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SANTA LUCIAN



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Here's how CleanPowerSF is California's latest Community Choice Energy program.

All In

SLO County proceeds with community choice energy study

On January 29, the deadline for all interested Central Coast communities to submit data on their energy use in order to participate in the tri-county Central Coast feasibility study of community choice energy (also known as CCA), every city in SLO County did so.

For maximum dramatic impact, they waited until the last minute of the last day.

Whew. All credit to SLO Clean Energy, who, as the old year wound down and the new year dawned, ensured that all the T's got crossed and the I's got dotted so that first the County agreed to participate in timely fashion and kick in its share of the cost ("On October 6, Help the County Make the Right Choice," Oct. 2015), and then bird-dogged the cities to obtain maximum participation.

The study will analyze impacts of various clean energy and greenhouse gas reduction scenarios and assess whether the CCA's electricity rates would be competitive with those offered by Southern California Edison and PG&E. It is expected to be completed this summer.

Dozens of other local governments in California are exploring the prospects for CCA programs in their communities.

If you don't know why this is all a good -- nay, essential -- thing, cast your eyes up to the Bay Area for a glimpse of what a community choice energy future could look like for SLO County.

On January 13, after twelve years of diligent advocacy, the first contracts for the CleanPowerSF community choice program were signed.

CleanPowerSF will enroll its first customers in its community choice energy program on May 1. The program will provide the option for commercial and residential customers to begin receiving 35% clean renewable electricity at a slightly lower rate than PG&E, or opt up to 100% clean energy for a slightly higher price. PG&E's energy mix is currently about 27% renewable.

The program has robust plans for comprehensive citywide and regional installations of local renewable energy projects.

Rebecca Evans, Chair of

Sierra Club's San Francisco Bay Chapter said, "This action by the SFPUC to sell greener energy at lower rates is truly groundbreaking in a major city the size of San Francisco. Sierra Club's members, and the planet, thank the SFPUC for launching this program and boldly leading the rest of the nation into a clean energy future. We call on other cities to quickly follow San Francisco's lead."

Eric Brooks, Campaign Coordinator of Our City SF, said, "The gas disaster in Southern California sounds the death knell of fossil fuel

ALL IN continued on page 6

Hundreds Urge SLO to Deny Phillips 66 Oil Train Proposal

By Elly Benson, Associate Attorney, Sierra Club Environmental Law Program

On February 4th and 5th, hundreds of people from across California converged on downtown San Luis Obispo to urge county planning commissioners to reject Phillips 66's proposal to build an oil train terminal at its Santa Maria refinery.

The oil giant seeks to transport tar sands crude from Canada in mile-long trains — each laden with over 2 million gallons of dirty crude — that would travel through hundreds of communities before arriving at the refinery on California's Central Coast.

By Thursday afternoon, nearly 400 people had signed up to speak at the Planning Commission hearing. The SLO Tribune reported that it was the largest turnout for a public hearing in years. The crowds were so large that the movie theater next door had to be used for overflow seating.

People came not just from San Luis Obispo County but also from farther afield: Los Angeles, the Bay Area, Sacramento, Fresno, Santa Barbara, and other towns and cities that would be put at risk by oil trains rolling through their communities.

Oil train derailments and explosions have skyrocketed in recent years. The most catastrophic accident occurred in Lac-Mégantic, Canada, in July 2013, when an oil train derailment caused a fiery explosion

that killed 47 people and obliterated several city blocks.

At the start of the hearing, Phillips 66 announced that it had downsized its proposal from five to three oil trains per week. Phillips conceded that this new proposal would have many of the same "significant and unavoidable impacts" to human health and the environment as the original proposal, particularly along the rail line. But the company espoused an opportunistic (and flimsy) argument that federal regulation of railroads means the com-



missioners can only consider impacts at the refinery site — not the risks posed to hundreds of communities that the unsafe oil trains would rumble through on their way from Canada to the Santa Maria refinery.

On the first day of the hearing, the Planning Commission heard from 83 members of the public. Every single speaker opposed the project.

The speakers included elected officials such as San Luis Obispo Mayor Jan Marx, Santa Barbara Mayor

TRAINS continued on page 4

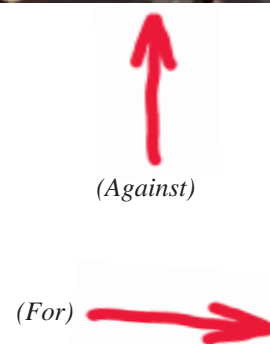
The End Game for Phillips 66

County's decision will likely turn on federal preemption and ESHA

As the Phillips 66 oil train terminal project heads for its fourth and hopefully final hearing at the Planning Commission on March 11, we predict that, of all the issues before them, the ones that will play the largest role in determining how the commissioners vote on the permit — and ultimately how the County Board of Supervisors votes when this reaches them on appeal —

will be the designation of the project site as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) and the principle of federal preemption — i.e. the federal government regulates interstate rail commerce and therefore local jurisdictions may not impose any safety or environmental requirements on railroads as conditions of a

END GAME continued on page 5



Compare & contrast This was the scene on Feb. 4 at the rally by oil train opponents at the County Court House (above) and across the street at the table set up by street supporters outside the County Government Center (right).

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Please recycle

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Let Me Tell You About My Week

By Andrew Christie, Director, Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club

February 10, 2016

As I write this, I've just returned home from an all-day meeting of the California Coastal Commission in Morro Bay. I'll bet you've heard about it.

Development interests, pulling the strings on those commissioners sympathetic to their world view, ousted the commission's executive director. In doing so, after multiple attempts over the last three decades, they established a major beach head in the effort to destroy the independence of the state's coastal program and turn it into a development permit approval factory.

Today was their biggest play in twenty years to secure maximum profit from the world's most desirable real estate by working their way around the California Coastal Act and thwarting the will of the people of California, who voted the Coastal Commission into existence in 1972 and whose elected representatives created the Coastal Act in 1976.

This time around, the wolf in sheep's clothing routine – a naked political power play dressed up as a personnel action – did the trick.

The Sierra Club joined with more

than 80 other environmental and social justice groups in prevailing on the Commission to cease and desist.

The Santa Lucia Chapter, of course, was in the middle of it, ensuring that you all got the word on what was going down and you had contact information for Erik Howell, our local Coastal Commissioner, so you could let him know that you expected him to do the right thing at that meeting ("Coastal Commission on the Brink," February), then helping set up the tables outside the Morro Bay Community Center before the meeting and assisting with speaker sign-ups.

Our local Coastal Commissioner was deaf to your pleas and we were unable to save the Coastal Commission from itself. But the determination by seven commissioners to do the wrong thing at that meeting -- waking everyone up to just how dire the situation at

the Coastal Commission has become -- was galvanizing. It may serve as the starting point in getting the Commission back onto the path first laid out by its late, legendary executive director, Peter Douglas.

And less than a week ago, I spent two days in the SLO County Government Center at back to back meetings of the County Planning Commission on the Phillips 66 proposal to build a rail spur at its Nipomo refinery in order to bring Canadian tar sands crude oil through California via a stream of oil trains, also bringing inevitable derailments, spills, explosions, fires, and toxic air.

The level of attendance at those hearings, and at the rally across the street on the first day, with some 600 people from around the state speaking in opposition to the project with one voice, was the product of months of planning and



Letter from Sacramento

Don't Mourn, Organize and Act to Keep Coastal Act Strong

By Kathryn Phillips, Director, Sierra Club California

February 21, 2016

Nothing good in environmental law and policy has come about easily.

I was reminded of this last week when a pro-development majority on the Coastal Commission removed its executive director, despite an overwhelming outpouring of support for him from the public, legislators and former Coastal Commissioners.

So, given that getting good environmental policy requires work, what must we do now to make sure the state's coastline remains open to all Californians and that the Coastal Act guaranteeing access is enforced?

Over the last few days, events have unfolded to reveal what I believe are the five most important things every Californian who cares about the coast and coastal access can do:

1. Give thanks. There are five Coastal Commission members who stood with the public and demonstrated their commitment to protecting coastal access for all Californians by speaking out in favor of retaining the

executive director. They are Mary Shallenberger, Dayna Bochco, Steve Kinsey, Carole Groom, and Mary Luévano. Drop them a thank you note c/o California Coastal Commission, 45 Fremont Street, Suite 2000, San Francisco, CA 94105.

2. Make it clear that the new Coastal Commission executive director must be extraordinary. That means, like the last two executive directors, the new one has to be fearless and determined to protect the coast, Californians' access to the coast, and the Coastal Act. Let your view on this be known by writing letters to newspapers, writing letters to the Commission itself, emailing your legislators, and posting on social media.

3. Support legislation to reform Coastal Commission lobbying rules. Right now, unlike lobbyists who advocate at virtually every other state agency, people who are paid by clients to influence the coastal commission do not have to register as lobbyists. They don't have to disclose how

much and when they spent money on commissioners (e.g. by buying nice lunches and dinners at a fine ocean-view restaurant), and no limits are imposed on their spending. Assembly members Toni Atkins and Mark Stone, and a raft of other legislators, have introduced Assembly Bill 2002 to reform the rules and help shed a light on lobbyists' influence at the commission. Make sure your legislators know you want them to support that bill, too, if they haven't already committed to it. Also, additional reform legislation may be introduced.

4. Stay engaged. Government entities run aground or become dominated by industry interests when there is not constant and demanding public oversight and informed involvement. A core group of Sierra Club California volunteers review Coastal Commission agendas, attend meetings and stay on top of activities at the agency. But more public engagement and oversight is needed. You can join our Coastal Committee or indepen-

dently monitor and attend Coastal Commission meetings. They move around the state throughout the year. You can find much information about those meetings and agendas at <http://www.coastal.ca.gov>.

5. Put the environment and the Coastal Commission on the next governor's agenda. Governor Brown's silence during the debate about the Coastal Commission sent one very loud message to Californians: Don't count on him to protect and defend the Coastal Act and broad public access to the state's beaches and coastal bluffs. However, it also illuminates the need to make sure the next governor is engaged and supportive.

The field for governor is expected to be crowded. Between now and late 2017, when that field becomes more defined, is the time to start asking potential candidates for governor where they stand on the Coastal Act. Some of those candidates have already begun to speak before local groups or outreach to party activists—many of whom are Club members. If you see them, ask them.

In the end, it doesn't pay to be angry. It pays to be organized, persistent, committed and vocal.

These are the qualities that led to Sierra Club's founding. It's what has made our volunteers a force to be reckoned with for more than 120 years. It's what drove so many of our members to collect signatures in 1972 for the ballot measure establishing the Coastal Commission.

Good policy takes hard work. Here's to rolling up our sleeves, again.

Sierra Club General Meeting

A Day with Thoreau at Walden Pond

7-9 p.m., Tuesday, March 29



Chapter outings chair Joe Morris has long been a fan of Henry David Thoreau, considered by many to be the inspiration for the environmental movement in America and a hero as well for John Muir. Tonight, based on Joe's trip to Concord and walk around Walden Pond, learn about Thoreau's life in the 1850s, see vintage and present-day slides of the area, and listen to his eloquent words on a simple life in harmony with nature. Environmental news begins the meeting.

Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

organizing by the Sierra Club, Forest Ethics, the Center for Biological Diversity, California Nurses Association, Mesa Refinery Watch Group, Surfrider, and local activists and residents who rose up in defense of their neighborhoods — making calls, knocking on doors, writing letters to the editor, getting signatures on petitions, going to city council and school board meetings, working our social networks and sitting down with County planners. That coalition work resulted in 24,000 comments opposed to the project coming into the Planning Department vs. 150 in support. Coalition work is also blogging, distributing yard signs, manning information tables, chartering buses and picking up the lunch tab for high school students after a five-hour bus ride. You know it was worth it and that you did it right when you see a front-page headline like the

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Santa Lucian

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MEMBER
Patrick McGibney (12/17)
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Lindi Doud, Patrick McGibney
TREASURERS

The **Executive Committee** meets the second Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The **Conservation Committee** meets the second Friday at 1p.m. at the chapter office, located at 974 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. All members are welcome to attend.

Committee Chairs

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This Isn't Over

The Sierra Club will join with a coalition of environmental and social justice organizations holding a press conference before the start of the Coastal Commission's meeting on Wednesday, March 9, at 8:30 a.m. outside the Civic Auditorium in Santa Monica. In addition to the press conference, advocates will attend the hearing and provide testimony about replacing former Executive Director Charles Lester.

A good turnout for the hearings will show the Commissioners that the public is watching how they move forward after the scandalous firing of the Executive Director. Plan to attend the press conference and hearing. The hearings will be held in the East Wing of the Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main Street, Santa Monica. There is plenty of parking in the auditorium lot if you arrive early, and a parking structure next door. Parking is \$1.00 per hour or \$5.00 per day. Carpooling advised. You may also get to the hearings by public transit.

A discussion of the process for hiring a new Executive Director will be heard as agenda item #5. We will focus our comments on that item, which will be heard shortly after the meeting begins at 9 a.m.

California Desert National Monuments Decades in the Making

There's a lot of history behind Obama's historic declaration

By Joan Taylor, Vice Chair, Sierra Club California/Nevada Desert Committee



President Obama has declared three vast new national monuments in the California desert: Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and Castle Mountains.

As I relish this victory, my thoughts whirl around the places, faces, and events that have marked great successes during my 45 years as a Sierra Club desert activist.

Standing at the podium at Wildlands Conservancy's gorgeous Whitewater Preserve this past November, Senator Feinstein was the same gracious and vibrant leader that she was in 1993 as a junior U.S. senator when I first met with her in Los Angeles on the California Desert Protection Act, more popularly called "the Desert Bill." At that meeting were the great leaders of the Desert Bill: Jim Dodson, Judy Anderson, and Vicky Hoover of the Sierra Club, and Nobby Reidy of Wilderness Society.

But most of all, there was Elden Hughes.

If the Sierra Club was the undisputed leader in protecting the California desert, Elden was its pied piper. Taking activists on trips to all 69 proposed wilderness areas in the Desert Bill, entrancing the press with his golden sound bites, and charming legislators from L.A. to D.C. with his desert tortoises, Elden was an irrepresible force on the side of the desert.

That is why, in the late 1990s, I consulted with Elden first, before suggesting a new national monument for the Santa Rosa and

San Jacinto Mountains.

Would the Sierra Club support a national monument? Elden said yes, go for it. So I contacted Ed Hastey, then-director of the California Bureau of Land Management, and the rest is history. Ed reached out to local communities and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, who reached out to Representative Mary Bono, who reached across the aisle to Senator Feinstein, and together we protected yet another great piece of the desert with a bipartisan unanimous vote of both houses of Congress.

Now, thinking about the new national monuments, many of us remember that the first Desert Bill came about because the BLM had failed to recognize the major wilderness-quality desert areas and to properly care for what is now the Mojave Preserve. But what about these new national monuments? What drove them?

The current saga started in the mid 1990s when SF Pacific Properties put its vast holdings throughout the California desert up for sale and development. Developing these lands would have severely harmed their biological and aesthetic integrity, as well as recreational access for more than 4 million acres of public lands. This was because of the checkerboard configuration of the parcels, which stemmed from land grants to the railroads in the 1800s.

But an agile new force in the desert, the Wildlands Conservancy, took on the

problem, and eventually, under the leadership of David Myers, got an option to buy the most sensitive of these properties — almost a thousand square miles of land.

Myers and the Wildlands Conservancy then raised \$30 million in private monies and teamed up with Elden Hughes and Senator Feinstein to procure another \$15 million in federal Land and Water Conservation Funds to complete the acquisition and to propose what was then called the

Interior. But during the 2008-2010 feeding frenzy to get billions in federal stimulus dollars that were being handed out for renewable energy, BLM had allowed over a million acres of public land in the desert to be plastered willy-nilly with solar and wind applications. There was little to no regard for the incredibly sensitive and irreplaceable resources of these lands. The Mojave Trails region had its share of abysmally sited projects, with such iconic places as Sleeping

the occasion once again.

The senator met with constituents, including Sierra Club leaders, and in 2011 she proposed legislation including a Mojave Trails National Monument to preserve not only the lands she had recently helped acquire but also to preserve the integrity of the many intervening Wilderness Areas that had been created in her first Desert Bill. Responding to strong community support, the senator also proposed a remarkable Sand to Snow National Monument at the same time.

Over time it became obvious that legislation for the national monuments would languish forever in a regressive Congress, so last year Senator Feinstein called on President Obama to use his powers under the Antiquities Act to get the job done.

On February

12, by taking action as have many presidents from Teddy Roosevelt to George W. Bush, President Obama made history, in this case by preserving some of the most iconic places in the California desert.

All Sierra Clubbers should give ourselves a pat on the back for the pivotal role that the Sierra Club has played in desert protection through the years, and also be sure to thank President Obama for his bold action.



Marble Mountains Overlook, Mojave Trails National Monument.

Jack Thompson/Wildlands Conservancy

Mother Road National Monument (later morphed to "Mojave Trails"). In the early 2000s, the Sierra Club was the first major organization to endorse this new national monument, and things seemed to be going swimmingly — until the solar (and wind) "gold rush" happened in the California desert.

You see, the thousand square miles of acquired land had been transferred to federal agencies to consolidate public land and access across the desert, with assurances of preservation in perpetuity by the President and the Secretary of the

Beauty Valley proposed to be filled with solar mirrors and power towers. Swift action was needed, and Senator Feinstein rose to



Elden and Patty Hughes with President Clinton at the signing of the Desert Bill, 1994. Photo: White House Staff.

National Sierra Club Elections are Underway - VOTE!



A democratic Sierra Club requires grassroots participation

The annual election for the Club's Board of Directors is now underway.

Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive in the mail (or by Internet if you chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot in early March. This will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on the Club's website. Your participation is critical for a strong Sierra Club.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels. The Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Club levels is a major membership obligation.

In a typical year, less than 10% of eligible members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure is strengthened when our participation is high. Therefore your participation is needed in the voting process.

How can I learn about the candidates?

Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more. Each candidate provides a statement about themselves and their views on the issues on the official election ballot. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and

chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. You can also visit the Club's election web site for additional information.



With Thanks

~ Peg Reagan made a donation of \$100 in memory of Evelyn Reagan.

A Drought Resistant Redesign for SLO City Hall

A Class 24 Leadership SLO Legacy Project

By SLO Leadership Class 24

Every year since 1991, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce Leadership program (LSLO) has brought together a group of 36 strangers from across the Central Coast and asked them to step out of their everyday lives and imagine a better San Luis Obispo County—and their role in creating it.

To facilitate engagement, each class is tasked to coordinate and execute a Legacy Project that benefits our community, meets a need in our community and represents each class. Since our community is in the midst of a very serious multi-year drought that will likely become the climate norm, and due to the overall class interest in LSLO's Sustainability Day, Class 24 opted to design water-conserving landscapes in the three designated softscape areas in front of SLO City Hall, currently planted with lawn.

The design and three-phase installation (below) will include drought-toler-

ant plants and educational public awareness signage as well as other landscape materials. LSLO Class 24 will design three distinct phases to transition the landscape to a sustainable and drought-tolerant landscape. The class will install one of the three phases, leaving the remaining two to be managed by the City of SLO. The project will be a demonstration garden that will educate the public about the need for sustainability and how to plant their own water-saving gardens.

San Luis Obispo County residents know that saving water is a huge challenge during times of drought and while our population is growing. Despite this year's El Niño, forecasters predict more droughts in years ahead. The Cali-

GARDEN continued on page 4



It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

Add your voice to protect the planet. Join the Sierra Club today.

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Want to Keep Oil Out of Your Water?

By Ash Lauth, California Anti-Fracking Campaigner, Center for Biological Diversity

The Environmental Protection Agency is about to determine the fate San Luis Obispo's water.

They are considering an application for exemption from the Safe Drinking Water Act from by state oil and gas regulators which would allow the pumping of oilfield waste into a protected aquifer in Price Canyon. Needless to say, in the midst of a devastating drought, polluting our precious water is unacceptable.

the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Thus, subject to approval by the US EPA, the Arroyo Grande aquifer exemption would allow for oil wastewater to be injected into the aquifer.

To get the exemption, Freeport McMoRan must prove that the aquifer exemption (and injection) will not harm

earthquakes, including those that could be caused by wastewater injection; ● Evaluate the potential for subsidence as water is pulled out of the aquifer; ● Provide an analysis of the chemical composition of the wastewater injected back into the aquifer.

Freeport McMoRan's application fails to mention the company's own plans to dramatically expand operations in this same oil field. The company is hoping to drill up to 350 new wells (including injection wells) to achieve up to a ten-fold increase in daily oil production, and a major increase in wastewater production. The analysis of aquifer exemption is based on current water extraction and injection. Nowhere does the application mention that the company is pursuing an oilfield expansion project. There is no analysis of what will happen to the aquifer if that expansion proceeds—including possible changes in pressure, the potential for inducing fractures, the water quality/chemicals that will be used, etc.

That's why EPA Region 9 needs to hear from you. I'm asking that you write a letter to EPA, demanding that they deny the exemption and protect SLO's water. Many similar applications across the state are awaiting the outcome of the SLO County application. This decision has a huge impact for not only SLO's water, but water for thousands of

communities across California.

It's critically important that you write to the EPA demanding they deny this exemption. Let's turn up the heat and take a strong stand to protect SLO's water.

Let me know if you'd like guidance: alauth@biologicaldiversity.org, (510) 84407100 x335.

TAKE ACTION

Here's where to send your letter:

Main Contact:
David Albright
U.S. EPA, Region 9
Drinking Water Protection Section (WTR-9)
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
albright.david@epa.gov

You should also include:
Michele Dermer
US EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94015
Dermer.michele@epa.gov

George Robin
US EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
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And cc:
Bruce Kobelski
Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water
USEPA Headquarters
William J. Clinton Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Mail code: 4606M
Washington, DC 20460
kobelski.bruce@epa.gov



Freeport McMoRan is applying for an exemption for the Arroyo Grande oil field because environmental groups and EPA recently discovered that it, along with other oil companies throughout the state, has been illegally injecting oil field wastewater into potential sources of drinking water, in violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Companies have been told to cease injection by set dates unless their aquifer receives an exemption from

water that is used for drinking, agriculture, and other domestic and beneficial uses. It must also show that no one is using the aquifer currently for drinking water.

There are at least a hundred water supply wells within a mile of the oil field, but the application didn't show exact map locations or sampling of these wells.

The application also doesn't:

- Evaluate the impacts of

Trains

continued from page 1

Helene Schneider, and staffers speaking on behalf of State Senators Bill Monning and Hannah-Beth Jackson, State Assemblymember Das Williams, and officials from nearby towns including Oxnard and Goleta. From the Bay Area, where oil trains would pass through on their way to the Phillips 66 refinery, staffers spoke against the project on behalf of elected officials from Santa Clara County, San Jose, and Berkeley.

A lunchtime rally further highlighted the overwhelming public opposition to Phillips 66's project. More than 500 people gathered in the plaza across the street from the hearing, many wearing t-shirts and waving signs bearing the message "Stop Oil Trains Now." As they alternated between listening to speakers and cheering, the rally participants lived up to the directive on one attendee's sign to "Stand Up to Big Oil." Among the rally speakers were Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider and Santa Barbara County Supervisor Salud Carbajal.

This trend of overwhelming opposition to the project continued on the second day of the hearing. The handful of people who spoke in support (primarily Phillips 66 employees) were far outnumbered by people urging the Planning Com-

mission to deny the project. This imbalance is nothing new. Of the approximately 24,500 comment letters received on the project during the environmental review process, only about 150 were in support.

The county has also received dozens of comments from state and local governmental officials, counties, cities, schools and fire protection districts opposing the plan to transport crude by rail through their communities.

At the hearing, the citizens who urged the Planning Commission to deny the project included residents of San Luis Obispo and Nipomo Mesa, nurses and physicians, a retired firefighter, students and teachers, San Jose and Davis residents who would be affected by the oil trains rolling through their communities, a retired chemical engineering professor, a zookeeper, parents and grandparents (and even a great-grandparent), a retired CFO, and representatives of groups including the Sierra Club, ForestEthics, Center for Biological Diversity, Surfrider Foundation, Mesa Refinery Watch Group, Santa Barbara Channel-keepers, the League of Women Voters, and the California Nurses Association.

Attorneys from the Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, and Environmental Defense

Center also spoke, addressing deficiencies in the final environmental impact report and the project's inconsistency with the Local Coastal Plan and General Plan, as well as refuting Phillips 66's argument that the preemption doctrine precludes the Commission from considering impacts on "up-rail" communities. (Notably, the company has also said it believes that preemption prevents the county from regulating rail terminals or unloading facilities — which signals that if allowed to build the oil train terminal under the 3-trains-per-week proposal, Phillips 66 would later argue that the county is prohibited from limiting the number of trains.)

At the hearing, many of the speakers urged the Planning Commission to follow the recommendation of its own staff, which recently issued a report recommending denial of the project. The staff report noted the significant local, regional, and statewide concern regarding toxic air emissions, risk of derailment and explosion, and inadequate emergency response services along the rail line.

The staff report also pointed out that the environmental impact report for the project concluded that there would be "significant and unavoidable" impacts from diesel particulate matter and toxic air emissions at the refinery (including an unacceptable cancer risk for the population near the project), as well as ten "significant and unavoidable" impacts along the rail line (including impacts to agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards, public services, and water resources).

The Sierra Club and our allies have played a critical role in the environmental review process for the project, helping to ensure that the project's impacts are thoroughly analyzed.

We submitted comments on the draft environmental impact report in January 2014, which led the county to do another round of environmental review, which we also commented on. In addition, represented by Environmental Defense Center, we submitted comments highlighting the project's inconsistency with critical Local Coastal Program policies.

As the second day of the hearing drew to a close, many people who had signed up to speak had not yet had a chance to do so. The Planning Commission continued the hearing to February 25 for additional public comment. Once the public comment process is complete, there will be a staff response, an opportunity for questions from the Commission (including questions for agencies such as Cal Fire), deliberations, and finally a Planning Commission decision.

That decision can be appealed to the County Board of Supervisors, whose decision could then be appealed to the California Coastal Commission.

Notably, on February 3, Coastal Commission staff sent a letter to the Planning Commission stating that it "strongly agree[s] with and support[s]" the planning staff's recommendation to deny the project.

The people have spoken, and their message to the Planning Commission is clear: put the public before oil industry profits, and deny this project. As the editorial board of the *Tribune* wrote, "we cannot support a project that would increase rail shipments of crude oil through communities in San Luis Obispo County, or any other county. There are too many risks and too many unanswered questions."

And as a Paso Robles High School student told the Planning Commission at the hearing: "oil trains are dinosaurs and dinosaurs belong in museums."

Garden

continued from page 3

California Native Plant Society, which gives tips for water saving at www.cnps.org, calculates that replacing a 1,000-square-foot lawn with low-water use plants saves 13,500 gallons of water a year. This translates into about 37 gallons of savings a day. Thirty-seven gallons per day is just under what Cambria residents used each day last September during a period of extreme water shortage.

That math adds up. With just over three years of City of San Luis Obispo water remaining in our reserves, it's time to be pro-active leaders in our community and adopt proven and sustainable landscape methods that help minimize water consumption and energy waste. Locating the project at the prominent and historic City Hall and collaborating with the City of San Luis Obispo, RRM Design Group and other contributing partners extends the reach of the project's public awareness and educational potential. This project will serve to demonstrate that public and private environmental softscape spaces can be beautiful, human-friendly, water-conserving and sustainable all at the same time.

Class 24 has shared a project overview with city leaders, the City Council, the Architectural Review Commission and the Cultural Heritage Commission and is currently reaching out to additional community stakeholders and thought leaders to get feedback and

ideas on what they would like to see included in the design phase. Once the design is complete, Class 24 will reach out again to the community to get final input prior to formally presenting the project designs and scope to the ARC, CHC and SLO City Council for approval.

We are very pleased with the positive reception and feedback from everyone thus far, including our local Sierra Club chapter's Conservation Committee at a recent meeting. We respect the Sierra Club's long history as citizen volunteers who advocate for conservation and other protections of the environment and appreciate the great ideas and feedback delivered at that meeting. In addition to water savings, our goals are to design drought-tolerant landscaping that welcomes the public and city staff, that is beautiful, that keeps with the character, heritage and charm of the historic City Hall and nearby city and county buildings, and that guides others who wish to design a similar space at their homes and businesses.

Class 24 will be in charge of raising funds for the implementation of phase A and anticipates some project costs will be covered through government grants, the California Conservation Corps, the City of SLO and local businesses who wish to partner on the project as sponsors. Any Sierra Club members interested in partnering or donating funds to this project please email our fundraising co-chair, bweiss@itech-solutions.com.

Environmentalists Rendezvous

The theme for the Santa Lucia Chapter's 7th annual forum of SLO County entities doing interesting work on the Central Coast focused on "The Sustainable City."

Joining us at SLO's Steynberg Gallery on January 29 were SLO Clean Energy founder Eric Veium (below), ECOSLO Executive Director Mary Ciesinski (center), City of SLO Natural Resources Manager Bob Hill (bottom), SLO Foam Free advocate Janine Kennel Rands and Sierra Club Santa Lucia Chapter Director Andrew Christie.

The speakers covered a spectrum of environmental work. Veium discussed SLO Clean Energy's advocacy for community choice energy as the ultimate expression of local control, giving the participants the opportunity to break with the monopoly utility — one of the reasons why the community choice movement is now "going like gang-

busters" across the state.

Ciesinski said that her main goal as ECOSLO's new executive director is to "connect the community with the environment" and described the group's docent-led hike's through the City of SLO's open space reserves and its SLO Stewards and Coastal Clean-Up programs.

Hill further discussed the City's 14 open space reserves and noted the SLO is one of a handful of cities in the country to have a natural resources manager, one of the results of the citizen advocacy that created an Environmental Quality Task Force in 1994 to assist in amending the City's General Plan. Citizen advocacy also resulted in the City recently restoring the acquisition of open space as a Major City Goal, and its protection in perpetuity. He is currently heading the City's Natural Resources Roundtable, laying out the

RENDEZVOUS continued on page 5



Not in my town SLO mayor Jan Marx testifies.



End Game
continued from page 1

land use permit. In order to render the oil terminal project permissible under the California Environmental Quality Act and the California Coastal Act, Phillips must show that significant and unavoidable environmental impacts have been avoided or mitigated. These impacts fall into two categories: off-site (up-rail), where federal preemption applies, and on-site, where the project would destroy twenty acres of ESHA. Phillips' representative telegraphed the importance of these two issues at the February 4 hearing and made it clear that in order to lawyer its way to a permit,

project involving railroads as otherwise required by law, and cannot withhold a permit because of the multiple violations of California's environmental laws and the County's General Plan that such impacts would represent. County Counsel Rita Neal riposted by rhetorically asking the planning commissioners "Then what are we doing here?" Neal turned aside the claims of Phillips' lawyer, saying "the applicant's view of the scope of preemption goes too far" and urging the commissioners to retain their jurisdiction and land use authority. After making the argument that Phillips' proposed reduction of weekly oil train

traffic from five trains to three eliminates all significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality on-site (which it wouldn't), and the County is preempted from considering any environmental impacts that occur up-rail from the site, Phillips' lawyer went on to claim that the "unmapped ESHA" covering the project

site doesn't count due to the time it took state regulators to amass and review the evidence that led to the conclusion that the site should be classified as ESHA – no development allowed. The County would have to buy all three arguments in order help Phillips find its way through the legal thicket barring the project, aiding and abetting the company in pretending that federal preemption makes significant environmental impacts disappear, and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat isn't really Environmentally Sensitive Habitat. On February 11, we got some indication of how this plan is likely to play out when the Benicia city planning commission made its own decision on another oil-by-rail project targeting California citizens. City staff had bought the pre-emption argument of the oil company (Valero) and told the commission they weren't allowed to even consider up-rail environmental impacts. But, after four successive nights of hearings, the planning commission rejected the project anyway. And unlike in SLO, there were no additional

significant and unavoidable on-site impacts to consider. Take it away, *Sacramento Bee*: Benicia city staff officials, in their environmental analysis, argued that federal laws on interstate commerce preempt any locally imposed safety regulations that would affect the train shipments, essentially prohibiting Benicia from responding in any way to concerns of cities along the rail lines. Planning commissioners rejected that notion. "That doesn't make sense from a human point of view," commission chair Donald Dean said. After listening to more than 70 members of the public testify on the issue over four nights, the six voting members of the commission unanimously declined to approve the city's formal environmental impact report on the project, calling it inadequate on numerous points. They also declined to give their OK for a project permit. Several said they

feel they need to look out for up-rail cities, such as Sacramento and Davis. "I don't want to be the planning commissioner in the one city that said screw you to up-rail cities," said Susan Cohen-rossman. "I don't want to be complicit with what has become a social nightmare across the country," Oakes said, referring to oil trains, several of which have crashed and exploded. "What we are talking about here is some additional profit for a couple of companies."

I don't want to be the planning commissioner in the one city that said screw you to up-rail cities.

Phillips knows it must persuade county decision-makers on both points. Phillips wants to extend this concept of federal pre-emption to include a requirement that local jurisdictions may not even consider the impacts of a

county in the last few months. But I don't, so, once again: Coalition... years of work... hundreds of people... opposition to be overcome... really huge deal. Let me be clear: To paraphrase Peter Douglas, the Coastal Commission is never saved, it's always being saved. The Phillips 66 project, by the time you read this, will still be awaiting approval or denial by the County Planning Commission, but either way it will be heading to the County Board of Supervisors on appeal. The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary may get the nod for the designation process, but that process will take over a year and will be contentious. A Community Choice Energy feasibility study is now under way for the entire Central Coast, but a program has not yet been approved and put in place. We will win — because we must, and because while they have the money, we have the people. Which brings me to my point: When you have the people, it's very helpful to have money, too. Organizing costs — as do flyers and phone bills and the internet and everything else that comes under the heading of getting the word out and mobilizing a community. That's what we do. We can't do it without your support. Every March, the Santa

My Week
continued from page 2

one that appeared in *The Tribune's* February 5 edition: "Hundreds condemn oil-by-rail proposal." At the February 4 planning commission meeting, when, for the first time in my life, I witnessed an eight-hour land use hearing in which not a single person spoke in favor of the project, I saw one of the most graphic illustrations imaginable of the adage "They have the money, but we have the people." I thought "nothing can ever top this"... and then I saw it again less than a week later at the Morro Bay meeting of the Coastal Commission. And now I'm hoping we'll see it at least one more time in the near future when — as a result of working with the Chumash tribe, other environmental organizations, local businesses, coastal advocates and elected officials — the voice of the people will be heard by the federal government and the designation process for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will commence, bringing to fruition a dream deferred for two decades, thanks to the efforts of many hands over the last five years. And if I had room, I'd also mention the extraordinary wins that have been racked up for Community Choice Energy in our

county in the last few months. But I don't, so, once again: Coalition... years of work... hundreds of people... opposition to be overcome... really huge deal. Let me be clear: To paraphrase Peter Douglas, the Coastal Commission is never saved, it's always being saved. The Phillips 66 project, by the time you read this, will still be awaiting approval or denial by the County Planning Commission, but either way it will be heading to the County Board of Supervisors on appeal. The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary may get the nod for the designation process, but that process will take over a year and will be contentious. A Community Choice Energy feasibility study is now under way for the entire Central Coast, but a program has not yet been approved and put in place. We will win — because we must, and because while they have the money, we have the people. Which brings me to my point: When you have the people, it's very helpful to have money, too. Organizing costs — as do flyers and phone bills and the internet and everything else that comes under the heading of getting the word out and mobilizing a community. That's what we do. We can't do it without your support. Every March, the Santa

Lucia Chapter sends you a letter inviting you to invest in where you live. You're about to get this year's letter, which will mention all of the above. As long as you keep supporting the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, as generously as you can, we'll keep doing what we're doing. How generous you want to be is up to you. Personally, I recommend membership in the Cal French Circle of donors, where an automatic monthly donation to the Chapter of at least \$20, or an annual check for at least \$240, puts you in the inner circle of our core supporters. Okay, gotta go. I'm due for a small vacation, so I'm off to catch a train. I've loaded up the iPod that Peter Douglas gave me for Christmas a few years back and I'm taking the Surfliner down that breathtakingly beautiful stretch of coast that his Coastal Commission was able to save over the last forty years, and which we must now save again. I'll be looking out at about 10,000 square miles of ocean that is going to be a national marine sanctuary someday soon. I'll be traveling along the tracks that Phillips 66 would like to use to import millions of gallons of tar sands crude oil for the greater glory of its quarterly profit statements, unacceptable risk and environmental damage be damned. As I ride along, despite the events of this traumatic day, I will hold to the conviction that we will get what we want — because we will have your support in making sure the opposition ultimately won't get what they want. Because there ain't no power like the power of the people, and the power of the people don't stop. We hope to hear from you soon.

Lies, Damn Lies, and COLAB

For the February 25 hearing on its oil-by-rail terminal project, Phillips 66 appeared to give virtually every Santa Maria refinery employee and executive the day off to testify, and brought more down from its Rodeo refinery. All sang the praises of their employer; none said anything about the impacts of the project as detailed in the Environmental Impact Report and County Planning staff report, or anything else about the specifics of the project. Mike Brown of the Coalition of Agriculture, Labor and Business (COLAB) resorted to statisticalation.



Try the fudge COLAB's Mike Brown attempts misdirection.

Saying "you need to focus on the facts," he cited the stat that from 2000 to 2014, 99.99 percent of oil tank cars reached their destination. Therefore, since just a small fraction of oil tank cars derail/spill/explode, the commissioners should approve the project. One problem: Mr. Brown fudged the dates. The oft-touted 99.99 percent figure actually covers the period 2000-2012. In 2013, more than 1.15 million gallons of crude spilled from rail shipments, more than the total for 1975-2012 combined.

The number of oil tanker cars on the rails jumped from 9,500 in 2008 to 500,000 in 2014, when the number of derailments, spills and fires spiked even higher. Five oil train derailments and conflagrations occurred across the U.S. and Canada between January 14 and March 7, 2015. The Department of Transportation forecasts that trains hauling crude oil or ethanol will derail an average of 10 times per year over the next two decades, causing more than \$4 billion in damage.

A Different Shade of Amber

Local p.r. pro Amber Johnson, the proprietor of Pacific Coast Strategies — "A boutique political consulting firm that specializes in campaign management, candidate recruitment, grassroots outreach and issue advocacy," per her LinkedIn profile — is well known to *Santa Lucian* readers for her work running the campaigns opposing Santa Barbara's anti-fracking ballot initiative and the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (see "Taking Issue - Extra" Jan. 2015 and "Anti-Marine Sanctuary Mystery Solved," Jun. 2015). When she spoke at the Feb. 25 Phillips 66 hearing, Ms. Johnson, as is her wont, did not identify herself in her professional capacity. Instead, saying "I am San Luis Obispo County," she spoke about her length of residency and the almost equally beside-the-point safety record of the Santa Maria Refinery while reiterating the popular claim — refuted in the EIR and staff report — that denial of the project would mean a loss of jobs and/or closure of the refinery. In response to previous speakers noting the evident fact that industry lobbyists and Phillips executives who live a long way from SLO County were popping up to speak in favor of the proposal, Johnson said "There are out-of-town folks who were here in support of this project, but there were an awful lot of out-of-town folks here a couple weeks ago opposed to this project. So let's not get into that." This made for an interesting contrast with Ms. Johnson's public debut on this issue, a Dec. 13, 2014, letter to the editor in *The Tribune* in which she opined that "We need to ask why special interests are trying to influence what happens in our county. They don't live here, we do.... This decision needs to be based on what is best for our county, not what outsiders think is best."

plan for the completion of the SLO greenbelt over the next twenty years. Rand, the powerhouse behind multiple bans on the sale of Styrofoam products in cities across the county, said that she's learned from the experience that "if you feel unhappy and powerless about an issue, you can be a change maker." Two years ago, with the Unitarian Green Team, she started walking into downtown SLO businesses and educating owners on the hazards of Styrofoam, meeting with City staff, eventually getting a ban agendized and passed by the city council in record time. She has built on that win in Pismo Beach, Arroyo Grande and Morro Bay. Christie gave an update of the Sierra Club's work on preventing Phillips 66 from hauling trainloads of tar sands crude oil into the county and recounted the history of the California Coastal Commission — which has played a significant role in assuring the sustainability of cities the length of the coast — and the nature of the pressures currently besetting the commission, which shortly thereafter resulted in the termination of the Commission's executive director (see "Let Me Tell You About My Week," "Don't Mourn, Organize," and "This Isn't Over," page 2).

That was then, this is now. Apparently, when the outsiders in question represent the oil industry rather than communities through which oil trains would pass, that special interest is really special — so special that we don't need to get into that.



Please disregard the previous statement Amber Johnson changes her mind.

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He's Katcho Kalhoun

Fans of the old *Saturday Night Live* character Tim Calhoun, the Write-In Party candidate perpetually awash in index cards ("I'm Tim Calhoun and I'm running for the President of America") got a blast from the past if they attended the 24th District Congressional debate at Cal Poly on the night of February 4. It was a debate in name only — candidates made formal statements and answered questions from the moderator — but for members of the audience, one sight that night was even rarer than actual debate: the eyes of Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian — which, unlike the eyes of every other candidate on the stage, were constantly cast downward so that Katcho could read aloud what had been written for him to say in response to each of the moderator's questions. Yikes. While the event wasn't exactly a presidential debate, it was part of an elec-



toral contest to decide the occupancy of a seat in the federal legislature, not class president at a junior high

school. He's Katcho Achadjian and he's running for the Congress of America.

Climate Protection Via Nuclear Power? Hardly

Antiquated beliefs about the electrical grid and a nuclear blockade of wind and solar won't end global warming

By Ned Ford, Energy Advisor, Sierra Club - Ned.Ford@fuse.net

Advocates for nuclear power will still be pushing arguments for it long after we have solved global warming.

The solution to global warming in the electric sector (which is the only part of the overall solution that nuclear might arguably contribute to) is a function of the rate of new efficiency plus the rate of new renewables.

Today we get a little over 1% of our annual new clean energy from utility efficiency programs.

The amount we get from renewables is highly variable. In 2012 we got about 1% from wind, the last year before the tax credit was stopped. We got about 0.15% from solar, if I'm not mistaken (the solar industry is highly erratic in reports of new installation).

In 2013 we got 0.12% new wind, and solar boomed to about 0.25%. In 2014 wind rose to about 0.4%, and solar also rose to about 0.4%.

According to recent reports, not yet confirmed, 2015 saw wind boom ahead to perhaps 0.6%. This is without the tax credit, so the restoration is expected to cause a huge increase this year, and the next three years as well.

Utility efficiency probably grew about 15% each year since 2014 but we don't have the data yet. And on top of utility pro-

grams, the Federal standards kicked in around 2015 with about a half percent per year of new clean energy.

Altogether, we see about 2.5% new clean energy per year — right now. This eliminates enough dirty energy, including compensation for new growth (population growth plus rebound from the recession) that it puts us on track to end coal by around 2040. That's what we are doing right now.

Merely increasing total clean energy by 1% per year brings the rate of clean energy down to the point where we can eliminate coal by 2030 and eliminate natural gas generation by 2040 — provided we have figured out how to manage the remaining load with energy storage and dispatchable renewables.

We can do a lot better than that, and we need to in order to compensate for inevitable delays in cutting carbon from petroleum and non-electric natural gas generation. Part of the solution for fast carbon reductions in the electric sector depends on a vision of an abundant electricity future that allows us to fuel some transportation and some space and water heating with clean renewable electricity. And part of the abundant electricity future vision depends on having enough clean energy to displace

retiring nuclear plants.

If we stick with the current rate of clean energy, we might see a justification for a couple of new nuclear plants. Those plants would be the most expensive central station generators ever built. The only nukes under construction right now are heavily subsidized and are actively experiencing out-of-control price escalation due to construction delays. A single plant in Georgia is getting a larger subsidy than the entire nation's wind industry did in 2012, and the subsidy is costing more per kWh of output from the plant than the entire wind subsidy.

More to the point, adding new nuclear power conflicts with adding new wind and solar. We are going to see a massive surge of renewable construction starting later this year. If the price of natural gas starts to rise, we will probably never see new natural gas generation built, and we will enter a period of time where renewables push natural gas out of the way. If the price of natural gas stays very low, it will slow the renewables boom, but probably not by much.

Nuclear plants must be operated 24 hours per day. Wind and solar cut into this. Natural gas generation can accommodate new wind and solar to maximize the economic benefits. Nuclear power cannot.

Efficiency is cheaper than

anything else, including sustained operation of fully amortized nuclear plants. Any new resource which is cheaper than the highest-cost existing resource pushes that resource out of the mix.

We need to end natural gas dependence if we want to solve global warming. Before we eliminate it though, we will be able to cross a boundary that exists only in the minds of utility planners: the point where either wind or solar resources in a given part of the grid exceed the daily variable amount of consumption, and start cutting into the constant load. This is usually termed "baseload" but that term is antiquated today, and if we are to succeed it will become more apparent to

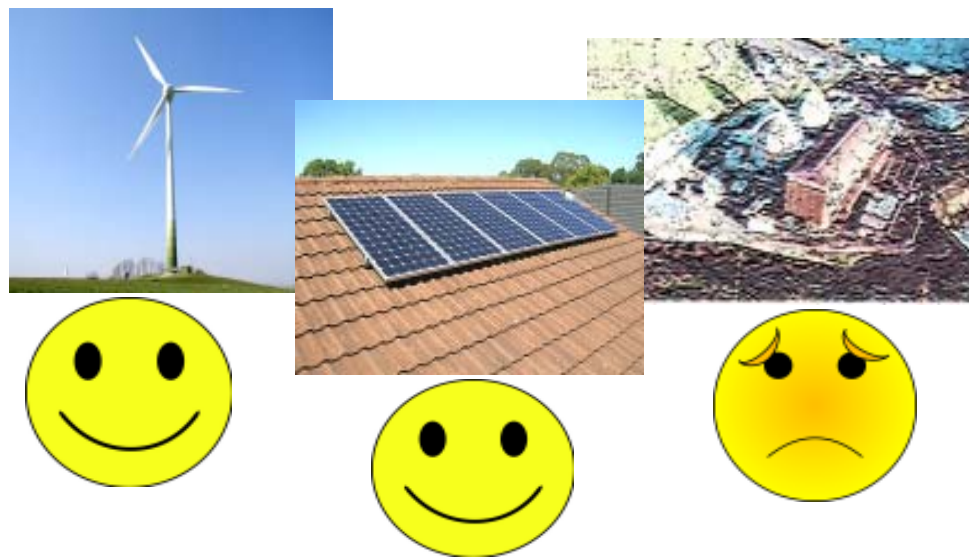
many more people that the future of electricity is not about addressing constant power need so much as it's about fitting together a larger set of variable resources in a way that works.

We still don't have a visible large energy storage technology. But we have most of the parts of one. I won't go into those parts here; I'm more interested in conveying the idea that the best way to develop those energy storage and management technologies is to move closer to them. Right now there are only two small parts of the nation (Iowa and parts of Texas) which arguably have these issues in real time. Iowa solves it by selling peak wind power to neighboring states. Wind and solar have different performance profiles, so in most

parts of the nation they are complementary and together reduce the need for fossil generation below the point where existing natural gas handles it all.

We don't need new natural gas. We are going to have a hard time eliminating natural gas use, but today's natural gas use is pretty close to the peak it will achieve. Of all the uses for natural gas — residential, commercial, industrial and electricity generation — only electricity generation has grown in the last decade. And it is presently at the point where new natural gas generation is required for further expansion. And new natural gas generation is not especially attractive, since there

NUKES continued on page 8



Hot Enough for Them?

Shell and ExxonMobil's history of climate change denial is coming back to bite them

By Andrew Christie, Chapter Director

In many parts of the world, the weather is unseasonably warm right now. But it's getting even hotter in the executive suites of some of the world's largest oil companies.

On November 4, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, after a year-long probe of ExxonMobil, issued a subpoena to the corporation seeking forty years of documents relating to its research on climate change, communications with its board of directors on the issue, and its decisions relating to the presentation of climate change in its marketing and advertising.

In January, the *L.A. Times* reported that California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris had opened an investigation to determine if ExxonMobil "repeatedly lied to the public and its shareholders about the risk to its business from climate change — and whether such actions could amount to securities fraud and violations of environmental laws."

On February 17, Congressmen Ted Lieu, Peter Welch and Matt Cartwright, members of the House Oversight Committee, sent a letter to U.S.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch expressing concern over evidence of "a conspiracy between Shell, Exxon Mobil and potentially other companies in the fossil fuel industry," asking that they be investigated "for intentionally hiding the truth about climate change and embarking on a massive campaign of denial and misinformation."

Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton have called on the Department of Justice to initiate an investigation.

All parties have noted the history of the oil companies funding think tanks and foundations dedicated to climate change denial, long after the companies knew, per their own scientists, that climate change was real and a serious threat.

ExxonMobil's defense on this score is intriguing. As reported by the *New York Times*:

Kenneth P. Cohen, vice president for public affairs at Exxon Mobil, said on Thursday that the company had made common cause with such groups largely because it agreed with them on a policy goal of keeping the United States out of a global climate treaty called the Kyoto Protocol.

"We stopped funding them in the middle part of the past decade because a handful of them were making the uncertainty of the science their focal point," Mr. Cohen said. "Frankly, we made the call that we needed to back away from supporting the groups that were undercutting the actual risk" of climate change.

Mr. Cohen's remarks are best examined in the light of a real-world example.

Let's take Exxon's support of the Heartland Institute. In

2014, the National Center for Science Education examined McGraw-Hill's proposed new 6th grade social studies textbooks for Texas public schools and found they equated "factually inaccurate arguments from the Heartland Institute, a group funded by Big Tobacco and polluters, with information from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)."

More than 50 scientific and educational societies signed a letter to the Texas State Board of Education stating that "climate change should not be undermined in textbooks, whether by minimizing, misrepresenting, or misleadingly singling [it] out as controversial or in need of greater scrutiny than other topics."

From 1998-2006, the Heartland Institute received \$676,500 from ExxonMobil. Walter F. Buchholtz, an ExxonMobil executive, served as Heartland's Government Relations Advisor, according to Heartland's 2005 IRS Form 990.

Then there's the matter of the corporation's actions long after "the middle part of the last decade" that public affairs v.p. Kenneth Cohen has picked as the dividing line to demonstrate that his employer is now on the side of the angels regarding climate change. ExxonMobil decided to make the (fake) "uncertainty of the science their focal point" when they regurgitated this climate change denial trope in their

HOT continued on page 8



There or getting there CA is heading for CCA.

All In
continued from page 1

energy. San Francisco just made a decisive move toward ending dependence on such disastrous fossil fuels. Now it's time to hire thousands of local union workers to build an infrastructure to deliver 50% of the City's electricity from clean local sources by 2025, and 100% by 2035."

Check it out at cleanelectricity.org -- or any of California's other existing CCA programs: mcccleanenergy.org, leanenergy.org, lancasterchoiceenergy.com, and sonomacleanpower.org.

Check the Coast At Tax Time

Protect California's coast and ocean with the check of a box on your tax form. Invest in our state's natural resources and beauty by donating to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund on the "Voluntary Contributions" section (last page of your California tax return).

Your contribution will be felt across California communities in the form of grants helping to clean up shorelines, restore habitats, and promote beach access. You'll also provide with the opportunity to experience the coast themselves -- many for the first time.





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A Bad Wind Is Blowing Across Our Public Lands

By Jim Hines, Conservation Chair, Los Padres Chapter

A wind is blowing across the land of red rock canyons, vast and beautiful gorges, the largest natural bridges on our planet and some of the most wild and pristine ecosystems, wild-life habitat and grand flowing rivers.

But this wind is not gentle; it is starting to rage, to engulf our grand wild places, leaving the land and waters wounded.

We are at a crossroads: Save our wild places or turn them over to the forces who seek their destruction?

Will the wolf howl again in the wild? Not if they are all killed. Will Canyonlands National Park still be the place for solitude and peace? Not if massive fracking operations on its western border are allowed. Will the Green River flow wild and free forever? Not if a massive dam is built along her journey. Will future generations enjoy and marvel at the beauty of Zion National Park? Not if cattle grazing and mineral extraction operations are allowed into her realm. Will we respect and protect the sacred places of our Native American brothers and sisters? Not if we allow Off-Highway Vehicle trails across native American sacred sites.

All of this is possible. How, you ask? As I write this, the Utah Congressional delegation (two U.S. Senators and four members of the House of Representatives) have introduced legislation (America's Public Lands Initiative) which

threatens the very existence of such beautiful and wild places like Zion, Bryce Canyon, Arches and Canyonlands National Parks as well as the world-renowned Red Rock Canyon areas of eastern Utah.

What makes matters even worse is the fact Utah congressman Ron Bishop is chair of the powerful House Committee on Natural Resources, the committee that oversees America's public lands.

But there are now two winds blowing across the state of Utah, the wind of evil destruction and the wind of public lands protection. If we as dedicated protectors of our ancient and beautiful lands do not rise up and heed the cries of the land and rivers, the howl of the wolf, the screech of the hawk and the calls of our ancient ancestors then Wild Utah will exist no more.

The Sierra Club and our partner organizations will take part in a show of support for Utah's wild places when some of us will travel to the scene of the crime, myself and other wilderness activists will be walking the halls of congress in Washington DC this month meeting with U.S. Senators and House members as well as staff of the House Committee on Natural Resources to try to stop the bad wind blowing across Utah's great wild places.

We are also encouraged by comments made to us by White House staff that President Obama will use

the powers granted to him by the Antiquities Act to create Bear's Ears National Monument, 200,000 acres of vast and beautiful wild areas in eastern and southern Utah this Spring.

We will face up to the challenge to stop this bad wind from blowing, for if this effort to remove national parks and other public lands -- lands which belong to all Americans -- succeeds then this bad wind will soon be blowing in other western states such as Wyoming, Montana, Alaska, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon and California. Several Republican candidates for the office of President of the United States have indicated their full support for these anti-public lands pieces of legislation. Things could get even worse in 2017.

So in the words of one of my environmental heroes, Utah native and renowned author of the American west, Terry Tempest Williams, "We hear our wild places calling out for help. Let us all heed her calls."

On behalf of the Sierra Club and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, we will move forward with a positive wind of our own to keep Utah's magnificent public lands protected for future generations to enjoy and marvel at, keep complete ecosystems intact and give wildlife the protections they deserve.



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Next issue deadline is **March 11**. To get a rate sheet or submit your ad and payment, contact: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 or sierraclub8@gmail.com

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All our hikes and activities are open to all Club members and the general public. Please bring drinking water to all outings and optionally a lunch. Sturdy footwear is recommended. All phone numbers listed are within area code 805 unless otherwise noted. Pets are generally not allowed. A parent or responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 18. If you have any suggestions for hikes or outdoor activities, questions about the Chapter's outing policies, or would like to be an outings leader, call Outings Chair Joe Morris, 549-0355. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.

Sat., Mar. 5th, 2016, 8:30 a.m. Avenales Ranch Exploration. Moderately strenuous, 9-mile, 1600 ft gain hike on uneven terrain. We will be crossing uneven fields, climbing hillsides then returning along Salinas River to cars. Lunch probably at American Canyon Campground. Bring lunch, water, sturdy shoes, and hiking poles if you like. Meet at the Pacific Beverage Company in Santa Margarita. Leader: Gary Felsman, 473-3694. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Thurs.-Sat., Mar. 10th-12th, Death Valley Wilderness Restoration. Restore wilderness values in this remote and beautiful desert park in a possibly great wildflower year. Project TBA, but may include working on the Cottonwood Canyon trail. Leader: Kate Allen, kj.allen96@gmail.com or 661-944-4056. CNRCC Desert Committee.

Sat., Mar. 19th, 8:30 a.m., American Canyon to Buckeye Camp Hike. Strenuous 12-mile hike, 1800 ft gain with poison oak on the trail in beautiful Garcia Wilderness. We will cross a shallow section of the Salinas River and do some minor creek crossings. You can go part way as this is an in-and-out trail. Bring lunch and water and expect to be out all day. Meet in Santa Margarita at the Pacific Beverage Company. Rain postpones to a future date. Leader: Carlos Diaz-Saavedra, 546-0317.

Sun., March 20th, 2:00 p.m., Historic Walk of Old Templeton. One of the prettiest and best preserved Old West towns, Templeton charms visitors with its century-old storefronts, former saloons, Victorian houses, and two churches built in the 1880s. Step into its past on an easy guided walk, learning the stories of its early pioneers. Duration

about 1 1/2 hrs. Directions: from Hwy 101 north, take Main Street exit, go 1 mile to corner of Main and First. Leader: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Fri.-Sun., Mar. 25th-27th, California Desert Wilderness Service. Annual desert wilderness service project with BLM staff, Needles office. Destination TBA, but Turtle Mountains or Dead Mountains are possible choices for restoration work and spring desert enjoyment. Central commissary. Contact Vicky Hoover, 415-977-5527 or vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org. CNRCC Wilderness Committee.

Sat., Mar. 26th, 8:30 a.m., Big Sur Coastal Hike. Moderately strenuous, 8-mile, 2400 ft gain hike along the Big Sur Coast with great views, starting near Ragged Point. Bring lunch, water, non-slip hiking shoes and dress for the


weather. Meet at the Washburn Day Use Area, San Simeon State Park on Hwy 1, 2 miles north of Cambria. Rain or threat of rain cancels. Leader: Gary Felsman, 473-3694.

Tues., Mar. 29th, 7 p.m., Bimonthly General Meeting: A Day with Thoreau at Walden Pond. Chapter outings chair Joe Morris has long been a fan of Henry David Thoreau, considered by many to be the inspiration for the environmental movement in America and a hero as well for John Muir. Tonight, based on Joe's trip to Concord and walk around Walden Pond, learn about Thoreau's intriguing life in the 1850s, see vintage and present-day slides of the area, and listen to his eloquent words on a simple life in harmony with nature. Environmental news begins the meeting. Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO. Info.: Joe Morris, 549-0355.

Wed., Mar. 30th, 10:00 a.m., Bloody Nose/North Dune Hike. Three-mile, 450 ft gain loop hike in Montana de Oro State Park. View eucalyptus and manzanita groves, canyons, dunes, and ocean views. Meet at Hazard Canyon Parking Area, 1.6 miles from park entrance. Leader: Vicki Marchenko, 528-5567 or vmarchenko57@gmail.com.



This is a partial listing of Outings offered by our chapter. Please check the web page www.santalucia.sierraclub.org for the most up-to-date listing of activities.




The Sierra Club Needs You!

Become an Outings Leader

- Lead hikes and camping trips
- Introduce others to nature
- Explore the outdoors
- Make new friends
- Protect the environment
- Get healthy exercise

For further information contact:
Joe Morris, Outings Chair
Sierra Club, Santa Lucia Chapter
(805) 779-1875
dji1942@earthlink.net



Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Apr. 3-5, May 8-10, Jun. 12-14, Jul. 17-19, Aug. 21-23, Sept. 25-27, Oct. 23-25. Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard cruise to the Channel Islands. Hike windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Snorkel in pristine waters teeming with colorful fish. Swim with frolicking seals and sea lions. Look for unusual sea and land birds. Watch for the endangered island fox. Or just relax at sea!

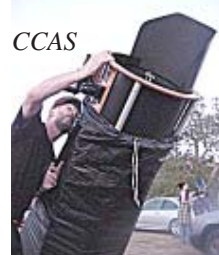


All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. \$650 cost includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks and beverages plus the services of a naturalist-docent assigned by the national park to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and give evening program. For more information, contact leader: Joan Jones Holtz; 626-443-0706; jholtzhl@aol.com.

To hold a reservation, mail a \$100 check to Sierra Club, and send to Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732.



Activities sponsored by other organizations



March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4, July 2, July 30, Aug 27, Oct 1, Oct 27: Star gazing with the Central Coast Astronomical Society. For north and south county star gazing locations, go to www.centralcoastastronomy.org/star-party/whats-a-star-party/



Sun., Mar. 11th, 7-9p.m. Remembrance of Fukushima. Words and pictures by Yoko Kubota and Reverend Sawada Gyosen, who is walking from Santa Barbara to the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.. Music by Dulcie Taylor. Dinner beforehand \$8-10; reservations must be received by Mar. 8. Send to evyjust@gmail.com. Steynberg Gallery, 1531 Monterey St., SLO.

SLO Botanical Garden



Sat., Mar. 12th, 1pm-2pm: Succulent Gardens of the Central Coast. Discover the secrets to having a beautiful, low-maintenance, and water-wise garden! Join us for a presentation by succulent expert Nick Wilkinson, owner of GROW Nursery and Left Field. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd. \$5 for Garden members / \$10 for public. Info at slobg.org/succulent. 805.541.1400 x 304.

CLOSE OUT!

2016 Sierra Club Calendar

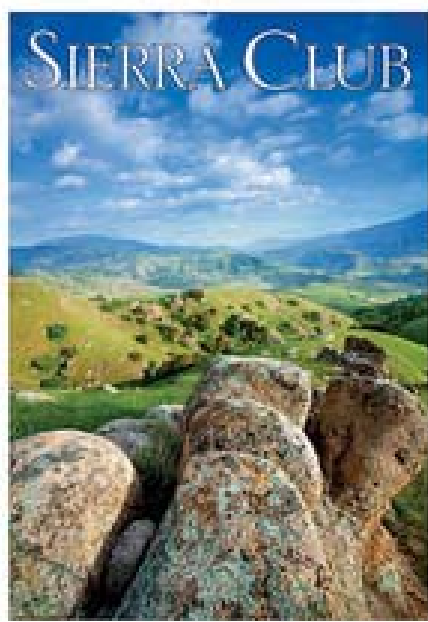
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Hot

continued from page 6

2009 Worldwide Contributions and Community Investments report:

"Far more substantial climate science emerges and is a game-changer for the reigning science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Observational evidence from NASA satellites indicates little to no heat-forcing effect from man-made CO₂.

This NASA data is empirical science, far superior to the uncertain IPCC computer models."

And Exxon went right on funding the likes of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, whose website warns against "global warming alarmism," hauls out the denialist chestnuts "that there is substantial disagreement about whether the warming since 1950 has been dominated by human causes, how much the planet will warm in the 21st century, whether warm-

ing is 'dangerous'..." and helpfully suggests "We don't need to supplant fossil fuels at this point in time."

Exxon's history of funding the TPPF and thereby helping to spread that word includes \$20,000 in corporate giving reported in 2009, and another \$20,000 in 2011.

Even if Exxon's vp for public affairs could make the case that Exxon should be shielded from prosecution because it stopped doing something "in the middle part of the past decade," the facts are clear: It didn't stop doing it.

Sierra Club + Sleater-Kinney = Record Year

Nukes

continued from page 6

is no assurance that the price of natural gas will stay as low as it is today.

The message I want to leave you with is that if we increase total clean energy by 1% per year — something which is all but guaranteed this year and next — the end of coal generation will happen so soon that it wouldn't be possible to build a single new nuclear plant before the need for that plant was eliminated.

We have the potential to double the current rate of new clean energy within a couple of years. Efficiency always saves a lot more money than is gener-

ally recognized — typical efficiency programs save more than six dollars for every dollar spent. Wind has been economically cheaper than fossil fuel generation in a third of the nation, and the restored tax credit has now made that true in two thirds of the nation. Solar is on a similar track, with higher costs, faster reductions, and a different economic target since it meets peak load and is therefore more valuable than wind.

If we double total clean energy, we end fossil fuel generation by 2030 and we have a serious chance at keeping global CO₂ under 450 ppm.

Nuclear power does nothing to help this.

The Sierra Club and rock band Sleater-Kinney have teamed up to celebrate the 2.4 million grassroots Sierra Club activists across the country who helped lead the environmental movement to a record 2015. Major victories included the defeat of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, the retirement of the 200th coal plant in the U.S., Shell's abandonment of Arctic Drilling, hundreds of thousands of acres protected as National Monuments, the finalization of the Clean Power Plan, and the international climate action agreement.

A new Sierra Club video set to Sleater-Kinney's "Surface Envy" commemorates these victories and the

activists who made them possible, setting the stage for a clean energy revolution in 2016 and beyond.

"We are pleased to have the opportunity to work with the Sierra Club," said Corin Tucker of Sleater-Kinney, "and have our music about change be matched by all of the positive work they do to protect the environment."

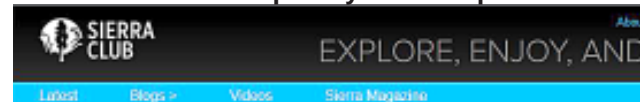
The video highlights the Sierra Club's various campaigns centered around our mission to "explore, enjoy and protect the planet."

"Our efforts would amount to nothing without the power of the people who fearlessly and relentlessly dedicate their time to building a broad, diverse

movement committed to fighting back against dirty, dangerous fossil fuels," said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune.

"These activists deserve a good soundtrack to celebrate our monumental victories. Thanks to Sleater-Kinney, they've got one."

Watch the video : <http://tinyurl.com/zp7cfd>



2015 Highlights: Join the Movement

