

SANTA LUCIAN



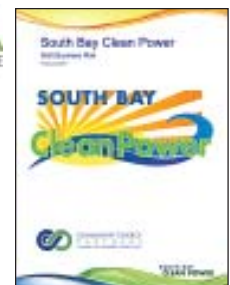
Santa Lucia Chapter

May/June 2019
Volume 56 No. 3

The official newsletter of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club ~ San Luis Obispo County, California

What the Community Choice Revolution Means to You

By Samuel Golding, President, Community Choice Partners, Inc.
Member, Sierra Club California Energy-Climate Committee



For Sierra Club members who want to fight against

climate change and for social justice, living in California right now affords you a singularly powerful and unique opportunity: informed engagement with your local Community Choice agency.

Over 170 municipalities have banded together to form these 15 new energy agencies, which are now selling competitively priced electricity to 4 million customers.

But Community Choice agencies aren't only opening up a more stable form of retail electric competition; they are fundamentally re-balancing the scales in terms of long-term planning authorities, institutional capacity and operational expertise that

comprise California's energy sector. And they're doing so in a uniquely democratic, inclusive and transparent fashion that is increasingly technically sophisticated — by operationalizing the innovations from more competitive markets — and that is uniquely able to leverage municipal authorities and relationships across both local communities and regional planning bodies.

The results have been groundbreaking. These agencies are building more

than 2,000 megawatts of renewable energy and storage and just submitted California's first application to develop offshore wind. They are collaborating with each other and local and regional agencies, legislators, utilities, labor, developers and manufacturers to remove barriers to rooftop solar installations, electric vehicles, and other "grid edge" innovations.

One agency negotiated the siting of a new electric bus factory, creating local jobs and the nation's first all-



electric bus fleet. Others are building renewable micro-grids for critical facilities and business parks, and partnering with utilities to replace natural gas power stations with distributed energy resources.

They've begun creating comprehensive "Decarbonization Roadmaps" and are working together at scale to deploy a shared technology platform for Smart Meter data analytics, contract for services and new renewables, draft "reach codes" above the state's building efficiency requirements, and have formed a trade association to reform the laws and regulations blocking progress. Most of this has occurred since 2016.

Got the Future If Your City Wants It

Community Choice Energy has long been the future of energy generation in California. Now the future is here.

Last December, the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay joined Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP), serving Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties, and will start serving residents on January 1, 2020.

CCE programs are a giant step toward achieving carbon reductions, creating local jobs, and reaching climate action plan goals. There are twenty CCE programs in California, supplying more than half the energy in the state. Should you happen to live in a county where, say, California's last nuclear power plant is preparing to close, Community Choice is a pretty obvious choice.

Last year, MBCP provided its members, local residents and businesses a rebate of 3% based on PG&E energy

Inside	
Affordable housing: How to	2
Green New Deal rising	3
Funding sanctuary	6
Classifieds	10
Outings	12

FUTURE continued on page 7

REVOLUTION continued on page 7

Sierra Club General Meeting

Wed., May 15
Copeland Pavilion, 3rd Floor
French Medical Center
1823 Johnson Ave., SLO
Doors open: 6:30 p.m.
Program: 7-9 p.m.

How To Make Affordable Housing

Hear from environmental attorney Babak Naficy and affordable housing experts what our local elected officials could do to solve our seemingly insoluble affordable housing crisis. Then let your elected officials know.



In Search of Affordability

By Babak Naficy

Recently approved residential and mixed commercial/residential projects in the City of SLO, like the Righetti and San Luis Ranch projects, are typical single-family suburban sprawl on the city's edge, while others consist of tall, dense apartment structures in the urban core.

The single-family projects do not attempt to create true neighborhoods with a sense of place and adequate amenities such as grocery stores, cafes and skate parks that might convince the neighbors to get out of their cars. The tall, dense, ugly apartments are advertised as housing for the people but in reality are external dormitories specifically designed to take advantage of college students temporarily flush with cash from family credit cards or Pell Grants.

The State's affordable housing laws are designed to encourage development of affordable housing by providing incentives to any project that incorporates a percentage of affordable units. Clever developers have learned to game the system by offering minimal affordable housing to take advantage of these incentives, such as height and density waivers. The 790 Foothill Project is a

Santa Lucian

Andrew Christie
EDITOR

Lindi Doud
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Denny Mynatt
PRINT MEDIA COORDINATOR

The Santa Lucian is published six times a year. Articles, environmental information and letters to the editor are welcome. The deadline for each issue is the 13th of the prior month.

send to: **Editor, Santa Lucian**, Sierra Club, P.O. Box 15755, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. sierraclub8@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

2019 Executive Committee

Sue Harvey (12/19) CHAIR
Carmen Bouquin (12/21) MEMBER
Chuck Tribbey (12/19) MEMBER
Heather Howell (12/20) MEMBER
Violet Sage Walker (12/20) MEMBER
Nancy Cole (12/20) MEMBER
Jennifer Bauer (12/21) VICE-CHAIR

Kevin O'Gorman TREASURER

Committees

Political
Violet Sage Walker
Jennifer Bauer

Membership/Development
Heather Howell, Dani Nicholson

Conservation
Sue Harvey

Nuclear Power Task Force
Rochelle Becker
Linda Seeley

CA Conservation Committee delegates

Jennifer Bauer, Violet Walker

Council of Club Leaders delegates

Jennifer Bauer, Chuck Tribbey

Facebook Administrator
Kim Ramos

Bookkeeper
Sandra Cirilo

Outings

Bill Waycott

Webmaster

Monica Tarzier

Trail Guide

Gary Felsman

Chapter Director

Andrew Christie sierraclub8@gmail.com

Santa Lucia Chapter

P.O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406
805-543-8717

**Office hours Monday-Friday,
1:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

**974 Santa Rosa Street
San Luis Obispo**



Printed by University Graphic Systems Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
Mailing preparation services courtesy of the Silver Streaks



Join Sierra Club’s Green New Deal Volunteer Corps!

To make it a reality, the Green New Deal needs tens of thousands of volunteers like you pushing in the same direction. Together, we can transform our economy and respond to the climate crisis with the scale and urgency that the science demands.

From local efforts to national mobilizations, we need people of all backgrounds and with varied skill sets to be advocates for the Green New Deal

Once you sign up, we’ll make sure to keep you informed about the latest efforts to secure a Green New Deal and the many opportunities for you to make a difference in your community.

Sign up now to join Sierra Club’s Green New Deal Volunteer Corps and help us make history!

[tinyurl/greennewdealcorps](https://tinyurl.com/greennewdealcorps)



Here’s the deal On March 20, the Santa Lucia Chapter hosted “What Do We Want in a Green New Deal?” at the Copeland Pavilion in SLO, featuring a panel discussion with representatives from Carbon Free SLO, Indivisible, NAACP, Climate Reality, Sunrise Movement and the SLO Youth Climate Coalition. Attendees packed the auditorium and voted for their favorite potential Green New Deal policies with green dots affixed to easel tablets around the room. The results will be reported to Rep. Salud Carbajal at a Paso Robles town hall on May 6.

A California Deal

TAKE ACTION

States are already moving to implement the Green New Deal in their legislatures -- and, of course, California is leading the charge. Three bills in the current legislative session are particularly worthy of support:

AB 1276 (Bonta) Green New Deal. This bill would significantly increase renewable energy production, invest in building decarbonization, reduce carbon emissions and promote the green job economy within 10 years.

AB 966 (Bonta) Reducing Emissions in Cement Plants. California’s eight cement factories are the largest consumers of coal and petroleum coke in the state. This bill would require cement plants to reduce their carbon emissions in a transparent way by preparing a facility-specific Environmental Product Declaration.

SB 1 (Atkins) California Environmental, Public Health and Workers Defense Act of 2019. The bill would defend California’s standards that protect our natural resources and public health from the Trump administration’s reckless attempts to repeal or undermine environmental regulations.

Call your representatives in Sacramento **by May 17** and tell them you want them to vote YES on AB 966, AB 1276, and SB 1.

Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham:
(916) 319-2035

Senator Bill Monning:
(916) 651-4017

In Memoriam

Thanks to Anne G. Tiber for her generous donation to the Chapter in memory of Norman Tiber.

Coastal Commission Passes Landmark Environmental Justice Policy

By ActCoastal.org

The Coastal Commission's March hearing took place at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles from March 6 through March 8.

The Friday meeting began with an impactful presentation by Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson, a Historian and Heritage Conservation Consultant, entitled "Making Visible Stories of African Americans and the California Dreams" She spoke of the

history of violence, exclusion and oppression that African Americans faced in visiting the beach in California.

This presentation segued into the adoption of the Coastal Commission's new Environmental Justice Policy which provides the vision for incorporating environmental justice policy into the Commission's permitting and planning decisions.

In 2016, the Assembly amended the Coastal Act to

give the Commission authority to specifically consider environmental justice when making permit decisions. Per the staff report, "The policy is intended to provide an analytical tool for the Commission to assess the potential disproportionate impacts of new development and coastal permitting decisions on traditionally marginalized communities, including historically disenfranchised communities of color."

The policy was developed with input from communities and organizations across the state and supported by a vast array of Environmental Justice organizations and Coastal Commissioners, including the Commission's environmental justice representative, Effie Turnbull Sanders.

Dr. Jefferson's presentation, the staff presentation and public comments are posted on ActCoastal's YouTube page.

COASTAL COMMISSION HEARING - April 10, 2019

Nick Alter's public comments on behalf of the Oceano Beach Community Association

Good morning Madam Chair and Commissioners. I am here to offer comments on the Public Works Plan proposed by State Parks for the Oceano Dunes SVRA.

As proposed, the Public Works Plan would nullify vitally important conditions of CDP 4-82-300 relating to vehicular access to the Dunes. In so doing, the plan would conflict with the Coastal Act, our county's local coastal plans, and the Commission's EJ policy. It would also obstruct Oceano's prospects for community development.

As a community services district, Oceano has no community development staff of its own. Absent needed support from County Planning, area residents have taken matters into their own hands to improve living conditions and revitalize their town. Hence, the formation of the Community Association a little over a year ago and its ensuing work on a community plan aimed at restoring Oceano to Oceanans, whose beachfront has been largely taken from them.

Oceano residents are struggling to establish a semblance of livability, job creation and prosperity in their town. As a disadvantaged community, Oceano was designated an Opportunity Zone last April, giving Oceanans hope of attracting private capital for a comprehensive redevelopment initiative. Such an initiative would address key issues relating to land use, sea level rise and social justice, all of which come to the fore in the proposed Public Works Plan.

If the EJ policy is truly meant to help marginalized communities, then Oceano should be the Commission's poster child for such a policy.

For the past 35 years, most have been looking at Oceano through an OHV lens, seemingly blind to the devastating effect OHV activity has had on the natural environment, and how such activity has been reducing Oceano's resiliency in the face of sea level rise.

The current SVRA model that allows for ATVs and hundred-thousand-dollar RVs to traverse a two to three mile stretch of beach to the Dunes renders this stretch of beach good for little else but a sand highway.

The Commission is now obligated by its own policy to see through an EJ lens and to act accordingly. **Specifically, I ask the Commission to hold and not skirt the annual permit review scheduled for 2019.** I also ask that this matter be turned over to Lisa Haage and her staff for an enforcement action.

If it is "time to take off the gloves," then let it be for environmental and social justice in this underserved community!

Thank you,

Nick Alter
Community Planning Advisor



For example Oceano continues to await environmental justice and the return of its beach.

Dear Acting Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, California BLM Acting State Director Joe Stout, and President Trump:

As environmental, public health and community groups with hundreds of thousands of members in California, we call on you to continue the moratorium on leasing California's federal public lands to oil companies that has been in effect for over five years. We are alarmed that under your watch, the Bureau of Land Management is proposing to open more than a million acres of public land and mineral estate in California to oil and gas drilling and hydraulic fracturing (fracking).

New drilling and fracking pose unacceptable risks to our health and safety. The Bureau of Land Management estimates that up to 90 percent of new wells on federal lands are fracked. A 2015 report from the California Council on Science and Technology concluded that fracking in California happens at unusually shallow depths, dangerously close to underground

FRACKING continued on page 10

Housing

continued from page 2

clear example of this kind of chicanery.

The City has made it clear that it will approve any project that includes affordable housing. The idea seems to be that more housing will eventually lower the cost of living. Current empirical evidence does not support this theory.

The City Council has painted its critics with the brush of NIMBYism. While some of the City’s critics want slower growth, many simply want the City to do a better job of promoting affordable housing and good planning. Approving projects that have been in the pipeline for a decade or more does not count as proactive advocacy for affordable housing.

Here are a few things the City could do:

- 🏠 Engage developers



Well put. The *Tribune's* recent reporting and editorial commentary summed up the problem.

early in the process to demand significantly more affordable housing. The 790 Foothill project is a case in point. This project includes 48 unaffordable units, the vast majority of which are two-bedroom units. It also includes 12 affordable studios under 400 square feet. While it is true that, like all forms of affordable housing, studios are needed too, it is difficult to raise a child in a studio. There is no evidence I have seen that the City ever tried to negotiate with this developer to squeeze more affordable housing out of this

monstrosity. The project appears substantially unchanged since it was proposed. The City has not been able to explain why the project would not have been financially feasible without the incentives.

- 🏠 Adopt rules requiring affordable units in a new development to be of a similar size and quality as the market rate units. This has been done in other communities, apparently with great success.

- 🏠 Obey the law. State law forces local agencies to grant

a density bonus for qualifying projects, and other incentives, concessions, waivers or reductions of development standards if requested by the applicant. But the law also requires local agencies to adopt regulations implementing these requirements, which are supposed to include procedures, timelines, and lists of documents and information to be provided in order for the application to be deemed complete. SLO City Code used to include such a regulation, but it was rescinded in 2016. Adopting rigorous regulation defining clear procedures and requirements will bring much needed transparency to the administrative review process. As a bonus, it would bring the City into compliance with State law.

- 🏠 Systematically incentivize the development of affordable housing by pre-planning an entire district, thereby removing planning and administrative hurdles to the development of affordable housing.

One such tool is SB 540, which authorizes cities and counties to establish one or more “Workforce Housing Opportunity Zone(s)” by preparing a specific plan that must include the location of 100 to 1,500 housing units at specified minimum densities. The specific plan must also include specific design review criteria and multiple public hearing requirements during the plan adoption process.

Some housing projects will not require additional CEQA review and must be approved within 60 days after the

How Do We Meet Our Housing Needs and Protect the Environment?

from Sierra Club California Housing Policy

The housing crisis is one of the most important challenges facing California today. The dramatic loss of state funding for affordable housing, the high cost of land, and zoning that restricts residential density are just a few of the factors that have exacerbated the problem. As job growth continues to exceed housing growth, workers must live farther from work, resulting in unreasonable commute distances.

The state has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. To do so, Californians must drive less and walk, bike, and use mass transit much more frequently than they do now.

Sierra Club California, the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club’s 13 local chapters in California, recommends several proposals that can help make affordable housing easier to build. They include:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reform the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process by transforming it into a planning program.* 2. Mandate that cities that fall behind in their RHNA goals must rezone lands around transit stations. 3. Re-establish a more narrowly defined redevelopment-like program that focuses on creating affordable housing. 4. Allow affordable housing bonds to be passed by the voters by a simple majority. 5. Support the repeal of the Hawkins-Costa Act to | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> return to cities and counties the option of enacting rent eviction controls and rent stabilization measures. 6. Mandate that local agencies reduce building and development fees for qualifying affordable housing projects. 7. Develop incentive programs that encourage local agencies to adopt inclusionary housing ordinances that require housing projects to include affordable units. 8. Plug the SB 375 loophole by requiring a direct link (and a finding of consistency) between the new smart growth | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> principles of adopted Sustainable Community Strategy Plans and the local General Plans that guide all local growth decisions. 9. Identify ways to help ensure local planning departments are adequately staffed and trained to implement measures that can accelerate housing production. <p>*The preparation of housing growth projections by the Department of Finance must be transferred to a more credible planning-oriented state agency, i.e. the Natural Resources Agency. The entire RHNA process should be part of a comprehensive plan.</p> |
|--|--|---|



Bill Waycott Honored for Conservation Efforts

Bill Waycott was presented with the Conservationist of the Year Award from the Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District (RCD) for making outstanding conservation related improvements to agricultural crops through plant breeding. The presentation took place Tuesday, March 12, at the Board of Supervisors' chambers. The Supervisors also awarded Bill with a Certificate of Recognition.

After serving in the American Peace Corps, Bill studied plant breeding with the goal of improving the available food supply. He has worked



All rise Bill and Diana Waycott accept a Certificate of Recognition from the County Supervisors.

on several species of crops to introduce natural disease resistance, enhanced human nutrition, improved water-use efficiency, and suitability for mechanical harvest. Bill has worked on the Plant Genome

Project for the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and more recently, introduced over 30 varieties of vegetables used by farmers throughout California.

"I have known and worked with Bill for many years," said

RCD President Neil Havlik. "After years as an expert seed geneticist, Bill and his wife Diana started their own business growing plants for seed production and biological pest controls in a facility in Nipomo which they built themselves."

Bill also works on native plant issues as president of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society, organizes and leads hikes as chair of the outings program for the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter, and does volunteer trail work at the Pismo Preserve, Irish Hills, and the Dana Adobe.

CHOW Time

Support the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary campaign!



Capitol Hill Ocean Week is the nation's premier ocean policy conference.

CHOW 2019 is taking place June 4-6 at the Reagan Center and International Trade Center in Washington, DC, hosted by the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, offering a unique opportunity to learn from and interact with marine conservation and policy leaders from around the world.

It also presents a unique opportunity for advocates for the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, who will be attending the conference to build support for the Sanctuary.

This is a key initiative at a critical juncture in the Sanctuary campaign. The Northern Chumash Tribal Council is working to raise funds for airfare and accommodations in DC for volunteer advocates, which will cost approximately \$6,000. Their fundraising goal of \$9,000 would include the trip to CHOW and a trip to Sacramento later this summer to build support with state agencies and legislators.

Any amount you can contribute to this effort will be greatly appreciated. Success in these outreach efforts in our national and state capitols will likely make the difference in whether we are able to secure the benefits of a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary for California's Central Coast.

Donations for the Sanctuary Trip can be made by check, credit card, or PayPal. **Donations are tax deductible.** You will receive a letter acknowledging your donation for your records. Go to <https://chumashsanctuary.com/donations>, or send a check to Northern Chumash Tribal Council, P.O. Box 6533, Los Osos, CA 93412.

We Moved

On May 1, the Sierra Club's Santa Lucia Chapter office relocated to larger quarters.

We've left 974 Santa Rosa Street in SLO and are now settling in about six blocks east at 1411 Marsh Street.



Housing

continued from page 5

application is complete, including projects that comply with the specific plan; include a prescribed amount of very low-, low-, moderate-, and medium-income housing units; and would be constructed using prevailing wage rules.

The agency can apply to the Department of Housing and Community Development for a grant, a no-interest loan, or both to support development of the specific plan and accompanying Environ-

mental impact Report within a Workforce Housing Opportunity Zone.

By identifying promising locations and proactively developing a specific plan/EIR for workforce housing, the City can take the initiative to actively promote the creation of affordable housing for working families without leaving the decision-making and the initiative to out-of-town developers whose only motive is profit.



Revolution

continued from page 1

This is what rapid, multi-sectoral decarbonization looks like. It requires much more than passing policies or adopting local ordinances. The goal is to reconfigure electrical grids and deploy distributed and renewable generation to eliminate fossil fuels entirely — across electricity, transportation, industry, buildings, etc. — while optimizing production and usage patterns and maximizing efficiencies. That complex process will vary by regional economy and city.

Creating the necessary changes and new relationships requires municipal planning authorities and expert staff, a deep understanding of the community, and coordinating local stakeholders and regional agencies in a collaborative fashion.

The problem has always been that what I just described is the opposite of what the energy industry was designed to do. It requires more locally-informed, nimble and competent governance than the utility industry can practically achieve as currently constituted. State regulatory commissions across the country were designed a century ago to move slowly and have consistently mismanaged technological progress, rate reform, distributed energy integration and the evolution of utility business models.

California is no exception. The California Public Utilities Commission is both understaffed and politicized, exhibiting the same behavior that created the Energy Crisis of 2000-01, and cannot competently manage the current industry, let alone guide us safely into the future.

Energy infrastructure and information technology are outdated. Access to critical data is restricted. Markets are flawed. Strategic planning and rule-making have become choreographed exercises in

“missing the forest for the trees.” And a century of this has cemented a complex mess of decision-making processes designed by experts playing the inside game to prevent holistic and rapid progress. That institutional inertia is what maintains the intellectual inertia that defines “business as usual” — it’s an industry of systems-thinkers forced to operate in silos, held apart by institutional turf wars of a bygone age.

The transformative potential is there, but we have to change the rules first — by reforming governance. Our top priority should be to reassert meaningful democratic control over our energy future through local, informed and direct participation in these complex issues of extreme consequence.

Institutional change requires new people, knowledge transfer, and legitimacy. Achieving this across the state requires the progressive political forces of community organizing and local democracy combined with the clarity of new, unbiased technical expertise. That’s what is actually required to identify and tear down the systemic barriers that have long prevented us from rapidly achieving multi-sectoral deep decarbonization.

That’s what Community Choice was designed to achieve: the fusion of new technical expertise and

accountable political authority necessary to accelerate long-overdue, structural change within California’s energy sector. Individual agencies are still evolving at various rates, and some do have problems to face up to, but best practices are spreading rapidly. At the end of the day, the phrase “democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time” springs to mind.

I think this is the most powerful -- yet largely unknown and unreported -- aspect of Community Choice in California: there are 200+ new government employees who are actually running competitive power agencies on a day-to-day basis, with an array of increasingly innovative service companies helping out. This is transferring unbiased technical knowledge to the agencies’ Boards of local elected officials and Community Committees, thereby truly democratizing decision-making.

The point here is that Community Choice agencies have government oversight responsibilities and also deeply understand the “front lines” of this business — which is the level required to even understand the problems in need of solutions.

That is completely new, unique and powerful dynamic in terms of governmental expertise and institutional

capacity in California. By empowering communities and educating local governments, and carrying out these functions under a democratic governance structure, Community Choice agencies are consequently diminishing the statutory and de facto autonomy of the utilities and the California Public Utilities Commission, our state regulator with a questionable track record in exercising oversight over those monopolies.

Few remember that this was the Legislature’s far-sighted intent when it passed Community Choice in 2002 because those institutions had just drained \$45 billion from our economy during the Energy Crisis. After 17 years of grassroots campaigns, the balance of power is finally shifting in a profound way, right now. And with over 170 local governments on the Boards and Committees of Community Choice agencies, meeting regularly to discuss energy issues, I would wager this will lead to more informed policy-making at the Legislature going forward.

The transformative purpose of Community Choice is both its greatest strength and weakness, because it is causing a political backlash from the “old guard.” That’s reached a boiling point: 2019 is the make or break moment and there is literally limitless, impactful work to be done by Sierra Club members.

Get involved with your local Community Choice agency by attending public meetings and asking how you can make a difference. Build the political coalitions necessary to launch Community Choice agencies in new municipalities. Fight back against the media disinformation and political threats at the Legislature and California Public Utilities Commission. (See “When CPUC Attacks,” page 10.) Be vigilant and spread the word about what’s really at stake.

As Ben Franklin famously quipped, “It’s a republic, if you can keep it.”

Future

continued from page 1

costs. In total, more than \$4.4 million went back into local economies.

In April, an MBCP representative came to SLO County to present the opportunity to join the regional Community Choice Energy program. The city councils for Paso Robles, Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Pismo Beach heard presentations. Draft ordinances are in the works, and will be heard at city councils throughout May and June. Show up at your council and show your support!

Go to carbonfreeslo.org and sign up for the mailing list to make sure you get the word when your city council is about to vote on its Community Choice ordinance.

TAKE ACTION

March 24, 2019

Letter from Sacramento

Assemblymember Rudy Salas, Jr., represents a hardscrabble district within the rural heart of the San Joaquin Valley.



Assembly District 32 is a little bit Kern County and a lot Kings County. It's dominated by agriculture and oil. About 30 percent of its nearly half-million residents live below the poverty line. The median income for an AD 32 household is only 60% of the state median household income.

And its air pollution is bad.

The district sits at the southern end of an air basin that contains two major truck routes (I-5 and Highway 99), more than a million dairy cows, and oil and gas rigs galore. The emissions from these sources alone are literally breathtaking, making this air basin one of the two most polluted in the country.

Despite this sad pollution picture, Salas, a Democrat who beat a Republican for a seat in 2012, has avoided voting for bills that would irritate the industries contributing pollution to his district.

It's easy to understand why: Big oil and big ag are always willing to target a legislator from the San Joaquin Valley who aggressively represents the interests of breathers. Salas likely couldn't retain his seat if he always voted the way, say, Sierra Club California wanted him to vote on bills that would protect his constituents from air pollution.

That's why we've never been surprised by his scores on our annual legislative report card. His average score over the six years he's been in office is about 47 percent. That's somewhere around an F-minus. His highest score was in 2015, when he received 67 percent and his lowest was during his first year, 2013, when he received a 22 percent. Last year, 2018, was his second worst year, with a score of 36 percent.

During those years, among the bills Salas has voted against or walked away from are bills that would have reduced climate pollution, tightened restrictions on oil drilling, cut oil and gas pollution, and ensured more environmental justice representation on the air pollution control district board in Los Angeles. These were all bills the oil industry opposed, too.

This voting record is one reason we were a bit surprised recently when Salas expressed his passion for cleaning up the air pollution in AD 32.

That expression came during his testimony at the Joint Legislative Audit Committee that he chairs, when he was pressing his colleagues on the committee to vote for an audit of the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and its transportation and climate pollution control programs.

Now audits are good and valuable things generally. They're inconvenient, but sometimes inconvenience is needed to make sure all things are in good order.

But in this case, Salas' audit request seemed ill-timed and unnecessary.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has been under

scrutiny by the so-called Moderate Caucus of the legislature for at least the last 15 years, and particularly since the board began implementing Assembly Bill 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. CARB has been responding by carefully reporting on nearly every action it takes. Its website is a trove of data and reports. (In case any of the curious Mod Caucus members are reading this, that website address is <http://www.arb.ca.gov>.)

The audit request came at a time when the air board has been fighting the Trump Administration's efforts to roll back California's ability to control pollution from automobiles.

If one had an orientation toward conspiracy theories—and I want to make it clear here that I do not tend to lean toward conspiracy theories—one might think the notion of auditing the air board was generated by automakers or the oil and gas industry to disrupt CARB's ability to concentrate on fighting Trump and advancing zero-emission vehicles.

The audit request was there on the table when Assemblymember Salas testified that he was motivated by his passion to cut air pollution in his district. Very delicately, the co-chair of the Committee — and less delicately, a couple of other senators on the committee — persuaded Salas that the \$447,000 that the state auditor would charge for the audit could be avoided if the assemblymember supplied CARB's executive director with some questions that the board could respond to directly.

As it happened, Salas had handy, at that very moment at that hearing, a list of 25 questions he wanted answered—far more than the handful he had included in the audit request. And then, a day or two later, Salas sent a letter to CARB with an expanded list of 29 questions to which he wants answers.

In the meantime, while CARB staff comb their data and reports for the answers Salas is seeking, the assemblymember has introduced a bill that appears to be designed to undercut CARB's efforts to transition the truck fleet to zero-polluting engines and away from dependence on oil and gas.

We sincerely appreciate any legislator who is interested in cutting pollution. Salas, by the way, is an active member of the Moderate Caucus, so we especially appreciate his apparently newfound passion for cutting pollution.

After the audit hearing, I reached out to Assemblymember Salas' office to meet with him directly to better understand his concerns and how we can work together to get at the awful pollution in his district.

So far, he hasn't been available to meet.

Sincerely,

Director, Sierra Club California

Sierra Club California is the state legislative and advocacy arm of the Sierra Club's 13 chapters in California. You may send a donation by check to Sierra Club California, 909 12th Street, Suite 202, Sacramento, CA 95814.

The Wrong End of the Telescope

Exxon and Plains Pipeline have to jump into a time machine to try to make their projects pass muster



On March 12, the Morro Bay City Council joined the cities of San Luis Obispo and Goleta in variously expressing opposition to allowing Plains Pipeline, a convicted felon, to rebuild its oil pipeline through our county, and/or Exxon's plan to send 70 oil tanker trucks a day from Santa Barbara through SLO County in the meantime.

At the meeting, the Sierra Club thanked the Council for its resolution and expressed the hope that "In furtherance of those goals, the City will soon adopt policies of divestment from fossil fuel companies and investment in industries that are helping to avert catastrophic climate change."

Perhaps the most striking aspect of both projects -- and the biggest giveaway that Exxon and Plains Pipeline know that project approval on the basis of an accurate environmental review is going to be a problem for them -- is the attempt to assert that the impacts of the project should not be evaluated relative to the current reality on the ground, aka the environmental baseline. Instead, the companies want to assess what the impacts of these proposed projects would have been four years ago, i.e. when the offshore oil platforms that used the original Plains All American Pipeline were still pumping, before that pipeline shut down after rupturing and spilling thousands of gallons of oil onto Refugio State Beach and down the coast all the way to Ventura and points south.

The Sierra Club, Environmental Defense Center, and Center for Biological Diversity have sharply challenged this plan in the proposed scope of the pipeline's environmental review, noting that the description of the project's environmental baseline must insure that the public has "an understanding of the significant effects of the proposed project and its alternatives," per the California Environmental Quality Act. The baseline should not be selected by the applicant to make a project's environmental impacts appear to be less than what they would be.

In other words, going back in time to assert that a level of environmental impact that hasn't existed for four years is the baseline against which you will measure the impacts of your proposed project is transparent -- and not in the good way.

Scope this out Plains Pipeline and Santa Barbara County planners got an earful at the Feb. 28 "scoping meeting" for the proposed pipeline project at the South County Regional Center in Arroyo Grande.

Carbajal Moves to Protect Public Lands

On April 6, Congressman Salud Carbajal -- accompanied by local hikers and representatives from the Sierra Club, Central Coast Wild Heritage Coalition, Los Padres ForestWatch, CalWild, The Wilderness Society, Keep Sespe Wild, Condor Trail Association and Vets Voice Foundation -- led a community hike on the Fremont Ridge Trail in Los Padres National Forest and announced the introduction of the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act, legislation to expand wilderness protections on the Central Coast.

The Act would designate nearly 250,000 acres of public land in the Los Padres National Forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument as wilderness, the highest form of protection the government can give to public land. The legislation also establishes a 400-mile long Condor National Recreation trail, stretching from Los Angeles to Monterey County.

"With this Administration taking action to open up public lands and national monuments on the Central Coast to oil and gas drilling, it is more important than ever that we act to permanently protect our open spaces that provide invaluable local watersheds and recreational outdoor activities," said Carbajal.



Dockwalkers Wanted

Become a Dockwalker Partner and help keep California's Waterways Clean. Dockwalkers help raise awareness about boating practices related to oil, fuel, sewage, trash, and marine debris through the distribution of boater kits and free Dockwalker trainings. Go to dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=29199.



Andy Bowden

Fracking

continued from page 4

drinking water supplies, with unusually high concentrations of toxic chemicals that are harmful to human health and the environment.

Moreover, new drilling and fracking would do even further damage to air quality in Central California, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley. The San Joaquin Valley is home to one of the most polluted air basins in the United States, failing to meet federal pollution standards for both particulate matter and ozone. These pollutants, which are also emitted by oil and gas drilling and fracking operations, stunt children's lung development, contribute to the formation of chronic lung and heart diseases, trigger asthma and heart attacks, and are correlated with premature death. New drilling in the region would threaten the health of low-income communities and communities of color already harmed daily by toxic air pollution.

Like a household budget, the planet has a fossil fuel budget, and it has been overspent. There is enough oil, gas, and coal in already open, producing fields globally to take us far beyond the Paris climate targets. It defies reason for the federal government to continue auctioning off publicly owned lands and fossil fuels for development. Now more than ever, we must keep fossil fuels in the ground.


Allowing fracking and dangerous drilling would also put the state's most iconic landscapes at risk. It threatens not only lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, but risks polluting the air and water in eleven distinct national parks, monuments, forests, and recreation areas, including Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks, portions of the Pacific Crest Trail, Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, as well as numerous state and local parks, open space, and schools.

Safeguarding California's diverse ecosystems, preserving cultural and heritage landscapes through the process of cultural preservation, and ensuring the continued health of natural cultural resources are essential to the preservation and continuity of the lifeways of California Native Nations and indigenous traditional ecological knowledge.

In the name of our health, wildlife and climate, we demand that you reverse your plans to sell off California's beautiful and precious public lands to the oil and gas industry. Do not open the Bureau of Land Management Bakersfield Planning Area for fossil fuel leasing.

Sincerely,

Clare Lakewood, Senior Attorney, Center for Biological Diversity
Kevin Hamilton, CEO, Central California Asthma Collaborative
Nayamin Martinez, Director, Central Cal. Environmental Justice Network
Genevieve Gale, Executive Director, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
Connie Young, Group Leader, Citizens' Climate Lobby Fresno
Ronald J. Martin, President, Fresno's Against Fracking
Jeff Kuyper, Executive Director, Los Padres Forest Watch
Monica Embrey, Senior Campaign Representative, Sierra Club



Volumes of Pleasure Bookshoppe
A General Bookstore Specifically for Thinkers
Carroll Leslie & Barbara Strauss
BOOKSELLERS
1016 Los Osos Valley Rd., Suite 101
Los Osos, California 93402 (805) 528-5565

When CPUC Attacks

Public Utilities Commission caught misstating facts about Community Choice in legislative hearing

By California Community Choice Association

Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) cautioned members of the Legislature in a March 19 hearing on expanding the California Public Utilities Commission's oversight of innovative new community choice aggregation (CCA) programs — charging the agency with attempting to “double down on [a] hyper-centralized, monopoly model” of electricity production that “has not worked well for California.”

State policy requires all Load Serving Entities, including CCAs, to demonstrate they have the capacity to provide enough electricity when and where it is needed — a critical measure of the reliability of the energy system.

In a hearing of the Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee, Senator Wiener asked Michael Picker, president of the CPUC, to clarify remarks Mr. Picker made in recent testimony before the Legislature that CCAs were not meeting state “resource adequacy” requirements — a claim Picker restated at the March hearing. “You made a statement that

there were 11 resource adequacy waivers granted [by the CPUC] in 2018 and that the majority were granted to CCAs,” Senator Wiener said, noting that a records request had revealed that none of the waivers were for community choice aggregators.

A CPUC representative at the hearing, Energy Division Director Ed Randolph, acknowledged that, in fact, “one or zero” waivers were for CCAs. All the rest were for other Load-Serving Entities adapting to the state's rapidly evolving energy market.

The waivers, now posted on the CPUC's own website, show that of the 11 that were issued last year, one went to an Investor-Owned Utility (IOU) and ten to Energy Service Providers (ESPs).

“The comments we're hearing, this consistent drumbeat of ‘there's a resource adequacy problem with the CCAs’... I just think the facts don't support that,” Wiener replied to Picker and Randolph. “And this is why I would not support expanding CPUC's authority over CCAs.”



Village Creek Plaza
168 La Costa Grill (805) 474-8797
170 Cutting Edge Salon (805) 481-3126
172 Bend Chiropractic (805) 474-4747
174 House 2 Home Interiors (805) 489-5233
168 - 174 Station Way, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
Along Arroyo Grande Creek next to AG Post Office

Outings

continued from page 12

Peak Loop via the Oats Peak Trail.

Moderate hike in Montana de Oro State Park. 5.8 miles with 1,300 ft. of elevation gain. Valencia Peak has an elevation of 1,347 ft. and fantastic views of the coastline. Possibility of ticks. Poison oak along the trail, usually avoidable. Bring water, snacks, and dress for the weather. Dogs not allowed on trails in state parks. Extreme heat cancels. Meet at the Valencia Peak Trailhead just past the visitor's center on Pecho Valley Road. For info, call Chuck, 805-441-7597.

Saturday, June 1st, 8:30 am, Point Buchon and Bishop Pine Ridge Plant Walk. Montaña de Oro State Park. Guided by PG&E botanist Kelly Kephart. Access to the ridge south of Coon Creek. 3.0 miles round trip, 800 ft. elevation gain. Meet at Coon Creek trail parking lot at the southern end of the Park. Bring photo ID, as you will need to register at the PG&E kiosk when entering this area. We will walk up the ridge road, to the Bishop Pine forest,



coastal scrub and chaparral habitats. In addition to Bishop Pine, *Pinus muricata*, we will see Pecho manzanita, *Arctostaphylos pechoensis*, a CA Rare Plant Rank 1B.2. Bring water, snacks, and dress in layers; hat and sturdy shoes are advised. Contact Bill, 805-459-2103. No dogs please.

Sat. June 8th, 8:30 am. Cruikshank & Salmon Creek Trails Hike. Much of this route parallels the Villa and Salmon Creek drainages while looping around Silver peak. Strenuous all-day hike; about 13 miles with @ 3000 feet of elevation gain and loss. We will set up a car shuttle between the trail heads. We will start at Cruikshank and climb nearly 7 miles to the Coast Ridge Rd. and walk about 1/2 mile south to the Salmon Creek Trail for descent to Highway 1. Poison oak. Dogs on leash welcome. Meet at Washburn Day Use Area in San Simeon State Park at 8:30. Hot weather will postpone. For info, contact Carlos Diaz-Saavedra at 805 546-0317.

Saturday, June 15th 8:30 am, Ragged

Point to Bald Top Hike. A southern Big Sur hike in the Los Padres National Forest. Moderately strenuous, 9 miles with about 2,100 ft. of elevation gain. We will hike up the Baldwin Ranch Road to a coastal ridge. Enjoy the views when you stop for a break. We then hike south along the ridge to Bald Top with views of the coast looking south. Possibility of ticks. Poison oak easily avoidable. Bring water, snacks, dress for the weather. Dogs on leash okay. Extreme heat cancels. Meet at the Washburn day use area of San Simeon State Park on the right side of Hwy 1, 1.5 miles north of Cambria. We will carpool to the trailhead. Those interested can go to lunch afterwards. For info, call Chuck, 805-441-7597.

Saturday, June 15th, 9:00 am, Arroyo de la Cruz Rare Plant Walk, North SLO


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:

Bill Waycott, Outings Chair
 (805) 459-2103 or
 bill.waycott@gmail.com



John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, in Yosemite

County. One of the "hottest" spots for botanical diversity in the County. D.R. "Doc" Miller and Elizabeth Appel will lead us on a 3-hour tour of many unique species located on these coastal bluffs, featuring a variety of plant communities and a number of endemic and rare plants found only in this small area. Meet at Elephant Seal Overlook (first entrance on the left going north) at 9 a.m. For those wanting to carpool from the south, meet in Santa Rosa Park parking lot in San Luis Obispo at 8 a.m. Bring adequate water, snacks, dress in layers; a hat and sturdy shoes advised. Contact: Bill 805-459-2103. No dogs, please.

Sunday, June 16th, 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, SLO High School Hill hike + Yoga. Join the Sierra Club on a hike up High School Hill (a.k.a. Outlook Hill, a.k.a. Murray Hill). Once at the top, we will do a 45-minute

hatha yoga practice, with excellent views of the region. Steep incline that will give you a good cardio exercise. 4 miles round trip with a 1,492 feet elevation gain. This hike is considered strenuous. Trailhead is located at the end of Lizzy St. with easy parking. Bring water and good walking shoes. If you bring a yoga mat, be sure to strap it to your back. For more information, contact Nan Cole at cole.nancy.j@gmail.com

Saturday June 22, 9:00a.m. Oats Peak to Coon Creek Trail. A moderate 10+ mile loop. Great views of the ocean, beautiful Coon Creek Canyon, and more beautiful views of the ocean along the bluffs. Meet at the Spooner's Cove Visitors Center. Dress in layers, bring plenty of water, sturdy shoes and a hat. Be prepared for poison oak and ticks. Contact Andrea, 805-934-2792.



A Will is a Way
 Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature.

Contact:
 John Calaway
 Director of Gift Planning at
 (415) 977-5639 or e-mail:
 planned.giving@sierraclub.org



SIERRA CLUB
 FOUNDED 1892

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

photo: Dave Miller

Sierra Club
Santa Lucia Chapter
P. O. Box 15755
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 84
SAN LUIS OBISPO
CA 93401

Outings and Activities Calendar

Seller of travel registration information: CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

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 Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103. For information on a specific outing, please call the listed outing leader.



**Saturday, May 11th,
8:30 am, Stony
Creek/ Caldwell
Mesa Trails**

Hike. These two trails are not easy to access and do not get a lot of use. This is a moderately strenuous hike of about 12 miles and 2,000 feet of elevation gain in the Garcia Wilderness. The route goes in and out on the same trails. There will be poison oak along the way. We will cross a shallow part of the Salinas River with our vehicles just before we get to the trail head parking area. Dogs on leash welcome. Meet

at the Santa Margarita Exit from Hwy 101 (Hwy 58), at the Park & Ride. Rain or hot weather postpones to a later date. Contact Carlos, 805 546-0317.

**Sunday, May 12th,
1:00 pm to 3:00
pm, Sycamore Crest
Trail Hike + Yoga.**

The Sycamore Crest Trail is a wide dirt road on the north slope of Ontario Ridge. Begin at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort in Avila Valley and hike 1.75-miles with a 575-foot elevation gain. We will do a 45-minute yoga session at the top.

If you bring a yoga mat, be sure to strap it to your back. Bring water and comfortable shoes. Parking at the resort not advised. You may park at the Bob Jones trail-head and walk to Sycamore Hot Springs. Contact Nan Cole, cole.nancy.j@gmail.com.

**Fri.-Mon., May 24th-
27th, Memorial Day
Weekend in the Black
Rock Desert.**

A great first trip to the Black Rock Desert, @ 100 miles north of Reno. Expect several hundred people at this event, guided tours, hot springs, speakers, a

Dutch Oven cook-off, and drawings. Come for the weekend or for the day. Some food available, but come prepared with food, water, etc. Leave no trace! We'll have porta-potties. Level playa is fine for passenger cars and RV's, but there will probably be dust. Co-sponsored by Friends of Black Rock, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, BLM, and Nevada Outdoor School. Visit blackrockrendezvous.org. Sign up

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.

with David, 775-843-6443, Great Basin Group.

**Saturday, May 25th;
9:00 am, Valencia**

OUTINGS continued page 11

**Rootamental
SIGNS
for CHANGE
"Your message handpainted"
Call (805) 549-9764**

**Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park
May 5-7, June 9-11, July 14-16, August 18-20, September 22-
24, October 20-22.** Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard tour of the Channel Islands. Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines, Marvel at pristine waters teeming with seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on sea and land birds and an occasional whale. Watch for the endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or just relax at sea. Departs from Santa Barbara. \$730, includes assigned bunk, all meals, snacks and beverages. Kayaking overseen by our concessionaire; all hikes will be on trails, class 1 terrain. This is a fundraiser to support the Sierra Club political program in California. To reserve space, send a \$200 check, written to California Sierra Club PAC, to Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For more information contact leaders Joan Jones Holtz: jholtzhl@aol.com, 626-443-0706, or Wayne Vollaire avollaire1@gmail.com, 909-327-6825.