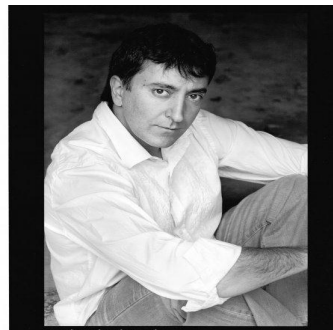




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# Enviros: The Naïve and The Dangerous

**R**ecently, I heard a presentation by two college students involved in service projects here and abroad. These young ladies were actually doing some good things and I don't want to undermine or detract from their ideals, however, it is important to consider the context, efficiency and efficacy of everything we do and the causes we support.

Using all the buzzwords of the day, the Cal Poly students described the projects they do in terms of being culturally and environmentally sensitive and sustainable. They spoke of several different projects, but the focus had to do with building sand biofilters that would purify drinking waters for villagers in 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries, and building latrines and septic systems to minimize the pollutant loading; projects desperately needed in Third World countries, especially in rural areas.

The projects completed were very low cost and low tech that serve to ensure good sanitation disposal and water quality. But back here, the gals were peripherally involved in one of the largest and most expensive boondoggle projects imaginable. Los Osos, a community of only 12,000, is having a sewer system built and installed that is going to cost a whopping \$190 million! Why so expensive a project for such a small community?

In essence, and in comparison to most countries including China, our air, water and sanitation conditions are very healthy and virtually pristine. The college students feel good about themselves for spending time, energy and money coming up with cheap, low tech solutions to 3<sup>rd</sup> World health and environmental problems, but they see no problem requiring locals and taxpayers in general to fork out hundreds of millions for local environmental and bureaucratic overkill. What do I mean by overkill?

I asked the students if seeing the poverty and lack of infrastructure for such basic things as clean

drinking water and sanitation facilities abroad helped put into perspective the standards we have here in the United States? One of the girls said yes, the other spouted off that our pollution problems here in the United States were still dire. I, of course, disagree.

We are now spending inordinate amounts of money, which is not sustainable, chasing goals of zero pollutant loading as versus reasonable limits that offer satisfactory levels of protection of human and environmental health. The point here is the sewer costs in Los Osos will end up causing people to lose their homes and a project much less expensive would have sufficed. But if environmentalists, activists and bureaucrats admitted we don't need to pursue perfection regardless of the cost, they would be out of a cause and a job. The resultant endorphin crash to their own somewhat narcissistic self worth would also be too much to bear.

The next day after I met these girls, who I actually commend all things considered, I conducted an interview with the Press Officer for a group associated with the eco-terrorists who torched 14 cattle trucks at the Harris Ranch Feedlot in Coalinga. The young woman I interviewed, a graduate of a Cal State college, compared the Harris Ranch cattle feed lot to a World War 2 death camp. She sees no difference in value between the life of an animal and a human being. In her opinion, the activists she represents justifiably employ terrorist tactics in order to save lives.

Environmentalists like these grossly exaggerate threats to public health and safety, animal welfare, and the ecosystem. They manufacture a crisis and then portray themselves as the savior of mankind and the planet. They collect power and prestige in the process, and in some cases, a lot of money. Their ideas, and they themselves are a danger and menace to society.

# Psychic Predictions? No! Psychotic Predilections!

**I**nstead of my annual offering of psychic predictions for the New Year, this year I hereby present psychotic predilections!

The Occupy Movement routinely maintains it has a right to demand the redistribution of wealth from the 1% to the 99%. Never mind that many of the 1% worked honestly for every penny and possession they have! So, don't you find it ironic that the Occupy Santa Barbara movement is suing the City of Santa Barbara because somebody took their tents and possessions when their camp was removed from City property? I guess private property does mean something, even to the occupiers and would-be-looters, if it is their property and possessions at stake?

Before he was elected and during his first year of office, President Obama and some of his staffers waxed on eloquently that the Bush administration was guilty of human rights violations with respect to water boarding terrorists (which does not result in any lasting harm) and yet this same administration ordered a drone kill of a suspected American born terrorist? Along these same lines, the President promised to close the Guantanamo facility used to indefinitely detain foreign terrorists and some in his administration wanted each of these detainees to get a trial in an American court as soon as possible. Yet, now this same President has signed into law a bill authorizing the United States to hold American citizens suspected of terrorism to be held at Guantanamo without trial indefinitely!

Tell me what is wrong with this picture. Somehow our society has evolved to the point that we consider handing out condoms to kids (and abortions to minors) without parental consent because somehow that is the sensible and right thing to do. Couple this with such things as seat belt rules, mandatory motorcycle helmets for all, and ski helmets for kids. Safety first must be our motto, right? But, a ballot measure in Los Angeles that would make condoms mandatory in porn

films is considered unconstitutional by the LA City Attorney?

Liberals and progressives claim they care about the poor, the elderly, the disabled, the disenfranchised and everyone else who relies upon the social safety net. Yet, during these tough economic times, these same lefties who occupy Congress, our Governor's office and the State legislature, along with university professors and college students, believe that drilling for oil (the greatest evil imaginable) must be avoided at all costs! So, in essence the progressives would rather starve, evict, and abandon the poorest among us rather than approve drilling for the oil off of our coast. Do you know that much of this oil is actually owned by the State of California and the revenues could be used however we so choose? Why are we turning our back on upwards of \$1 trillion?

On a similar note, progressives will continue to maintain it is better for the mentally ill, drug addicts and alcoholics to be free to wander our streets living in depravity and despair and in some cases, with the potential threat of resorting to a life of crime, including murder, than it would be to force them into treatment protocols. How is that the lesser of evils?

Will the three blind mice Jerry Brown, Gray Davis, and Arnold Schwarzenegger, ever come clean with respect to the proposed tax hikes they want to impose on California? Will they admit that sales taxes hurt the poor disproportionately, and that the real reason the State needs more money is because they themselves approved salary, benefit and pension benefits that are the number one cause (with respect to expenditures) of our States imminent bankruptcy?

*A. Caldwell*

# HALTING THE JUGGERNAUT

By COLAB Government Affairs Dir., Mike Brown

**T**he juggernaut of interlocking local and regional government regulatory agencies that now dominate Santa Barbara County (and much of California) constitute a formidable force under which the enviro-socialists are undermining private property and economic progress. By their control of the State and many local governments, these groups acquire expert professional staffs, full time legal specialists, powerful attractive web sites, dedicated public TV and radio stations, and public information specialists. The continuing volume of new regulations, fees, and ordinances issued by these separate entities, each with its own meeting schedule, board, and staff, makes it almost impossible for the citizens to even know what is coming next, let alone have the time, ability, and expertise to do something about it. So-called workshops are perfunctory and staff dominated. The public discussions are conducted in highly ritualistic meetings, usually held during business hours, when most citizens are unable to attend. The issues are too complex and incessant for the daily newspapers and TV stations to provide meaningful coverage. (Local talk radio programs, such as The Andy Caldwell Show, are one of the few successful counters.)

The specialized structure and incestuous interrelationship of the County, Air Pollution Control District, Santa Barbara Council of Governments, Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Coastal Commission forestall accountability. Except for the County, none of these boards has members who are directly elected to the entity being served. It is a major problem of these special district structures that

members are appointed elected officials from other entities. Compounding that, none of these boards has an elected chief official. The inherent structural deficiency in not having a chief elected official who must run for office and appeal to a large spread of constituencies throughout each entity is that there is no one who has appealed to the broader public interest and who can lead and engender policy based on the broader public interest. There is no jurisdiction-wide elected policy leader.

The deficiency of accountability to the entire community that is integral to this non-elected single purpose regulatory board narrow focus is illustrated by a recent incident in San Luis Obispo County. Its Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA) was holding a hearing to consideration of a single use grocery bag ban. Each of the Supervisors and city council members serving on the IWMA is elected to a general purpose government responsible for balancing a broad range of priorities. This notwithstanding, a number of them stated that their duty and vote when acting in their role as an IWMA member is limited to waste management issues and not to the broader underlying community and social concerns that have been raised over and over again by the citizens. These members basically refused to consider the issues and used the institutional structure as cover. This is somewhat similar to Coastal Commission's fetish to force the County to waste millions of dollars to destroy Goleta Beach County Park even though the community is overwhelmingly in favor of protecting the park from further erosion.

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# Resistance and Triumph by Mike Brown

The bad news is that the environmental socialist movement now controls the government of the State of California as well as that of many cities and counties within the State. The good news is that environmental socialism contains the seeds of its own destruction. Ultimately the high taxes, ever growing fees, and blighting regulations will undermine productive elements of society which in turn will erode governmental revenues and sap governmental power. The power of governments rests largely on their finances. As the private weakens, physical and social blight proliferates, capital facilities deteriorate, and existing businesses leave and seek to expand in more favorable economic climates, income taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes stagnate or decline. Enviro-socialist elites react by further raising fee and tax rates, which in turn accelerate the destructive process. The problem is that, while one can take solace in the knowledge that ultimately the corrective forces will prevail and hold the enviro-socialists accountable, millions are unemployed, homes are foreclosed, life savings are destroyed, and most tragically, the hopes and dreams of generations are annihilated.

The era of dominance of environmental socialism may exist for decades. This fact is very disheartening to many of those who understand the problem, as well as leaders and potential leaders who would resist and ultimately seek to overcome the regime. Since the enviro-socialists control the government apparatus of the State of California as well as the government apparatus of many cities, counties and special districts, the full force of professional staff expertise, contract patronage, alliances with powerful government employee unions, and job patronage are used to enhance their power and advance the enviro-socialist agenda. In the face of such daunting obstacles people may be tempted to give up and submit. On the other hand we may regard it as our duty as citizens to fight back. The American Revolutionary patriot Thomas Paine wrote as the colonies were threatened by the military might of the British Empire, *“Tyranny, like hell is not, easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph”*.

Here are practical things we can do to resist:

Be aware and stay informed. At a minimum, consider what COLAB is doing on your behalf! Check out the COLAB websites at [www.colabsbc.org](http://www.colabsbc.org) and [www.colabslo.org](http://www.colabslo.org). Read and share the COLAB newsletter. Listen on line or on the air to the Andy Caldwell Radio Show on KUHL 1440 or KZSB 1290. For both local and State and national information read the free online Cal Chronicle at [www.Calchronicle.com](http://www.Calchronicle.com). This website includes links to local and national news sources.

Get mad. As former University of Texas football Coach Darryl Royal (back when Texas won three national championships) used to say, *“You have to get mad to win football games.”* The injustice and destructiveness of the enviro-socialists policies are outrageous and are a powerful motivational factor.

Recognize that anger can be destructive and must be converted into plans and action, which result in holding the currently powerful enviro-socialist regimes accountable. Elected officials, appointed board members, and sycophantic senior staff members should understand that once the consequences of their policies are widely understood as perpetuating economic decline and suffering, they will be held accountable legally, professionally, and materially. It should not be sufficient that they are allowed to retire into oblivion.

Appeal your property tax assessment. While county assessors have made some minor adjustments as a result of the deep drop in real estate prices, they have not actually recognized the huge collapse in values. Go on the web and do a quick analysis of sales (not asking prices) of comparable properties in your area. It is likely that in many, many cases you will find that you have a strong argument for a lower property assessment. The process is free, and you do not need to hire consultants or experts. Stay away from firms that offer to file your appeal for a fee. You do not need to pay them, and online real estate sites offer ample data. Mass appeals will stress the counties administratively and when successful will undermine the power of the current controlling enviro-socialist

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elites in county governments, schools, cities and some special districts.

Oppose ballot measures which establish new or increased sales taxes, property taxes, or special tax assessments. Often voters who oppose general taxes will support a tax for a specific benefit such as roads, a school, a library, a new jail, or parks. It is rationalized that these are specific benefits for which there is a demonstrated need. The problem is the new tax takes the pressure off the government officials for trying to balance their bigger operating budgets. Demand that they grow the natural economy to pay for these things instead of placing higher taxes on an ever narrowing base.

If you can afford the tuition, put your kids in private schools. The public schools are now a vast indoctrination system promoting enviro-socialism, political correctness, and value relativism. The teachers unions are powerful allies and funders of the enviro-socialist regimes in Sacramento and Washington. Eliminate the reason for their existence.

Do not compromise on fees and regulations. Many business, agricultural, and trade organizations seek to minimize the damage caused by state and local enviro-socialist regimes by participating in efforts to ameliorate more egregious regulatory and fee proposals and seek compromise. Paid representatives and officers attend workshops, provide suggested wording changes, and otherwise "cooperate" to obtain crumbs. The current state of regulatory and tax conditions in the State and many cities and counties are clear proof that the strategy ultimately fails and is death by a thousand cuts. Business owners and their trade associations, both large and small, should recognize that short-term cooperation and collaboration only advances the regime's ultimate goals. Some businesses, and especially those dependent on government contracts, may fear retribution if they or their representative associations oppose particular enviro-socialist policies. Such retribution may come in the form of economic ostracism and /or regulatory punishment. In these circumstances, the government is little more than a "legitimized" protection racket.

Demand that your elected officials/ candidates declare a moratorium on all new fees and regulations for their term of office or prospective term of office. When your elected official or aspiring candidate is at a meeting, campaign event, or other situation where

there is a crowd, wait for the question period. When your turn comes ask this question: "Given the sorry state of the economy, falling home prices, unemployment etc., will you agree to sign this pledge today to promise to vote against all new fees, taxes, and regulations if you are elected, reelected, or for the remainder of your term (whatever the case is for that individual). Have a friend hand him/her the form-big letters and a signature block pre filled out with his or her name. Have extra copies for the crowd so they can see what you are asking. If they refuse to sign or say they have to study the matter, hit them again at the next event.

Organize: Set up study groups or writing groups. These may only be three or four people or can be more extensive. Write letters to the editor. Oppose new regulatory measures and fee increases. On major issues, appear at the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Air Pollution Control District, SBCAG. If you have a business association or trade group, make sure its staff alerts you to critical issues. Remember, it's not sufficient to oppose just the fee or regulation which affects your own particular business. Eventually the knock on the door will come for you. Groups should help one another by opposing all fees and regulations. Write, email, appear, and complain. Support candidates who oppose the regime. Hold a coffee hour for a candidate in your home or with your business group (or both). If you are able, support such candidates financially. Remember, early support is important because a large proportion of votes are now by absentee (mail-in) ballots. These are sent out months before the actual Election Day. Thus, funding for media buys, printed materials, and so forth must be accumulated very early in the campaign.

Pass out voter registration forms to your friends and associates and help them fill out the forms. Offer to deliver the form to the registrar's office or mail it in for them.

Get appointed to a County or city advisory commission in order to learn the system and hone your skills.

**Support educational and advocacy groups like COLAB and get others to do the same!**

*Mike Brown worked in government for 42 years, including 14 years as CEO of Santa Barbara County! He is now working for COLAB as our government affairs director.*

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*(Continued from page 4)*

Each entity selects its chief administrative officer or executive director separately. Exacerbating the problem, with the exception of the County Administrator, these administrative chiefs are single field subject specific experts (air pollution, transportation, garbage, water pollution, or whatever) who have no allegiance to balancing broader competing societal concerns outside of their professional mission. Unlike city managers and county administrators, they are institutionally insulated from the direct economic and social consequences of their policy recommendations. Conversely, a city manager who undermines the health of local business may soon find that he or she faces dwindling revenues for basic services such as police, fire, and road maintenance -- problems that are almost immediately visible to the public. Unlike the city managers, executives in regulatory districts do not have to live with the economic consequences of their decisions. They are extremely well compensated and usually remain in their job for years. For example, the recently retired California Coastal Commission Director, Peter Douglas, had occupied his position since 1985 and was Deputy Director for ten years prior to that. These chiefs, who are insulated by contracts, state imposed professional qualification requirements, and the support of their membership associations, have almost unfettered ability to appoint their subordinates, who are doubly protected by civil service and unions. These subordinate staffers, of course, are extensively trained specialists with degrees in environ-

mental engineering, environmental science, hydrology, city and regional planning, and biology. They tend to be true believers who support, both professionally and ideologically, an intrusive regulatory and aggressive tax/fee environment. Most have little understanding of economics, agriculture, mining, finance, how business works, or even history. They are largely immune from the economic consequences of their actions. If the economy declines, their elected leadership simply raises fees to fill any gaps. Concepts of structured process improvement; eliminating non-value-adding processes; reducing requirements and fees; and utilizing program performance budgeting at the program cost center level are not part of their universe. As one staffer snarled at this writer when it was suggested that a proposed regulation be subjected to an economic impact analysis prior to being sent to the agency's board for adoption, "Why would you do that? This is a regulation which is a benefit; it does not need economic analysis."

Recently a very astute and engaged long-term community participant said in frustration, "*There is too much going on and I can't keep up with all of this. We have to change the leadership and structure to fix this.*" As she correctly discerns, it is not sufficient to simply resist analytically and educationally. It is also essential to engage the environmentalists politically and to wrest from their hands the control of the resources and power of the government apparatus.

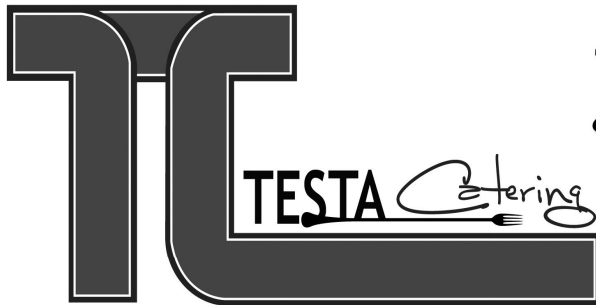
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