



**WEEKLY UPDATE  
JANUARY 12 - 18, 2025**



**FOR DECADES THE PALISADES, MALIBU, BRENTWOOD & SANTA MONICA HAVE VOTED 70% FOR LEFTIST UNACCOUNTABLE REGIMES AND CANDIDATES – NO FIRE BREAKS, NO BRUSH CONTROL, NO SALT WATER CISTERNS CONNECTED TO HIGH VOLUME MARINE PUMPS - INSTEAD ANTI-NUCLEAR, PRO MARINE SANCTURY, CLIMATIST, DEI EXTOLLING, MASS TRANSIT LOVING (BUT NOT FOR THEM), HIGH CO<sub>2</sub> FOOTPRINT ELITES**

**MEANWHILE THE MAIDS, NANNYS, GARDENERS, POOL GUYS, WAITERS & WAITRESSES, TRUCK DRIVERS, DELIVERY GUYS, AND EVERYONE ELSE LIVES DOWN ON THE FLATS IN \$3,300 PER MONTH 75 YEAR OLD CRUMBLING 2 BEDROOM APARTMENTS, MANY IN GANG INFESTED, GRAFFITI COVERED, AND HOMELESS LITTERED DYSTOPIAN DECAY**

**YOU CAN FLEE THE NEXT FIRE IN THE DARK IN YOUR MANDATORY UNCHARGED ELECTRIC PRIUS**

**GOVERNOR NEWSOME JUST ISSUED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER  
SUSPENDING THE IMPACTED COUNTIES' AND CITIES' PERMITTING  
REQUIREMENTS FOR REBUILDING**

**WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US WHO CAN'T BUILD ANYTHING AT  
ALL?**

**THIS WEEK  
SEE PAGE 5**

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**KPMG \$437K ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF  
THE HEALTH AGENCY**

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT LISTS DIVERSITY,  
EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING AS ITS  
“FOUNDATIONAL PILLAR”**

***WHO KNEW? WHAT DOES THE BOARD THINK?*  
DOES IT AFFECT HIRES, PROMOTIONS, AND CONTRACTOR PICKS?**

**APPOINTMENTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS  
TO VARIOUS COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONERS  
*GIBSON TO BE APPOINTED TO PASO BASIN COOPERATIVE  
COMMITTEE AGAIN***

**COUNTY'S STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM  
MORE MONEY, MORE PROGRAMS, MORE TAXES**

**FEASIBILITY OF REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL SCALE  
DESALINATION STUDY TO LAUNCH**

**BOB JONES TRAIL TO ULTIMATELY COST \$48 MILLION  
\$43 MILLION EXPENDED OR PLEDGED SO FAR  
*BOARD REQUESTED TO ADD A NEW \$5 MILLION***

**SUPERVISOR NEW REQUESTS**

**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**  
**COULD MOVE SANTA MARGARITA RANCH PROJECT FORWARD**  
***WITH ANNEXATION TO WATER DISTRICT***

**LAST WEEK**  
**SEE PAGE 19**

**BOS SWEARING IN CEREMONY**  
**NO REGULAR BUSINESS**  
**ORTIZ-LEGG APPOINTED CHAIR AND PAULDING VICE CHAIR**

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING FOR SLOCOG**  
**NO REGULAR BUSINESS**

**CENTRAL COAST COMMUNITY ENERGY OPS BOARD**  
**CANCELLED - WILL NEXT MEET IN FEBRUARY**

**PLANNING COMMISSION POSTPONED**

**EMERGENT ISSUES**  
**SEE PAGE 21**

**WHY BUILDING A LOT OF 'AFFORDABLE' HOUSING**  
**IS BAD NEWS FOR AFFORDABILITY**

**PROMISES TO REDUCE CALIFORNIA'S HIGH LIVING COSTS**  
**CONFLICT WITH STATE'S PROGRESSIVE POLICIES**

**CALIFORNIA ADOPTS PERMANENT WATER RATIONING**  
**THE LOS ANGELES WILDFIRES: AN AVOIDABLE TRAGEDY**

**THE LA FIRE DEPARTMENT WENT WOKE. NOW LA  
IS ON FIRE**

**WHY IS THE RED STAR SLO TRIBUNE ATTACKING  
CAL COAST NEWS AGAIN?**

**COLAB IN DEPTH**  
**SEE PAGE 38**

**THE DEBASEMENT OF TOLERANCE**  
**BY J. DARYL CHARLES**

**THE ANTI-AMERICAN AGENDAS OF  
CALIFORNIA'S DEMOCRATS CATCHING UP**  
*POLITICAL INCOMPETENCE IS POLITICAL. GROSS  
NEGLIGENCE IS POLITICAL. CORRUPTION IS POLITICAL*  
**BY KATY GRIMES**


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**H**  
**HEARST**  
R A N C H



**LA LOMITA**  
RANCH

**HAMON**  
**OVERHEAD DOOR**  
**COMPANY**

## THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, January 14, 2025 (Scheduled)

**Item 5 - Request to 1) authorize the County Administrative Officer to execute the sole sourced professional services agreement, upon approval by County Counsel as to form, with KPMG LLP, for an assessment and management review of the Health Agency; and 2) approve a corresponding budget adjustment in the amount of \$436,700 from General Fund Talent Development Reserve Designation to FC 104 - Administrative Office for this effort, by 4/5 vote.** The CAO proposes that the County hire the consulting firm KPMG to begin to review the effectiveness of the County Departments. The first Department to be reviewed is the Health Agency. As we have reported in the past, this “agency” that consists of 2 departments, the Public Health Department and the Behavioral Health Department. The organization structure and budgets are confusing. The performance measures are scarce and weak. Moreover, since the County does not budget at the program level, they are essentially meaningless.

It is not clear from the write-up if the contract price will cover only the Health Agency in the future or other departments as well.



Santa Barbara County hired KPMG about five years ago to perform the same services. Over the ensuing years, the County has spent millions on KPMG review of all its departments. The CEO has set project timelines for the Departments to adopt the recommendations. Any savings attributable to the project have been diminimus, and the County staffing has grown from 3,800 in 2011 to almost 4,800 today.

With regard to the project, the CEO's FY 2024-25 Budget message stated:

*Operational Performance Reviews. In addition to the four big picture goals above, a key objective of Renew includes the operational performance review of all 21 county departments, which are being conducted over a period of five years, from 2020 through 2024 and have produced a number of evidence-based best practice recommendations related to organizational structure, resource utilization and productivity, demand and workload, and performance. Proposed timelines for implementation of these recommendations are posted to the County's website and progress is tracked on a quarterly basis by each individual department in coordination with the County Executive Office. Budget requests that align with and facilitate the implementation of operational performance review recommendations are given priority consideration in the budget development process.*

We could not find the cited timelines and tracking reports on the Santa Barbara County website.

Of course, neither County is reporting if the hundreds of millions that each spends on Public Health and Behavioral Health and the related programs are working. There are many vignettes of data but no comprehensive reporting. It appears that the number of mentally ill continue to grow inexorably. How many got better? How many more appeared? What is the overall score?

Back in SLO County, whatever happened to the **Six Sigma** organizational development project? It was supposed to kick off in the Planning and Building Department.

We know that SLO County has hundreds of discrete programs. Just look at the list that the Behavioral Health Department posted on its website. A problem is that these are not depicted in the Budget. Instead, they are rolled up into multi-million dollar division summaries. How many FTE's does each program contain? What are the consultant costs for those that are contracted out? What are the relevant performance measures? So far, KPMG has not addressed this problem in Santa Barbara County. The Behavioral Health Department lists its programs on its website, but they are not presented in an organized hierarchical form in the Budget. KPMG has a huge task in disentangling this one.

[Adult Mental Health Outpatient Treatment](#)

[Assisted Outpatient Treatment](#)

[Behavioral Health Treatment Court](#)

[Friday Night Live/Club Live/Cal Poly FNL](#)

[Homeless Outreach Full Service Partnership](#)

[Latino Outreach Program](#)

[Martha's Place Children's Center](#)

[Mental Health Evaluation Team \(MHET\)](#)

[Psychiatric Health Facility \(Inpatient\)](#)

[Veterans Treatment Services](#)

[Youth Substance Use Treatment Program](#)

[Youth Mental Health Outpatient Treatment](#)

[Access to Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Services](#)

[Abused Children's Treatment Services \(ACTS\)](#)

[Child and Youth Full Service Partnership \(FSP\)](#)

[Katie A Intensive Team](#)

[Youth Group Home/Residential Mental Health Services](#)

[Therapeutic Behavioral Services](#)

[Mental Health Services in Therapeutic Learning Classrooms](#)

[Adult Full Service Partnership \(FSP\)](#)

[Mental Health First Aid](#)  
[Veterans Outreach](#)  
[Justice Services Treatment](#)  
[Court Screening](#)  
[Behavioral Health Community Action Team](#)  
[Co-occurring Treatment Courts \(ATCC\)](#)  
[Mental Health Diversion Court \(MHDC\)](#)  
[Opioid Safety Coalition](#)  
[Mobile Crisis Team \(MCT\)](#)  
[Mobile Crisis Services](#)  
[Strategic Plan 2024-2029](#)  
[Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment \(CARE\) Act Court](#)  
[Patient Access & Provider Directory API](#)  
[Patients' Rights Advocate](#)  
[May Mental Health Awareness Month](#)  
[September Suicide Prevention Month](#)  
[Withdrawal Management - Detox](#)  
[Sobering Center](#)  
[Recovery Support Services](#)  
[Perinatal Outpatient Extended Group \(POEG\)](#)  
[Medication Assisted Treatment](#)  
[Drug & Alcohol Services Walk In Clinics](#)  
[Drug & Alcohol Services Residential Programs](#)

[Adult Residential Programs](#)  
[Older Adult Full Service Partnership \(FSP\)](#)  
[Network Provider Resources](#)  
[Middle School Comprehensive Program](#)  
[College Prevention & Wellness](#)  
[Student Support Counseling](#)  
[Transitional Aged Youth \(TAY\) Full Service Partnership](#)  
[Mental Health Services at the Juvenile Hall](#)  
[Wraparound Services](#)  
[Services Affirming Family Empowerment \(SAFE\)](#)  
[Intensive Care Coordination \(ICC\)](#)  
[Intensive Home Based Services \(IHBS\)](#)  
[Intensive Day Treatment Services](#)  
[Behavioral Health Managed Care](#)  
[Quality Support Team](#)  
[Health Agency Contractor and Network Provider Support Page](#)  
[Behavioral Health Board](#)  
[Customer Awareness Response Effort \(CARE\)- Not for Ourselves Alone](#)  
[Mental Health Services Act \(MHSA\)](#)  
[Suicide Prevention](#)  
[Cannabis Health and Safety Information](#)  
[Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging](#)



[Co-Occurring Disorders Program](#)

[Adult Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment](#)

[Adult Justice/Court Mandated Programs](#)

[Narcotic Treatment Program \(NTP\)](#)

[Jail-Based Services](#)

[Genoa Pharmacy](#)

[Drug Medi-Cal Outpatient Delivery System \(ODS\)](#)

[Drug & Alcohol Services Fees](#)

[Driving Under the Influence Programs](#)

[Behavioral Health Bridge Housing](#)

**Separately From the KMPG Study Issue: The County Behavioral Health Department is promoting DEI throughout its structure, operations, and hiring practices. This became apparent from the investigating the list above.**

We don't recall that the Board of Supervisors ever adopted such an initiative. How much does the DEI program cost, how many hours per year are devoted to it, who leads it, how many FTEs, how many hours are consumed for training the employees, etc. For example, is some manager tasked with leading this? The write-up on the web site is simply a propaganda piece (wonder if the Board knows they are promoting DEI?).

Is the Human Resources Department supporting this initiative in hiring and promotions? Are Behavioral Health Department employees rated on DEI during their performance evaluations?

Read the program description below:

### *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

*The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Program is the embodiment of an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the Behavioral Health Department. Rooted in the principles of cultural humility and propelled by a steadfast dedication to progress, this program transcends the conventional scope of initiatives. It is the foundational pillar of our mission, intricately woven into the fabric of our operations to foster an environment that is not just inclusive but deeply understanding and welcoming for everyone involved.*

*The program's journey is rooted in the belief that true excellence in healthcare is achieved only when we fully embrace and celebrate the rich diversity of our community. We recognize the myriad dimensions of diversity, including but not limited to culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexuality, abilities, veteran status, spiritual beliefs, and*

*language. It is our pledge to not only acknowledge these differences but to honor and elevate them in every aspect of our work.*

Does the Board of Supervisors support this program? Are any other Departments conducting a similar effort?

See the related article on the LA Fire Department DEI program on [page 34](#).

See the related profound article on societal behavioral standards on [page 39](#).

**Item 16 - Request to: 1) approve and execute a professional consultant services contract with Carollo Engineers, Inc. through January 14, 2027, in an amount not to exceed \$899,957, to develop a Desalination Executable Solution and Logistics Plan; 2) authorize the Director of Public Works, or designee, to approve amendments to the contract in an amount not to exceed a contingency of \$89,995 provided County Counsel approves said amendments as to form and legal effect; and 3) authorize a budget adjustment for Fund Center 450 – San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone General to grant funds for the United States Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART: Water Recycling and Desalination Planning Funding Opportunity Grant and budget Federal Aid Revenue in the amount of \$548,410, by 4/5 vote.** Hooray! The project to assess the feasibility of industrial scale desalination on the central coast is alive. Credit the County for obtaining a nice big grant to pay for the assessment project.

*On October 18, 2022, the Board authorized staff to proceed with developing a Desalination Executable Solution and Logistics (DESAL) Plan in coordination with other participating agencies and stakeholders and to pursue grants to offset project costs.*

*On April 18, 2023, the Board authorized the Director of Public Works to execute agreements for grant funding under the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) WaterSMART: Water Recycling and Desalination Planning program and directed staff to return with a DESAL Plan consultant contract for Board approval. The grant agreement was finalized in September 2024, and today's recommended Board action is the approval of a DESAL Plan consultant contract to proceed with steps including, but not limited to, establishing a stakeholder engagement process, identifying, vetting, and analyzing project concept alternatives, and ranking and selecting an optimal desalination project, which is Phase 2a of the DESAL project.*

*The DESAL Plan, when complete, will contain balanced recommendations related to responsibly advancing the implementation of a regional desalination project that could serve as a drought-proof solution for current and projected water supply imbalances caused by strained alternative supplies and increased demand.*

Go public works!!!! If the County solves the water problem, it can begin to solve the housing problem.

**Item 26 - It is recommended that the Board approve appointments of the individual Board members to various committees and commissions for the calendar year 2025.** This is usually a collegial process, with the Supervisors deferring to each other's top preferences.

| <b>TITLE</b>                                       | <b>2024 Appointments</b>                      | <b>2025 Interest</b>                          |
|--|---|---|
| Adult Services Policy Council                      | John Peschong                                 |   |
| Behavioral Health Advisory Board                   | Jimmy Paulding                                | Jimmy Paulding                                |
| Cal ID Advisory Board                              | John Peschong                                 | John Peschong                                 |
| Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory Committee | Debbie Arnold                                 | Heather Moreno                                |
| Cal Poly Campus Planning Committee                 | Debbie Arnold                                 | Heather Moreno                                |
| California State Association of Counties (CSAC)    | Bruce Gibson<br>Alternate - Jimmy Paulding    | Bruce Gibson<br>Alternate - Jimmy Paulding    |
| Central Coast Community Energy Board               | Dawn Ortiz-Legg<br>Alternate - Jimmy Paulding | Dawn Ortiz-Legg<br>Alternate - Jimmy Paulding |
| Children's Resource Network of the Central Coast   | Dawn Ortiz-Legg                               | John Peschong                                 |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO) | Jimmy Paulding   |  |
| REACH<br>(2 Appointees)                                  | Dawn Ortiz-Legg<br>Jimmy Paulding                              | Dawn Ortiz-Legg<br>Jimmy Paulding            |
| Fire Safe Council  | Debbie Arnold  | Heather Moreno                               |
| First 5 Children & Families Commission                   | Dawn Ortiz-Legg  | Dawn Ortiz-Legg                              |
| Golden State Finance Authority                           | John Peschong<br>No Alternate                                  | John Peschong<br>No Alternate                |
| Golden State Connect Authority                           | John Peschong<br>No Alternate                                  | John Peschong<br>No Alternate                |
| Homeless Services Oversight Council                      | Dawn Ortiz-Legg  | Bruce Gibson                                 |
| IWMA   | Jimmy Paulding<br>Alternate - Dawn Ortiz-Legg                  | Jimmy Paulding<br>Alternate - Heather Moreno |
| Latino Outreach Council                                  | Debbie Arnold  | Heather Moreno                               |
| Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)                | Debbie Arnold<br>Jimmy Paulding<br>Alternate - Dawn Ortiz-Legg | Heather Moreno                               |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Nacimiento Water Project Commission                 | John Peschong                                    | John Peschong                                 |
| National Estuary Program Executive Committee        | Bruce Gibson                                     | Bruce Gibson                                  |
| Psychiatric Health Facility Committee               | John Peschong                                    | Jimmy Paulding                                |
| Rural Counties Representatives of California (RCRC) | John Peschong<br>Alternate – Debbie Arnold       | John Peschong<br>No Alternate                 |
| SB/SLO Regional Health Authority (CenCal)           | Dawn Ortiz-Legg                                  | Jimmy Paulding                                |
| Student-Community Liaison Committee                 | Debbie Arnold                                    | Heather Moreno                                |
| Visit SLO Advisory Committee                        | Dawn Ortiz-Legg                                  | Dawn Ortiz-Legg                               |
| Countywide Oversight Board                          | Debbie Arnold                                    |   |
| SLO Basin Groundwater Sustainability Commission     | Dawn Ortiz-Legg<br>Alternate – Jimmy Paulding    | Dawn Ortiz-Legg<br>Alternate – Jimmy Paulding |
| Los Osos Basin Management Committee                 | Bruce Gibson                                     | Bruce Gibson                                  |
| Paso Basin Cooperative Committee                    | Bruce Gibson<br>Staff Alternate – Blaine Reely   | Bruce Gibson<br>Alternate – Heather Moreno    |
| Atascadero Basin GSA Exec Committee                 | Debbie Arnold<br>Alternate – John Peschong       | Heather Moreno<br>Alternate – John Peschong   |
| Cuyama Basin JPA Board of Directors                 | Jimmy Paulding<br>Staff Alternate – Blaine Reely | Jimmy Paulding<br>Alternate – Blaine Reely    |

Shouldn't John Peschong and Heather Moreno be the two on the Paso Basin Cooperative Committee? The basin is in their districts. Gibson has been an enemy of those poor people still stuck in the 2013 moratorium.

**Item 27 - It is recommended that the Board consider and approve the County's proposed 2025 State and Federal Legislative Platform.** The 39-page policy document lists scores of programs and projects for which it requests the State and Federal governments to provide continued or additional funding. The power of governments is based on their finances. Thus, the entire focus is on enhancing the power and patronage of the County government. There is really only one plank in the platform oriented toward the poor taxpayer. That is the one that seeks to preserve Proposition 13. Usually Supervisor Gibeon attempts to weaken or remove this one. So far, supervisors Paulding and Ortiz-Legg have not gone along.

***Proposition 13*** *Oppose any legislation or initiative that proposes to modify Proposition 13. Specifically, oppose any proposal that would weaken the homeowner protections of fortified Proposition 13 by increasing or eliminating the 2% cap on annual property tax increases for homeowners. Oppose any legislation or proposal that would establish a so-called "Split Roll" for property tax, which would thereby reduce protections for commercial property owners.*

There is considerable discussion of Diablo in the Platform. Much of the discussion relates to continuation of property taxes and grants should the NRC approve continuation of the Plant. The County also seeks replacement revenues beyond the first round, should it be closed. The County

received tens of millions of dollars under the original closure agreement but has largely frittered that away on inconclusive economic development programs, housing deals, and pet capital projects. There was no real strategic plan. It was simply a general allocation to various functions.

***Diablo Canyon Power Plant Problem:*** *The closure of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) will have significant ramifications on the County of San Luis Obispo, school districts, and residents including a significant loss of jobs (anticipated 1,500) and opportunities for jobs in the County. In 2018, Senate Bill 1090 (authored by Senator Monning and Assembly member Cunningham), was signed by former Governor Jerry Brown to ease the transition for the employees, community members, and public services that rely in many ways on the operation of the plant and will be impacted by its closure. The law provides funding for the County to plan for the plant's closure.*

**Some red herrings:** The Platform is chock full of requests for funding for a variety of trendy virtue signaling woke projects. Some examples include:

**Broadband:** *The Loan Loss Reserve Fund provides a credit enhancement related to the financing of local broadband infrastructure development. The reserve fund expands the ability of local governments, tribes and non-profits to secure financing for building last-mile projects, with an emphasis on public broadband networks, by providing collateral to local governments to enable more favorable borrowing rates and terms for bonds issued to deploy broadband infrastructure.*

*In July 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 156 (Stats. 2021, Ch. 84 and 112) and Assembly Bill (AB) 164 (Budget Act of 2021), among other things, created a Broadband Loan Loss Reserve Fund in the California State Treasury. This included plans for up to \$750 million dollars over multiple years to fund costs related to the financing of broadband infrastructure deployment by local government agencies, nonprofit organizations and Tribal governments.*

*As part of the final 2024-25 state budget adopted last June, SB 109 (Chapter 36, Statutes of 24) revised previous appropriations, and specified a significantly reduced Broadband Loan Loss Reserve appropriation to only \$50 million and provided that: "Awards made from the Broadband Loan Loss Reserve program shall be issued by December 31, 2024, irrespective of cycles and tracks."*

*In context, the \$50 million in FY 2024-25 will only cover demand of \$451 million in applications putting many Golden State Connect Authority County Federal Funding Account (FFA) project applications in limbo, including for the County of San Luis Obispo.*

Does government funded fiber optic really promote economic development? Is it now obsolete given worldwide satellite services such as Starlink? Why should the County need to dig up the streets to run miles fiber or hang wires on polls at huge disruptive tax payer funded costs? Of course it's patronage for consultants, engineering firms, and contractors

**Infrastructure, Energy, and Economic Development Projects:** *Support legislative initiatives that provide funding sources or financing tools for programs or projects that enable infrastructure, energy, and economic development projects including but not limited to development of adequate infrastructure; increased energy efficiency; development of renewable*



energy and energy storage systems; all zero net energy buildings; and, access to energy consumption data to support infrastructure and resiliency planning.

This one is simply more climate change patronage.

***Climate Change Problem:*** San Luis Obispo County is experiencing more frequent events of extreme heat, drought, wildfires, smoke, and flooding, with projections showing significant increases in occurrence. These climate-related hazards can contribute to rising cases of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, injuries, food- and water-borne illnesses, and increased risks of vector-borne diseases like Valley Fever. The populations most negatively impacted by these hazards include older adults, farm workers, outdoor workers, and people experiencing homelessness—groups that will struggle to adapt due to limited resources, such as cooling during heatwaves or transportation during disasters. This results in cascading health impacts, including worsened respiratory conditions, heat-related illnesses, delayed healthcare, and mental health strain from displacement and economic loss. ***Resolution:*** Support efforts and funding to build climate-resilient communities in San Luis Obispo County, mitigate climate-related hazards, and address their health impacts. Prioritize equitable climate policies, increase healthcare access, and invest in infrastructure that reduces exposure to environmental hazards.

Is climate change actually causing the problems listed above. Where is the longitudinal data?

***Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Problem:*** Effective 2035, 100% of the new cars and light trucks that are sold in California will be zero-emission vehicles. The current County electric vehicle infrastructure can support less than 2% of the vehicles currently in service. ***Resolution:*** Support legislation that reinforces the County's fleet electrification goals and infrastructure requirements by incentivizing manufacturers to produce a variety of vehicle options and charging capabilities, with emphasis on emergency-related vehicles and the charging infrastructure to support them.

Are we going to electrify police cars, fire trucks, garbage trucks, earth moving equipment, dump trucks, sewer vac trucks, ambulances, lawn mowers, and other equipment that must run for hours in the field and must be able to run during disasters?

***Economic Development Problem:*** California has set a planning goal of 2-5 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030 and 25 GW by 2045. The Morro Bay wind energy Area is one of two federal offshore wind call areas on the West Coast that were auctioned in December 2022. The economic benefits from offshore wind development that could be realized by San Luis Obispo County are dependent in part on development of an operations and maintenance facilities. ***Resolution:*** Support Statewide offshore wind development programs and initiatives, as well as funding for Central Coast-specific offshore wind development, including studies aimed at infrastructure, workforce training and development, economic benefits, supply chain development, environmental analyses, permitting, and more. Support initiatives that improve coordination between local, state, and federal agencies as well as with other communities preparing for offshore wind development. Support local hire initiatives to ensure the jobs generated in the building and construction phase of offshore wind development go to local workers.



Does the Board actually support offshore wind? At this point? What will the power cost the rate payers?

***Single Payer Health Care System Problem:*** *In the 2023 legislative session AB 1400 (Kalra, Lee and Santiago) proposed a single-payer health care system. This bill would require the elimination of health care plans throughout the State and require all employees to be covered by a single-payer system (CalCare) run by the State of California. Resolution: Support public health forward policies that focus on providing proactive health care services to reduce costs and complexity of our healthcare system.*

Does the Board actually support a single payer system and the abolition of private health insurance? Would such a system actually reduce costs? Ultimately, health care comes down to a patient in a room (office, hospital, ER, OR) with a board certified doctor backed up by some very high tech expensive equipment. Just how would such a system reduce the cost of a Board certified Internist or a \$750,000 cat scan machine?

## **MATTERS AFTER 1:30 PM**

**Request to:** 1) receive an update on the scope change application for the Bob Jones Pathway Gap Closure Project (Project) and direct staff to advocate for project approval at the January 2025 California Transportation Commission (CTC) hearing; 2) adopt a resolution of support for the Project; and 3) authorize a related budget adjustment in the amount of \$5,000,000 from the Capital Projects Fund Facilities Planning Designation to Fund Center (FC) 230 – Capital Projects WBS 320096 - Bob Jones Pathway Gap Closure Project, by 4/5 vote. It turns out the Bob Jones Trail is a \$48.3 million project when all prior, current, and proposed costs are included. This makes it more expensive than the \$40 million Willow Road/Highway 101 interchange project completed a decade ago.

*The projects are funded through a combination of Federal, State, regional and local funds. The Bob Jones Project is a key component of the corridor plan, with \$43.3 million invested or committed by multiple agencies toward a total estimated cost of \$48.3 million, as shown on the charts below.*

The latest iteration requires an additional \$5 million from the County. The County has petitioned the State Transportation Commission to approve an amended route that does not require condemnation of a segment of right of way. The Commission's determination is scheduled for February. Thus, there is a degree of urgency for the Board to approve this appropriation.

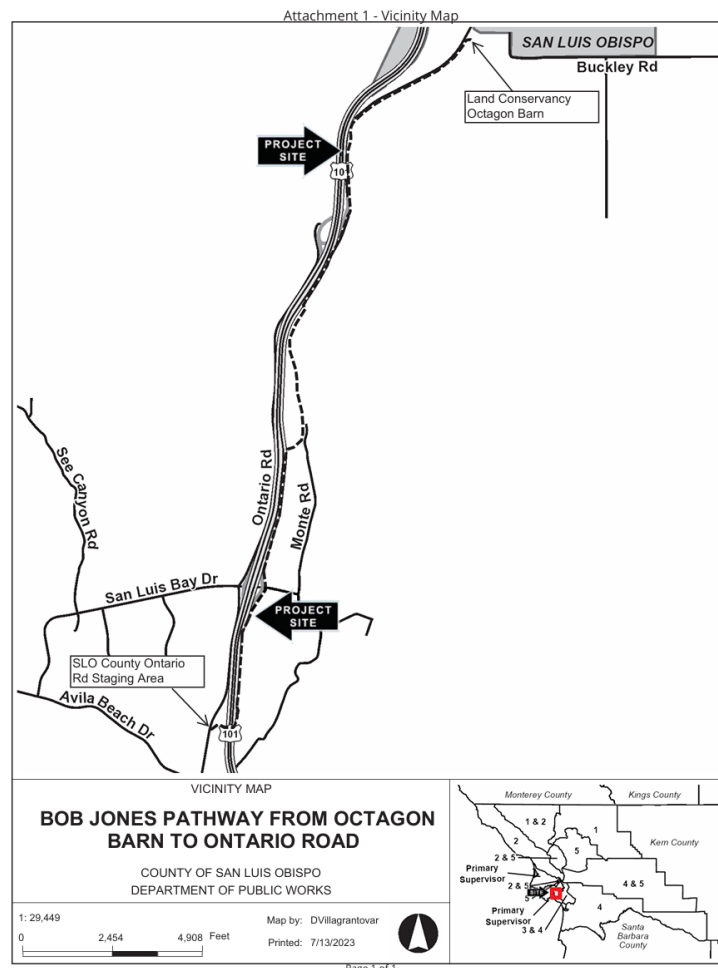
*Staff has submitted the necessary documents to Caltrans and the CTC for placement on the January meeting agenda. At this time, staff believes their response to the recommendation will be positive; however, in discussions with Caltrans and CTC staff, this is dependent on showing a fully funded Project. At the moment, Phase 2 of the Project currently has an approximate \$5 million funding shortfall. Both SLOCOG and Caltrans have increased their contributions to the*

*Project and do not have any other funding available. This means the County will need to allocate the necessary funding for the recommended scope change to feasibly be approved by the CTC at the January hearing. It is recommended that your Board increase the Project budget by \$5 million by moving funds from the Capital Projects Fund Facilities Planning Designation into the Project budget.*

**Several questions not covered in the write-up include:**

- What is the Capital Facilities Fund Balance from which the transfer will be made?
- What portion of that balance is general fund?
- What scheduled projects will be postponed as a result of the transfer?
- The trail is very popular with some segments of the south county community, especially the bike lobby.

The pressure is severe, as over \$18 million of the \$48.3 million is funded by an approved State \$18 million grant, of which millions have already been spent. Should the State not approve the revised plan, the County could lose the entire grant and have to refund the expended portion.



**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.**

**SLO County Local Agency Commission meeting of Thursday, January 16, 2025  
(Scheduled)**

**LAFCO File No 2-R-23: Sphere of Influence Amendment and Annexation No. 1 to County Service Area 23 (111 Residential Lots In Tract 2586) Recommendation:**

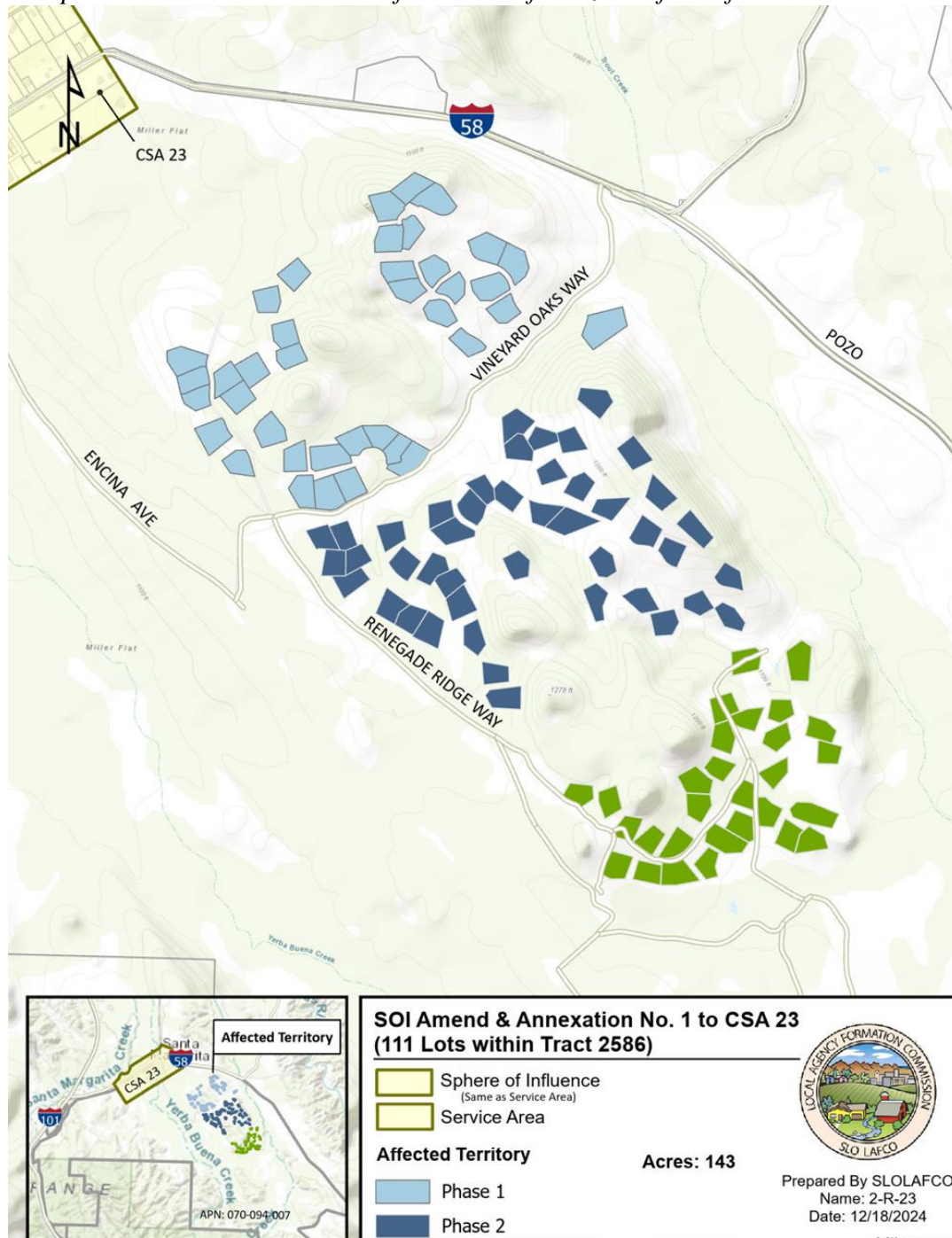
**Action 1: Acting as the Responsible Agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), find by motion, that the Certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and EIR Addendum, State Clearinghouse No. 200411112, adopted by the County of San Luis Obispo, was reviewed, considered, and determined to be adequate for purposes specified in Section 15096 of the CEQA Guidelines and for use in considering approval of the proposed Sphere of Influence amendment and annexation.**

**Action 2: Approve, by resolution, the proposed Sphere of Influence Amendment and Annexation No. 1 to County Service Area 23, as contained in Attachment A, subject to conditions of approval, adopt Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Findings for compliance with CEQA (Attachment A, Exhibit A) and waive protest proceedings pursuant to Government Code Section 56662(a).** The LAFCO will consider approval of the annexation of the long pending Santa Margarita Ranch project to the CSA 23. This will enable the project to obtain water.

*Proposal: The proposal consists of a Sphere of Influence (SOI) Amendment and Annexation into County Service Area (CSA) 23 of 111 residential lots (1.0 to 2.5 acres in size with one single-family home per lot) created by the three-phase Tract Map 2586 for water service. CSA 23 supplies the community of Santa Margarita with water service via two groundwater wells and an emergency water supply intertie with Atascadero Mutual Water Company. The proposal would add two new water supply wells to the CSA 23 system and the intertie with Tract 2586 would increase the water supply, fire flow pressure, available storage, and redundancy in CSA 23. At the request of the County and landowner (Santa Margarita Ranch, LLC), one application is being processed to amend the SOI and annex all three phases into CSA 23. The annexation boundary is proposed to be co-terminus with the lots B-1-1 San Luis Obispo LAFCO January 16, 2025 LAFCO File No. 2-R-23 Page 2 created by the tract map. This approach is being pursued because the need for service is associated with the single-family homes that will be built within each lot and not the remainder of Tract 2586 which will maintain surrounding agricultural land under the Agricultural Open Space Easement.*

*As a result of the proposal for the SOI amendment and annexation into CSA 23, additional infrastructure and capital improvements are necessary. The Plan for Services prepared and submitted by the County, dated March 5, 2024, further elaborates on the required improvements associated with each phase. All costs associated with the design, inspection, plan check, and*

review and construction inspection by CSA 23 staff will be paid for by the applicant per the terms and conditions of the Engineering Reimbursement Agreement dated May 28, 2020, and Annexation Agreement. The owner would fund a number of major water infrastructure improvements, which are detailed in the Plan for Services and annexation agreement included as Attachments E and G. A zone of benefit will be established for the tract and connection fees will be paid by the owners. CSA 23 intends to initiate proceedings for the formation of a new zone of benefit upon the issuance of the Certificate of Completion for annexation. The capital improvement charge will be implemented through a Proposition 218 protest process, which will take place at the same time as the formation of the zone of benefit.



## ***LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS***

### **Board of Supervisors Special Meeting of Tuesday, January 7, 2025 (Completed)**

**Special Meeting:** New and re-elected Supervisors (Heather Moreno, Dawn Ortiz-Legg, and John Peschong) were sworn in for full 4-year terms. Supervisor Ortiz-Legg was appointed Chair and Jimmy Paulding Co-Chair. No other business was transacted. The next regular meeting is set for Tuesday, January 14, 2025.

**What Next?** During a few introductory remarks Superiors did not reveal any major policy initiatives. Supervisor Ortiz-Legg indicated that her priority for the term is “affordability.” Supervisor Gibson spoke about “uncertainty, hope, and strategic thinking.”

**Background:** Any membership change in a small governing body such as the Board of Supervisors will result in changes in the substance and tone. Heather Moreno is replacing the retiring Debbie Arnold. The left Board majority of Gibson, Ortiz-Legg, and Paulding will remain. Other than restoring the left’s advantage in the configuring the Supervisorial Districts and facilitating large water interests to take over the Paso Basin, this coalition has been ineffective in executing a policy program, even from its own ideological stand point. Its overall policy has been “status quo.” That has meant preservation of existing service levels, continuous expansion of homeless services (already policy prior to its installation), and continued growth of the staff (also prior policy).

#### **Major policy initiatives that have been lost in the shuffle include:**

1. The feasibility of rezoning additional land on a large scale for homes of all types.
2. The feasibility of partnering with Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties to develop industrial scale desalination. (**Note: This one is actually going to be done – see item 16 above in this This Weeks Highlights.**)
3. Expediting of a real economic development program that provides quantifiable increases in property tax (not the current growth from home price escalation), sales tax, TOT, and jobs.
4. Structural Budget reform. This would include adding the program level to the Budget, abolishing the so-called fund centers, and aligning real performance measures to program cost centers. (Note: First year CAO Pontes may be advocating changes in the future).
5. Regulatory reform (Certainty, consistency, and velocity). For example, is the Board aware of current policy shown below?



To make an appointment with Planning and Building staff, please use the following link: [No Wait Inside](#).

Regular walk-in hours are available on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays from 8:30 to 11:45 AM. Planning information sessions are limited to 15 minutes to accommodate as many people as possible. New building permit applications will only be accepted up to 11 AM to ensure adequate processing time.

To submit electronic Building Permit or Land Use Permit Applications, please visit the [Permitting](#) page.

You would think they are doing colonoscopies. Well, actually, many would agree.

6. A capital investment program and (especially roads – not “transportation”) are prioritized, and the County and 7 cities put real skin in the game prior to requesting a new ½ cent sales tax.

7. Accountability for dozens of climate initiatives. (What is their CO2 reduction vis a vis their adopted Climate Action Plan?)

**Land use policy is destiny for local governments.** The County’s Strategic Growth Policy is a major barrier to the development of housing. It has not been examined or revised since 2009. In fact, the key principles are almost word for word the same as they were in 1980 (Over half a century). The key Plan Elements and Ordinances key off from these policies. Of course, the exploitation of CEQA has not helped either.

### *Guiding Principles of Strategic Growth*

The County Board of Supervisors adopted the following Principles of Strategic Growth, together with policies and implementing strategies:

1. Preserve open space, scenic natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas. Conserve energy resources. Conserve agricultural resources and protect agricultural land.
2. Strengthen and direct development towards existing and strategically planned communities.
3. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods and towns.
5. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
6. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
7. Encourage mixed land uses.
8. Take advantage of compact building design.
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.
11. Strengthen regional cooperation.

### **And an interesting personal question.**

How are the Supervisors going to handle compliance when the Feds declare SB 54 (2018) illegal? SB 54, with which SLO County has been complying with since its adoption, forbids counties to disclose the names of illegals who are held in their jails on criminal charges. A few violent crimes have been exempted by the State, but most are covered. Actually each year under



the law, the Supervisors must conduct a special hearing and require the Sheriff to give a public accounting.

What happens when ICE shows up and demands the list? Will some Supervisors resist the State law and risk Federal prosecution? Will they channel John C. Calhoun and invoke the theory of nullification and states' rights?

### **San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Meeting of Wednesday, January 8, 2025 (Completed)**

**This was an organizational meeting to elect a chair and representatives to various regional and State association boards.**

### **Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, January 9, 2025. Continued to Thursday January 23, 2025. (Postponed) It is not known why there was a lack of a quorum.**

**Date:** December 27, 2024  
**From:** Daniela Chavez, Planning Commission Clerk  
**Subject:** Notice of Intent of Continuance and Adjournment of the January 9, 2025 Planning Commission meeting to January 23, 2025

Due to a lack of quorum, notice is hereby given that it is the intent of the Planning and Building Department to Continue and Adjourn the regularly scheduled January 9, 2025 San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission meeting (and all items listed on its agenda) to January 23, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

Notice of Continuance and Adjournment will be given following confirmation of the continuance and adjournment by the Planning Commission Secretary on January 9, 2025.

## **EMERGENT ISSUES**

### **Item 1 - Why Building a Lot of 'Affordable' Housing Is Bad News for Affordability**

Cities become affordable when lots of new housing is built, not when a larger percentage of a small amount of new housing is made "affordable" by regulation.

**CHRISTIAN BRITSCHGI**



Happy Tuesday and Happy New Year! With the cost of housing ever-present in the public consciousness, state legislatures reconvening, and elections out of the way, we can expect 2025 to be action-packed with lots of wonky housing policy fights. *Rent Free* will be here to cover them all.

As policymakers go about considering reforms aimed at making their cities more affordable, it's important to understand what success will look like. Even more importantly, it's important to understand what success *does not* look like.

To that end, this week's newsletter takes on the mistaken idea that building a high share of below-market "affordable" housing is a sign that a city is becoming more affordable.

### **If a Lot of New Housing in Your City Is 'Affordable,' Something Is Off**

On New Year's Eve, the Boston city government issued a press release touting the good work of its newly reorganized Planning Department at approving new development. The city reports that 3,575 net residential units were approved in 2024, of which a little over a third were "income-restricted."

That top-line number is not necessarily anything to brag about. Despite having some of the highest home prices and rents in the country, Boston is permitting fewer homes than less-expensive peer cities with equivalent populations.

Similarly sized cities like Washington, D.C., are building more housing than Boston. Atlanta is building *way more* housing than Boston.

Even more concerning than Boston not permitting a lot of new homes is how many of the homes it is permitting are "income-restricted."

Those are units (often also just called "affordable," "below-market," or "deed-restricted" units) that are reserved for lower-income residents and where rents are capped at steeply discounted below-market rates. Despite the city's celebratory touting of that figure, such a high share of new housing being income-restricted housing is very bad news.

That data point suggests that not only is Boston not building a lot of housing, but that it's vastly under-building what the market demands. It says most of the projects getting approved in Boston are either dependent on public subsidies or command such high rents that they can bear the cost of the city's punishing affordable housing mandates.

Understanding exactly why cities don't become affordable by raising the "affordable" share of the tiny amount of housing that they do build is crucial for getting housing policy right in the new year.

### **Filtering Up, Filtering Down**

In a free market without subsidies and price controls, there wouldn't be such a thing as "income-restricted" units. All housing would be rented or sold at market rates for a profit (save for whatever housing is provided by charitable nonprofits and religious groups).

New housing would be pricey under such a system. But without zoning or other artificial caps on production, housing would still generally be affordable thanks to filtering.

Filtering is the process by which high-income people move into pricey, newly built units, lowering demand (and prices) for the older units they leave behind. Those units are then snapped up by lower-income people, who themselves leave behind an older, less-expensive unit to be taken by even lower-income people.

Studies that follow the filtering process down the income ladder find that the addition of new market-rate units kicks off a chain of moves that ends up leaving more units available in the most affordable neighborhoods.

Boston, of course, does not have a free market in housing. The city's zoning laws artificially restrict how much new housing can be built in the city. One measure of regulatory burden finds Boston has the strictest land use rules in the country.

A consequence of such strict regulations is that the natural market filtering process is thrown in reverse.

Absent new housing coming online at high enough rates to meet growing demand, high-income people stay put in their old units for want of better options. Units become more expensive over

time, not less. Lower-income people economize by moving into older, worse housing instead of newer, better housing. People at the bottom rung of the income ladder either move out of town or move onto the street.

### **Just One More Regulation**

When filtering has broken down in a city, the obvious move for policymakers is to get rid of the zoning rules, permitting requirements, impact fees, taxes, mandates, and more that stymie new housing production.

Instead, cities like Boston have decided to fix the ill consequences of overregulation with more regulation.

Operating under the assumption that sky-high housing prices are just a force of nature (and not the product of overregulation), Boston created an "inclusionary zoning" policy back in the late 1990s.

That policy requires developers seeking waivers from zoning regulations to include below-market "income-restricted" units in their projects if they are building more than 10 units at a time.

Since Boston's zoning regulations are so restrictive, a high percentage of developers need to ask for zoning waivers to make their projects possible. A high percentage of newly constructed units in the city are "income-restricted" as a result.

Add in the affordable units that are built through federal, state, and locally subsidized housing programs and you end up with a third of new units being "income-restricted."

The city touts those affordable units as a policy success, when in fact they're plain and obvious proof of how overly burdensome the city's zoning regulations are.

If routine homebuilding requires waivers from the laws on the books, then the laws on the books by definition are killing routine homebuilding.

Even if Boston grants every waiver a developer requests in exchange for them building "income-restricted" units, the city is still costing itself new housing.

The voluminous research on inclusionary zoning policies finds that they're an effective tax on new housing that lowers housing production and raises housing prices.

For-profit builders need to make a higher rate of return on their market-rate units in order to make up for the tax imposed by "income-restricted" units. If the returns on market-rate units in a project don't cover the costs of the inclusionary zoning tax, then that project just doesn't get proposed at all.

That means that in Boston, fewer units overall get built and the market-rate units that do make sense to build are incredibly expensive.

## Bad to Worse

Things are going from bad to worse in Boston. In October 2024, updates to the city's inclusionary zoning policy went into effect.

The pre-October regulations required that the builders of 10 units or more who received zoning relief make 13 percent of their new units income-restricted. The new policy requires *all* projects of seven or more units to be at least 17 percent income-restricted. They must also be restricted to incomes of at most 70 percent of the area median income.

This makes Boston's inclusionary zoning policy one of the most burdensome in the nation. One should expect the share of "income-restricted" units to rise as a percentage of new development going forward in Boston. The city will surely issue celebratory press releases when that happens, saying that their new policies are working. In the background, the overall number of homes will be falling.

As yet another example of more bad news presented as good, the city has launched a Housing Accelerator Fund to subsidize projects that are already approved and permitted but haven't started construction because of financial difficulties.

If a developer can't attract financing for already-approved housing in a high-priced, undersupplied city, something has gone very wrong indeed.

## A Tale of Two Cities

In 2005, the Texas Legislature, responding to the concerns of Austin homebuilders, banned mandatory inclusionary zoning in the state. From that year on, Texas cities were prohibited from conditioning the approval of new, code-conforming housing on the inclusion of "income-restricted" units.

Affordable housing advocates opposed Texas' inclusionary zoning ban at the time and have continued to argue for its repeal on the grounds that inclusionary zoning is a powerful tool for creating affordability.

Yet 20 years later, it's Texas' megabuilding, inclusionary zoning-free cities that are relatively affordable and affordability-mandating jurisdictions like Boston that aren't.

According to the most recent rental data from Apartment List, median rents in Austin are \$1,394 a month and have fallen 7.2 percent year-over-year. In Boston, median rents are holding steady at \$2,298.

**COLAB NOTE: By way of comparison, Zillow Real Estate reports that it's Market Summary of January 6, 2025 found:**

**The median rent for all bedrooms and all property types in San Luis Obispo, CA is \$3,250.**

Median Rent

\$3,250

Month-Over-Month Change

+\$255

Year-Over-Year Change

+\$50

Available Rentals

157

Boston might be the worst offender when it comes to bragging about how its policies are making things worse. But the policy preference for shrinking the amount of housing that's built in favor of boosting the percentage of housing that's "affordable" is a nationwide phenomenon.

California's state planning system is predicated on the idea that localities should mostly be building income-restricted housing. When they don't, politicians complain that they're overbuilding market-rate housing and call for greater subsidies and regulation.

Several states are now copying California's planning approach.

The Biden administration doled out new zoning reform grants, initially intended as an incentive for cities to repeal regulations on new housing, to cities that adopted inclusionary zoning policies.

In the past decade or so, a wave of inclusionary zoning requirements have been passed in Portland, New York City, Seattle, Pittsburgh, and more. Some of these are worse than others. All these policies implicitly accept the idea that we should sacrifice more housing for some additional "affordable" housing.

In states where inclusionary zoning is the norm, the policy hamstring otherwise productive zoning reforms.

Bills that "upzone" land so that more units can be built are too often larded down with inclusionary zoning mandates requiring some (or all) of the newly legal units to be "income-restricted."

In effect, more housing is exchanged for less housing. Peter is robbed to pay Paul. The bad tradeoff of lower overall housing production for a higher share of "affordable housing" is extended into the future.

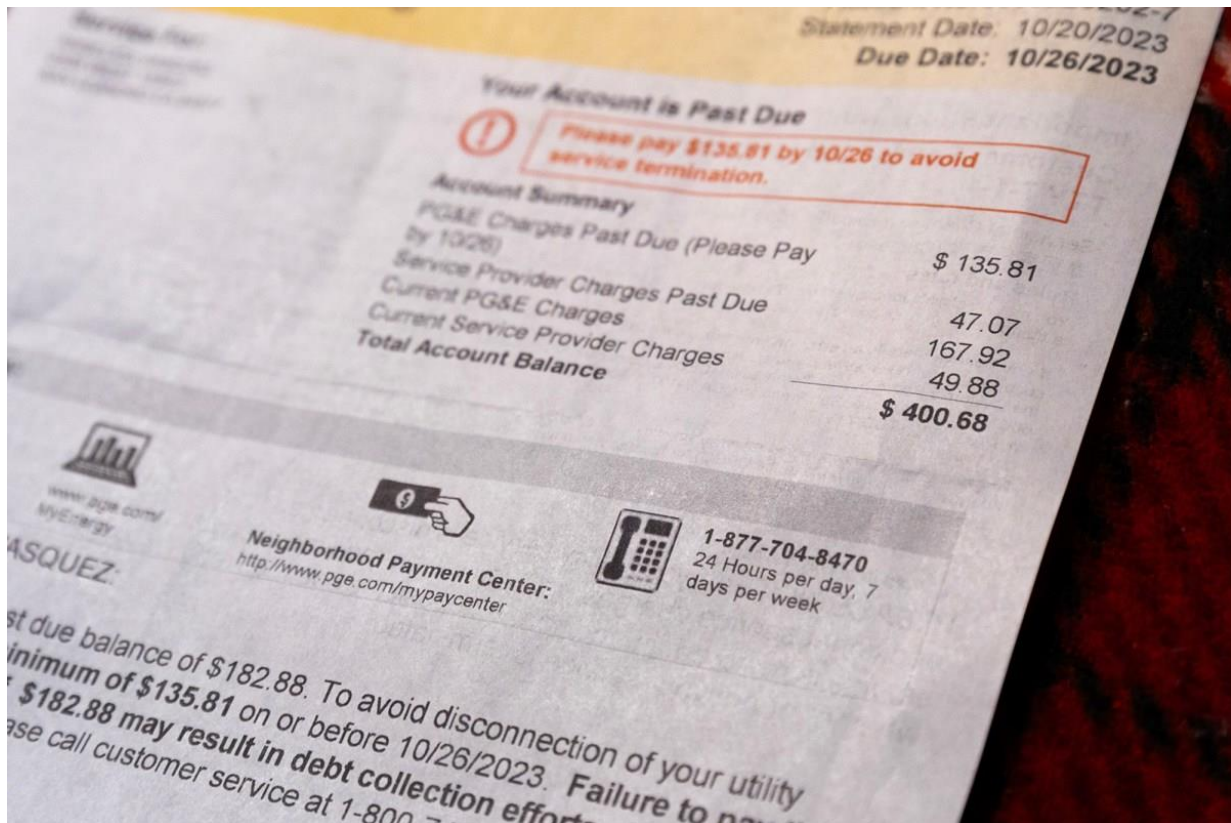
Aside from Texas, a handful of states have banned inclusionary zoning policies. More states should follow suit.



Housing becomes affordable when a lot of it is built, not when capital-A "affordable housing" makes up a larger slice of a tiny new housing pie.

*Rent Free is a weekly newsletter from Christian Britschgi on urbanism and the fight for less regulation, more housing, more property rights, and more freedom in America's cities. Christian Britschgi is a reporter at Reason. This article first appeared in the January 7, 2025 edition of Reason.*

**Item 2 - Promises to reduce California's high living costs conflict with state's progressive policies. BY DAN WALTERS JANUARY 8, 2025**



**A consumer's PG&E bill from October, 2023. Photo by Manuel Orbeozo for CalMatters**

This story is part of California Voices, a commentary forum aiming to broaden our understanding of the state and spotlight Californians directly impacted by policy or its absence. Learn more [here](#).

While post-election autopsies vary on why Democrats fared so poorly in November, there is general consensus that a major factor was voter resentment of high inflation in their costs of living.

Traditionally, voters who feel angst about their personal finances will take it out on the party in power. It helped Donald Trump win support among working-class voters who feel the financial pinch most severely — a syndrome felt even in deep-blue California, where 10 counties whose voters had backed President Joe Biden in 2020 [switched to Trump](#) in 2024.

When the Democrat-dominated California Legislature [reconvened this week](#), its members chanted a [new mantra about trying to reduce living costs](#) in a state where those costs — particularly for housing and utilities — are at or near the nation's highest.

“We get it,” Democratic state Sen. [Dave Cortese told the San Jose Mercury-News](#). “The Democratic Party, has, in effect, just been called out by the voters on that issue.”

Talk is cheap, especially political talk. There's a big difference between saying that something should be done about high living costs and actually doing something.

Cortese, Gov. Gavin Newsom and other Democratic figures have passed a slew of bills in recent years they said would make it easier to build more housing in California, thereby reducing upward pressure on costs. However, we have yet to see those decrees generate a noticeable increase in construction.

The median price for a single-family house in the nation was \$404,500 in October, [according to financial website Bankrate](#), while in California it was \$869,000 — second only to Hawaii.

The nation's average rental for a housing unit is \$1,595 a month, [according to Redfin](#), but those in California's major urban areas are at least twice as high, including \$3,417 in San Francisco and \$3,285 in Los Angeles.

Californians also face budget-busting costs for such necessities as gasoline and electric utilities, and the trend is sharply upward.

The [Center for Jobs and the Economy](#), an offshoot of the California Business Roundtable, reports that California's average gasoline price is the nation's highest at \$4.46 a gallon, which is about 75 cents higher than neighboring Nevada and more than twice Oklahoma's \$2.55.

One reason, [but not the only one](#), for California's high gas prices is the nearly \$1.50 in federal, state and local taxes and fees.

The organization also pegs California's rates for electric power as the nation's highest, averaging 31.62 cents a kilowatt hour of residential service — just over twice as high as the average for

states outside of California. Although average power bills are just eighth-highest due to the state's generally mild climate.

On Tuesday, the Legislative Analyst Office, the Legislature's nonpartisan fiscal advisor, [parsed power rates](#), putting them at the nation's second-highest behind those in Hawaii. The LAO concluded that the state's propensity for wildfires and its efforts to eliminate oil and natural gas as energy sources are major factors driving high power costs.

The data suggest that if Newsom and the Legislature are serious about cutting Californians' living costs, they would have to throttle back on climate policies and those that subsidize lower-income consumers.

That might include a newly enacted program to base some electric power prices on income and the [California Air Resources Board's new mandate](#) to reduce the carbon content of automotive fuel, which could add a half-dollar or more a gallon to the cost of gasoline.

California's progressive policies are clearly in conflict with its living costs, thus creating a political conundrum. We'll see whether the promises to improve affordability are a change of direction or just cheap talk.

Dan Walters , January 8, 2025 Flash report. Dan Walters is one of most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a [column](#) four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. He began covering California politics in 1975, just as Jerry Brown began his first stint as governor, and began writing his column in 1981, first for the Sacramento Union for three years, then for The Sacramento Bee for 33 years and now for CalMatters since 2017.

### **Item 3 - California Adopts Permanent Water Rationing**

**Summary:** California implemented permanent water rationing for urban water users on January 1. The California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) designed the regulations, which [will affect about 405 water providers](#) serving about 95 percent of the state's population. These providers in turn will need to determine how to meet their SWRCB quotas.



## ***California Adopts Permanent Water Rationing***

By: Lee Ohanian

California implemented permanent water rationing for urban water users on January 1. The California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) designed the regulations, which will affect about 405 water providers serving about 95 percent of the state's population. These providers in turn will need to determine how to meet their SWRCB quotas.

The stringency of the rationing varies across locations. Newsweek reports estimated water delivery reductions of 92 percent for the City of Vernon, 58 percent for the City of Atwater, and 43 percent for the City of Glendora by 2040. It also reports that by 2040, about 36 percent of water suppliers will need to cut water delivery by an estimated 10 percent or more. About 31 percent of suppliers are estimated to avoid any cuts by 2040. Fines for noncompliance could reach \$10,000 per day, though compliance apparently won't be enforced until 2027.

To get a sense of household water consumption envisaged under this program, the National Review reports a target for household indoor use of about 47 gallons per person per day in 2025, and about 42 gallons per person per day in 2030. If you happen to have a high-flow showerhead, then you could possibly use as much as 25 gallons on a 10-minute shower.

The state has adopted temporary rationing in some previous years when water supplies were low. The intent of this permanent rationing is to increase water supply reliability. But the program faces significant challenges. Perhaps the most obvious one is that urban water use typically accounts for only about 10 percent of California's annual water consumption. This means that these conservation efforts will have a limited quantitative impact. A report by California's



Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) estimates that the new regulation could save about 1 percent of annual water use upon full implementation.

Another issue is cost. The LAO report states the rationing will add significant costs and complexity to urban water provision, and the LAO asks whether the costs outweigh the benefits:

*While an assessment from SWRCB estimates a cumulative net benefit of \$2.5 billion, an independent review conducted by a private consulting firm—which raises credible questions about SWRCB's estimates—projects net costs of \$7.4 billion. Moreover, even if benefits outweigh costs in the long run, whether they merit the amount of work and costs to implement the requirements as currently proposed is uncertain.*

These issues raise the question of why California is doing this. The rationing approach, part of a regulatory framework titled "Making Water Conservation a Way of Life," stands in contrast to California's previous approaches to dealing with water scarcity.

Because some parts of California, particularly Southern California, have limited rainfall, California has chronically faced water challenges. California substantially expanded its water supply through significant investments in water storage and conveyance in the previous century. This includes the Central Valley Project, which provides water to the San Joaquin Valley for purposes including crop irrigation, and the California State Water Project, which provides water for agricultural use and for household use by 27 million residents.

However, expansions in storage and conveyance have slowed since those major water systems were developed. In 2016, then US senator Dianne Feinstein stated that California had essentially the same water infrastructure at that time as when the state had just 16 million people, which is less than half the population in 2016 and today.

Why hasn't California expanded water storage and conveyance more as the state has grown? One factor is environmental challenges to these projects. The Delta Conveyance Project, which would move water from the Sacramento River to a reservoir on the California Aqueduct, has been delayed because of concerns about some fish species; preliminary geotechnical investigations were halted in June 2024 by a court injunction. This project was first proposed in 2009.

The California Wild and Scenic Rivers Act has impeded the possibility of raising the height of the Shasta Dam, a project that was evaluated by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation in 2015.

Desalination is another option to increase water supply, yet proposed desalination plants also face environmental challenges. A proposed desalination plant in Huntington Beach was contested by environmental groups and was denied permitting by California's Coastal Commission in 2021. As of 2023, only four desalination plants were operating regularly in California, according to the Sierra Club.



Environmental concerns and challenges do not always halt projects, but they can delay them. An appellate court recently upheld a decision regarding the sufficiency of the environmental impact report for the proposed Sites Reservoir, which had been challenged by environmental groups on the basis of the California Environmental Quality Act. However, planning for the Sites Reservoir, which would be located in the western Sacramento Valley, goes back at least 40 years, and the authority for advancing the project has been in place since 2010.

At one time, California was very nimble in building water storage and water conveyance infrastructure. That no longer is true, and environmental challenges are one reason why. Californians pride themselves on being responsible stewards for the environment, but there needs to be a balance of the costs and benefits of environmental policies. Some of the environmental challenges that water projects face fall under laws that California can change. If modifications to these laws could be enacted that made it faster and less costly to permit and build environmentally reasonable projects, then California may be able to expand water supplies significantly. This in turn could reduce the need for rationing and other policies that constrain water demand.

*Lee E. Ohanian is a senior fellow (adjunct) at the Hoover Institution and a professor of economics and director of the Ettinger Family Program in Macroeconomic Research at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He is associate director of the Center for the Advanced Study in Economic Efficiency at Arizona State University and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, where he codirects the research initiative Macroeconomics across Time and Space. He is also a fellow in the Society for the Advancement of Economic Theory. This article first appeared in the Hoover Institution Daily Report of January 8, 2025.*

#### **Item 4 - The Los Angeles Wildfires: An Avoidable Tragedy - By Jonathan A. Lesser**

**State efforts to prevent them have been costly and impractical, with grim results.**

Jan 08 2025/ Share

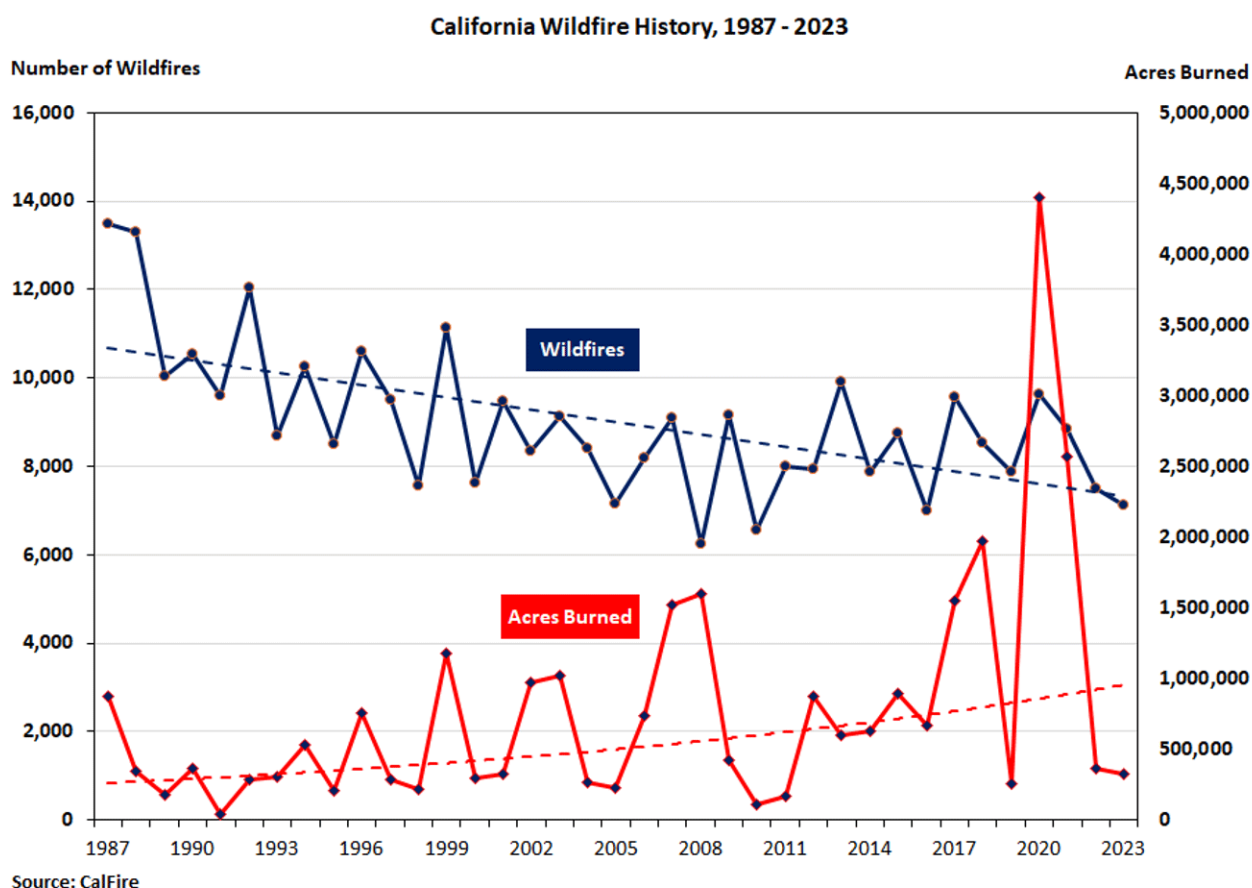
The scenes from the wildfires devastating Los Angeles are [apocalyptic](#). As of this writing, more than 1,000 homes, businesses, and other buildings have been destroyed, and two people have died. Firefighters have battled, with little success, flames spread by hurricane-force winds from Pacific Palisades and Santa Monica—wealthy areas in western L.A. near the Santa Monica Recreation Area—to the east in Eaton (near Pasadena) and toward the Cattle Canyon Bride, located near the San Bernardino National Forest.

Though the cause of the current blaze has yet to be established, commentators are already making familiar claims that climate change is igniting more wildfires in California—a thesis with [no basis](#) in fact. Some state and local officials even argue that high winds [caused](#) the wildfires. Not so: wind, by itself, doesn't create sparks that trigger wildfires, though it certainly worsens them once they've started, as is happening here.

The most [common causes](#) of recent wildfires in the Golden State have been human activities (including arson) and poorly maintained power lines, such as those belonging to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), which caused the 2018 Camp Fire that killed 85 people. Another likely culprit: bad forest management. Last April, Los Angeles County unveiled its [Community Forest Management Plan](#). The plan is heavy on buzzwords about the need to ensure an “equitable tree canopy” and “environmental justice” but light on strategies to reduce wildfire risk.

Though some good work has been done in that regard, such as by the [Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy](#), the latest wildfires demonstrate the ongoing failure of Governor Gavin Newsom to manage the problem. In 2019, Newsom issued an [executive order](#) to devote more than \$1 billion to wildfire prevention. But a [2021 investigation](#) found that the governor had misled the public about the acreage of fuel-reduction projects completed in the state: just 11,399 acres, versus his claim of 90,000.

Various [studies](#) purport to “prove” that wildfires are increasing in number and destructiveness. But the trend since 1987 has been fewer wildfires each year (see figure below). The acres burned have climbed upward, though that trend is skewed by the 4.5 million acres burned in 2020 and 2.5 million acres burned in 2021. Acreage burned in 2022–2023 totaled some of the lowest levels in the last 40 years. A [longer-running trendline](#) shows that the number of state wildfires peaked in the 1920s.



That the acreage burned is increasing even as the number of wildfires has decreased is not the result of climate change. Rather, it is the combined result of efforts to suppress wildfires and environmentalists' demands to leave forests undisturbed. California's Mediterranean climate, with its historically wet winters followed by months of dry conditions, heightens the likelihood of wildfires. But instead of removing dead and diseased trees and undergrowth, the state, following environmentalist restrictions, has allowed that natural fuel to build up, creating the conditions for explosive wildfires. Land-use restrictions have also [forced development nearer wildfire-prone areas](#), worsening the damage and loss of life.

A 2022 state audit and [report](#) found that California electric utilities' efforts to reduce wildfires were inadequate, and that the state's [Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety](#) had approved "seriously deficient" wildfire prevention plans. The utilities, including Southern California Edison, which serves the region around Los Angeles, have been burying their transmission and distribution systems underground, but the costs of doing so far exceed those associated with tree-trimming near power lines.

As with its singular focus on green energy, California's wildfire prevention efforts have been costly and impractical, with tragic results. Whether sparked by fireworks, powerlines, lightning, or arson, the conflagrations devastating Los Angeles are just the latest result of decades of ill-conceived policies.

*Jonathan A. Lesser is a senior fellow with the National Center for Energy Analytics and the president of Continental Economics, Inc.*

*Photo by Apu Gomes/Getty Images*

## **Item 5 - The LAFD is Run by Three Lesbians Named 'Kirsten'**

### **The LA Fire Department went woke. Now LA is on fire.**

**January 10, 2025, by Daniel Greenfield**

The most important thing to know about Los Angeles Fire Chief Kristin Crowley is that she is the first LGBTQ fire chief in the history of the Los Angeles Fire Department.

It's also the only thing worth knowing about the woman in charge while Los Angeles burned.

Crowley's status as the first LGBTQ fire chief appears at the top of her bio on the LAFD site. It's what got her on the Kelly Clarkson show under the headline, "Meet LAFD's First Female & LGBTQ+ Fire Chief" and made her one of the marshals of the Los Angeles Pride Parade (some of whose attendees no longer have homes after the wave of fires.)

But DEI wasn't done with the LAFD just yet. Not until two other lesbian 'Kirstens' were also running the LAFD.

Kristina Kepner, the first lesbian Assistant Chief and a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School for Managing Diverse Organizations, was accused of a domestic violence incident involving her girlfriend. Kristine Larson, who has a degree in Sociology, headed 'Equity on Fire', an organization complaining that the LAFD was sexist and racist, was then rewarded with the title of the LAFD's first lesbian Equity Bureau Chief with a \$399,000 salary.

Diversity mandates had led to three lesbians named some version of 'Kirsten' running the LAFD.

Meanwhile, Jamie Brown became the LAFD's first lesbian Training Commander. Her accomplishment was being the only one of the four lesbians running the LAFD who wasn't named 'Kirsten'.

Many glass ceilings were being broken, but there was no one who actually knew how to fight fires. Unless it was by asking the fire about its preferred pronouns.

Crowley, Kepner, and Brown were all paramedics, not firefighters. Diversity mandates led to paramedics being referred to as 'firefighters' and being promoted to fire captains and battalion chiefs and then to the top echelons of the LAFD.

Paramedics who did not understand how to fight fires were running one of the biggest fire departments in the country.

Around this same time, Janisse Quinones was appointed to head the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, with a \$750,000 salary that far exceeded her predecessor. The press release made sure to mention that she was the "first female Latina to lead LADWP as CEO."

Between all the trailblazing lesbian fire chiefs and the first female Latina CEO, the LAFD couldn't find the manpower to actually fight the fires on the first day of the firestorm or the water in the hydrants to put them out. Breaking glass ceilings is easy, but putting out fires is hard.

And Kristin Crowley was picked to break glass ceilings, not to actually fight fires.

Even before the worst firestorms in over a decade hit, there were warnings that the DEI LAFD brass had wrecked one of the country's greatest firefighting services. The I-10 fire in 2023 spun out of control and the LAFD struggled to cope with what should have been an easy problem. In a Keystone Kops moment, Engine 17 got stuck under the overpass and was destroyed.

No one dared to point the finger at Crowley, a Harvard Business School graduate who earns \$439,772 and was prone to reciting Kamalaisms like "I am different, but there's a lot of difference everywhere in the world" and "we all are different, but that's a strength of ours."

Being different had become a major asset at the LAFD ever since it went DEI.

Crowley succeeded Chief Ralph Terrazas, hailed as the first Latino chief who replaced Chief Douglas Barry, the first black chief, and in the ordinary way of things, Crowley will be replaced by the first transgender fire chief who will then have to be replaced by someone even more diverse. Assuming that there is still a Los Angeles to pay them/it/xem a six-figure salary.

None of this has much to do with fighting fires, but very little in LA government has to do with anything except “breaking barriers” and triumphing over obstacles like basic competence.

After complaints that the first Latino fire chief tolerated sexism, he had to be replaced by a woman. And Kirstin Crowley came to work, committed to being the best at rooting out sexism.

After her appointment, Fire Chief Crowley vowed to prioritize a “work environment that is free of harassment, discrimination and hazing” and promised to build a new era of the LAFD through “the creation of systemic equity and inclusion across the LAFD.”

Systemic equity and inclusion doesn’t put out fires. Not unless you drop DEI consultants on them. But the LAFD leadership was too busy with DEI to deal with minor matters like fires.

In 2022, the LAFD under Crowley announced its first Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Bureau. It bragged that 70% of the applicants to the department were minorities and 8% were women. Rather than hiring the best, the LAFD was laboriously working to fill diversity quotas.

Mayor Eric Garcetti had promised to bring the number of women up to 5% from 3.5% and now the LAFD is approaching 8%. No one was allowed to ask if this was going to make the LAFD any better at fighting fires now that it was hiring in order to hit a diversity target.

Beyond DEI, every stupid woke idea found a home under Crowley’s regime. After taking over, Crowley debuted the first “electric fire engine” to fight “pollution”, instead it was sidelined by a water leak. The vaccine mandate ousted some firefighters and suspended others. Last year, with a shortage of firefighters, the LAFD began trying to bring some of them back.

Los Angeles and the LAFD fought the Firefighters4Freedom Foundation group which represented 500 members of the LAFD. Now the LAFD has been reduced to begging for volunteers with firefighting experience. The DEI LAFD seems to be a whole lot more diverse, but also a lot less competent at deploying manpower than the old organization used to be. While the LAFD might have lost a whole lot white men who knew how to fight fires, it gained a lot of DEI hires who knew how to pursue diversity, inclusion and all the pronoun stuff.

And while LA might have lost a lot of buildings, it gained a lot of lesbian fire chiefs.

*Daniel Greenfield, a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center, is an investigative journalist and writer focusing on the radical Left and Islamic terrorism. This article first appeared in the Front Page Magazine of January 10,2025.*



**COLAB NOTE: Prior to the fire start, LA County ( separately from the City) took preparatory actions given the weather forecasts for 100 mile per hour winds:**

- It activated additional engine companies.
- It held over the shift from the night before, doubling the number of firefighters immediately available.
- It contacted the State OES and indicated that it could be ordering strike teams at any time.
- It activated its EOC.
- So far, there is no indication from the City of Los Angeles that it took any of these actions timely.

The key performance measure related to suppressing wild land conflagrations is to restrict the spread of the fire early to the area of ignition.

At 10:27 AM on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, how many engines, how much air support, and how many bulldozers did the City send to the fire? (Note that at the time, visibility was clear and larger fixed wing air craft could have operated in the winds).

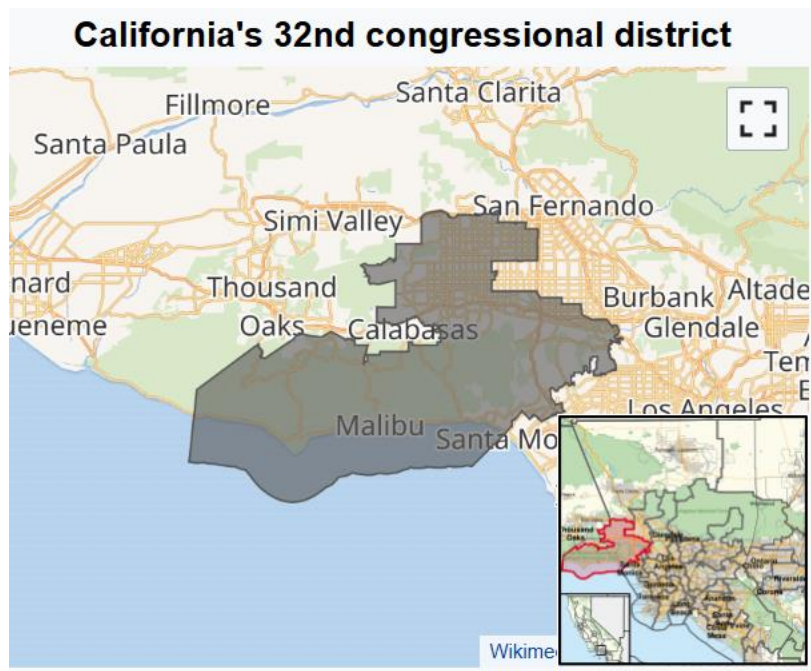
At what time did the fire become a general alarm?

At what time did the City Fire Chief begin to order strike teams? (Note: we didn't see any outside resources other than Cal Fire until we saw a Long Beach City Engine around 7:30 PM).

The Pacific Palisadians, Malibuites, and Brentwood Upscalers did it to themselves. For years, they have voted 70% for left wing Democratic candidates. What did they expect? For example, the area is in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District. The results are similar for State Assembly and State Senate.

2022 United States House of Representatives elections in California

| Party   | Candidate                | Votes   | %     |
|---|--------------------------|---------|-------|
|  Democratic      | Brad Sherman (incumbent) | 167,411 | 69.2  |
|  Republican      | Lucie Lapointe Volotzky  | 74,618  | 30.8  |
| Total votes   |                          | 242,029 | 100.0 |
|  Democratic hold |                          |         |       |



#### **Item 6 - Why Is the Red Star SLO Tribune Attacking Cal Coast News again?**

Over the years we have seen repeated cover ups and attacks, especially when the Tribune was hell bent to provide air cover for the bullying and corrupt former County Supervisor Adam Hill.

While the Tribune is known to viciously attack its political targets and media rivals, during the past three months its cub reporters have penned a slew of libelous hit pieces on Dan Dow, John Peschong, Debbie Peterson, and others.

With its finances in the toilet, the Tribune has lost all semblance of an ethical news source. In just the past week, the Tribune published three hit pieces targeting its primary competitor, Cal Coast News.

It is time to boycott the Tribune! Do not read the paper, cancel your subscription, and do not return its reporters' calls until it stops its biased reporting that supports the corrupt, while attacking those working to make our community better.

## **COLAB IN DEPTH**

**IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES**



## THE DEBASEMENT OF TOLERANCE

BY J. DARYL CHARLES

Along with its sibling “diversity,” “tolerance” has achieved the status of being our culture’s reigning virtue. Given its omnipresence, it is incumbent upon us to be morally serious about its definition and character when applied in the public sphere. The current cultural climate, however, militates against this—a climate in which at times grotesquely distorted forms of “diversity” are being mandated by government, education, as well as business, as in, the key sectors of American society.

Tolerance originally denoted a policy of forbearance in the presence of something not acceptable to all. It was foremost a political virtue and, at bottom, demonstrated a government’s readiness to permit a variety of religious beliefs. John Locke argues that government should not enforce a specific religion in his *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) and *Two Treatises of Government* (1689).

Removed from its religio-political context and understanding, however, tolerance ceases to be a virtue. Indeed, it becomes a vice if and where it ceases to care for truth, ignores what is good, and disdains the values that uphold a community. The culture in which we Americans presently find ourselves is one in which almost everything is tolerated. It is a culture in which people believe nothing, possess no clear concept of right and wrong and, ultimately, are indifferent to this precarious state of affairs. The challenge before us, then, is learning how to purify tolerance so that it remains a virtue, without succumbing to the centripetal forces of relativism in a vacuum of moral chaos.

Tolerance, properly conceived, has private as well as public dimensions. While we may disagree with another's opinion or lifestyle, we extend, in principle, that person's "right" to live according to his conscience. Religious and non-religious people of all varieties tolerate one another's differences because of what they share in common—the laws of nature, an acknowledgement of what is acceptable and unacceptable, and a desire for humans in community to flourish. When, however, someone in the name of "tolerance" is making claims on the public square that lie outside these bounds, we do not tolerate those views. Why? Because those views undermine the common good.

This distinction is by no means owing to Christian or religious insight. Locke himself makes the basic observation—especially important for contemporary Americans—that a great deal of difference can be tolerated provided that it does not endanger social cohesion. Hence, moral honesty requires that we not divorce charity from the moral-social bedrock of truth.

Truth and charity are not mutually exclusive. Charity, rightly perceived, will not sacrifice what is true and real in order to underpin compassion and empathy, while truth will always attempt to clothe itself in ways that dignify fellow human beings.

Tolerance, wielded properly, will insist on the unity of charity and truth. To operate out of a false or perverted sense of "tolerance" is to make the world safe for moral dereliction and criminality. Where "tolerance" and "compassion" are not rooted in moral principle, they end up corrupting both the practitioner and the object. Disengaging tolerance and compassion from truth, in the end, has insidious effects.

Where, then, should responsible citizens draw the moral line as it affects public policy, social norms, and the wider common good? How should "tolerance" be measured? Our answer must be this: We draw the line where private preferences that undermine the communal good demand fealty in the public sphere. Whatever the cost and inconvenience, not only are we as engaged citizens—including religiously-informed citizens—free to contend in the public arena, we are required to do so for the express purposes of preserving social cohesion, the moral order, and the common good.

To recapitulate: Tolerance as a political virtue is anchored in a commitment to what is true and good for society, based on natural law assumptions. As a vice, it is indifferent at best and hostile at worst to these realities. Therefore, tolerance properly understood must not—indeed, cannot—be "neutral" toward that which affects society. In its character, true tolerance will avoid the extremes of passivity and narrow-mindedness; the former encourages cowardice in the face of vice, while the latter breaks societal bonds before they even have a chance to form. What we are prepared to tolerate pivots on what is ultimate—in our personal lives and in our society.

And let us be clear: There is something "ultimate" before which every person and every society will bow. There is no escaping the fact that everyone—and every society—has a hierarchy of values. What we tolerate is predicated on this hierarchy. Social consensus is possible when everyone shares a common moral-social capital. Where there is no agreement on morals, consensus is impossible, and anarchy is invited.

It is impossible for a society or its government to avoid “legislating morality.” Someone’s morality will be imposed and, in time, become law. Thus, the public nature of the marketplace (of ideas, goods, and social norms) as well as social institutions compels us to work for the common good.

The hard truth is that a society cannot function well, cannot protect the innocent, and indeed cannot survive without a measure of “intolerance.” A society that cannot discern evil from good—and name it—is a society that stands before collapse.

Everyone has claims on the public square, especially Christians, who share their convictions with the founders and framers of the “American experiment.” These men believed that the public square is in fact “public,” and therefore needs the influence of religion to reinforce moral principles. It is not, however, a “given” today that all views will be tolerated in the public sphere. Can claims to normative truth and ultimate reality —claims that offend ancient, modern, and ultra-modern sensibilities alike—still be made? To deny that there is an objective moral reality to which our social and political life must align is to prepare the way for totalitarianism.

*J. Daryl Charles serves as a 2024/2025 visiting Elshtain Fellow at the Institute on Religion and Democracy and is a contributing editor at Touchstone and Providence: A Journal of Christianity and American Foreign Policy. This article first appeared in the Journal: First Things on January 7, 2025.*

## **THE ANTI-AMERICAN AGENDAS OF CALIFORNIA’S DEMOCRATS CATCHING UP *POLITICAL INCOMPETENCE IS POLITICAL. GROSS NEGLIGENCE IS POLITICAL. CORRUPTION IS POLITICAL* BY KATY GRIMES**

California fires produce as much pollution in 2 days as all the state’s cars do in a year. Yet quest to be the new Climate Change Czar, nor have the corrupt bureaucrats at California’s Air Resources Board.

Their lies are catching up with them.

A few months ago we reported that Gov. Newsom, who isn’t running for President, refuses to seriously address what ails his state, instead focusing on shady, unaccountable, immeasurable issues like climate change, and the “equity” hoax.

Southern California is on fire. But here are Newsom’s priorities and what he has been focused on:



- “Newsom created the California abortion sanctuary state
- Newsom legalized abortion/infanticide up until birth, authorized a trans sanctuary state allowing children to receive hormone blockers and chemical castration without parental consent
- Newsom exacerbated the homeless crisis spending \$24 billion only to gain more homeless
- Newsom says he’s working on the thousands of fentanyl deaths
- Newsom has embraced illegal immigration, even providing health insurance for illegal aliens.
- Newsom is also on board for the bottomless pit of high speed rail and Delta water tunnel(s), while frequently reminding the state’s residents to stop using so much water and energy.

It is painfully apparent that California Governor Gavin Newsom has never made important human priorities his priorities. His policies and priorities are anti-American.

A troll reader went on the attack claiming the Globe was politicizing the Palisades fire and LA Mayor Karen Bass’s failure to respond:

“Bass left on Saturday, the Palisades fire started Tuesday and she’s back on Wednesday. From Africa. Let’s blame her for the weather while trying to figure out the difference between a video call from next door or 10,000 mi. away. OK? It’s the new American way.”

We responded:

“The hurricane level Santa Ana Winds were announced a month ago. The Weather Channel reported December 10: Dec 10, 2024: ‘Particularly Dangerous Situation’ is forecast for Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Strong Santa Ana winds could peak at 80 mph, causing quickly-spreading wildfires, should one be ignited.”

“Due to the expected long duration of dangerous fire weather conditions and critically dry fuels, there is the increasing potential for any new ignitions to have very rapid fire spread and extreme fire behavior,” The NWS office in Los Angeles said in their forecast discussion.”

Mayor Bass had one month to prepare. Gavin Newsom had a month to prepare. Mayor Bass went to Ghana West Africa instead. Newsom has been promoting his policies and the shiny tourism and entertainment industries – of which Southern California is a premier location:

“2024 has been a year defined by resiliency, and we’ll continue to show this strength heading into the new year,” Newsom said on X. “From entertainment and tourism to budget and jobs — here’s a recap of the Golden State in 2024.”

What happened to a coordinated emergency response to the Palisades fire? Why did it take so long to call in the National Guard? Why weren’t fire departments posting fire engines in neighborhoods ready to respond knowing these were hurricane strength winds?

The U.S. Navy and National Guard have more than 200 C-17s and hundreds of C-130s available in the state. CalFire now has 6 C-130s. Newsom, together with federal assistance, could have mobilized multi-agency assistance and prepared for the dangerous winds and wildfires.

The warnings even before the Weather Channel’s December 10 warning, were there. As the Globe asked, “how did this happen, even after the devastating 2018 fires in Paradise CA, which killed 85 people and destroyed the entire town?”

Since that devastation, Gov. Newsom has removed 4 dams along the Klamath River – dams which provided fire fighters a lot of water during wildfires.

And when Joe Biden was elected, by April of 2021, Gavin Newsom claimed that “wildfire preparedness will be better now that Biden is in office instead of Trump.”



**Oops. Can’t take that back.**

We’ve long reported that the state’s last reservoir project was completed in 1979, when the population was 23 million – nearly half of what it is today. 50 years later, California now has 39 million residents and the same number of reservoirs.

Californians have approved more than \$30 billion in water bonds in the ensuing years – but no reservoirs have been built.

In 2014, while Gavin Newsom was Lt. Governor, California voters approved \$7.12 billion in bonds for state water supply infrastructure projects. Of that, \$2.7 billion was designated for water storage projects. But more than 10 years later, there are no new dams or reservoirs, or other water storage projects to collect and store California’s winter runoff, 80% of which is sent to the Pacific Ocean for environmental purposes.

As we asked Wednesday, “How is it that Gov. Newsom and Gov. Jerry Brown before him, hasn’t gotten any actual water storage built? The short answer is they don’t want it. Both would rather have the \$30 billion Delta Tunnels project instead, which would destroy California’s very important Delta region.”

Remember this: The voters approved more water bonds in 2014 – ten years ago.

While Gov Newsom is publicly whining about Trump and some news outlets like CA Globe “politicizing” this tragedy, mismanagement is political. Political incompetence is political. Gross negligence is political. Corruption is political.

Gov. Newsom slashed roughly \$150 million from Cal Fire’s wildfire prevention budget. Why? CalFire is probably the best state forest management and wildfire fighting agency in the country. And California is a tinder box with decades of neglected forest management.

If the Pacific Palisades fire catastrophe doesn’t bring about political change in California, the state is done.

President-elect Donald Trump already called for Gavin Newsom’s resignation.



**Katy Grimes** ✓  
@KATYSaccitizen



President-elect Trump just called for CA Gov Gavin Newsom to resign!



**Donald J. Trump** ✓  
@realDonaldTrump

One of the best and most beautiful parts of the United States of America is burning down to the ground. It’s ashes, and Gavin Newsom should resign. This is all his fault!!!

**660** ReTruths **2.03k** Likes

Jan 08, 2025 at 8:40 PM

As we said Wednesday, “Newsom has been ‘Trump-Proofing’ California rather than ‘Wildfire-Proofing’”. Failing up is no longer acceptable with Southern California on fire again. Newsom has been playing at being governor rather than caring for the safety and security of the people. Newsom has shown no interest in actual governing, with his sites set on the White House since first running for governor in 2010. And because of that, Gavin Newsom’s political career may have just gone up in flames.

What is going to happen with California’s’ already tenuous homeowners insurance crisis? Will the entire state melt down economically? If we can’t insure our homes... Houston, we have a problem. A colossal problem. With the country’s most expensive real estate, some of which just went up in smoke, how does California recover? Where does the money come from to rebuild?

“California has prioritized ‘suppression-only’ strategies and failed to remove accumulated vegetation, leading to denser forests with increased fuel loads – our forests have become tinderboxes, leading to devastating outcomes when a fire starts,” Assemblyman Bill Essayli said on X.



**Bill Essayli** ✓  
@billessayli



California has prioritized “suppression-only” strategies and failed to remove accumulated vegetation, leading to denser forests with increased fuel loads – our forests have become tinderboxes, leading to devastating outcomes when a fire starts.



From [californiapolicycenter.org](http://californiapolicycenter.org)

11:50 AM · Jan 8, 2025 · **125K** Views

“Bottom line: many of the wild fires CA experienced could have been prevented or significantly mitigated with better management, policies, and funding. This is a time for accountability and, more importantly, change in how we approach fire policy. Many of the rejected proposals were brought by Republicans, and I suspect they were rejected for that reason. There is only one political party to blame for CA’s failures.”

**Indeed.**

*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? California Globe, January 8, 2025,*



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