



WEEKLY UPDATE

May 11-17, 2025

The May 6, 2025 San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting was one of the shortest in recent months, finishing all but closed session business before noon. The agenda appeared to have little of significant consequence, but several items inspired discussion.

A Cranky Tirade for Mike Brown

Supervisor John Peshong was kind enough to put forth a resolution recognizing Mike Brown's retirement from COLAB which was heard early in the meeting. On the day before the meeting, the SLO Democrat Chairman had sent out a nasty gram to his followers alerting them to the resolution. Several smarmy emails ensued, targeted at various Supervisors. However, none of the emailers were inspired enough to leave their keyboards and actually attend the meeting. This left only Supervisor Gibson to do a fine job of painting Mike up as an awful horrible no good evil and down right rotten person. High praise considering the source. At any rate, Gibson did come off as dramatic and determined. After his soliloquy, Supervisors Moreno, Ortiz Legg and Peshong all voted yes, and the resolution passed 3-2.

Common Sense Achieved

A South County Builder appeared before the Board during public comment and shared a difficult permitting situation he was experiencing with a 14 unit project. His building permit was issued with a three-year lifetime, but the solar permit (which he was required to have) only had a one-year lifetime. As often happens with new build projects, his timeline became stretched out beyond the one-year life of his solar permit and he was required to reenter the palace of red tape and high fees to get new solar permits for each unit. Following the tale of bureaucratic headaches, Supervisor Paulding made a motion to align the timing of solar permits with those of accompanying building permits. Motion passed unanimously.

More Common Sense

As reported here last week, the Avila Beach Drive roundabout project timing was the subject of firm discussion from Supervisor Ortiz Legg. Public Works had scheduled the start of the project for July – the peak of tourist season. The potential impact on the business community, along with a couple large-scale events, would likely be difficult if not devastating. After strong encouragement from Ortiz Legg, Public Works reviewed the schedule and came up with an adjustment that allows for construction to begin at the end of August.

Lots of Bucks for the Bang

Item 18, a seemingly simple effort to put some teeth to the regulations regarding Fireworks in SLO County communities had a few points of interest. The item read: “Introduction of an ordinance amending Chapter 6.23 of Title 6 of the San Luis Obispo County Code – Fireworks to include enforcement provisions. Hearing date set for May 20, 2025”.

The County Fire Chief presented the case that enforcement was a complicated and expensive process. They are looking at utilizing drones to locate illegal use, but there is an up front cost to such enforcement. The Chief expressed some hope that fines generated from citations issued would help to pay for the effort, but said there is no guarantee.

While all fireworks (including Safe and Sane) are prohibited from county jurisdictions, some cities do allow the sale and use of Safe and Sane fireworks. The proposed regulations include :

Penalties for Violations

- Misdemeanor and Public Nuisance
- Administrative fine of \$1,000 per violation

Response Cost

The County shall be entitled to recover from any person found to be in violation of any provision of this chapter, the County's full response costs.

- Salary and benefits
- Medical treatment for enforcement officer injuries
- Cost to repair equipment
- Cost of disposal of fireworks

Social Host, Minor, and Spectator Liability

- Any social host shall be strictly liable for any violation of this Chapter occurring at the social host's property or gathering
- Any person having the care, custody, or control of any minor who violates this Chapter shall be strictly liable for the minor's violation of this Chapter
- It shall be unlawful for any person to be knowingly present as a Spectator during an unpermitted fireworks discharge in violation of this Chapter.

Enforcement Officer

Any County employee, agent of the County, or law enforcement officer with the authority to enforce any provision of this Code, including, but not limited to, employees of the County Fire Department, the Sheriff's Office, and Department of Planning and Building.

Administering Department

Department of Planning and Building shall be the department responsible for administering this Chapter.

- Notice of violation and fine - Upon the determination by the Enforcement Officer that a violation occurred, a Notice of Violation and Fine may be prepared and issued
- Appeal process - Pursuant to Government Code section 27721, the appeal shall be heard by the County Hearing Officer, established under Section 22.74.060

An amendment by Supervisor Paulding was offered that would exempt Grover Beach from these regulations and allow for the sale and use of Safe and Sane fireworks. His rationale was that fireworks were permitted prior to a recent community vote to consolidate services with the County, and that this is an unintended consequence of that vote. He pointed out that many local charities depend on the revenue from firework stands. Supervisor Peshong supported the amendment, but the motion failed 3-2.

A Bridge Over Troubled Finances?

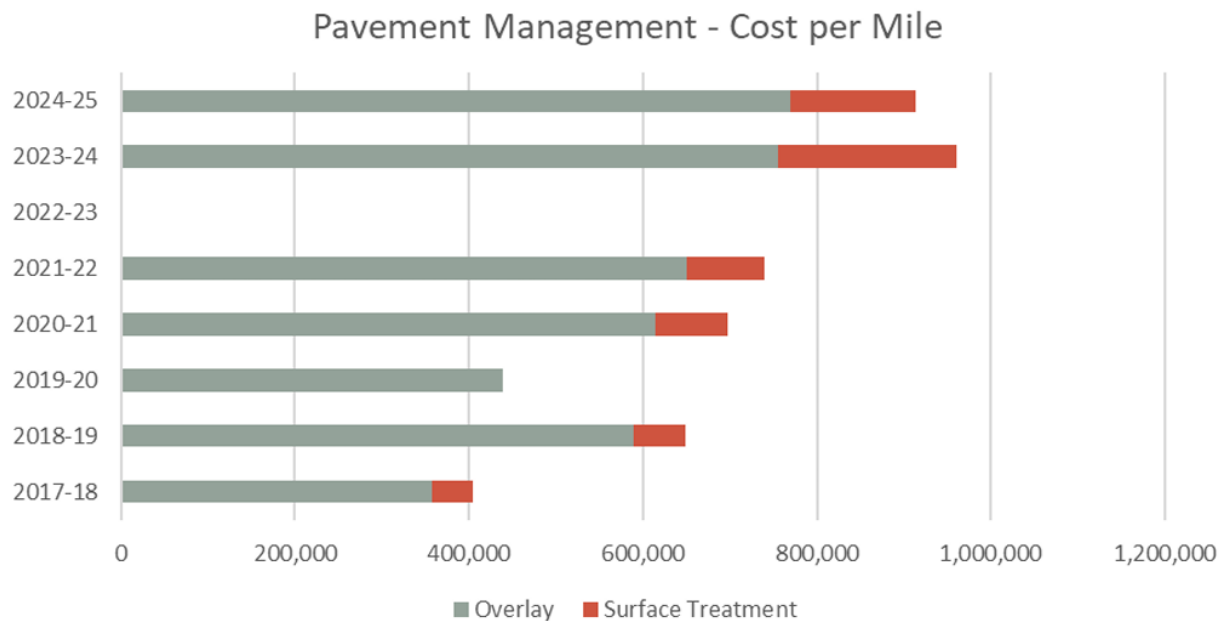
Aside from the Mike Brown resolution, the most intense action came from Public Works with their update to the Board regarding the County Bridge Maintenance and Pavement Management Programs, which provides direction to staff regarding Road Fund priorities for Program performance measures, strategies, and funding alternatives.

While Public Works has been making good progress on their bridge maintenance and update program, they are facing a number of concerns. The first is collecting the federal matching funds that have been granted, especially from FEMA. The

challenge with collecting the funds can cause delays or require construction loans as they move on to new projects with new costs. Even more confounding are the delays due to a very slow permitting process from other government agencies. Finally, costs are increasing dramatically year by year. This means that a project planned and approved last year for X dollars, that can't be started until next year will experience large cost increases over the interim. The charts below, provided by Public Works, illustrate some of the cost increases.

In addition to bridge maintenance, road surface is another ongoing area of work. PCI stands for Pavement Condition Index, which measures the road surface for potholes, cracks and other failings. A brand new or freshly resurfaced road would be at or near a PCI of 100, and the statewide average is 62. Below are parameters proposed for PCI maintenance efforts:

- Board set PCI targets by Road classification:
 - Urban – Good or better (55 min PCI)
 - Suburban – Good or better (55 min PCI)
 - Rural – Fair or better (35 min PCI)
- 2/3 of roads met targets; Avg PCI = 59
- \$5.5M in budget requests, \$1.3M approved.



Examples of cost increases					
Expense:		FY 2020-21	FY 2025-26	Net Increase	
	Insurance	\$ 301,039	\$ 3,632,873	\$ 3,331,834	1107%
	CWOH	\$ 871,807	\$ 1,393,010	\$ 521,203	60%
	IDT	\$ 231,280	\$ 406,964	\$ 175,684	76%
Total		\$ 1,404,126	\$ 5,432,847	\$ 4,028,721	287%

In the discussion of bridge maintenance, Supervisor Paulding raised a situation in his district in rural south county where two adjacent bridges are slated for construction in the near future, but the order in which they will be done will create gridlock. He was able to convince Public Works to reexamine the order of the work and likely make the adjustments necessary to improve traffic flow during construction.

Lingering in the background of these discussions was the **prospect of a sales tax measure** that would provide needed funding as well as extra qualification for state grants. While such a measure has yet to be formally discussed, many people are floating the concept. It remains to be seen whether such a measure would prioritize road improvement or whether it would be carved up into chunks for bike paths, mass transit and homeless services.

Month of May: Affordable Housing

The County has declared the Month of May its Affordable Housing Month. According to the County, “affordable Housing Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of housing” and puts a focus on “challenges faced by many in our community to promote policies and initiatives that expand access to safe and affordable housing for all residents”. The County goes on; “safe, stable, and affordable housing is a fundamental necessity for individuals and families, and provides the foundation of health, economic stability, and community well-being”. Further, “San Luis Obispo County, like many communities across California, faces a significant housing affordability crisis, with rising costs placing homeownership and rental housing out of reach for many residents, including low-income families, seniors, veterans, and essential workers”.

The County then cites the following: “ According to data provided by the US Census, 66% of very low and low income households and 37% **of all households** in San Luis Obispo County experience housing insecurity, highlighting the urgent need for affordable housing solutions”.

Hopefully the month of May inspires reflection by policy makers on the regulatory and permitting costs that the County imposes on housing development – making housing expensive.

LAST WEEK S HIGHLIGHTS

- Detour runs through tension**
- Two year moratorium on a fire hazard?**
- 8.3 million dollar lack of curiosity**
- Rules for presentations revisited**
- Fire map – the gift that keeps on giving**
- We won't be leaving the light on for you in Cayucus**
- Housing woes go on and on**
- Phillips 66 appeal continued**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

After a three-week gap due to the Easter break and the CSAC meeting in Sacramento, the SLO County Board of Supervisors convened again on April 29 with what appeared to be a relatively light agenda having only 8 items of business beyond the consent calendar. However, after the usual proclamations, resolutions and acknowledgements were dispensed with, several of the seemingly benign items inspired some interesting discussion.

Detour Runs Through Tension

Board Chairwoman Ortiz Legg had strong apprehension with an item on the consent calendar to receive and file an update on the Avila Beach Drive at US 101 Interchange. This is a very disruptive 6-month roundabout project planned for the canyon road that provides access in and out of Avila Beach. Anybody that has driven to Avila on a pleasant day has probably experienced back up from too much traffic on the road that was not designed for heavy volume, and it only gets more congested in the summer.

Understandably, Ortiz Legg's frustration was focused on the fact that Public Works has slated the project to begin smack dab at the height of summer tourist and special event season in July. She expressed concern for the businesses in Avila, as they rely heavily on summer visitor commerce, and she pointed out that there are a couple of annual events in July that attract thousands of visitors. She requested Public Works revisit the scheduling and ascertain whether the project could be moved to the end of August.

At this point, Supervisor Gibson weighed in suggesting that Public Works was fully capable of handling the project and mitigating the traffic challenges. Ortiz Legg, however, was not interested in

Gibson's council and intensely pushed forward with a request that Public Works examine the scheduling options and report back. Motion passed 5-0. She makes a good point and it's nice to see a flash of common sense in matters like this.

Two Year Moratorium On A Fire Hazzard?

In the public comment period, about a dozen Morro Bay residents spoke on a proposal they would like the Board to take up that would establish a two-year moratorium on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) throughout San Luis Obispo County. They cite seven BESS fires that have occurred in California over the last 18 months, and point out the high level of toxicity resulting from such fires. Not only does the smoke and fumes from these fires create air quality hazards for many miles downwind, but the residue fall-out has damaged agricultural fields for many acres surrounding them. While BESS facilities have already been established in SLO County, the speakers pointed out that there are no standards outlining safety precautions or wise planning procedures for the construction of such installations. It remains to be seen how the Board will proceed.

\$8.3 Million Lack Of Curiosity

Item 22, a consent item involving an \$8.3 million contract with the state brought about only a few questions from one Supervisor. The request was to 1) approve a retroactive agreement with the California Department of State Hospitals for the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2028 in the amount of \$8,304,000 to continue services started with the initial funding under the diversion program pilot grant and move to ongoing funding to provide treatment for individuals deemed incompetent to stand trial; and 2) delegate authority to the Health Agency Director or designee to, sign any amendments, subcontracts, or documents related to the agreement that do not increase the level of General Fund Support required by the Health Agency.

Only Supervisor Moreno asked follow up questions regarding the services expected to be delivered or past performance of the program. While the answers to Moreno's queries seemed a bit vague, at least there was some minor accountability exercised. Motion passed 5-0.

Rules For Presentations Revisited

Item 40, a consideration of amendments to the Board of Supervisor's Rules of Procedure pertaining to the use of County equipment for public comment, and discussion regarding presentations at Board of Supervisor regular meetings was brought forth by Supervisor Moreno. The discussion was about two different issues.

The first is the lack of structure, guidelines or policies regarding the public recognition period during Board meetings. Moreno pointed out that there is no system in place to define who could be recognized, and how long such recognition efforts should go on. Her main point is that many county personnel are required to attend Board meetings if anything impacting their county division is on the agenda. Those staff members, sometimes measuring a couple dozen, must sit through presentations

that can take over an hour before the Board gets down to business. This amounts to many wasted hours of staff time by county employees.

The second part of the question involves the public's use of county Audio/Video equipment for presentations to the Board during Board meetings. This became an issue in the past when one misguided individual thought displaying pornographic pictures on an overhead projector would enhance his presentation. At that point, all public access to county equipment was cut off. While a good round of discussion was had, the Board ultimately requested more time to think through the points raised by Moreno.

Fire Map – The Gift That Keeps On Giving

As covered here in previous weeks, the State Fire Marshall has issued its Local Responsibility Area (LRA) Fire Hazard Severity Zones map and presented it to the Board for final adoption. Several frustrated people spoke out on inaccuracies within the map while others expressed concern for homeowners' insurance policies and rates. Board members expressed unease that the map was drawn up without any local feedback and does not recognize mitigation efforts such as mandatory community wide weed abatement, brush clearing, fuel reduction or even fire safe communities. With no alternative, the Board received the map.

We Won't Be leaving The Light On For You In Cayucas

A proposed small hotel project designed for a vacant lot in Cayucas was approved by the Planning Commission on Oct 4, 2024, but the permit was appealed by local residents to the Board and was heard at this meeting. The four-unit project was designed to meet all County requirements, but neighbors expressed concern over parking, which led to a vigorous discussion led primarily by (Cayucas resident) Supervisor Gibson. Supervisor Peshong stated that he was adamant he would not support the appeal because the developer had followed all the rules. Nobody disagreed with Peshong's point, but some remained uncomfortable with the plans put forth. After considerable consternation, the Board voted unanimously to continue the appeal until July 8, so that the developer could make changes to parking and design elements.

Housing Woes Go On And On

Housing availability and costs continue to be a key issue throughout San Luis Obispo County. Whether for low-income workers or highly trained professionals, finding a home is very difficult. Near the end of the meeting, Planning and Building presented a report with progress updates and information relating to Board priorities for the Department of Planning and Building and sought direction as deemed necessary.

Amongst the shuffling back and forth regarding zoning changes and density issues came two nuggets of

interest. The first was the odd method that the county has been using to measure its performance towards the goal of seeing more low-income housing construction. While those performance figures are woefully shy of current goals, it turns out that they have been counting new Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) as low-income housing. This raised a few eyebrows amongst the Supervisors. Certainly, some ADUs probably are used as lower cost rental housing, but many are also used for family member housing and some as vacation rentals. Supervisor Gibson asked whether there were any hard numbers reflecting how many were actually used as low-income housing, but did not get a substantive answer. It would appear that the county counts all ADUs as low-cost housing.

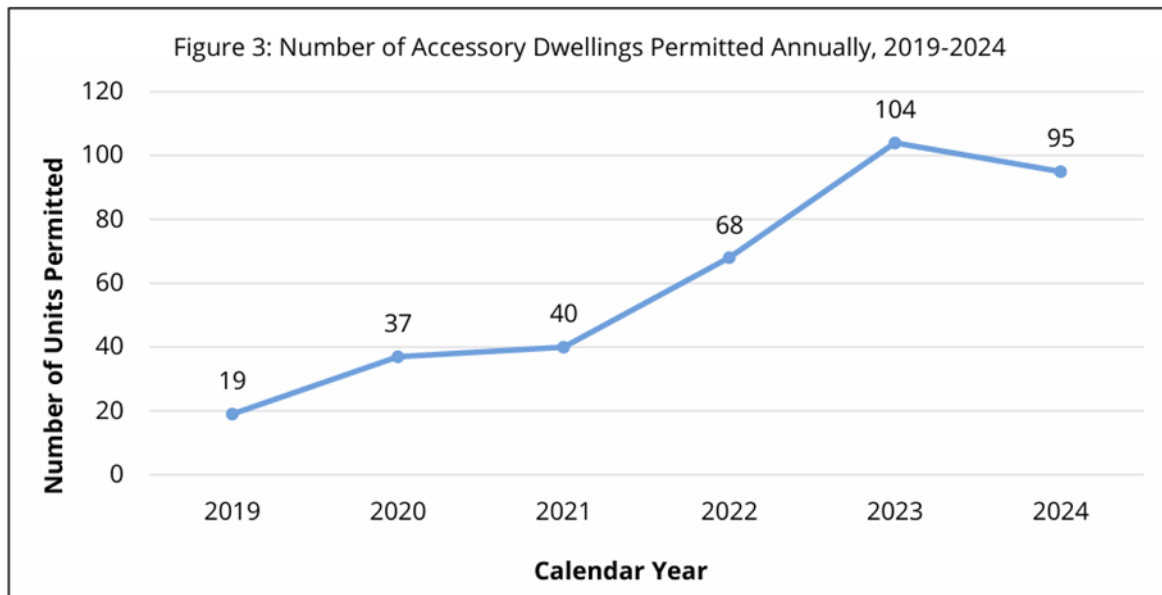
The second nugget is that Building and Planning is hiring a big accounting firm to do an analysis of the SLO county housing market with the hopes that some so far undiscovered pathway to lower cost housing will be revealed. We can only hope that such a report will compile a comprehensive inventory of all the costs associated with local building with a focus on permit and regulatory costs, and will offer comparisons to the same costs in different communities, as well as in different states.

Discussion got off track briefly when Renters Union representatives suggested that we have too many vacation rentals, need a managed registry of all rental properties and perhaps homes that are not occupied full time should be taxed at a higher rate.

Table 1: Unincorporated County's Regional Housing Needs Allocation Progress

Income Category and Example Occupations ¹	Number of Dwelling Units			Percent Completed
	Total Need	Permitted (2019-2024)	Remaining Need	
Very Low-Income (e.g., barista, farmworker, childcare employee)	801	7	794	1%
Low-Income (e.g., family social worker, community health advocate, roofer)	505	226	279	45%
Moderate-Income (e.g., occupational health worker, construction cost estimator, electrician)	585	246	339	42%
Above Moderate-Income	1,365	1,132	233	83%
Total	3,256	1,611	1,645	49%

Figure 3 shows the number of accessory dwellings permitted annually in the past six years. The number of accessory dwellings permitted annually increased significantly from 2021-2023, peaked in 2023 at 104 units, and slightly reduced to 95 units in 2024.



Phillips 66 Appeal Continued

The Sierra Club appeal of the plans for the cleanup of the closed Phillips 66 refinery in south county has been pushed off until July. Concerns remain that the Sierra Club is looking for measures that would permanently remove the possibility of any commercial or industrial activity from the privately owned refinery property.

NEXT WEEK

With the forthcoming budget hearings, it appears that most County agencies are focusing on fiscal matters, with little substantive business agendized for the coming week.

The Air Pollution District Control Board

Meeting on May 21 for Consideration of Appointment of Public Employee – Air Pollution Control Officer pursuant to Government Code section 54957

This individual could be instrumental in the way San Luis Obispo County addresses issues such as the Pismo Dunes, as well as the implementation of state mandates regarding various forms of emissions and particulate matter.

The next Board of Supervisors Meeting is scheduled for May 20

EMERGENT TRENDS - SEE PAGE 13

Unprecedented vote shows Dems fractured over housing policy

Gov. Newsom's Latest Appointment – Another Climate Hustle Association

COLAB IN DEPTH SEE PAGE 21

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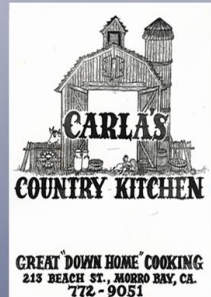
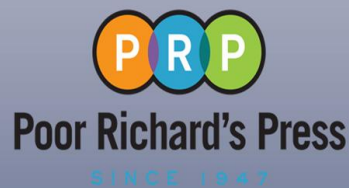
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Unprecedented vote shows Dems fractured over housing policy



BY BEN CHRISTOPHER APRIL 30, 2025

CalMatters

One of the most controversial housing bills of the year has lived to be voted upon another day, but only by surviving the Legislative equivalent of two back-to-back prison breaks.

Last week, Senate Bill 79, a bill by San Francisco Democratic Sen. Scott Wiener to boost apartment and commercial construction around major public transportation hubs, passed the Senate Housing Committee over the strenuous objections of its chair, Sen. Aisha Wahab, a fellow Democrat from Fremont.

That was a notable development in its own right. Chairs tend to get their way on the bills that pass through their committees. When a majority of a committee's members decide to buck legislative decorum and tradition and steamroll that committee's chair, it's often taken as a sign that California's dominant Democrats are unusually divided over an issue; that the issue at hand is especially contentious; that the legislators either aren't receiving clear guidance from legislative leadership or are willing to ignore that advice; or some combination of all of the above.

Fast forward to this week and it happened again.

In the Senate Local Government Committee, Sen. María Elena Durazo, a Los Angeles Democrat, urged a no vote on Wiener's bill.

She didn't get her way. The bill passed with the backing of all the other Democrats on the committee. Durazo voted "no" with the two Republicans.

A chair getting "rolled" is an unusual spectacle in Sacramento. In the typically arcane and perfunctory proceedings of the Legislature, this bit of human drama

pops up once or twice a year. For it to happen twice in a row for the same bill is without any obvious precedent.

“Extra unique” is how Chris Micheli, a longtime California lobbyist and public commentator on the Legislative process, described the situation. “Beyond the particular bill at hand, it could give an indication that there is a philosophical split in the caucus.”

So far Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire, a Santa Rosa Democrat, has refused to comment publicly on where he stands on the divide within his caucus, whether the two chairs speak for him and whether he plans to intervene to smooth things over.

For some advocates, the silence from McGuire has been deafening.

“As ‘one of our own,’ a member of the Bay Area Caucus, and President Pro Tem of the Senate we feel compelled to write to you to share our deepening concern that the progress that we need on housing may ultimately stall in the Senate,” Jim Wunderman, president of the Bay Area Council, which co-sponsored SB 79, wrote to McGuire late last week.

McGuire’s office did not respond to a request for interview before this story was published.

After the caucus, Wiener downplayed the idea that there are irreparable divisions within the party.

“You have two chairs who have just a different perspective and that’s normal and, you know, I appreciate that we’ve been able to go through this process very respectfully,” he said. “We’re all grown ups.”

As for McGuire: “He’ll weigh in when he needs to weigh in,” said Wiener.

McGuire is termed out of the Legislature next year, an expiration date which may limit his influence.

The increasingly public philosophical split within the Democratic caucus was apparent in both committee hearings. Wiener is a prolific housing legislator whose views align with the broader “Yes In My Backyard” movement that sees California’s housing affordability crisis as the product of an overall housing shortage. For that group, which includes Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas and Assembly Appropriations Committee Chair Buffy Wicks, making it easier to build

more homes more cheaply, quickly and densely is the policy north star. Wicks said as much at a recent legislative hearing.

“I’m like a one-trick pony,” she said during a debate over a statewide rent control bill. “We’ve got to make it easier to build more housing in California and that has been really my sole focus since I’ve been here.”

Wahab and Durazo represent a different faction of the Democratic Party. Both have stressed that they aren’t opposed to new housing construction and that they share the view that the state faces a severe housing shortage. But they are more skeptical of the private development that tends to be a byproduct of the YIMBY movement’s proposed legislation, and believe state law that encourages it should come with terms and conditions.

Wiener’s bill would allow housing developers to build apartment, condo and mixed-use towers on or near train, subway and light rail stations, ferry terminals and at the intersection of heavily used bus lines, regardless of what local zoning or building design rules specify. It would also remove barriers to transit agencies that want to do the same on their own land.

“If we leave decisions about what to build up to market-rate developers who do not have the broader public interest in their minds, it’s the wrong way to go,” Durazo said. “While I want to help members move their legislation forward, sometimes bills go against our core values and amendments won’t address that.”

“We are aligned on the vast majority of issues,” Wiener said in response. “In this one, unfortunately, we are deeply not aligned and I do not believe that building more housing near public transportation, housing of every variety, goes against our core values.”

The bill doesn’t require private developers to set aside a share of units for low-income residents. Last week, Wahab called the lack of an explicit affordable housing requirement a “sweetheart deal” for the housing industry. Some affordable housing and anti-gentrification activists have turned out to oppose the bill, arguing that expanding opportunities for private development would come at the expense of affordable housing opportunity and turbocharge displacement.

The bulk of studies that have looked into the question have found that new market-rate housing reduces neighborhood rents and tends to ease displacement pressures.

Wiener has stressed that apartments and condos are inherently more affordable than single family housing and that the bill would not preclude other state and local affordability requirements that developers might be subject to from applying. In

the committee hearing today, Wiener said that he is “exploring the possibility” of including a minimum affordability requirement.

The bill is also opposed by many local governments and neighborhood groups that resent the state’s usurpation of their land use authority and opponents of dense development. Ditto the State Building and Construction Trades Council, an umbrella group representing many unionized construction workers, who regularly oppose housing bills that lack stringent labor standards, and some environmental justice advocates.

Another Wiener bill, Senate Bill 607, which would make it easier for urban multifamily housing projects to avoid environmental review — a priority of many Assembly Democrats — also survived, despite Durazo’s “no” vote.

Both bills are now scheduled to go to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

This latest legislative kerfuffle could be a sign of things to come. This year, Assembly Democrats have put forward a vast package of housing bills aimed at speeding up development. Though some are eye-glazingly technical, others may incite the same Dem-on-Dem infighting that broke out over Wiener’s bill.

“(SB 79) could foreshadow tough sledding for some of the Assembly bills,” said Micheli.

Gov. Newsom’s Latest Appointment – Another Climate Hustle Association

Pretty much everything we use in modern society needs to be upended, overhauled, and restricted, according to Gov. Newsom and climate change hustlers

By Katy Grimes, May 9, 2025

We are told Friday that California Governor Gavin Newsom and Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers have been appointed co-chairs of the U.S. Climate Alliance.

Joining this brain trust are New York Governor and outgoing Alliance co-chair Kathy Hochul, Delaware Governor Matt Meyer, and Washington Governor Bob Ferguson. “They will serve on the Alliance’s executive committee charged with overseeing the strategic direction of the coalition.”

Issuing his first scintillating statement, Gov. Newsom explains that “Americans want cleaner air and water, lower costs, and healthier communities — and that’s exactly what Alliance governors are delivering.”

Oh, so now the governor of a bankrupt blue state is “delivering” cleaner air and water, lower costs, and healthier communities?

No. No he is not.

This is the real crux:

“As the federal government retreats from the climate fight, states are charging ahead. We were built to lead in moments like this, and as co-chair of this coalition, I look forward to partnering with my fellow governors to keep America on track.”

As the Trump administration cuts federal funding to Newsom and other blue state governors’ climate grift, they are fighting back. #Resist.

Every bit as vapid as Governor Newsom, Alliance co-chair Wisconsin Governor Evers does not disappoint: “Every day the Alliance’s states and territories are showing that we don’t have to choose between protecting our air, water, and communities and growing our economy — we can, and will, do both.”

Blah, blah, this means nothing, blah, blah.

Who exactly is having to choose between protecting air, water, communities and growing our economy?

As the Globe commented in October, “Once his role as Joe Biden’s surrogate presidential candidate was shattered as Democrats replaced him with Kamala Harris, how could Newsom remain present in order to facilitate a run for President in 4 years?”

We addressed Gov. Newsom’s plan to decrease the state’s gas supply in special session legislation, creating more shortages, and more expensive gas for Californians. USC Professor Michael Mische warns that California gas prices could escalate 75% to \$8.43 per gallon in 2026 due to the pending shutdowns of two major in-state refineries.

Thank Gavin Newsom for that.

Keep in mind that California’s cap and trade shakedown program expires in 2030, and Newsom wants to extend it.

As we said, with few alternatives left in his political career, “Gavin Newsom is working to become the next Al Gore – the name and face of the worldwide climate change grift.”

Gov. Newsom claims that the state’s highest-in-the-nation gas taxes and prices are not what led to dramatically spiking gas/oil prices but because of price gouging by the oil industry. In May, Newsom even signed a gas price gouging law into place.

The California Energy Commission disagreed with the governor at the time, showing that gas price spikes occurred in the last few years because of refineries temporally going out of commission because not enough oil was getting to them.

And, In March, the Globe reported on a study by USC Professor Mische which found that the factors contributing to California’s high gasoline prices over 50-years are self-imposed by state officials and politicians. It turns out that California is its own worst enemy.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, who pretends he isn’t running for President, refuses to seriously address what ails his state, instead focusing on shady, unaccountable, immeasurable issues like climate change.

Every climate change bill passed by Newsom and the Legislature is to “Achieve net zero GHG emissions” in the state, and to Newsom and his acolytes, that means outlawing oil and gas. So pretty much everything we use in modern society needs to be upended, overhauled, and restricted, according to Gov. Newsom and the burgeoning industry of climate change hustlers.

The higher the stakes – including attacking the oil and gas industry – the more notoriety Gavin Newsom receives. The harm to the people, businesses and industries of the state is inconsequential as long as Newsom gets press.

This latest climate appointment joins Gavin Newsom’s other recent appointment in March as co-chair of America Is All In – an expansive coalition of state, local, tribal, private sector, and non-profit leaders supporting climate efforts at the subnational level.

Wow. Sounds really practical and useful. “Governor Gavin Newsom today announced he is joining America Is All In as its newest Co-Chair. In each of the 50 states in the U.S. and across sectors, the coalition of state and local leaders aims to cut emissions in half by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050, while building resilience in the face of increasing climate impacts.”

Now Newsom has a title to go along with his climate change passions:

In his first action since being named Co-Chair of the climate coalition “America Is All In,” Governor Gavin Newsom “announced a groundbreaking state effort to cut methane pollution with the help of innovative satellite technology,” a press release from Newsom says.

As the Globe predicted, Newsom is trying to shove Al Gore out as Big Chief Climate Change in order to save his what’s left of his declining political career.

As for Newsom’s latest appointment to the Climate Alliance, it “comes as the Alliance concludes its weeklong semiannual spring meeting in Washington, D.C., which brought together top officials from the coalition’s states and territories to share solutions and chart a path forward for collective state-led action.”

How exciting.

“The convening also featured a series of engagements and dialogues with federal policymakers and partner organizations on a range of topics, including clean energy deployment, grid modernization, energy affordability, and clean transportation.”

If you want to get something done, be sure to schedule “engagements” and “dialogues.”

These people don’t do anything other than “resist” President Trump. As proof, the Alliance was launched on June 1, 2017 by the governors of Washington, New York, and California “to help fill the void left by President Trump’s initial decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement.”

The Alliance has grown to a whopping 24 governors. They claim their Impact is:

Compared to the rest of the country, Alliance members are collectively delivering more:

- Air Pollution Reductions
- Emissions Reductions
- Climate Resilience
- Clean Energy
- Jobs
- Economic Growth
- Energy Savings
- Zero-Carbon Electricity

They don't show actual proof of air pollution and emissions reductions, but I'll bet that they have expanded their grift by getting people jobs in "Climate Resilience" non-profits.

Under the Alliance's "See Our Latest Actions," is nothing but press releases reiterating what they claim to be working on... like this one: Alliance Governors Vow to Continue Climate Fight in State of the State, Inaugural Addresses – "We Are Truly Masters of Our Own Destiny."

And they include headlines they like:

How US states are leading the climate fight – despite Trump's rollbacks

How the US Climate Alliance is responding to Trump's second term

So, what it is that the Alliance members actually do? "The Alliance Secretariat regularly convenes Working Groups to deepen member collaboration, share lessons and best practices, and provide services and tools to help members advance high-impact action across our 10 policy priorities."

They also do "Capacity Building," "Partnerships," "Federal Engagement," and... "Historic federal resources from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) are turbocharging state-led climate action and enabling Alliance members to tackle pollution, lower costs, and create good-paying jobs."

This is rent seeking – "an economic concept that occurs when an entity seeks to gain wealth without making any contribution to the benefit of society," Investopedia says.

The U.S. Climate Alliance doesn't produce anything, and is accountable to no one. They admit as much.

"Alliance members are working to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement through four key commitments:

Reducing Emissions

Accelerating Action

Centering Equity

Tracking Progress

This should be the perfect new job for Gavin Newsom.

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?

COLAB IN DEPTH

Principles of New Environmentalism

Edward Ring
Director, Water and Energy Policy
Californians for Energy and Water Abundance

May 9, 2025

Last month, in recognition of the annual celebration of Earth Day, it seemed appropriate to compile a list of ten common myths that constitute the major premises of modern environmentalism. That list, along with explanations of why each of these premises is unfounded and counterproductive, can be summarized as follows:

- 1 – There is no climate crisis.
- 2 – There are not too many people on Earth.
- 3 – We are not running out of oil/gas/coal.
- 4 – Biofuel is not renewable or sustainable.
- 5 – Offshore wind is not renewable or sustainable.
- 6 – Renewables are not renewable.
- 7 – Renewables cannot replace oil/gas/coal.
- 8 – Housing should not be confined to densifying existing cities.
- 9 – Mass transit is almost never cost-effective.
- 10 – Wilderness areas are not sacred.

Environmentalism, pursuant to these myths, is not a movement primarily devoted to protecting the planet's ecosystems. It is a totalitarian political agenda that aims to consolidate power and wealth in the hands of a managerial elite that will wield absolute control over every aspect of human life. Where you live or travel, what you purchase or produce, and what you can own and consume will all be specified, monitored, and rationed. And the moral justification for this will be the "climate emergency."

There are few examples in history that can compare to the political power grab enabled by the alleged “existential threat” of climate change. But of equal concern is the fraudulent essence of the economic and technological agenda pushed in the name of fighting climate change. It not only discredits environmentalism in the eyes of awakening millions, but, as explained in the ten myths, it also will wreak environmental havoc.

Meanwhile, true environmentalist values, uncorrupted, remain of vital importance to humanity. It is necessary to expose how special interests have hijacked the environmentalist movement. But it is equally necessary to articulate principles that may inform a new environmentalism focused on authentic threats and propose ways to counter these threats without compromising individual freedom and prosperity. To that end, here are some ideas.

Principles of New Environmentalism

- 1 – Questioning the “climate emergency” does not mean someone is not an environmentalist.
- 2 – Public investments and public policies designed to combat the alleged climate emergency must still pass a cost/benefit analysis that does not take into account “climate impact.”
- 3 – Over-regulation is a primary cause of unaffordability, but deregulation cannot be selectively targeted to favor, for example, “renewables” or “affordable housing.” A level, deregulated playing field must be created for all investments, including energy, water, and housing.
- 4 – The priorities of environmentalists must return to addressing genuine environmental threats, for example:
 - The steady and significant decline in global insect mass.
 - Overfishing the oceans.
 - Poaching of endangered species.
 - Aquatic dead zones.
 - Deforestation and wildlife depletion in nations denied access to conventional energy and commercial agriculture because of the “climate emergency.”
 - Actual air and water pollution, mostly in developing nations.
 - Biofuel plantations destroying hundreds of thousands of square miles of rainforest.

– Massive oceanic garbage patches.

– The worsening human population crash and environmental factors that may be contributing to worldwide loss of fertility.

5 – Mitigating even genuine environmental challenges must avoid extremes.

Advances in genomics can now identify subspecies as unique even if they are otherwise indistinguishable apart from minute genetic differences. Similarly, we now can measure toxins in parts-per-trillion quantities. But now that science’s ability to identify subspecies and measure toxins greatly exceeds our economic capacity to mitigate, a balance must be struck.

6 – “Smart Growth” is not smart. It is a heavily subsidized and highly inefficient way to create housing that most people don’t prefer. The alternative to Smart Growth might be called “New Suburbanism,” an unsubsidized, family-friendly approach that recognizes consumer preferences and, contrary to agenda-driven misinformation, does not consume excessive land.

7 – In a reasonably regulated, competitive commercial environment, private industry can operate far more efficiently than government. Private investment in, for example, energy production, water infrastructure, mineral extraction, and forestry will create jobs, generate tax revenue, and lower the cost of living.

8 – A corollary to the principle of private investment being more efficient is the unavoidable necessity for public utilities. You can’t change the route of a pipeline or railroad for every property owner who will not consent to an easement. But public utilities should not be guaranteed revenue on a cost-plus model, and their profits should not be “decoupled” from their productivity.

9 – For everyone on earth to use half as much energy as Americans do per capita, global energy production must double. In 2023, wind, solar, and geothermal energy only accounted for 2.5 percent of global energy production. Scaling these “renewable” sources of energy while they remain technologically immature is not sustainable. We need to continue to develop conventional energy while continuing to aggressively research new energy technologies. Access to energy is a prerequisite to prosperity and wealth, which in turn is a prerequisite for nations to have the wherewithal to address and solve genuine environmental challenges.

10 – Around the world, the challenge to achieve abundance is governed more by politics and culture than by limited resources. The scarcity agenda inherent in “climate” policy guarantees societal instability and inadequate resources to eliminate genuine pollution. Abundance is achieved through economic freedom and competitive capitalism, subject to reasonable regulatory restraints. Beware of the “abundance” mantra increasingly being adopted by the left or by climate zealots. Even if they are sincere, their solutions are unworkable.

These are a few of the principles that might help redefine environmentalism for the 21st century and restore its credibility. They offer a new approach that not only rescues the natural environment but also preserves freedom and nurtures worldwide prosperity. Moreover, because they make practical economic sense and are predicated on reality instead of theory and mythology, adhering to these principles would set an example that other nations would enthusiastically emulate.

The next time you hear a politician or pundit blithely discuss the “climate emergency,” as if it is something we all accept as indisputable truth, think about the dubious premises they rely on to make these claims. And think about new approaches that will allow us to more effectively care for our beautiful world, along with everyone living here.

###

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