation Commission. Agencies with projects funded through the ATP must meet Timely Use of Funds deadlines identified in the program guidelines or risk being deleted from the program. The tasks in the scope of work are a continuation of environmental and engineering work carried out under a separate expiring/underfunded contract with the County of San Luis Obispo, which continues to lead and coordinate the design phase.*

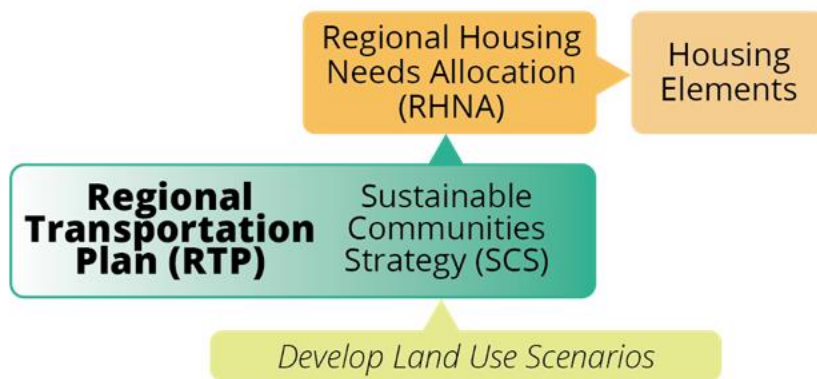
**F-4 - 2027 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the 2027 Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA): Background, Requirements, and Schedule (VOICE VOTE – REVIEW AND COMMENT; SUPPORT DIRECTION). James Worthley/Sara Sanders.**

The Board heard a presentation and engaged in considerable discussion about the need for new funding mechanisms, as electric vehicles do not pay the gas tax, which is the main funder for roads.

**Background**

The item introduced the next RTP development cycle and its relationship to the RHNA. These two required plans are essentially used by the State to force cities and counties to comply with State housing policies and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction mandates. Each jurisdiction must comply or risk losing millions in Federal and State transportation funding. The graphic below illustrates the interrelationship:

**Figure 1: Connecting the RTP & RHNA**



A portion of the narrative states:

*2027 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan Since 1980, the State of California has required each jurisdiction to plan for its share of the state's housing need for people of all income levels. The RHNA is the process by which each community is assigned its share of the housing need for an eight-year period. The RHNA identifies each jurisdiction's responsibility for planning for housing and is divided into four income categories (very low, low, moderate and above moderate). The RHNA Plans are prepared in conjunction with RTPs. The San Luis Obispo*



region will initiate the 7th RHNA Housing Element Cycle in 2025. The allocation process consists of three steps.

1. *Determination:* The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines the total housing need for the region.

2. *Plan:* The RHNA Plan establishes a distribution methodology. As the Council of Governments for the San Luis Obispo region, it is SLOCOG's responsibility to create a plan in coordination with the local jurisdictions. The RHNA Determination is distributed to the local jurisdictions by the four income categories.

3. *Result:* The eight local jurisdictions must update the Housing Element of their General Plans to show how it plans to meet the housing needs in its community. State law requires housing elements to be completed 18 months after the adoption of SLOCOG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The County and its component cities have an estimated \$2.3 million funding gap for needed road improvements, road maintenance, and mass transit. See the summary table below:

#### **A Historical Look: The 2023 RTP Funding Gap**

*Provided as a historical perspective on the transportation-funding gap.*

The 2023 RTP was adopted in June 2023 (23-year plan) and identified a funding level of \$3.1B (escalated) leaving a \$2.3B funding gap for needed, desirable, and requested projects and improvements. This includes:

- **Highway Improvements:** Over \$1.5B in needs identified; \$820M identified as available funding (i.e., 46E improvements, US 101 operations and interchange improvements); leaves \$735M of improvements as unfunded.
- **Major local route improvements:** Requested projects totaled over \$630M; \$270M expected to be available (i.e., intersections, bridges, and extensions on local roadways); leaves \$360M of improvements as unfunded.
- **Local Road maintenance:** With \$820M expected to be available to maintain existing pavements some jurisdictions will see improvements to their pavement conditions while some will struggle to maintain current conditions. To reach local targets, an additional \$40M/year is needed.
- **Transit** (\$930M available) and **Maximizing System Efficiency** (\$83M available): No estimations were included to identify the additional funding required for optimal systems.
- **Active Transportation:** Requested projects totaled over \$700M with \$184M expected available.

This gap will be used to generate support for a new ½ cent sales tax in 2026. This year, a number of the cities had tax measures on the November 5<sup>th</sup> ballot. These passed. Accordingly, they may be more receptive to a countywide transportation tax in '26, as it would not compete with their own measures. It will be interesting to see how Supervisor Paulding's position on this one develops, as he will be up for reelection.

#### **Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)**

The most insidious component of the RTP is the SCS, which injects the leftist mantras of "equity" and CO2 reduction into Plan.

*The Sustainable Communities Strategy is required by Senate Bill 375 (2008) which dramatically shifted the context and framework for RTP development, placing new emphasis on performance and outcomes and presenting significant opportunities to create healthier,*



*more equitable communities and regions. The SCS is an integrated plan for transportation, land use, and housing that must meet, if feasible, greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets for cars and light trucks set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).*

*SLOCOG's SCS will integrate transportation infrastructure, housing, and environmental planning as a bottom-up, consensus-driven, long-term growth strategy. It will also complement the region's emphasis on building and maintaining an integrated, intermodal transportation system that supports and maintains the unique geographical qualities of the region.*

*A major challenge of the SCS is the likelihood that CARB will set new targets for GHG reductions. Our modeling methodology (approach and variables) and off-model tool considerations must be developed, submitted to, and approved by CARB. Staff is currently testing modeling tools and developing the 2060 Regional Growth Forecast Update to be used in modeling scenarios in the SCS.*

**F-5 - Year-End Legislative Report (VOICE VOTE - APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION). Gus Khouri, Legislative Consultant / Tim Gillham a) Review enacted bills and modify processes and requirements accordingly. b) Support legislation on a regional 2% sales tax cap waiver.** The SLOCOG Board voted 7/0 to seek legislation to raise the cap on the sales tax. Supervisor Paulding led the effort stating that removing the cap “gives the voters a choice.” He further stated, “I will be facing the politics of this. It gives the voters a choice over our quality of life.”

Others concurred and echoed his position. Significantly, Supervisors Arnold and Peschong were absent from the meeting. They could have raised a debate. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Supervisor Gibson was also absent and would have likely supported the idea. Incoming Supervisor Heather Moreno voted yes and spent some time talking about how voters support such measures if they have confidence in their leadership and find that the elected officials spend the money as promised. Pismo Mayor Ed Wagge also supported the vote to seek legislation. What a disappointment.

### **Background**

The staff recommended that the SLOCOG support legislation that would make it easier to adopt up to a 1% increase for transportation sales taxes. Currently, State law caps the cumulative amount allowed in any county to be a maximum 2%.

As noted in the write-up excerpt below, several cities, when their sales taxes are combined, are approaching this limit. It is proposed that the law be amended to permit a 1% override for a county-wide measure that is generated by a voter initiative. Again, there is no limit to the appetite for more taxes.

This request may also be seen as a way to get a new transportation measure on the ballot when and if the SLOCOG Board cannot obtain a majority vote to do so.

The SLOCOG Board should reject this idea out of hand. They should reflect on the trillions of dollars spent by the Federal Government and the billions by the states on COVID slush funding,

the American Rescue Plan Act, the so called Climate - Infrastructure Act, million dollar homeless studio apartments, commuter train subsidies, high speed rail, sea level rise projects, DEI, \$88 billion worth of new American military equipment abandoned to the Taliban in Afghanistan, government employees at all levels of government still “working” at home, abandoned borders (and related social costs), State and Federal funding for universities that allow attacks on their Jewish students, coddling of criminals, County staffing that grew from 2,400 FTE at the end of the 2010 recession to 3,000 FTE today, irritating bike lanes all over the place, traffic circles (why not \$250,000 traffic signals instead of a \$3.5 million “roundabouts”), electric buses and garbage trucks, \$70,000 EV chargers (many are broken already), natural gas bans, fossil fuel vehicle bans, endless steps and COLAS, failure to pursue real economic development (giant offshore windmills and Vandenberg spaceport), importing energy from Arizona while paying Arizona Public Service to take our over-produced solar, not enough new land zoned for homes, free air purifiers for the poor, empty subsidized buses roaring up and down the streets, failed multi-billion dollar homeless programs, \$500,000 sound booth programs playing gongs to the mentally ill, a new government regulator - the so-called Chumash Heritage Marine Sanctuary, a new government agency - 3CE Energy is given unfair advantage and imports fake energy certificates for out of state, while exporting our utility jobs out of state etc. Meanwhile, we are hiring and paying the State employees to think all this stuff up.

#### **The staff report sugar coats the issue:**

*Proposed Sales Tax Cap Waiver Legislation The purpose of the proposed legislation is to provide an exemption to the 2% cap on the local transaction and use taxes (also known as the Bradley-Burns district tax) in the County of San Luis Obispo to allow SLOCOG to pursue a local sales tax measure dedicated for transportation purposes. The proposed legislation would provide no more than a 1 percent exemption to place items before voters to fund regional transportation programs. This legislation would also allow a qualified voter initiative for transportation purposes to be placed on the ballot under certain conditions.*

**COLAB NOTE: OF COURSE THE 1% CAP WOULD LAST FOR ONLY A FEW YEARS, AND THEN “NEED” TO BE INCREASED.**

#### **Then the staff asserted that the cap is obsolete:**

*Problem and Background The 2% cap was implemented in 2003, over two decades ago. Since then, several bills have passed the Legislature to create exceptions to the cap. This cap is quickly reached since cities and counties each enact district taxes. It is particularly problematic for counties because if one city within a county has reached the cap, then the county is precluded from seeking voter approval to self-impose additional district taxes.*

*Similarly, cities that have already reached the cap are constrained when seeking additional funding for programs and services above the cap. San Luis Obispo County has several cities near the local sales cap tax which could impact SLOCOG pursuing a sales tax measure to address the severe traffic along the U.S. 101, goods movement and safety along SR 46, auxiliary routes such as SR 227, and fund several multimodal projects countywide.*

*While the SLOCOG Board can currently elect to place a sales tax measure on the ballot, a voter-approved qualified initiative process will enhance community engagement and help inform and affirm the development of an expenditure plan. This would provide greater accountability and direction for how best to dedicate future resources in San Luis Obispo County. Solution Proposed: legislation that lifts the 2% state cap on San Luis Obispo County district taxes for transportation specific purposes, allowing SLOCOG or a qualified voter initiative to seek voter approval for a local transportation sales tax measure in the future.*

**You want to enhance community engagement, conduct labor negotiations in public meetings.**

**Stop: Insist that the State and Feds reprioritize their programs to capital investment. Then do the same in all the LAFCO jurisdictions.**



## Proposed Sales Tax Cap Waiver

### Issue:

- 2% cap implemented 2003
- Several SLO County cities near tax cap
- Precludes county from seeking voter approval to self-impose additional district taxes

### Fix:

- Propose legislation to lift 2% state cap on SLO County district taxes for transportation-specific purposes
- Provide no more than 1% exemption

## EMERGENT ISSUES

**Item 1 - Countries where you can drink the tap water.** Posted On **December 2, 2024** By Steven Hayward In The Daily Chart



**Item 2 - California sets initial State Water Project allocation at 5% following hot, dry stretch**  
Story by Ian James



The California Aqueduct, which transports water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to Southern California, runs near Highway 165 in Los Banos. ((Brian van der Brug/Los Angeles Times))© **(Brian van der Brug/Los Angeles Times)**

California water managers have announced their preliminary forecast of supplies that will be available next year from the State Water Project, telling 29 public agencies to plan for as little as 5% of requested allotments.

The state Department of Water Resources said Monday that the initial allocation is based on current reservoir levels and conservative assumptions about how much water the state may be able to deliver in 2025. LA Times , Dec 2, 2024

### **Item 3 - Expensive climate policy is dead. That's a big opportunity**

***Money saved as countries back away from Green New Deals can fund research into making green fuel cheap, which will make it genuinely popular***

Bjorn Lomborg, [Special to Financial Post](#)  
Published Nov 28, 2024

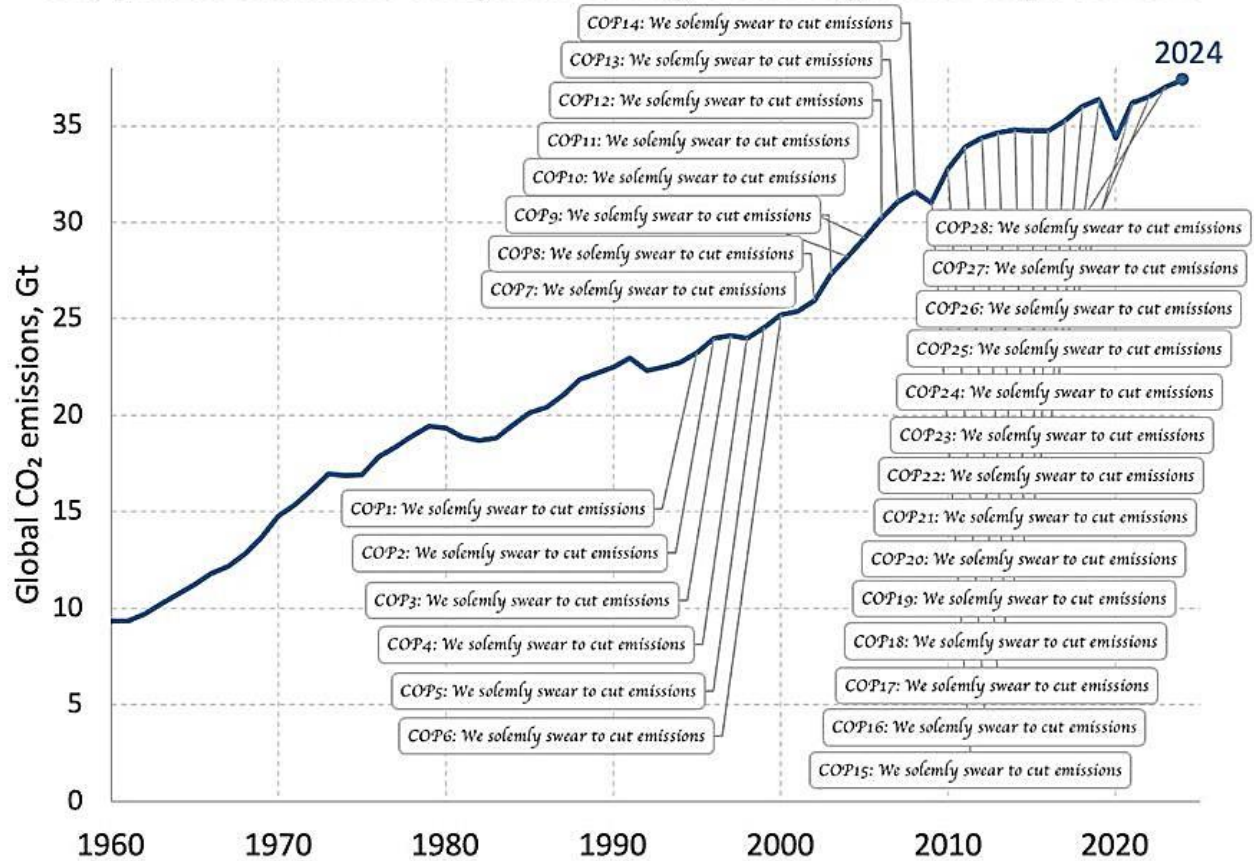
The latest climate summit, COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, was as hypocritical and dysfunctional as the 28 that preceded it, with most world leaders not even bothering to turn up. Still, 50,000 people did fly in from across the world — while essentially telling the rest of us to give up flying. Poor-country politicians staged a performative “walkout” and rich nations ended up promising a climate slush fund of \$300 billion a year.

Like previous fanciful pledges made over three decades of climate summits, this extravagant payoff is unlikely to happen. The emissions that virtually every summit has promised to cut have increased almost every year and in 2024 reached another new high. In 2021, the world promised to phase-down coal. Since then, global coal consumption has only gone up.



# Three Decades of Climate Gabfests: 2024 Highest CO<sub>2</sub>

Since the first climate conference in Berlin in 1995, the global community has promised *every year* that *now* we will cut emissions  
Yet, global emissions keep increasing, reaching a new high in 2024



<https://globalcarbonbudget.org/fossil-fuel-co2-emissions-increase-again-in-2024>, [twitter.com/BjornLomborg](https://twitter.com/BjornLomborg)

## Item 4 - The Green Energy Apocalypse- Plunging ourselves into extinction.

December 5, 2024 by *Bruce Thornton*

Someday our descendants will look back on the Age of Climate Change and marvel how a civilization with so much wealth, scientific knowledge, and sophisticated technologies could have willfully wrecked their economies and plunged themselves into poverty or extinction.

More astonishing to them, this civilizational suicide had been based on an unproven hypothesis like Anthropogenic Catastrophic Global Warming—the idea that human-produced atmospheric



CO2 emissions would destroy their civilization unless fossil fuels, the cheap, abundant energy that created the modern world, were abandoned.

Moreover, the portents of that future apocalypse are relentlessly multiplying across the rich Western nations, despite the ever-growing evidence that the hypothesis radically simplifies how a complex global climate works over space and time. More troubling, the proposed solution for lowering emissions enough to stave off the alleged disaster cannot be realized by eliminating fossil-fuels.

Thankfully, the election of Donald Trump offers hope that the suicidal “renewable” energy programs and policies will be rolled back.

For now, resistance to the zero net carbon narrative is growing. Even at the U.N.’s grand climate powwow held in Dubai in January, the UAE’s Minister of Industry, Dr. Sultan Al-Jaber, made the classic gaffe of speaking that truth out loud in front of the conclave of true believers. The Paris Accords’ goal to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2030 was a chimera: “‘There is no science out there, or no scenario out there that says the phase-out of fossil fuel is what’s going to achieve 1.5,’ Al-Jaber said at an online event on Nov. 21, “adding a pointed barb to the hosts that it would be impossible to stop burning fossil fuels and sustain economic development, ‘unless you want to take the world back into caves.’”

And if a government minister is an untrustworthy witness, listen to MIT professor of atmospheric science Richard Lindzen, and Princeton emeritus professor of physics William Happer, who wrote in 2021, “We are both scientists who can attest that the research literature does not support the claim of a climate emergency. Nor will there be one. None of the lurid predictions — dangerously accelerating sea-level rise, increasingly extreme weather, more deadly forest fires, unprecedented warming, etc. — are any more accurate than the fire-and-brimstone sermons used to stoke fanaticism in medieval crusaders.”

But despite numerous other exposures of how dubious the science is, the Western nations continue to double-down on transitioning to “clean energy,” mostly by phasing out gas-powered automobiles and mandating they be replaced by electric vehicles through taxpayer-funded subsidies and draconian government regulations.

This distortion of the free market enriches a few green corporate rent-seekers, at the expense of consumers who have to pay more for electricity, gasoline, or the gas-powered automobiles they prefer to EVs dependent on intermittent energy sources like solar panels and wind turbines. Meanwhile, the higher costs for energy harms the whole economy, especially the automobile industry. Just look at the straits that some of the world’s largest economies have put themselves in by pursuing net zero use of carbon. Great Britain, the seventh biggest economy in the world, “is killing its auto industry,” as the Wall Street Journal’s headline reads. Automaker Stellantis is closing a plant, at the cost of 1100 jobs. America’s Ford is shedding 800 at its British plant, and Nissan has warned the government that it also might scale back production.

Why? “The culprit,” the Journal writes, “as always these days, is the forced political march to electric vehicles. Britain requires manufacturers to steadily boost the proportion of EVs in their annual sales. Currently the quota is 22% and rising every year. Rishi Sunak’s Tory administration tried to push the final phase-out of new internal-combustion cars to 2035, but the new Labour Party government vows to bring the deadline back to 2030. Even the current quota is proving impossible to meet as consumers spurn EVs.”

An economy managed by government fiat, as the U.S.S.R. and every socialist country have shown, in the end will fail and drag the people’s wealth down with it. And bribing customers and manufacturers to purchase and build an unwanted product further burdens a nation’s fisc with more debt and misallocated resources. In the U.K., “The total cost to manufacturers of the mandate has hit nearly £6 billion this year, SMMT estimates: about £4 billion in discounts and sales incentives car companies offered to boost EV sales, and £1.8 in outright fines for each ‘excess’ internal-combustion car sold.”

Britain is just one of several European economies that are falling deeper and deeper into the “renewable energy” rabbit hole. In Germany, Volkswagen has been forced to shut down three factories at the cost of 10,000 jobs. And the U.S. during the Biden administration also took the country on a “renewable energy” and net-zero carbon bender as well. True to its status as the bellwether of every lefty lunatic fad, California under its failed governor is binging on the same toxic “global warming” brew, driving its economy and citizens towards a fiscal cliff.

Under the aegis of “climate action,” Governor Gavin Newsom, as the Wall Street Journal reports, and the Democrat-controlled state government have targeted two critical industries for California’s economy comprising “a perfect storm of laws, regulations and lawsuits designed to eliminate oil and farming.” But that’s not all: “Every essential foundation of a healthy, affordable economy is under attack. But rather than acknowledge this storm, California’s Gov. Gavin Newsom is doing everything in his power to make it worse.”

Key to this assault is the unholy grail of net-zero carbon emissions, supported by billions in subsidies for “renewable” energy, and regulatory attacks on fossil fuel energy. “As a result, California’s households and businesses pay for the most expensive electricity and gasoline in the lower 48 states. It’s all for nothing. California still relies on oil and gas for 80% of its energy, a reliance on fossil fuel that is the same as the national average.”

That astonishing paradox of trying to get rid of the energy resources that provide 80% not just of the U.S.’s energy, but the whole world’s, is powerful evidence of how unscientific and incoherent the whole net-zero carbon pursuit is. Moreover, what reductions of carbon emissions that have already occurred result not from pie-in-the-sky expensive mandates or bribes to consumers and manufacturers to buy and produce electric cars, but from the development of shale fracking, which produces cleaner natural gas for generating electricity.

But that’s not all: California is “sitting on tens of trillions of cubic feet of reserves” of natural gas. “California used to produce 60% of the oil it consumed, but despite reserves estimated as high as 30 billion barrels, in-state production is down to 23% of consumption.”

As the Journal concludes, “These are the consequences of a state run by rent-seeking renewable-energy firms and the environmentalist fanatics that offer them political cover. Mr. Newsom’s climate action is hitting every industry and every household.”

Finally, these feckless “renewable energy” policies are damaging economies most of which are already confronting huge loads of debt, amassed over the years to pay for entitlement transfers that few politicians dare to pare back and reform. These costs also make financing the West’s military preparedness more difficult, exposing us to our enemies’ adventurism.

Adding the expense of discarding cheap, abundant fossil fuel energy—and the difficult, if not impossible, task of replacing carbon energy with “clean energy” and electric cars, for which there are nowhere near enough transmission lines, charging stations, and high-capacity battery storage—make our fiscal straits dire to the point of being suicidal. For as economist Herbert Stein famously said, “If something cannot go on forever, it will stop.”

That’s especially true in our case, given our geopolitical rivals like China and Russia, who want to usurp the West’s preeminent role in global affairs. The former is perfectly happy to burn tons of dirty coal to generate electricity; while the latter sits on the world’s 8<sup>th</sup> largest oil reserves. Both are ruled by ruthless realists, and care nothing for our romantic environmentalism, and are immune to our arrogant virtue-signaling.

Thankfully, the election of Donald Trump offers hope that the suicidal “renewable” energy programs and policies will be rolled back. Apocalypse, like decline, is not a destiny but a choice. Trump established his realist climate policy bona fides during his first term, and strengthened them by his cabinet choices so far. By reprising those policy changes and making others, Trump can rein in the suicidal war on fossil fuels, and rev up our production and exports of energy to our allies, reducing Iran and Russia’s geopolitical leverage.

That’s how we can make the West—the freest and wealthiest civilization in history—great again. *Bruce S. Thornton is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, an emeritus professor of classics and humanities at California State University, Fresno, and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution. His latest book is Democracy’s Dangers and Discontents: The Tyranny of the Majority from the Greeks to Obama. This article first appeared in the December 5, 2024 Front Page Newsletter.*

**COLAB IN DEPTH**  
**IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS**  
**ON OUR FREEDOM AND UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL,**  
**AND ECONOMIC CAUSES**

# IT'S TIME TO TAKE BACK THE PEOPLE'S POWER – IN CALIFORNIA AND DC

## ***GAVIN NEWSOM'S SEEMINGLY BOLD, PROGRESSIVE STANCES ARE MERELY DESIGNED TO RAISE HIS PUBLIC PROFILE – HE ALWAYS WANTS TO BE THE FIRST TO DO SOMETHING***

**BY KATY GRIMES**

The power of the American people has been stolen by politicians and the permanent government bureaucracy. This bureaucracy exists in every state and Washington DC. The “Department of Government Efficiency, or “DOGE” will start taking the people’s power back one regulation, one department, one NGO, one fraudulent non-profit, one “public-private partnership” at a time.

According to John Locke, the 17th century English political philosopher, there is little difference between a partisan, prejudiced government and a thief. Locke was an “intellectual titan, one whose thoughts and ideas can be found throughout our country’s earliest political documents, including and especially the Declaration of Independence.”

Nowhere is this more apparent, or a DOGE is needed, than in California. At this juncture with Gavin Newsom impersonating a Governor, Californians could turn blue in the face waiting for a DOGE to happen.

In a recent article, I said, “California needs a DOGE oversight agency to dismantle government bureaucracy, and cut wasteful expenditures.” What an understatement.

According to the State Controller, there are 247,515 state employees as of October 2024, but that doesn’t account for the universities. Another 265,000 employees are employed by the University of California. There are 63,357 employees in the California State University system. And there are 88,000 employees in the California Community College system – this totals 416,357 state university and college employees.

There are 1,800 state legislative employees according to a bill authorizing unionization of legislative staff – which Gov. Newsom signed into law.

The grand total thus far is 665,672 employees in state jobs.

There are more than 2.4Million total government employees in California which would include city and county employees.

**DOGE, as announced by President-elect Donald Trump, is an advisory group intended to streamline, reduce, and reform federal government operations, led by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy. Here are some key points regarding the DOGE, which promises to reverse a decades long executive power grab:**

- The initiative aims to address government waste and inefficiency by slashing regulations, reducing federal workforce, and restructuring government agencies.
- The primary goals include cutting up to \$2 trillion from the federal budget, reducing the size of the federal workforce significantly (Ramaswamy has mentioned cutting up to 75% of federal employees), and eliminating or downsizing numerous federal agencies. They

are aiming to cut \$500 billion plus in annual federal expenditures that are unauthorized by Congress or being used in ways that Congress never intended.”

- Operational Strategy: Rather than being a formal department within the government, DOGE operates as an external advisory group. It will provide recommendations to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) rather than having direct executive power. This setup allows Musk and Ramaswamy to continue their private sector roles while advising on government efficiency.
- Public Engagement: They have announced plans for a podcast named “DOGEcast” to bring transparency to their efforts, discussing their findings and strategies with the public to explain the waste, fraud, and abuse within government operations.
- Musk and Ramaswamy envision applying private sector efficiency principles to government operations. They propose using executive actions and recent Supreme Court rulings to justify their recommendations for regulatory cuts and workforce reduction. (Grok)

Just as California Gov. Newsom has allowed, “Federal government agencies are using, on average, just 12% of the space in their DC headquarters. The Department of Agriculture, with space for more than 7,400 people, averaged 456 workers each day (6% occupancy). Why are American taxpayer dollars being spent to maintain empty buildings?” Musk and Ramaswamy posted on the DOGE X page.  
And that’s just the starters.

California also could cut billions from the state budget, “\$288.1 billion in total spending, down from the \$291.5 billion that Newsom proposed in January, and significantly down from the \$310.8 billion approved last year for the 2023-24 budget despite many indications that it was not sustainable relative to the state’s revenue,” CalTax reported.

...and by reducing the size of the state workforce significantly... by say 50%?

Gov. Newsom comically claims the state budget is balanced. Such bravado, arrogance and ridiculousness. The reality is that Gov. Newsom’s Administration consistently underestimates short and long term costs and debts – including the \$1.5+ Trillion unfunded public employee pension and health obligations, the Unemployment Insurance loan repayments, and the more than \$300 billion High Speed Rail estimate former Senate Transportation Committee Chair Mark DeSaulnier (D) provided – just a few examples.

California state employees are not required to be back in the office full time. Some are back 2 days a week, while the state-owned buildings sit empty the rest of the week.

A huge swath of state employees are grossly overpaid for what is effectively clerical work. Many of the state jobs are unnecessary or redundant, or used-to-be/should be done by private sector businesses. But pay and benefits attract employees to the state, and then pays them higher than they would be paid in the private sector, effectively enslaving them to government work and health benefits they could never afford otherwise.

Musk and Ramaswamy are targeting wasteful spending:

The U.S. Government recently approved the following grants: -\$45 million for a diversity and inclusion scholarship in Burma -\$3 million for “girl-centered climate action” in Brazil -\$288,563 for diverse bird watcher groups.

How the Government Spends your Tax Dollars: -\$28 million on licensing fees for a green “camouflage” pattern on Afghan National Army uniforms -\$2.5 million on a Super Bowl Ad for the Census -\$1.7 million for holograms of dead comedians -\$500,000 to build an IHOP in Washington, DC.

In 2024, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) spent \$1.8 billion studying racism including: - \$125K on “Examining Anti-Racist Healing in Nature” -\$151K on “Perceived racism, cardiovascular disease risk, and neurocognitive aging” -\$516K on “Effects of Racism on Brain and Pathways to Health Disparities”

and:

An estimated \$100 billion in estimated improper payments were made in the Medicare and Medicaid programs in Fiscal Year 2023. This is 43% of government-wide improper payments that year.

**They have a monumental job ahead of them – particularly since Washington DC is made up of a “creeping socialism” class, which will not willingly turn over power without a fight. We know that because of how the DC cabal of FBI/DOJ/DOD agencies has attacked, prosecuted, and litigated Donald Trump since he first announced his run for president in 2015. And that Trump’s life was nearly taken twice during the campaign speaks volumes.**

However, we have already witnessed another leader implement his own DOGE: Argentine President Javier Milei.

Longtime journalist Elizabeth Nickson of the Absurdistan Substack reported: “Milei was interviewed by Lex Fridman. In a detailed, theory-moving-to-practice rich interview, Milei asserts that after they took a chainsaw to the Argentine fiscal arrangement (the last word best drawled in an entitled French accent) they immediately 2.5Xed the per capita GDP of Argentinians.

His approval rating is now higher than it was when he took office. Despite their venal press.

In his first month, he did what everyone said he couldn’t. He balanced the budget. He balanced it by cutting 50% of bureaucrats and ministries. Fifty thousand civil servants lost their jobs. Thus in a single stroke he saved hundreds of millions. His team then instituted a program of regulatory reform, over-regulation being the principal Marxist/socialist/commie tool for destroying economic health, initiative and creativity.”

So it is not only possible, it worked.

Nickson continues:

“Milei found that government offices were lying about all the stats. Every single one. They were lying about unemployment, they were lying about inflation, they were lying about government



debt, and they were lying about the poverty rate. They had run up prices through theft and regulation, then fixed prices, and lo and behold, no one could afford to make or import anything so there was nothing to buy.”

“We found that 13.5% of GDP was from money printing.”

Nickson continues:

“Biden printed almost \$10 trillion in the past four years, shoved it into the economy, mostly by funding bank debt, hiring government workers and calling it growth. Therefore, roughly an equivalent %age of the U.S. GDP is from money printing. Which means the real growth rate is around -5%. That’s what real people are facing — feeling outside of the sheltered neighborhoods, we are losing 5% a year. Which means every year, we lose more agency, are more enslaved to debt.”

While Newsom’s isn’t printing California currency *yet*, he has implemented policies and regulations of the kind Javier Milei overturned to bring his country back from the brink of socialist hell.

Newsom’s seemingly bold, progressive stances are merely designed to raise his public profile – he always wants to be the first to do something, regardless of the outcomes. As San Francisco Mayor, Newsom started issuing same-sex marriage licenses in violation of state law. A few months later, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Mayor Newsom, and the City and County of San Francisco had exceeded its authority and violated state law by issuing the marriage licenses. But the headlines had already lauded the “progressive” Mayor.

Newsom was the first governor in the country to lock down an entire state and issue a stay-at-home order in March 2020 at the onset of the Covid virus, in one of the most egotistical, arrogant moves imaginable – he wanted to be the first in the nation to issue the stay-at-home order, thus propelling himself into the media as a national leader, with no consideration for the healthy in California. He was also the first Governor to face a recall election during Covid for his unconstitutional lockdown orders.

By November of 2020, we reported that Gov. Newsom had issued 58 executive orders, effectively ruling California by dictatorial decree, proving that his lust for power was indeed real. The executive orders would grow to 70 before he lifted the state of emergency, three years later. Newsom’s COVID State of Emergency order continued from March 2020 until the end of February 2023 – over 1,000 days – locking down the entire state, businesses, schools. Newsom hung on to his emergency powers for three years, treating the state to his dictatorship. No other governor did this. Notably, the California media gave him a pass, proving they are his reliable propaganda arm.

Newsom was making law via his State of Emergency powers including:

- Permitting vote-by-mail procedures to be used in three upcoming special elections
- 2020 General Election Vote-By-Mail Ballots

- Waved Certain Privacy and Security Laws for Medical Providers to Provide Telehealth Services and Minimize Risk of Penalty
- Banned in-state sales for all new vehicles that are not zero-emission by 2035 September 23, 2020

Legacy media fawned all over Newsom for his bold proclamations “protecting” Californians – even when he cancelled Christmas in December 2020.

As the Globe reported in Dec. 2020, “In Gov. Gavin Newsom’s California business owners are fined and arrested for being open and doing business, while convicted criminals are let out of jails and prisons.”

We noted that the state’s Public Health doctors, while not in a medical practice, still were required to adhere to “*Primum non nocere*,” the Latin phrase that means “first, do no harm.” But they weren’t.

“Lockdowns are killing people, destroying businesses, and harming the state’s children who aren’t attending school because of the ordered closures,” we reported.

And Newsom was ordering all of this tyranny, while the fawning media never questioned his orders, nor the lack of science behind them.

As we continually remind readers, “Remember, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the compliant Democrat Supermajority in the California Legislature closed your children’s schools, shut down your businesses, ordered your churches closed, cancelled your holidays, ordered beaches and parks closed, masked your kids, mandated Covid shots to go back to work and school... while they exempted themselves from these mandates.” And while Newsom dined at the French Laundry, vacationed with his family, and sent his kids to their private school.

Newsom even forbid passing the offering plate at church, and specifically ordered no singing at churches that were only 25 percent capacity – and only opened again in late 2023 because President Trump’s administration ordered churches opened. Newsom was further disciplined by the US Supreme Court which lifted Newsom’s ban on indoor church services. “California worries that worship brings people together for too much time,” wrote Justice Neil Gorsuch in an opinion concurring with the majority’s Feb. 5 decision. “Yet, California does not limit its citizens to running in and out of other establishments; no one is barred from lingering in shopping malls, salons, or bus terminals.”

Gavin Newsom was the Governor still clinging to his Covid State of Emergency powers when he was sworn in for a second term, January 2023, nearly three years after his first order, ruling by fiat. Newsom locked down 40 million people during Covid, issued more than 70 executive orders containing 561 provisions, and killed off half of the businesses in the state. He ordered Covid patients into nursing homes, effectively helping kill off the sick and elderly. And he hasn’t ‘t been held accountable for any of it. Yet.

We will never see government accountability in California as long as Gavin Newsom and the Democrat Supermajority are dictating policy detrimental to the people of California.

But never say never. The Trump Administration had a positive effect on California in Trump's first term; we expect it will again. And Newsom will be gone at the end of 2026.

Notably, President-Elect Trump's platform has a Dedication:  
"To the Forgotten Men and Women of America"

And there is a PREAMBLE

America First:

A Return to Common Sense.

That is exactly what Javier Milei's focus was on – the forgotten men and women of Argentina and common sense – and now they are estimating a 7% growth rate for each of the next ten years.

That is the opposite of what Gavin Newsom is doing to the people of California.

As Elizabeth Nickson correctly concludes, "Massive fiscal reform will release that money and return it to you. The result will be a boom for the ages. Try to stay with me on this. It will be all anyone will be talking, shouting, complaining about for the next 18 months. And it is the only way to save the culture. No green economy, fancy derivative, debt forgiveness, UN plan or tax will stop a thousand years of misery. Only this."

*Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses? This article first appeared in the California Globe of December 2, 2024.*

## **THE FUMES OF THE 2024 ELECTION**

### ***THE LAST GREAT HOPE TO STOP THE MADNESS***

#### **BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

Three weeks after the election and the fallout from it, we are starting to appreciate the clarity of the vote. It explains much of the present, the past, and the future.

Consider the following:

1. Even Donald Trump's enemies are beginning, albeit sheepishly and begrudgingly, to concede he proved indestructible in a way they never imagined. After failed collusion hoaxes, laptop disinformation ruses, the 2020 mail-in ballot ambush, two impeachments, the attempt at ballot removal, five criminal and civil lawfare cases coordinated by the White House, 95% negative

media coverage, and \$5 billion in 2020 and 2024 political campaign hit ads and vituperation, and two assassinations, the Left failed to defeat him, to bankrupt him, to jail him, and to destroy him.

And now like an exasperated Wile E. Coyote, they have developed a bizarre mixture of fear and respect, venomous though it is, for the unstoppable beep-beep Roadrunner Trump.

2. For all the recent spin, post-election Kamala Harris is going nowhere but to a Dukakis-like retirement. She proved the worst Democratic candidate since the 1972 catastrophe of George McGovern (who was a sincere person, and a decorated WWII B-24 combat bomber pilot).

She will make no Trump 2021-4 comeback, no election victory in 2028, as either president or California governor. Her moneybags donors are exasperated that she and her PACs blew \$1.5 billion of their money in little more than a 100-day campaign—while paying for private jets, concerts, and the likes of Al Sharpton, Beyonce, Oprah, etc. to endorse/interview her.

She ran five points behind Joe Biden four years earlier in California. The widely disliked Adam Schiff outperformed Harris this year in his preordained California Senate race. If she runs either for president or governor, she will have to explain in leftwing primaries or in a leftwing state her three-month metamorphosis to a fracker, a crime-fighter, a border hawk, a deporter—or revert back to her true 40-year leftwing persona, claiming temporary flip-flop amnesia in 2024.

3. Trump's 2024 victory clarifies his close 2020 Electoral College loss. Four years ago voters were already tired of the Left, approved of the Trump tenure, and were willing to reelect him, had not the undreamed-of, perfect-storm quadrafecta followed—in part through Leftist machinations: the catastrophic COVID-national lockdown, the nonending 2020 post-George Floyd summer and autumn riots and chaos, the 2020 radical transformation from 30 percent to 70 percent mail-in ballots in swing states and the mysterious plunge in ballot rejection rates by a magnitude, and, finally, the cover-up of a demented Joe Biden and his basement campaign, aided by the Covid lockdown, and his handlers who outsourced his 'ol' Joe Biden, the moderate from Scranton' puppet candidacy to the lapdog media.

4. The Left is still catatonic and barking at the moon. Everything they told us was revealed a lie. Harris was never ahead. She never enjoyed a "bump. She was never soaring on joy. She was never 3 points ahead in Iowa or creating a historic Trump "gender gap" deficit with women voters (Trump gained a larger percentage of women voters than in either 2020 or 2016, and he increased his lead with men from both past elections.)

The leftwing polls were mostly rigged to gin up momentum, fund-raising, and voter turnout—and were refuted and embarrassed once again by the accuracy of the sneered-at, but always professional AltasIntel/Trafalgar/Rasmussen triad. The usual crowd of the likes of Rachel Maddow, Elizabeth Warren, Joy Reid, Adam Schiff, Nancy Pelosi, Gavin Newsom, Al Sharpton, etc. are now serially projecting that Donald Trump might do to the DOJ, the CIA, the FBI, the IRS, and the Pentagon what they did in the past to Trump—and what they most certainly would

do to warp these agencies if they were now Trump and they had suffered what Trump had at their own hands.

5. Trump is becoming a 1961-63 “New Frontier” JFK-like figure well beyond the drafting of RFK, Jr.: the reboot of space exploration, the shift from a can’t do to a can-do, get- moving-again national exuberance, the proposed tax cuts, strong defense, and deterrence, and a renewed hope that the era of racial demagoguery is passing, as taking the knee morphed to dancing to YMCA.

6. To paraphrase Churchill, the 2024 victory is not the end of the beginning of the radical left, but the end of the beginning of the effort to do so. There is no more stomach for spaghetti-arm Antifa rioting, BLM-inspired looting, and pampered foreign students spouting anti-Semitic venom while breaking their hosts’ laws. Israel has proved the feared Hezbollah and death-to-Israel Iran were paper tigers and blowhards. The exhausted public has little tolerance left for toppling statues, renaming iconic buildings and streets, DEI venom, transgendered chauvinism, lectures from bicoastal grandees on why we must buy EV cars, throw away our gas stoves, flash our pronouns, study Professor Kendi, worship the moronic Ta-Nehisi Coates, or listen to the claptrap of sanctimonious Pete Buttigieg and Alejandro Mayorkas

7. Finally, there remains worry about the status of the present and future president. Joe Biden has now descended into utter incoherence without even the past lies that he is fit as a fiddle, strong as an ox—from wandering into the jungle to mumbling at the podium in a bizarre untranslated language unknown to man. Can he finish the next 60 days, as the world is on the way to a veritable DefCon 1? Unhinged Harris supporters talk of a 2-month, 25-Amendment imposed President Harris, an insane idea except not so insane when one listens and watches the current state of Joe Biden.

By the same token, there is increased anxiety about the safety of Donald Trump. The post-election Left is so unhinged, so crazy and the Secret Service is so suspect in its incompetence, that the nation is rightly worried about Trump’s security, who is increasingly seen as the last great hope to stop the madness.

*This article first appeared in the American Greatness of December 2, 2024. Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004, and is the 2023 Giles O’Malley Distinguished Visiting Professor at the School of Public Policy, Pepperdine University. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush, and the Bradley Prize in 2008. Hanson is also a farmer (growing almonds on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author of the just released New York Times best seller, The End of Everything: How Wars Descend into Annihilation, published by Basic Books on May 7, 2024, as well as the recent The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won, The Case for Trump, and The Dying Citizen.*

# **THE CORRUPTION OF DEMOCRACY, CALIFORNIA STYLE *ELECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA ARE A TRAVESTY, AS IS CALLING WHAT JUST HAPPENED PROGRESS FOR THE STATE'S REPUBLICAN PARTY* BY EDWARD RING**

Wishful thinking aside, California did not participate in the realignment that, on November 5, 2024, may have transformed American politics forever. The positive spin on California's dismal failure to liberate itself from failing Democrat policies rests on what are, in the cold light of day, modest achievements. California's voters approved Proposition 36, a ballot initiative that made criminal behavior a crime again; they recalled a few Soros DAs, and GOP candidates logged a net gain of two seats in the state assembly and one seat in the state senate. It's not enough.

To begin with, the fact that voters had to overrule a corrupt legislature and judiciary to compel law enforcement to once again enforce the law is no reason to celebrate. It's just one first step, in just one area, against a party that wields layers upon layers of stupefying power in every area of policy. The State Supreme Court is still packed with Democrat appointees. The state bureaucracy, consisting of a bewildering and almost innumerable collection of regulatory agencies and commissions, is under the absolute control of public sector unions. Every higher state office is occupied by Democrats, including activist Attorney General Rob Bonta, a machine politician who aims to succeed Newsom as California's next governor. Democrat politicians still enjoy a 62-17 (one seat is vacant) advantage over Republicans in the state assembly and a 31-9 advantage in the state senate. Newsom is still governor, and now he's called a special session of the state legislature to "Trump-proof" the state.

Everyone knows that the consequences of California's failed policies on energy, water, transportation, housing, homelessness, crime, and education inevitably roll out to afflict the rest of the country. Lobbying, "climate partnerships," and similar end runs on national policy, and lawfare—which is about to be turned up a notch—are all California specialties. But the biggest example of California's power is its ability to decisively influence the US Congress by virtue of having its largest congressional delegation. And this is where the California GOP's failure on November 5 was so big it overshadows any traces of success. California's GOP is on track to lose three seats in the US Congress, falling from a mere 12 out of 52 to only 9 out of 52. And how they lost these seats reveals an outgunned GOP organization that could not overcome the most corrupt, rigged system of voting in the country.

Californians have correctly pointed out that the state's loose requirements to vote introduce the potential for voter fraud. That's true, but it's also an excuse for failure. There were ten battleground congressional districts in California, and the GOP only won four of them. But they might have run the table. If they had, instead of nearly handing control of the US Congress to the Democrats, they would have given the GOP a still slim but much more comfortable majority.

California's election this year had a relatively low turnout, only 73.3 percent compared to 80.1 percent in 2020. In a presidential election universally acknowledged as even more consequential



than the last one, an estimated 1.7 million fewer Californians cast ballots than in 2020. Maybe voters felt that California was a lock for Kamala Harris and didn't care about down-ballot races, but they should have felt the same way about Biden in 2020. Whatever the reason, voters stayed home, and that meant the organization with the best get-out-the-vote operation was going to win the close races. California's perverse election rules make GOTV embarrassingly easy if you have the operation to pull it off.

The strength of the Democrats in California four years ago was thanks to the legalization of ballot harvesting and universal vote-by-mail. But the Republicans countered in 2024. As mailed ballots were received and processed prior to Election Day, Republican counts were surprisingly high. But this early strong performance just alerted the Democrat campaigns to where they needed higher turnout and where they needed to find it. And they had a weapon that proved to be unbeatable—same-day registration.

In California, it is legal for eligible but unregistered voters to register and vote right up until and including Election Day. Their votes are cast on what the state calls "conditional voter registration ballots." As of November 8, there were 371,840 of these same-day registration ballots still uncounted, along with 76,133 "provisional ballots," which election officials accept from voters who "believe they are registered to vote even though their names are not on the official voter registration list at the polling place." Also unprocessed as of November 8 were 236,653 "vote-by-mail ballots received after Election Day thru E+7" (the state accepts mailed ballots up to a week after Election Day) and 45,519 "other" ballots, which are "ballots that are damaged or could not be machine-read and need to be remade, and ballots diverted by optical scanners for further review."

Altogether, three days after the election, 730,145 ballots in one of these four dubious categories were "unprocessed" in the State of California. Surely within these four categories, there are opportunities for fraud. For that matter, one may suggest some fraudulent votes may have been included within the additional 4,596,972 ballots that lacked the distinction of being "provisional," or "conditional," or "received up to 7 days after the election," or "diverted for further review," but were simply mailed in and received before election day. In all, on November 8, there were still 5,472,423 "unprocessed ballots." A week later, on November 14, there were still 1,658,803. By November 17 that number had dwindled to a still very substantial 784,448. As of December 2, only 37,533 remain.

Suggesting voter fraud is impossible in California is partisan misinformation. But it misses something of equal significance. Same-day voter registration, even more than vote harvesting, confers an advantage to the campaign and the party that has the biggest GOTV operation. Imagine the scene at UC Merced during election week in a congressional district where GOP incumbent John Duarte trailed as of November 2 by a whopping 231 votes. Imagine professional Democrat Party vote gatherers fanning out across campus, targeting students enrolled in majors with an emphasis on sociology, gender, race, and racial justice. Imagine their pitch: "We have to stop Trump," "We have to protect abortion rights," "We have to fight race and gender discrimination."

And voila, another registrant, another voter, another ballot, and Duarte, that GOP racist, has to earn one more vote somewhere else to keep up. Same-day voting, legal in California, must have favored Democrats. It will be a while before we know the party registration statistics on the more than 371,840 people who registered and voted at the last minute in California. But even if Republicans had the operation to execute same-day voter outreach, where would they go? Their potential voters are dispersed and busy working, whereas the Democrats need only go to college campuses. When you're looking for 231 votes in a battleground district, the margin of victory can be found in front of lecture halls.

Ultimately, the fact that 1.6 million fewer Californians voted this year compared to 2020 means that either party could have won in the battleground districts if they got out there and dragged people to the polls. Republican voters had more reason to vote than Democrats because they knew the state was failing its people, or they wouldn't be registered as Republicans. Also, maybe the Republicans needed to run better campaigns. Duarte and his opponent, Democrat Adam Gray, both spent millions on television ads featuring people with heavy Chicano accents saying the other guy is a bad guy. Is that the best we can do? And, in other close races, the GOP consented to allowing perennial candidates to run who had enough name recognition and donations to advance to the general election but not enough to win.

Election laws in California are structured to favor Democrats because they have a structural advantage thanks to the political power of public sector unions that are overwhelmingly partisan in favor of Democrats. Bigger government means more union dues. More union dues mean more political donations. More political donations mean more Democrats get elected. That's wrong, but equally flawed is the moral justification for California's election laws: making voting accessible to everyone. Why?

Why should it be so easy to vote that a paid operative can approach someone on Election Day, hand them a registration form and a ballot, and walk away with another vote for the candidate they're confident this targeted prospect will favor? Is this how democracy succeeds, or, as California ought to exemplify, is this how democracy fails? Voting is a privilege that should require some effort. We are privileged to drive cars on public roads, but we aren't automatically granted driver's licenses. California needs to restrict mail-in ballots to people who genuinely cannot vote any other way. California also needs to restore a requirement to register to vote six weeks before an election. They need to require an ID to vote, they need to ban vote harvesting, and they need to stop accepting mail ballots that are received after Election Day. They need to ban automatic voter registration at the Dept. of Motor Vehicles. And they need to compile election results within 24 hours of the polls closing.

Anyone calling these reforms voter suppression is wrong and has a partisan agenda. There's a moral worth in requiring citizens to proactively obtain the privilege of voting. It skews the pool of registrants ever so much towards a more responsible electorate, and that's a good thing for democracy.

Elections in California are a travesty, as is calling what just happened progress for the state's Republican Party.

*Edward Ring is a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. He is also the director of water and energy policy for the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. Ring is the author of Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism (2021) and The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California (2022).*



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