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AGENDA
BOARD LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Friday, May 21, 2010
12:45 p.m., Peralta Oaks Board Room

The following agenda items are listed for Committee consideration. In accordance with the Board Operating Guidelines, no official action of the Board will be taken at this meeting; rather, the Committee's purpose shall be to review the listed items and to consider developing recommendations to the Board of Directors.

AGENDA

<u>STATUS</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>STAFF</u>
	12:45 p.m.	I. STATE LEGISLATION / ISSUES	
		A. NEW	O'Brien/Pfuehler
		a. Proposed Legislation	
(D)		SB 845 (Committee on Budget) & AB 1638 (Committee on Budget) – Funding for Countywide Strategic Action Plans	
(R)		AB 2103 (Hill) – San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority	
(R)		Elections Clarification	
(R)		AB 2679 (Eng) – Public Building Energy and Water Consumption Reductions	
(R)		SB 1061 (Hancock) – Funding for Bicycle-Pedestrian Pathway on the Bay Bridge	
(R)		SB 1205 (Corbett) – San Francisco Bay Area Disaster Recovery Authority Act	
		B. ISSUES	O'Brien/Pfuehler
(I)		a. State Budget Update	
(D)		b. State Parks Access Pass Ballot Initiative Update	
		2. FEDERAL LEGISLATION / ISSUES	Pfuehler/O'Brien
		A. NEW	
		a. Proposed Legislation	
(R)		H.R. 996 (Fudge) – To designate September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month	
(R)		H.R. 5061 (Speier) – Funding for San Francisco Bay Improvement	
		B. ISSUES	Pfuehler/O'Brien
(I)		a. Transportation Update	
(I)		b. Water Resources Development Act Update	
(I)		c. Let's Move Initiative Update	
		3. PUBLIC COMMENTS	
		4. STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS	
		5. CORRESPONDENCE & ARTICLES	

Board of Directors

Ted Radke President Ward 7	Doug Siden Vice-President Ward 4	Beverly Lane Treasurer Ward 6	Carol Severin Secretary Ward 3	John Sutter Ward 2	Whitney Dotson Ward 1	Ayn Wieskamp Ward 5	Pat O'Brien General Manager
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(R) Recommendation for Future Board Consideration
(I) Information
(D) Discussion

Future 2010 Meetings: June 18, 2010 September 17, 2010 December 17, 2010
 July 16, 2010 October 15, 2010
 August 20, 2010 November 19, 2010

Legislative Committee Members:

Ted Radke, Chair, Doug Siden, Ayn Wieskamp, John Sutter, Alternate
Erich Pfuehler, Staff Coordinator

Distribution/Agenda Only

Afton Crooks
Michael Kelley
Stana Hearne
Peter Rauch
Johan Klehs
Judi Bank

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Dan Levy
Pete Wilson
Robert Follrath, Sr.
Fred W. Lopez
Yolande Barial
Bruce Beyaert

Distribution/Full Packet

Board of Directors
Pat O'Brien
Rosemary Cameron
Dave Collins
Bob Doyle
John Escobar

Distribution/Full Packet

Allen Pulido
Carol Johnson
Tyrone Davis
Dave Kalahela
Carol Victor
Ted Radosevich

Distribution/Full Packet

Hulet Hornbeck
Dr. George Manross
Norman LaForce
Glenn Kirby
Di Rosario
Jon King

BOARD LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
2009/10 Status of Recommendations

The following is a record of bills that the Board has taken action on.

1. AB 83 (Feuer) Torts: personal liability. (2/2009)
STATUS: 08/06/2009-Chaptered by Secretary of State - Chapter 77, Statutes of 2009
CURRENT LOCATION: **8/6/2009 Assembly-CHAPTERED**

 AB 90 (Adams) Torts: personal liability. (1/22/10)
STATUS: 1/22/10 Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(b)(2). (Last location was 2 YEAR on 6/8/2009).
CURRENT LOCATION: 1/22/2010 Assembly-DEAD

 The Board unanimously voted **support** pending state legislative AB 83 and AB 90. (Resolution #2009-4-105)
CURRENT LOCATION: 6/8/2009 Assembly-2 YEAR
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: **April 24, 2009**
2. AB 1496 (Skinner) Contractors: energy efficiency measures.
STATUS: 1/31/2010 Failed Deadline pursuant to Rule 61(b)(3). (Last location was 2 YEAR ON 6/2/2009)
CURRENT LOCATION: 1/31/2010 Assembly-DEAD
 The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation AB 1496. (Resolution #2009-4-106)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: **April 24, 2009**
3. AB 521 (De La Torre) Utility property: leases for park purposes. (10/11/2009)
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Chaptered by the Secretary of State, Chapter Number 448, Statutes of 2009.
CURRENT LOCATION: **10/11/2009 Assembly-CHAPTERED**
 The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation AB 521. (Resolution #2009-4-107)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: **April 24, 2009**
4. AB 979 (Berryhill) Hunting or fishing: local regulation (9/4/2009)
STATUS: 9/4/2009 to inactive file on motion of Senator Harman.
CURRENT LOCATION: 9/4/2009 Senate-INACTIVE FILE
 The Board unanimously voted to **oppose unless amended** pending legislation AB 979. (Resolution #2009-4-107)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: Letter dated April 8, 2009 to Jared Huffman, Chair, Committee on Water, Parks & Wildlife
5. AB 1084 (Adams) Local planning: development projects: fees (10/11/09)
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Chaptered by the Secretary of State, Chapter Number 507, Statutes of 2009
CURRENT LOCATION: **10/11/2009 Assembly-CHAPTERED**
 The Board unanimously voted to **oppose unless amended** pending legislation AB 1084. (Resolution #2009-4-107)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: **N/A**

6. AB 135 (Jeffries) State parks: California Citrus State Historic Park: operating agreement. (8/24/09)
STATUS: 9/4/2009 In committee: Set, first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author.
CURRENT LOCATION: 8/25/2009 Senate-Natural Resources & Water
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation AB 135.
(Resolution #2009-6-167)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: *June 1, 2009*
7. AB 817 (Nestande) Government liability: special districts: indemnification.
STATUS: 5/01/2009
CURRENT LOCATION: 1/15/2010 Assembly -DEAD
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation AB 817.
(Resolution #2009-6-168)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: *June 1, 2009*
8. AB 1464 (Symth) Transportation: California Bicycle Routes of State or Regional Significance Act (8/25/09)
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Chaptered by the Secretary of State, Chapter Number 396, Statutes of 2009
CURRENT LOCATION: 10/11/2009 Assembly-CHAPTERED
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation AB 1464.
(Resolution #2009-6-169)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: *June 1, 2009*
9. SB 372 (Kehoe) State parks system: unit modification, adjustment, or removal. (9/15/09)
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Vetoed by the Governor
CURRENT LOCATION: 10/11/2009 Senate-VETOED
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation SB 372.
(Resolution #2009-6-172)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: *June 1, 2009*
10. SB 555 (Kehoe) Eminent Domain Law: conservation easement. (9/15/09)
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Vetoed by the Governor.
CURRENT LOCATION: 10/11/2009 Senate-VETOED
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation SB 555.
(Resolution #2009-6-173)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: *June 1, 2009*
11. HR 1044 (Miller) Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial Enhancement Act of 2009 (2/12/09)
STATUS: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.
CURRENT LOCATION: 7/16/2009 Referred to Senate committee. On Oct. 29, 2009 this was included as part of Defense Authorization and signed into law.
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation HR 1044.
(Resolution #2009-6-170)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: *July 6, 2009*
12. HR 1443 (Matsui) The Complete Streets Act (5/15/09)
STATUS: Referred to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.
CURRENT LOCATION: 3/12/2009 Referred to House subcommittee.

The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation HR 1443.
(Resolution #2009-6-171)

NOTIFIED AUTHOR: July 6, 2009

13. ACA 9 (Huffman) Local government bonds: special taxes: voter approval.
STATUS: 1/14/2010 To inactive file on motion of Assembly Member Torrico.
CURRENT LOCATION: 1/14/2010 Assembly-INACTIVE FILE
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation ACA 9.
(Resolution #2009-7-188)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: September 22, 2009

14. S. 866 (Reed) A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding environmental education, and for other purposes.
STATUS: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.
CURRENT LOCATION: 4/22/2009 Referred to Senate committee.

HR 2054 (Sarbanes) To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding environmental education, and for other purposes.
STATUS: Referred to the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education.
CURRENT LOCATION: 6/4/2009 Referred to House subcommittee.
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation S. 866 and H.R. 2054.
(Resolution #2009-7-189)
NOTIFIED AUTHORS: September 22, 2009

15. SB 448 (Pavley) California State Safe Harbor Agreement Program Act. (9/10/09)
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Chaptered by the Secretary of State, Chapter Number 184, Statutes of 2009
CURRENT LOCATION: 10/11/2009 Senate-CHAPTERED
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation SB 448.
(Resolution #2009-10-275)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: October 21, 2009

16. S. 1469 (Boxer) A bill to provide for the administration of Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.
STATUS: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.
CURRENT LOCATION: 7/16/2009 Referred to Senate committee.
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation S 1469.
(Resolution #2009- 10-274)
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: October 21, 2009

17. SB 402 (Wolk) Recycling: California redemption value.
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Vetoed by the Governor.
CURRENT LOCATION: 10/11/2009 Senate-VETOED
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation SB 402. Pulled by the Board Dec. 1, 2009 due to Governor's veto.
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: N/A

18. SB 406 (DeSaulnier) Land use: environmental quality.
STATUS: 10/11/2009 Vetoed by the Governor.
CURRENT LOCATION: 10/11/2009 Senate-VETOED

The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation SB 402. Pulled by the Board Dec. 1, 2009 due to Governor's veto.

NOTIFIED AUTHOR: N/A

19. AB 1594 (Huber) Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: peripheral canal.
STATUS: 04/27/2010-In committee: Set, second hearing. Held without recommendation.
CURRENT LOCATION: 04/27/2010-Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation AB 1594.
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: April 8, 2010

20. AB 419 (Caballero) Local government: change of organization or reorganization: elections.
STATUS: 2/11/2010 Referred to Com. on L. GOV.
CURRENT LOCATION: 2/11/2010 Senate-Local Government
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation SB 402. Pulled by the Board Dec. 1, 2009 due to Governor's veto.
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: April 8, 2010

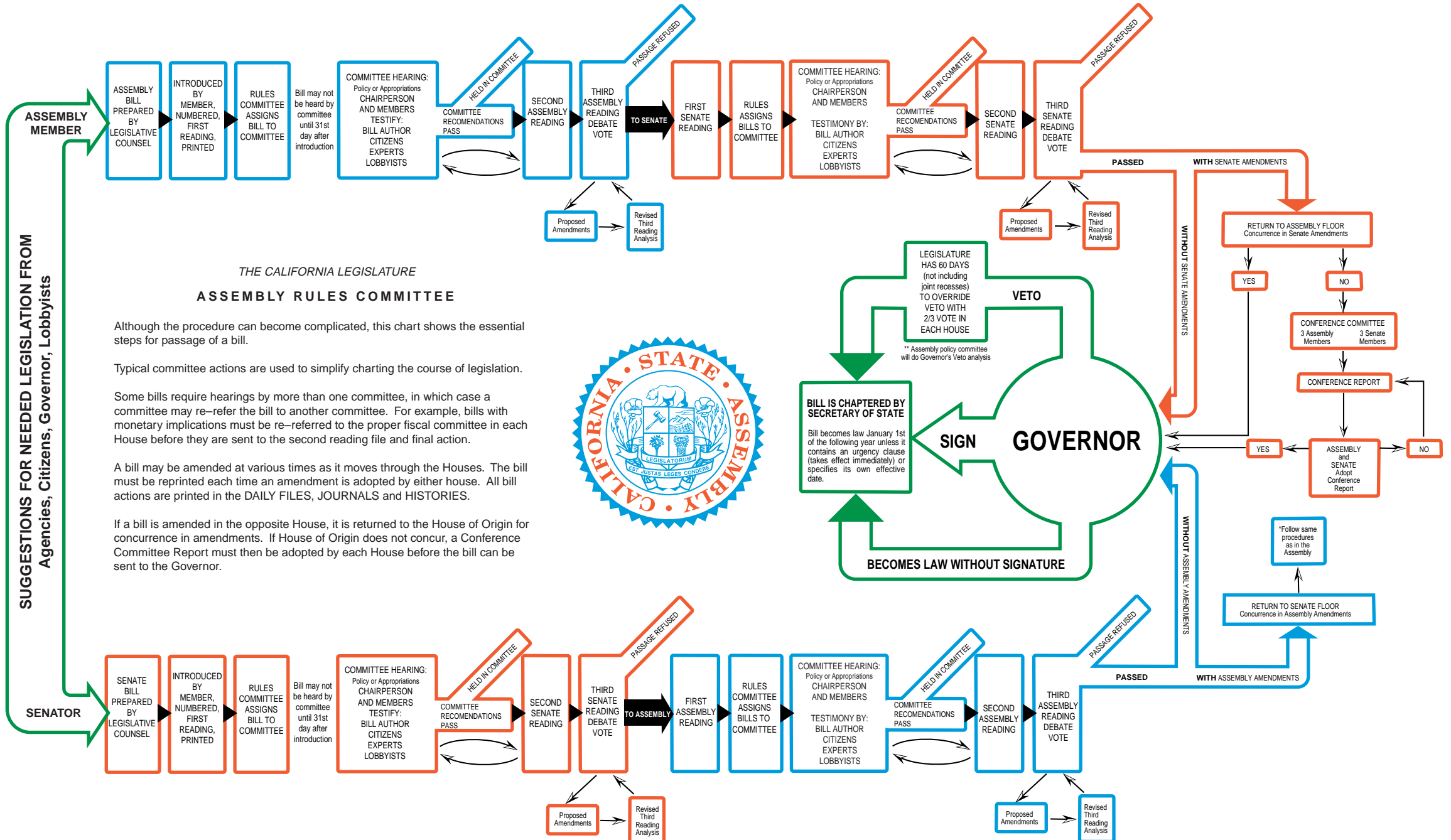
21. AB 1805 (Calderon) Environment: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
STATUS: 4/19/10 In committee: Hearing for testimony only.
CURRENT LOCATION: 4/20/10 Assembly-Natural Resources
The Board unanimously voted to **oppose** pending legislation AB 1805.
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: N/A

22. HR 4722 (Blumenbauer) Active Community Transportation Act of 2010
STATUS: Referred to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.
CURRENT LOCATION: 3/3/2010 Referred to House subcommittee.
The Board unanimously voted to **support** pending legislation HR 4722.
NOTIFIED AUTHOR: May 6, 2010

Updated 5/10/10

THE LIFE CYCLE OF LEGISLATION

From Idea into Law



THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

ASSEMBLY RULES COMMITTEE

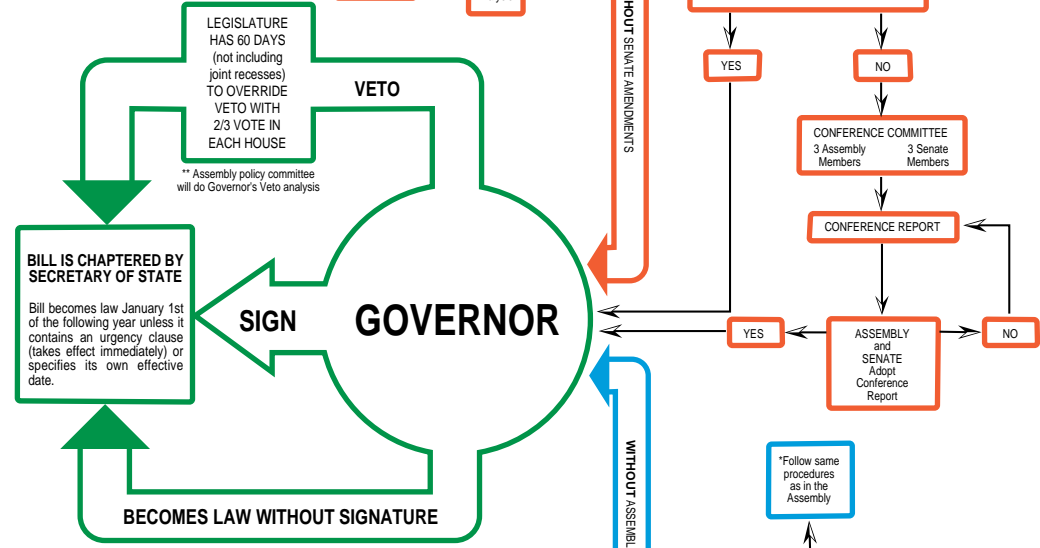
Although the procedure can become complicated, this chart shows the essential steps for passage of a bill.

Typical committee actions are used to simplify charting the course of legislation.

Some bills require hearings by more than one committee, in which case a committee may re-refer the bill to another committee. For example, bills with monetary implications must be re-referred to the proper fiscal committee in each House before they are sent to the second reading file and final action.

A bill may be amended at various times as it moves through the Houses. The bill must be reprinted each time an amendment is adopted by either house. All bill actions are printed in the DAILY FILES, JOURNALS and HISTORIES.

If a bill is amended in the opposite House, it is returned to the House of Origin for concurrence in amendments. If House of Origin does not concur, a Conference Committee Report must then be adopted by each House before the bill can be sent to the Governor.



BILL IS CHAPTERED BY SECRETARY OF STATE
Bill becomes law January 1st of the following year unless it contains an urgency clause (takes effect immediately) or specifies its own effective date.

SIGN GOVERNOR

BECOMES LAW WITHOUT SIGNATURE

VETO
LEGISLATURE HAS 60 DAYS (not including joint recesses) TO OVERRIDE VETO WITH 2/3 VOTE IN EACH HOUSE
** Assembly policy committee will do Governor's Veto analysis

RETURN TO ASSEMBLY FLOOR
Concurrence in Senate Amendments

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
3 Assembly Members
3 Senate Members

CONFERENCE REPORT

ASSEMBLY and SENATE Adopt Conference Report

RETURN TO SENATE FLOOR
Concurrence in Assembly Amendments

*Follow same procedures as in the Assembly

SFGate.com**Deep cuts likely in updated state budget**

Wyatt Buchanan, Chronicle Sacramento Bureau

Monday, May 10, 2010



Controller John Chiang reported that revenues fell short of projections for April.

Photo: Rich Pedroncelli / AP

(05-10) 04:00 PDT Sacramento --

The state budget crisis has been quiet for the past few months but will return to center stage this week as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger prepares to belt out some bad news.

The governor is scheduled to release an updated budget plan Friday that will probably include even deeper cuts than those he proposed in January, when he called for reductions in health and human services, prisons, education and state worker pay, among other areas.

Unexpected gains in state revenues that leaders hoped would significantly cut the deficit evaporated in the last few weeks. State Controller John Chiang reported Friday that revenues coming into state coffers from personal and corporate taxes fell \$3.6 billion short of what was projected in April, the month when the bulk of revenues are collected.

That means the state's budget deficit, which started the year at \$20 billion and dipped to about \$18.6 billion after some midyear actions by the Legislature, could exceed the original estimate.

"One thing is for certain, not only the governor but the Legislature too is going to have to confront some difficult decisions in the coming weeks in closing this gap," said H.D. Palmer, spokesman for the state Department of Finance.

Losses carry over

State financial analysts are pointing to a significant carryover of losses from 2008 to 2009 that brought down revenues from capital gains and weakness in small business income to explain the shortfall. Some people, including state Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, had hoped that gains in revenues from the first few months of the year would push the deficit for the 2010-11 fiscal year below \$10 billion.

State leaders also hoped for billions in aid from the federal government. The governor had included \$6.9 billion in federal dollars in his January budget plan, but so far the state has received just under \$3 billion, according to the Finance Department.

Schwarzenegger also had counted on \$140 million in proceeds from a lease for an oil drilling project off the Santa Barbara coast that would fund state parks. But last week the governor dropped his support for the proposal after the huge oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. It is not clear how the governor plans to pay for parks now.

Both Democratic and Republican leaders in the Legislature have said they do not intend to seek higher taxes this year to bridge the gap.

All of that leaves lawmakers and the governor facing decisions such as the wholesale elimination of certain programs for children, the poor and the disabled.

The governor promised earlier in the year to spare education. He proposed an increase in funding for higher education while calling for a controversial \$2 billion cut to K-12 schools that he said was consistent with the voter-approved initiative that determines education funding in California. Keeping the increase to higher education could prove tough given the deficit.

"Basically, the Legislature and the governor are faced with solutions that are largely going to be distasteful. They're going to hurt somebody either in their pocketbook or in the level of services they are receiving," said Michael Cohen, deputy analyst for the California Legislative Analyst's Office.

Deficit needs action

Cohen said that a deficit of this magnitude needs to be addressed with cuts and new revenues, such as taxes or fees.

The state Constitution requires two-thirds approval by the Legislature to pass a budget and any new taxes, giving Republicans, who have steadfastly opposed new taxes the power to block them.

Jean Ross, executive director of the California Budget Project, a public policy think tank that advocates for low-income Californians, also said leaders need to increase revenues as part of the budget solution. She said she thinks solving the deficit this year will be tougher than last year because leaders already have used up most of their options.

"I think we're likely to see some very harsh spending reductions that, if implemented, will have a long-term impact on the state's economy and a very significant impact on California families," Ross said.

E-mail Wyatt Buchanan at wbuchanan@sfchronicle.com.

SFGate.com

Alice Waters push for local, organic setting national agenda

[Stacy Finz, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

Sunday, May 9, 2010



Alice Waters has been preaching the value of organic food that comes from local farms for 40 years.

Food crusader Alice Waters is making the rounds to promote her new cookbook.

McDonald's, she told Bill Maher on his TV show, "Real Time," "is never the answer," not even for impoverished families trying to put food on the table. Then, in her signature breathy voice, she lambasted the microwave.

"That's not cooking," Waters said, somewhat flustered that Maher would even ask about the common kitchen appliance. "I don't know how to relate to it. I need a little fire."

Last week on Martha Stewart's program she tried to impress the importance of learning how to chop an onion, peel garlic and make chicken stock.

Food bloggers responded with their usual snark. Waters' appearance on Maher's show was "cringe worthy," wrote Grub Street San Francisco, going on to describe her performance on "Martha" as "loopy." When she roasted an egg on a giant iron spoon in her kitchen fireplace during an earlier "60 Minutes" interview, you could almost hear the nation gagging.

Yet, despite the scorn she sometimes evokes, Waters is steadfast. Her message is hitting its mark.

For nearly 40 years, "St. Alice," as she's been called for her unrepentant views, has touted the importance of eating local, organically grown food; emphasized the necessity of being good stewards of the land; and tirelessly advocated and funded nutritional meal programs in public schools. For many of those years she was mostly ignored, seen as a Berkeley radical whose ideals were not only elitist and unrealistic but also a bit wacky.

But as Americans began grappling with an obesity crisis, and journalists and documentarians began exposing the ills of factory farming, Waters' little movement motored away from the fringes and into the mainstream.

First lady on board

Michelle Obama wasted no time in planting an edible garden, some believe at the urging of Waters, on the South Lawn of the White House. Obama's Let's Move campaign, which replaced her predecessor's literacy drive, addresses much of what Waters has been preaching. Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's "Food Revolution" on ABC-TV has taken Waters' message to prime time. Even former President Bill Clinton, famous for his love of Big Macs, has taken up the cause, combining forces with the American Heart Association to form the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

"Alice and people like her, along with my own weight and heart problems, inspired me to take on the issue of childhood obesity," Clinton wrote in an e-mail. The former president says he met Waters while dining at her restaurant Chez Panisse - where the activist supposedly tried to talk him out of blueberry ice cream in favor of a "perfect" peach - and has read her books.

"I know how passionate Alice is about fresh foods and the importance of Americans living healthier lives," he wrote.

This helped inspire Clinton to work with the soda companies to wean students off high-calorie soft drinks and to help schools improve their meals and exercise programs. "The first lady's leadership on this issue will make a big difference," he added. "And Alice's involvement ensures even more success."

Thrilled with progress

Waters, 66, couldn't be happier with the momentum.

"I feel empowered," she says while sipping mint tea at her Chez Panisse Cafe, upstairs from the restaurant that inspired the farm-to-fork movement and will celebrate its 40th birthday next year.

And perhaps she feels a bit vindicated.

"I always knew it had to happen," she says. "I just didn't know it would happen so soon.

"These are not my ideas," she continued, a bit teary-eyed. "It's the way people have been eating for hundreds of years."

Still, Chris Lehane, a political consultant who has worked for Al Gore and Bill Clinton, sees Waters as "the George Washington of the movement and Northern California as the 13 colonies."

"If you're going to pick a figure who's responsible for it all, it all comes back to her," says Lehane, adding that even 10 years ago food probably wouldn't have crossed a politician's mind as a public policy issue.

"Not unless you include Ronald Regan calling ketchup a vegetable," he laughs.

But now, Lehane says, people don't see the campaign as more of those "San Francisco values."
"This has become a health issue - even in the red states."

About 32 percent of children and adolescents today are obese or overweight, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Being overweight is a health risk that can lead to Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, depression and other life-threatening illnesses.

It's a problem that Waters says has reached emergency levels. In 1996 she created the Chez Panisse Foundation, a nonprofit that, along with the Berkeley Unified School District, pioneered one of the most ambitious and lauded school food programs in the country. First they planted an edible garden at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School that became a model for the rest of the nation. Then they hired renowned school chef Ann Cooper, who made every dish from scratch and bought all the produce from local farms - organic whenever possible.

Starting a movement

A.G. Kawamura, California secretary of food and agriculture, says he first met Waters at the edible garden five years ago. Since then, nearly 4,000 gardens have been planted at California schools.

"When we saw how Alice had linked the garden to the cafeteria - a culinary institute so to speak - we were amazed," he says. "It was a great concept that could be duplicated everywhere."

But her contributions haven't stopped at the school cafeteria. Waters, who was recently awarded the French Legion of Honor for her efforts to promote Slow Food, a movement designed to combat fast food, has been a boon to small farms and the local food shed.

Two years ago, she helped organize the first American Slow Food Nation, a four-day political food festival in San Francisco that featured local growers, chefs and nutrition experts.

"She has helped to reintroduce the public to where their food comes from," Kawamura says. "What's really remarkable is that she has been consistent with her message, even if people don't agree with it."

And a lot of people don't - partly because she's rarely willing to compromise. In her new book, "In the Green Kitchen: Techniques to Learn by Heart" (see Cook's Books, Page K7), Waters hopes to get Americans back to the stove.

Basic cooking

"I'm trying to demystify cooking," she says. "I'm trying to talk about universal and basic techniques so that once you know them you can cook anything."

So if she manages to teach her readers how to whip up a scramble, will it be enough, even if the eggs were bought at Safeway?

"No," she says.

"I want to know where everything comes from," continues Waters, who buys her groceries straight from California farms. "I don't want to have to choose between local and organic. I want both. I don't want to live a half-good life."

That's where her message can start to bug people.

"It's making the task of getting Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables unachievable," says James McWilliams, a food historian at Texas State University. "It's a great example of the perfect being the enemy of the good."

A privileged view

McWilliams, who warns against food "primitivism," says Waters' message involves a certain amount of privilege.

"There is a kind of elitism about it, which isn't necessarily a bad thing," he says. "If you have the time and the resources to support the local food-shed, that's great. But there are some who see her as having boutique concerns that are out of touch with where our food worries should be - like how we're going to globally produce 70 percent more food in the next 40 to 50 years."

School chef Cooper, who has left Berkeley Unified to start similar lunch programs in Boulder, Colo., and across the country, says her mentor has certainly been a target for the naysayers.

"When her effort to launch organic lunches at Berkeley High School didn't work, it made the New York Times in a particularly ugly, nasty way," she remembers. "Then there was the Atlantic piece that criticized her Berkeley program. People just seem to like to pick on her. Maybe it's because they perceive her as just a little too precious.

"But in the face of intense adversity she's been unwavering."

The seemingly unflappable Waters has big plans for the future. Tops on her agenda is overhauling the USDA's National School Lunch Program. She's already started lobbying for the federal agency to more than double its budget to feed America's youth, which would include ridding the cafeteria of processed foods such as chicken nuggets and syrup-drenched fruit.

If she has her way, schools would serve more fruits and vegetables bought from nearby growers who use sustainable and organic farming methods.

"I'm trying to focus my energy on the people who can win this race," Waters says. "And there are so many doors that are open right now."

Roast Chicken

Serves 4 to 6

Adapted from "In the Green Kitchen: Techniques to Learn by Heart," by Alice Waters (Clarkson Potter, 2010).

- 1 whole chicken, about 3-4 pounds

- -- Salt and fresh-ground pepper, to taste
- 3 to 4 sprigs thyme, or other herbs
- -- Olive oil, to taste
- -- Chicken stock (optional)

Instructions: A day or two ahead of cooking, if possible, remove the neck and giblets from the chicken. If there are any lumps of fat just inside the cavity, pull them out and discard. Season the chicken inside and out with salt and fresh-ground pepper. Put a few sprigs of thyme or other herbs in the cavity, and truss, or tie, the legs together. Tuck the wing tips up and under the back of the neck. Cover loosely and refrigerate.

Remove the chicken from the refrigerator 1 hour before cooking and preheat the oven to 400°. Place the chicken in a lightly oiled roasting pan or earthenware dish, breast side up. Roast about 20 minutes, then turn the chicken over, and roast breast side down, for another 20 minutes. Turn the chicken over again, and roast breast side up, for about 20 minutes more. To test for doneness, pierce the leg joint with the tip of a knife; the juice should run clear, not pink. Remove the chicken to a platter to rest for 10 to 15 minutes before carving.

While the chicken is resting, prepare the pan juices. Tilt the pan to one corner and skim off and discard most of the clear fat from the top. Put the pan on the stovetop, add a little chicken stock or water, and scrape loose all the browned bits on the bottom. When carving the chicken, collect all the juice released from the bird and add to the pan juice. Heat the juices and pour over the chicken just before serving, or pass in a bowl at the table.

Per serving: 253 calories, 33 g protein, 0 g carbohydrate, 13 g fat (4 g saturated), 103 mg cholesterol, 96 mg sodium, 0 g fiber.

Wine pairing: Roast chicken is one of the most accommodating dishes in wine pairing - flexible enough to pair with a wide range from aromatic whites to oakier Chardonnay to light reds.

Greens With Ginger & Chile

Serves 4

This recipe, adapted from "In the Green Kitchen: Techniques to Learn by Heart," by Alice Waters (Clarkson Potter, 2010), can be made with any type of greens. Tender greens such as spinach, watercress and pea shoots cook in just a few minutes, uncovered. Sturdier greens (chard, kale, broccoli rabe, collards, cabbage, amaranth, beet greens, turnip tops) take longer. They are best cut into ribbons and covered to steam during cooking.

- 1 to 1 1/2 pounds amaranth or other leafy greens
- 4 coin-size slices peeled fresh ginger
- 1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- -- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 fresh red or green chile, or 1 dried red chile (for flavor, not heat)

Instructions: Sort the greens, removing any tough stems, and wash and drain the leaves. Cut the ginger slices into a fine julienne, or chop them, or simply leave them as round slices. Cover the bottom of a wok or generous skillet with a layer of oil, and heat over medium-high heat. Add some salt to the oil, then add the ginger and the chile pod. If it is a fresh chile, make a slit in it to prevent it from bursting in the heat.

When the ginger begins to sizzle, stir it around and add the greens. Use tongs to toss the greens to distribute the oil and flavorings and to keep the greens moving and cooking evenly. Very tender greens will wilt and cook in 1 to 2 minutes. For sturdier greens, reduce the heat and cover the pan for a few minutes to let them steam and wilt. Remove chile and ginger; discard or, if desired, chop them fine and add to the greens.

Serve greens hot, warm or at room temperature.

Per serving: 64 calories, 3 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 4 g fat (0 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 24 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.

An E&E Publishing Service

DEVELOPMENT: Appropriators to examine funding for 'livability' programs (Monday, May 3, 2010)

Gabriel Nelson, E&E reporter

A Senate Appropriations panel this week is scheduled to question Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan on budget requests for the Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the centerpiece of the Obama administration's "livability" initiative.

The partnership between U.S. EPA, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development was created last year to promote policies that reduce energy consumption, encourage public transit use and promote dense development over sprawl.

Federal policies have worked against one another for decades, flummoxing efforts to respond to those types of challenges, said Ron Sims, HUD's deputy secretary, during testimony on the program before a House Appropriations subcommittee last month.

"With few exceptions, the federal government has not been up to the task of addressing these critical trends," Sims said. "Federal programs dealing with housing, transportation and energy issues remain largely divorced from each other, precluding smart, integrated problem solving. Federal policies and rules are narrowly defined, poorly coordinated and often work at cross-purposes."

The Obama administration has requested \$527 million in new funding for DOT sustainability programs, another \$150 million for HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities and \$10 million for EPA to provide technical assistance on environmental issues.

Additional programs within the agencies have been tweaked to reflect the administration's livability goals, bringing the initiative's total price tag into the billions.

The \$527 million request for DOT livability programs includes \$307 million for sustainable transit projects, \$200 million for a program to factor environmental and land-use concerns into transportation planning and \$20 million to establish an Office of Livable Communities.

Agency officials came under fire last month from House Republicans for requesting new funding for "boutique" sustainability programs without first resolving funding crises for roads and transit. The Obama administration pushed lawmakers to extend the current transportation bill until the end of this year, planning to craft a new multi-year highway authorization next year.

"My objection doesn't have to do with the stated goals, it has to do with where the money is coming from," Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio) said last month during a House Appropriations subcommittee hearing. "If this administration were going to deal with that, I wouldn't have a problem with it. But you're not" ([E&E Daily](#), March 11).

Senate appropriators previously voiced concerns that the livability initiative's housing programs will primarily benefit cities. Sens. Kit Bond (R-Mo.) and Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) prodded Donovan on that point last month during a hearing on HUD's overall budget.

"As I look at the budget, I'm afraid there's this shift of priorities from rural America to urban areas," Leahy said. "That's what I'm going to be most concerned about, because there is no way I can support appropriations that did that."

Bond, the ranking member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee, said housing needs in rural areas have often been ignored.

"Everybody knows the housing programs in the city, because people see them all the time," he said. "I travel to rural areas, and I know the need is great, and this budget does not recognize it."

Donovan has responded to those criticisms by saying that the concept of "livability" does not apply only to central cities.

During previous hearings, Donovan and Sims pointed to HUD's \$100 million Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program, which offers money for state, regional and municipal agencies to develop sustainable development plans. Rural and suburban areas will be equally eligible to receive that grant money, they said, though Bond has questioned the transparency of the criteria and suggested that central cities would have an advantage ([E&E Daily](#), March 9).

The agency's budget also requests \$150 million for the new Catalytic Investment Competition, which would award grants to transit-oriented and green infrastructure projects.

Schedule: The hearing is Thursday, May 6, at 9:30 a.m. in 138 Dirksen.

Witnesses: Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan.

Vorderbrueggen: Martinez gears up for political sport

By [Lisa Vorderbrueggen](#)

[Contra Costa Times](#)

Posted: 05/01/2010 06:24:00 PM PDT

Updated: 05/07/2010 01:57:06 PM PDT

The state's campaign finance watchdog agency need look no further than Martinez for a window into the difficult task of distinguishing online electioneering vs. Web activism.

The Fair Political Practices Commission is exploring the adoption of rules governing disclosure of money and people behind campaign activities and fundraising on the Internet.

But the definition of "campaign" is a slippery one, as Martinez illustrates.

By way of background, residents and elected officials have been squabbling for years over a proposed redevelopment agency and downtown development.

The battle is heating up.

The council is expected to again approve the formation of a redevelopment agency this month, which may trigger another referendum.

And Mayor Rob Schroder and City Council members Mike Menesini and Lara Delaney — all redevelopment supporters — are up for re-election in November.

Former Martinez council candidate Tim Platt has started the Martinez Fair and Responsible Growth Coalition Blog (<http://mfrgc.wordpress.com>). His group is suing the city over its approval of a downtown apartment complex.

Platt is soliciting donations to pay the legal costs and promises to keep the names of donors secret. Donations for lawsuits don't come under campaign disclosure rules.

But Platt is also the treasurer of the Committee Against Martinez Redevelopment, a group formed in 2003 to fight prior city iterations.

Rumored to be running for the City Council, Platt is walking Martinez neighborhoods and handing out literature that Schroder says insinuates the need for a recall or replacement of the entire council.

Like most things Martinez, there is history.

Platt ran for the council in 2002 and came up short, winning third place in a race for two seats.

When then-Councilman Schroder was elected mayor in 2002 and his seat opened, Platt's supporters argued that as the third-place finisher, he was the logical choice. Instead, the council appointed Janet Kennedy, also a fan of redevelopment.

In a second website, Martinez resident Mark Thomson is the registered owner of Open Martinez (www.martinezca.org), which aggregates development-related items and posts opinion pieces by Platt and other council critics.

One of those voices on Open Martinez is Phillip Ciaramitaro, who helped organize a February community meeting to "discuss options for the upcoming election and gear up for a redevelopment agency ordinance referendum."

Ciaramitaro set up a booth at the Earth Day event at the John Muir National park a few weeks ago and asked for donations to help form a group called Sustainable Martinez, which would help the city reduce its carbon footprint.

At what point does all this online activism cross over into reportable election fundraising?

State law requires any individual or group that raises or spends \$1,000 to promote or oppose a candidate or ballot issue must disclose the sources of their money and what they spend it on.

An individual who declares himself or herself a candidate and asks for money must also file a statement of intent.

None of these folks appear to have triggered the thresholds.

But in Martinez, where politics is a blood sport, you can bet folks will be watching.

GOT POLITICS? Read the Political Blotter at www.ibabuzz.com/politics.

- This is excellent news for open government — the state is posting online statements of economic interest for all statewide officeholders, legislators and county boards of supervisors. Go to www.fppc.ca.gov.

PARTY DISPUTE

: Ongoing internal strife on the Contra Costa Republican Central Committee has spilled into the legal realm. Committee member Ted Hudacko has filed a police report alleging that he was manhandled at a party meeting in Walnut Creek.

Police have questioned people but no charges have been filed.

By way of background, Hudacko is among a minority alliance on the board who say they have been repeatedly denied access to financial documents. The unresolved conflict has led to resignations, bad blood and, now, a police report.

Hudacko declined to talk on the record.

But as committee spokesman and former Antioch Councilman Arne Simonsen described the March 18 incident, Hudacko stood in the doorway of the Rossmoor meeting room and attempted to talk with GOP Treasurer Darcy Linn.

Committeeman Tom Midanek allegedly touched Hudacko's arm and asked him to step aside, Simonsen said.

"I was in the front of the room when I heard someone yell, 'Get your hands off me!' " Simonsen said. "But there was no assault. It was just a friendly hand on Ted's arm to say, 'Hey, we need to get the meeting started.' "

The meeting was under way when some people said they heard Hudacko call Linn a "whore" as she walked through the room.

No, it was a cough, according to the text of a proposed resolution submitted by board member and Hudacko's wife, Christine.

Whether it was a case of loose phlegm or loose lips, it riled up the committee and a majority voted to throw out Hudacko.

He refused to leave and days and numerous fiery e-mails later, the group's leaders called for the removal of Hudacko from the Central Committee and scheduled a vote for April 7.

Three days before the scheduled showdown, Hudacko filed the police report.

Everybody has subsequently lawyered up and the committee postponed the vote.

It is unclear whether the GOP will pursue the matter pending the outcome of the police investigation, Simonsen said.

What is clear is that the Contra Costa GOP has internal problems that far exceed the expertise of the Walnut Creek Police Department.

Contact Lisa Vorderbrueggen at 925-945-4773, lvorderbrueggen@bayareanewsgroup.com or www.ibabuzz.com/politics.



Bottom Line

Big bucks pushing to 'Stop Hidden Taxes'

Andrew S. Ross

Thursday, April 22, 2010

It may be one of those stealth initiatives, judging by the absence of response I've been getting from its sponsors, but money for the "Stop Hidden Taxes" proposition aimed at the November ballot is sure pouring in.

The initiative, as we noted last week, would subject any new fee, levy, charge or tax reallocation subject to a two-thirds vote of the California Legislature, resulting in a "potentially major decrease in state and local revenues," according to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office.

That hasn't stopped the measure from raising over \$1 million in the past six weeks, according to a list compiled by Election Track, based on filings with the secretary of state's office.

(links.sfgate.com/ZJNV).

The biggest one-time donation, so far, is from San Ramon's Chevron Corp., with \$250,000.

"Chevron's concern is prompted by the economy," said a company spokesman. "We believe that increasing fees, taxes or the cost of doing business in California will hinder economic growth and adversely affect job creation."

Future emission fees on companies like Chevron may be a factor, because Bakersfield's Aera Energy LLC has contributed \$150,000, and \$25,000 more came from ConocoPhillips. The alcohol lobby - which has so far successfully fighting a proposed "mitigation fee" to cover the costs of alcohol-induced illnesses - is well represented, including \$75,000 from San Francisco's Wine Institute.

Last, so far, but by no means least, is the initiative's chief sponsor, the California Chamber of Commerce, which has contributed a total of \$425,000 in several tranches. As said, no response to my inquiries from the chamber, nor from the initiative's supposed "media contact."

Should we assume the chamber's 15,000 members are OK with this?

Winning streak: First, on Monday, the California Public Employees' Retirement System gets a major private equity firm, Apollo Capital Management LLC, to agree not to charge \$125 million in projected investment management fees and forswear future use of placement agents, which have caused the nation's largest public pension system so much grief.

Then, on Tuesday, the even bigger Blackstone Group LP, perhaps cognizant of Apollo's move, backs off from its opposition to a state bill eliminating contingency fees for placement agents, a measure which CalPERS vigorously supports. Instant result: Measure sails through an Assembly committee, 7-0, its prospects a whole lot brighter, even if other financial industry lobbyists still lurk.

On the same day, the \$210 billion public pension fund's board officially stated it's getting out of the "predatory equity" business - investments in real estate apartment projects whose raison d'etre is to attain "market rents" by displacing rent-regulated tenants by one means or another. That earned unaccustomed praise from tenants groups who have raised a ruckus on the issue, which had prompted legislation aimed at CalPERS by San Francisco Assemblyman Tom Ammiano. One tenant organizer called it "a major milestone." Another said he was "very pleased" with CalPERS.

Of course, the fund has miles to go before it can more safely sleep. But, said CalPERS spokesman Brad Pacheco, "After the last 12 months we'll take it."

More than a consolation prize: Fortunately for San Francisco's Heller-Manus Architects, the city's Board of Supervisors and gadfly Aaron Peskin don't carry much weight in China. Otherwise the firm might not be getting its increasingly steady stream of prestigious urban design and master plan contracts there.

For example, the one signed last week to design a \$44 million headquarters complex for the China Automotive Technology & Research Center, a government agency somewhat equivalent to our National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Then there's the \$36 million International Fashion Center in Guangzhou that Heller-Manus was tapped to design last week.

Add those plums to the urban master plan and construction contracts it already has for the \$100 million-plus development of downtown Guangzhou, and the 350,000-square-foot mixed-use office building that is already going up in Shanghai, across from the old Jewish Quarter.

As for the 10-0 Board of Supervisors' slapdown of the Heller-Manus-designed condo tower next to the Transamerica Pyramid, "the difference in attitudes to getting things done in China and here - and not just in San Francisco - is very worrisome," said partner Jeffrey Heller.

[Obama hails the Great Outdoors from inside the Interior Dept.](#)

April 16, 2010 | 2:18 pm

-- Andrew Malcolm

INTERIOR



Following the suggestion of his tone-deaf advance team, President **Obama** went from inside the White House to inside his armored car to inside the Interior Department today to celebrate the Great Outdoors.

After a short drive, the Chicagoan spoke to a Great Outdoors Conference auditorium audience of about 500 including **Cory Booker**, the mayor of Newark, a favorite urban butt of late-night comedians.

In a brief 10-minute speech (see full text below, as provided by the White House), Obama acknowledged the standing ovation, hailed the conservation legacy of President **Theodore Roosevelt**, vowed never to shoot a bear, and bemoaned the increasing strains placed on America's environment by a population now exceeding 300 million and a changing climate.

The president also issued one of those meaningful ceremonial proclamations, making next week National Park Week.

Obama praised his own conservation work and some co-workers and promised not to let American civilization mar the beautiful natural work of the ages.

Two minutes later he was back safely inside the interior of the White House.

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President Obama's remarks on the Great Outdoors at the Interior Department

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, everybody. Thank you so much. Thank you. Please, everybody have a seat. Thank you.

It is a great privilege to join [you] for this conference on America's Great Outdoors. There are a number of people that obviously I want to acknowledge here who have worked tirelessly to...

...move this agenda forward. At the top of our list, our Secretary of the Interior -- who I believe is going to be one of the best Secretaries of Interior in American history -- Ken Salazar, who has just fully embraced this issue, we're thrilled with the work he's done. Thank you. Thank you, Ken. (Applause.)

Secretary Tom Vilsack, Administrator Lisa Jackson, Nancy Sutley -- all have been part of what we call our "green team," and are consistently providing creative ideas to make sure that we understand that conservation is not contrary to economic growth, it is an integral part of economic growth. And they have just done a fabulous job on that so please give them a big round of applause. (Applause.)

We have my outstanding NOAA Administrator, Dr. Jane Lubchenco. We have Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Jo-Ellen Darcy. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Installations and the Environment, Dr. Dorothy Robyn. And in the audience, if I'm not mistaken, we've...

EXTERIOR



...got some luminaries. Is Governor Bill Richardson in the house? There he is -- from New Mexico, a great conservationist. (Applause.) Former Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Bruce Babbitt is

here. (Applause.) One of the finest young mayors in the country, Mayor Cory Booker. (Applause.) And to all the outstanding members of Congress who have been so diligent in promoting a conservation agenda.

Now, I am mindful that the first such conference was held over one century ago by one of my favorite Presidents, one of our greatest Presidents -- and certainly our greatest conservation President. Upon taking office, Theodore Roosevelt -- avid birdwatcher, bear hunter -- set out on a tour of the American West that would change his life and the life of a nation forever.

He stood in awe of the geysers at Yellowstone. He camped in a snow blizzard at Yosemite. He stood on the lip of the Grand Canyon. "The ages have been at work on it," he declared. "Man can only mar it."

And from that sense of commitment sprang five national parks, 18 national monuments, 51 federal bird reservations, and 150 national forests. From that commitment sprang an effort to save the great Redwoods of California and the Petrified Forest of Arizona, the great bird rocks of the Aleutian Islands and the Tongass of Alaska. From that commitment sprang a breathtaking legacy of conservation that still enhances our lives.

Now, that legacy is an extraordinary achievement -- and no matter how long I have the privilege of serving as President, I know I can never match it. And I will probably never shoot a bear. (Laughter.) That's a fair bet there, fair guess. (Laughter.) But I do intend to enrich that legacy, and I feel an abiding bond with the land that is the United States of America.

I do, for the same reasons that all of you do; for the same reason families go outside for a picnic or campers spend a night in a national park, and sportsmen track game through the woods or wade deep into a river. It's a recognition passed down from one generation to the next, that few pursuits are more satisfying to the spirit than discovering the greatness of America's outdoors.

And when we see America's land, we understand what an incredible bounty that we have been given. And it's our obligation to make sure that the next generation enjoys that same bounty.

That recognition has been a touchstone of this presidency thanks to the outstanding leadership of Ken Salazar and Secretary Vilsack and Lisa Jackson and Nancy Sutley. They have done extraordinary work.

Last year, I signed into law a public lands bill -- the most significant in decades -- that designated 2 million acres of wilderness, over 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers, and three national parks. We better protected cherished places like Oregon's Mount Hood. We're taking a new approach to our National Forests to make sure they're not just providing timber for lumber companies, but water and jobs for rural communities. We are restoring our rivers and coasts, from the Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf Coast, from the Great Lakes to the Everglades.



So, yes, we are working faithfully to carry on the legacy of Teddy Roosevelt in the 21st century. But we also know that we must adapt our strategies to meet the new challenges of our time.

So rising to meet these challenges is a task and an obligation, but it's one that government cannot and should not meet alone.

There are roughly 1,600

privately run land trusts in this country that have protected over 10 million acres through voluntary efforts.

And by working with farmers and ranchers and landowners, the Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program has protected over 30 million acres, and its Natural Resource Conservation Service — a service that is 75 years old this year — has protected almost 3 million more. So together, we are conserving our working lands in a way that preserves the environment and protects local communities.

And that's the kind of collaborative spirit at the heart of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative that we're launching today. In the months ahead, members of this administration will host regional listening sessions across America. We'll meet with everybody -- from tribal leaders to farmers, from young people to businesspeople, from elected officials to recreation and conservation groups. And their ideas will help us form a 21st century strategy for America's great outdoors to better protect our natural landscape and our history for generations to come.

Understand, we're not talking about a big federal agenda being driven out of Washington. We're talking about how we can collect best ideas on conservation; how we can pursue good ideas that local communities embrace; and how we can be more responsible stewards of tax dollars to promote conservation.

First, we're going to build on successful conservation efforts being spearheaded outside of Washington -- by local and state governments, by tribes, and by private groups -- so we can write a new chapter in the protection of rivers, wildlife habitats, historic sites, and the great landscapes of our country.

Secondly, we're going to help farmers, ranchers, property owners who want to protect their lands for their children and their grandchildren.

Third, we'll help families spend more time outdoors, building on what the First Lady has done through the "Let's Move" initiative to encourage young people to hike and bike and get outside more often.

And fourth, we want to foster a new generation of community and urban parks so that children across America have the chance to experience places like Millennium Park in my own Chicago.

We're launching this strategy because it's the right thing to do -- because, as TR said, we must not mar the work of the ages. But we're also doing it because it's the right thing to do for our economy. It's how we're going to spur job creation in the tourism industry and the recreation industry. It's how we'll create jobs preserving and maintaining our forests, our rivers, our great outdoors.

In a time of great difficulty, when we are recovering from the worst recession in generations, and waging two wars abroad, some may ask whether now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to our national heritage. But I want everybody to recall, it was in the midst of civil war that Abraham Lincoln set aside lands that are now Yosemite. It was in midst of a great depression that FDR formed the Civilian Conservation Corps that built the trails and campgrounds and parks we enjoy today.

Even in times of crisis, we're called to take the long view to preserve our national heritage -- because in doing so we fulfill one of the responsibilities that falls to all of us as Americans, and as inhabitants of this same small planet. And that is the responsibility that we are rising to meet today.

So thank you all for the outstanding work that you're doing individually. I look forward to the work that you're going to be doing collectively and advising this administration. Thank you. God bless you. God bless the United States of America. (Applause.) ###

Photos: Dept. of the Interior; [Donnie Sexton / TravelMontana](#); Pete Souza / White House.

George Lakoff

Author and Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at UC Berkeley

Posted: April 15, 2010 09:04 AM

[The Poll Democrats Need to Know About](#)

Framing, Value-Shifting, the California Budget Crisis, and Why Democrats So Often Act Like Republicans

This is a case study of how inadequate polling can lead Democrats to accept and promote a radical Republican view of reality. This paper compares two polls, one excellent and revealing, the other inadequate, misleading, and counterproductive. The issues raised are framing and value-shifting (where voters shift, depending on the wording of questions, between two contradictory political world-views they really hold, but about different issues). It also discusses how polls can reveal the difference between what words are commonly assumed to mean, versus what they really mean to voters -- and how polls can test this.

It is a truism that poll results can depend on framing. For example, the *NY Times* [reported](#) last month on a *NYT/CBS* Don't-Ask-Don't-Tell poll on whether "homosexuals" or "gay men and lesbians" should be allowed to serve openly in the military. Seventy-nine percent of Democrats said they support permitting gay men and lesbians to serve openly. Fewer Democrats however, just 43 percent, said they were in favor of allowing homosexuals to serve openly. That's a 36 percent framing shift on the same literal issue, but not surprising since the words evoked very different frames, one about sex and the other about rights. Newsworthy for the *NY Times*, but hardly earthshaking.

But [a recent poll by David Binder](#), perhaps the premier California pollster, showed a framing shift of deep import for Democrats -- a shift of 69 percent on the same issue, depending on the framing. It was noteworthy not just because of the size of the framing shift on the main question, but because the shift was systematic. Roughly, around 18 percent of voters showed that their values are not fixed. They think like *both* liberals and conservatives -- depending on how they understand the issue. With a liberal value-framing, they give liberal answers; with a conservative value-framing, they give conservative answers. What is most striking is that conservatively framed poll questions are all too often written by Democrats thinking they are neutral. The result is a Democratic move to the right for what are thought to be "pragmatic" reasons, but which are actually self-defeating.

Here is the background.

California is the only state with a legislature run by minority rule. Because it takes a 2/3 vote of both houses to either pass a budget or raise revenue via taxation, 33.4 percent of either house can

block the entire legislative process until it gets what it wants. At present 63 percent of both houses are Democrats and 37 percent are far-right Republicans who have taken the Grover Norquist pledge not to raise revenue and to shrink government till it can be drowned in a bathtub. They run the legislature by saying no. This has led to gridlock, huge deficits from lack of revenue, and cuts so massive as to threaten the viability of the state.

Unfortunately, most Californians are unaware of the cause of the crisis, blaming "the legislature," when the cause is only 37 percent of "the legislature," the 37 percent that runs the legislature under minority rule.

I realized last year that the budget crisis was really a democracy crisis, and that a ballot initiative that could be passed by only a majority could eliminate the 2/3 rules, replacing minority rule by majority rule. The idea was to bring democracy to California. Only two words are needed to be changed in the state Constitution, with "two-thirds" becoming "a majority" in two paragraphs, one on the budget and the other on revenue. The changes could be described in a 14-word, single-sentence initiative that went to the heart of the matter -- democracy. It is called The California Democracy Act:

All legislative actions on revenue and budget must be determined by a majority vote.

One would think voters would like the idea of democracy -- and a ballot initiative they could actually understand. And they do. David Binder of DBR Research recently conducted a poll showing that likely voters support it by a 73-to-22 percent margin -- a difference of 51 percent!

There were 800 randomly selected likely voters, with a ± 3.5 percent margin of error -- and 53 questions. In short, it was a thorough and responsible poll.

In California, the Attorney General gets to write the "title and summary" -- the description of the initiative that actually appears on the ballot. At present, the Attorney General is Jerry Brown, who is running for Governor. He had announced that he was against getting rid of the 2/3 rule for taxes, though in favor of a majority for budget alone. The result would make Democrats responsible for the budget, but with no extra money to put in it, they would be presiding over the further decline of the state.

When the Democracy Act came across Brown's desk, he personally penned the following title and summary:

Changes the legislative vote requirement necessary to pass the budget, and to raise taxes from two-thirds to a simple majority. Unknown fiscal impact from lowering the legislative vote requirement for spending and tax increases. In some cases, the content of the annual state budget could change and / or state tax revenues could increase. Fiscal impact would depend on the composition and actions of future legislatures.

Instead of the original initiative text, Brown's wording would appear on the ballot if it qualified, and would have to appear on all petitions. This wording uses the word "taxes" three times paired with the verbs "raise" and "increase," as well as the conservative phrase for vilifying liberals "spending and tax increases."

When DBR Research polled voters on both the original initiative text and the Brown title and summary, the results came out as follows:

	Support	Oppose	Difference
Original initiative text	73%	22%	+51%
Brown title and summary	38%	56%	-18%

The Brown wording shifted the result by 69 percent! The largest shift Binder had ever seen.

But this was not mere wording. I had expected a large shift, but the neural theory behind my cognitive linguistics research had made a deeper prediction: Many voters have both conservative and liberal value-systems in their brain circuitry, linking each value-system to different issues. Each value-system, when activated, shuts down the other, and each can be activated by language. The prediction was that this shift was systematic, tied to value-based ideas -- not just a matter of one wording or another.

A second prediction was made from long experience. After a strong attack from the right, a liberal poll advantage on an initiative can be expected to drop by around 10 percent.

Brilliantly, the DBR poll tested both for the systematic effect and simulated the effect of a right wing attack. The systematic effect was tested by a battery of pro-arguments followed by a battery of con-arguments, each in distinct wording. The pro-arguments were given first, followed by the battery of con-arguments. Right after the con arguments, the original wording and the attorney general's title and summary were tested again.

	Support	Oppose	Difference
Original initiative text	62%	34%	+28%
Brown title and summary	43%	52%	-9%
			37% shift

As predicted, in the face of con-arguments, the 73 - 33 percent advantage for the original initiative dropped to a 62 - 34 percent advantage, a loss of 11 points, but still a 28-point advantage. The attorney general's wording also suffered a loss after the pro-arguments, going from 38-to-56 percent before the arguments to 43-to-52 percent after the arguments, a 9 percent drop for the attorney general's language, about as expected. The total shift after the arguments, from +28 to -9, is 37 percent.

The current explanation of the shift is as follows. There are two political value-systems that voters have, call them Pro and Con. (You might think them as Progressive and Conservative, though no overall views are tested in the poll.) About 40-to-45 percent have a consistently Pro-worldview. About 35-to-40 percent have a consistently Con worldview. About 18 percent have *both* worldviews, and the understanding provided by language can trigger one or the other, resulting in a shift.

Now things get really interesting. The DBR poll found a way to test this explanation. The respondents to the poll were asked if they found the pro- and con-arguments convincing or unconvincing. On the battery of pro-arguments, an average of 57 percent found the pro-arguments convincing and 38 percent found them unconvincing.

On the battery of con-arguments, 57 percent found the con-arguments convincing and 41 percent found them unconvincing. The same high percentage -- 57% on average -- who were convinced by the pro-arguments were also convinced by the con arguments! As in the shift found in the support for the initiatives, the wording resulted in a shift of about the same magnitude. On the pro- and con-arguments, it was 35 percent -- well within the $\pm 3.5\%$ margin of error.

	Convincing	Unconvincing	Difference
Pro-initiative arguments	57%	38%	+19%
Con-initiative arguments	57%	41%	-16%
			35% shift

This result fits the explanation given above: About 40-to-45 percent are consistently Pro and about 35-to-40 percent consistently Con, with about 18 percent having both Pro and Con worldviews -- and shifting, depending on how language leads them to understand the issue. A large majority of voters stay the same, but a value-shift of about 18 percent of the voters makes for a huge "public opinion discrepancy" of around 36 percent.

What is public opinion on the initiative? It depends on what the initiative is taken as saying. Is it about democracy and majority rule or is it about raising taxes? Overall, public opinion is very favorable on one understanding and very unfavorable on the other.

Is there a fact of the matter? Is one understanding more true than the other?

At this point, the DBR Research poll gets even more interesting. When a voter hears "raise taxes," he or she usually understands the phrase as meaning "raise my taxes." In short, there appears to be a difference between what the words say and what the voter taking the poll understands. Technically, plugging a tax loophole previously given to certain corporations can be seen as "raising taxes," since those corporations would now be paying their fair share instead of a previously reduced amount. Charging oil companies for the oil they take out of the ground in California is called an "oil severance tax." But such actions would not be "raising taxes" on any individual.

This raises the question of whether the attorney general's title and summary was misleading. When it said "raise taxes," were most voters misled into thinking it meant raising *their* taxes?

The DBR poll found a way to test this. It asked the following question:

Some experts on the state budget say that enough money to solve the budget crisis can be raised without raising taxes on those in the lower or middle income brackets. Instead, tax loopholes for corporations can be closed and a fee can be assessed to oil companies for extracting their oil from the land. Do you support or oppose solving the budget crisis by closing tax loopholes on

corporations and charging oil companies an extraction fee without raising taxes on lower and middle income Californians?

The response: Support -- 62%, Oppose -- 34%

In short, most Californians, those hurting most in the lower and middle income groups, are not opposed to raising taxes in general. They just think they are already paying fair taxes. What does this mean for the shifts we have seen toward the Attorney General's title and summary, which says that the initiative is about "raising taxes"? It means that most voters are misled by the language into thinking that the initiative is about raising *their* taxes.

For this reason, I have resubmitted the California Democracy Act, asking Attorney General Brown for a new title and summary, one that does not mislead the voters.

Do most voters really care about democracy? Hardened Democratic political leaders told me they didn't believe it. They thought voters only cared about their pocketbooks. So DBR Research tested this as well. The poll asked voters if they agreed or disagreed, as follows:

In a democracy, a majority of legislators should be able to pass everyday legislation.

Agree -- 71%, Disagree -- 24%

In a democracy, a minority of legislators should be able to block everyday legislation.

Agree -- 25%, Disagree -- 68%

In short, voters do care overwhelmingly about democracy.

The DBR Research poll is remarkable, and brilliant in many ways. But to see its true significance, one should compare it to other polls, supposedly on the same issue.

In the spring of 2009, when I first thought of this initiative and started discussing it in public, I was told over and over that polls were taken and that my initiative didn't poll. I heard it first from a state senator, then from a powerful official in the State Democratic Party, then from the political directors of various unions who had spoken with that party official. They were against my initiative on the grounds that it couldn't win, supposedly because it didn't poll. Perhaps the most influential of these polls was one by someone I will call the Other Pollster, taken just after I had submitted the California Democracy Act to the Attorney General.

(Incidentally, I am not identifying the individuals involved because the issue is not about individuals. As we shall see, the other pollster, the party official, and the political directors were acting normally, all too normally.)

Here is what the Other Pollster, in his summary, referred to as the "direct question."

Would you favor or oppose allowing the state legislature to increase taxes by a majority vote rather than the current two-thirds vote requirement?

Favor -- 35%, Oppose -- 62%

Notice the assumptions built into the question: "*allowing* the state legislature to *raise taxes*." Again, the "raise taxes" will be heard as "*raise your taxes*" and "allow" suggests that the legislature will want, be able to, and **will** raise **your** taxes."

The Other Pollster also asked a slightly different version of this question:

Regarding taxes and government, would you prefer less government and lower taxes, or SLIGHTLY HIGHER TAXES FOR BETTER GOVERNMENT SERVICES?

LESS GOVT/LOWER TAXES. 59 % BETTER GOVT/HIGHER TAXES. 41 %

The results are what we would expect.

The Other Pollster was also asked by the party official to see if the California Democracy Act had any serious support.

The question the Other Pollster asked on the poll embedded my initiative language into the linguistic frame, "Some people say Do you agree or disagree with this viewpoint?" It was the only question embedded into this particular linguistic frame.

Notice that this frame presents a contrast between "some people" and "you," introducing a bias against whatever is in the "...". In addition, "some people" indicates a minority opinion, which introduces a second bias. Third, he referred to it as "this viewpoint," distancing it from the person taking the poll (it is only a "viewpoint") -- a third bias.

Here is his question and result:

Some people say that "all state legislative actions on revenue and budget issues should be determined by a majority vote." Do you agree or disagree with this viewpoint?

AGREE. 51 DISAGREE. 43

Even in that triply-biased frame, the original initiative language about majority rule came out ahead by 8 percent, while the language about raising the respondent's taxes came out between 27 and 18 percent behind -- shifts of 35 to 26 percent.

The Other Pollster noted the shift, but concluded:

the question of simply lowering the two-thirds budget approval threshold to a majority vote, *without any conditions*, was asked two ways:

- 35% of voters supported, and 62% opposed, the direct question of "allowing the state legislature to increase taxes by a majority vote, rather than the current two-thirds vote requirement."

- 51% of voters agreed, and 43% disagreed, with the "Lakoff" question which read: "All state legislative actions on revenues and budget issues should be determined by a majority vote?"

Neither one of these 2 concepts meets the initial 60% voter support threshold needed to withstand the onslaught from a well-funded opposition campaign.

The difference between the "Lakoff question" and the "direct question" can largely be explained by recognizing that the Lakoff question which read: "all state legislative actions on revenues and budget issues shall be determined by a majority vote" (51% support), did not fully convey the real consequences to voters that the Lakoff language would mean: "allowing the state legislature to increase taxes by a majority vote rather than the current two-thirds vote requirement" (35% support).

On subjects like taxes, it can be dangerous to assume that voters can be moved to vote differently from their true beliefs by using cleverly crafted language.

First, the Other Pollster does not mention the question he actually asked, using the some-people-say frame. Second, he assumes that the "direct question" is the one that does not mention democracy or majority vote, but rather the one that assumes that "the legislature" wants to, would be able to, and would increase the respondent's taxes. This is misleading, not "direct," for reasons discussed above. He calls this the "true belief" of the voters. Third, he suggests that asking about democracy and majority rule is "cleverly crafted language" to "move voters to vote differently from their true beliefs."

If you take the Other Pollster's poll and his description of the results at face value, you might very well think that the California Democracy Act "does not poll" when it, in fact, polls 73 percent on the first pass and 62 percent right after a barrage of right-wing attacks.

Why does the Other Pollster's poll and poll description look that way, and what does it say about the Democratic leadership that commissioned it and believes the Other Pollster's description of his results?

What Does All This Mean?

Polls have come to matter, in at least four ways.

First, the issues matter. The issue here is the future of California, and whether a minority of ultra-conservatives will continue to bankrupt the state government purposely to keep it from meeting desperate public needs. In short, the issue is as serious as any issue in public life. And the question "Does it poll?" becomes literally a matter of life and death for many people, and of impoverishment and suffering for others.

Second, what the Other Pollster calls the "direct questions" and "true beliefs" are the radical conservative ideas about taxes that conservatives have put forth misleadingly year after year. Here *Democrats* have been so whipped for so long that they accept conservative framings as simply "true beliefs." What happens when those Democrats are confronted with a question about simple democracy and majority rule, rather than the minority rule that they and the majority of citizens have been suffering under? They cave. When such Democrats see a statement that they actually believe in and wish would happen, they see it as only "cleverly crafted language." The Democratic

leadership in California has come to believe a false Republican view of reality, to own it and promote it, and to help make it real. Through polls.

Third, it is rare for polls to discuss what DBR called "the 33%-percent discrepancy group," that is, the people who have *two* distinct value systems applied to different ideas (e.g., democracy vs. additional taxes on them), and shift depending on the ideas expressed in the language of the poll. These voters need to be studied, isolated as a culturally important demographic group, and taken into account in future polls. This may involve admitting that there may not be such a thing as overall "fixed public opinion" that includes this significantly large group. Polls should be detecting *public understanding* -- and studying voters with dual value-systems is crucial if the value-shifters are to be identified and understood.

Fourth, the word "taxes" is not neutral or objective. It has been hijacked by the right. By virtue of their communications system, they have changed the framing of the word to mean, according to radical conservative doctrine, "money that individuals have earned without government help that is taken out of their pockets by the government and given to people who haven't earned it and don't deserve it." For many voters, "taxes" has come to be a word defined by the Con ideological worldview, able to activate that worldview in the approximately 18% of voters who switch, depending on language. The last thing Democrats -- or independents -- should be doing is using language that activates a Con worldview and whose effect is to create a shift to the right. It is unfair. In this case it goes against democratic principles. And politically, it is shooting oneself in the foot.

It is for this reason that I have chosen the word "revenue." "Revenue" is a neutral word in that it has no such doctrinal meaning. It is a word that comes from business. To run a business, you need revenue; and the same is true of running a government. It is just false to think that the use of the word "taxes" is neutral or objective. In the poll questions cited, that right-wing doctrinal meaning is sneaked in, misleadingly.

Finally, these results show the effectiveness of the radical conservative communication system operating 24/7 using the same effective framing year after year. It operates on an unconscious level, slowly changing the brains of those engaged (on either side) of the discourse that the conservatives define. Their communication system is so effective, and Democratic leaders have to deal with it so often, they too can get taken in.

This poll revealed that, in California on this issue, 18% of the likely voters were value-shifters, that is, they seem to have *both* worldviews. Given that Democrats have 63% of the seats in the legislature at present, that means that the 18 percent has been voting in the Democratic column, either as Democrats or independents. But if they have *both* worldviews, that means they are susceptible to conservative arguments in conservative language, and could shift, as happened in the case of Scott Brown's election in Massachusetts. Democrats cannot take value-shifters for granted. They have to identify them and convince them using value-based language of their own.

The results of this poll goes *against* the idea that such voters are "in the middle" and that one can appeal to them by moving to the right. The use of the language of the right can move them to think like conservatives, and hence to vote like conservatives.

I am a cognitive scientist and a linguist, and have been applying what has been learned in those disciplines to our politics. I have been arguing over the past decade and a half that progressives need to build a communication system of their own to (1) express the values they really believe in, to (2) to communicate the truth, (3) to use their own values-based language to show the moral

significance of those truths, and (4) avoid communicating conservative beliefs they do not hold, especially by avoiding the language of conservatism. The poll results just discussed reflect the failure of progressives to do so.

Pollsters have an awesome responsibility. I see the DBR Research poll as a model for carrying out that responsibility. And I have chosen to discuss that poll at length because of the general lessons it has to teach.

George Lakoff is Goldman Distinguished Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley. He is the author of The Political Mind, and the author of the California Democracy Act.

4/19/10

Questions for Jon Jarvis, director of the National Park Service

The National Park Service celebrates National Park Week this week by waiving entrance fees at the nation's 392 national parks. National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis discusses the program, the new law allowing guns in parks and his 34-year career with the agency.

Q Why are parks free this week?

It's an invitation to the American public to come visit their national parks. . . . It's a great celebration and opportunity to reacquaint with our parks.

The week of festivities is also tied to the 40th anniversary of Earth Day?

Earth Day is Thursday, April 22. There are over 300 [events] across the country. We have some events right here in D.C. around the Washington Monument. We have about 600 kids coming in to participate in a range of activities.

How much will the fee waiver cost the Park Service in lost revenue?

A little less than \$1 million a day, so about \$9 million total.

Is it worth the cost?

Absolutely. Our fee program is a great program, because we use it specifically to improve facilities for the visitors. . . . But occasionally, it's important to waive this fee. We'll do it again in August. The fee program is only a supplement to the regular appropriations we get from Congress to operate the National Park system.

How are overall visits to the parks going this year?

It's up. We got a bump last year, about 4 percent, or 287 million last year. We'll probably hit 290 million this year.

I think it's always hard to exactly pin down why visitation goes up or down. A lot of it is tied to the economy and you can probably give some credit to the Ken Burns series ["The National Parks: America's Best Idea" on PBS] in drawing some attention to the National Park system. You can give some credit to the economy and folks who couldn't afford to go to Europe, so they're reengaging with great places here in the United States.

Guns are now permitted on the grounds of many parks, depending on state firearms laws. Have there been any incidents and how have park staffers adjusted to the new laws?

There've been organizations that have come to the parks to demonstrate their new rights to carry, and we've been very professional in their rights to carry. But no incidents out of the ordinary.

We ensured that citizens were expected to know their rights whether or not they're in compliance with state rights, and our employees are well prepared with training. And sites where guns are prohibited are well signed so that the public do not bring their weapons into those. I think it's frankly worked out pretty well so far. [Protesters plan to bring their guns to a "Restore the Constitution" rally Monday at Fort Hunt and Gravelly Point parks on the banks of the Potomac River.]

You're a 34-year veteran of the National Park Service. Why did you join the agency?

I started right here in Washington, D.C., as a seasonal employee on the Mall. I started at the Bicentennial Information Center in 1976 in the Commerce Department building, where the White House Visitor Center is.

I'd known about the National Park Service from growing up in rural Virginia near Shenandoah National Park, and I had a biology degree and I really wanted to pursue this as a career.

At how many have you worked?

Eight actual parks (the Mall, Prince William Forest Park in Virginia, Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas, Crater Lake National Park in Oregon, North Cascades National Park in Washington, Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska and Mt. Rainier in Washington) and then I served as the regional director for the Pacific West, where I had 54 parks under my responsibility.

Do you have any memorable stories from working at those parks?

When you see those pictures of the big brown Alaskan red bears standing at the waterfall and catching fish with their teeth, it happens at two places, the McNeil River and the Brooks River.

The Brooks River is a really short little river, maybe a couple miles long, two lakes between and a fair amount of fall in the river. It's a great place to fish. I am a fly fisherman. I was fishing that river by myself very late in the day and I had a big old brown bear take a very strong interest in me. For about an hour and a half it was cat and mouse with me and the bear. I wound up swimming the river several times and floating past him and getting out of the bank as he actively pursued -- not in an attack mode, but was never more than 15 feet from me at any time until I got back to my cabin.

He literally followed me up to the cabin door. I burst into the cabin totally soaking wet and my brother was sitting in the cabin reading a book in front of the fire.

"What happened to you?" he asked.

"Look out the window," I said, and there was the bear staring at the door.

-- Interview by Ed O'Keefe

4/17/10 Washington Post

Obama launches America's Great Outdoors conservation initiative

By Juliet Eilperin and Scott Wilson, Staff Writers

President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors initiative Friday, an attempt to reshape U.S. conservation policy at a time when the nation is facing new environmental threats but the government is hard-pressed to afford new spending programs.

In a brief speech at the Interior Department, Obama said he intends to build on "a breathtaking legacy of conservation that still enhances our lives." He said the tradition began with Theodore Roosevelt, whom he described as "one of my favorite presidents," although he added, "I will probably never shoot a bear."

Obama said the nation's growing population, pollution and other factors are "putting a rising strain on our lands." He said government cannot address conservation issues alone, and he urged private industry, local communities, Native American leaders and volunteers to help protect the outdoors.

"Even in times of crisis, we're called to take the long view to preserve our national heritage, because in doing so, we fulfill one of the responsibilities that falls to all of us as Americans and as inhabitants of this same small planet," Obama said. "And that is the responsibility that we are rising to meet today."

Obama signed a memorandum sketching out broad goals that the administration hopes to pursue in the next few years: forming coalitions with state and local governments and the private sector; encouraging outdoor recreation by Americans; connecting wildlife migration corridors; and encouraging the sustainable use of private land.

Four administration officials -- Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson and Nancy Sutley, who chairs the White House Council on Environmental Quality -- will spearhead the effort.

"It's really about getting people to think about the great outdoors again and recognize what a tremendous asset it is to our country," Vilsack said in an interview.

American children are spending half as much time outside as their parents did, according to the Interior Department, and the country loses 2 million acres a year to development. Government officials worry about the effect of land conversion on natural resources: The Maryland Office of Planning projects that more land in the region surrounding the Chesapeake Bay will have been converted to housing between 1995 and 2020 than in the previous 3 1/2 centuries.

Sierra Club Chairman Carl Pope, who was among the environmental leaders attending Friday's day-long conference to launch the initiative, said he hoped a broad coalition of partners will be encouraged to reengage on public-lands issues.

It remains unclear how much the government can afford to spend on such programs in the future. The National Park Service alone estimates that it would need an extra \$9.5 billion to clear a backlog of repairs and improvements.

PUBLIC LANDS: Obama unveils new conservation strategy for 'America's Great Outdoors' (04/16/2010)

Noelle Straub, E&E reporter

President Obama today launched the "America's Great Outdoors" initiative to develop a federal land conservation strategy that builds on local efforts to protect parks, rivers and open spaces.

"When we see America's land, we understand what an incredible bounty that we have been given. And it's our obligation to make sure that the next generation enjoys that same bounty," Obama said in a 12-minute speech at the Interior Department.

As part of the initiative, administration officials will hold public listening sessions around the country during the coming months with a wide range of groups to discuss innovative conservation strategies and efforts to establish new community parks.

Obama signed a presidential [memorandum](#) after his speech that calls for a report by Nov. 15 detailing an action plan with specific steps to meet the initiative's goals. The report also will include a review of promising non-federal conservation approaches and an analysis of federal resources and programs that could complement them.

Obama said the goals include building on successful conservation efforts being spearheaded outside of Washington; helping families spend more time outdoors; fostering a new generation of urban parks; and helping ranchers, farmers and property owners who want to protect their lands.

But the initiative appeared to provide no new funding for conservation. The November report should "reflect the constraints in resources available in ... the federal budget," the memo says. Instead, the report should recommend efficient use of existing resources and opportunities to leverage non-federal resources, it says.

The effort will be led by Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairwoman Nancy Sutley, all of whom gave short speeches prior to Obama's.

Those gathered for the daylong conference, during which Cabinet members will lead several discussion panels, included a wide range of conservation organizations, hunters and anglers, state and local officials, outdoors groups, industry officials and ranchers. New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson (D), former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Newark, N.J., Mayor Cory Booker also attended.

Obama noted that President Theodore Roosevelt held the first White House conservation conference more than a century ago.

"I will probably never shoot a bear," Obama joked in reference to Roosevelt. "But I do intend to enrich that legacy, and I feel an abiding bond with the land that is the United States of America."

American lands face a variety of threats, including development, climate change and new sources of pollution, Obama said.

"Rising to meet these challenges is a task and an obligation, but it's one that government cannot and should not meet alone."

Private land trusts have already conserved 10 million acres through voluntary efforts, while the Agriculture Department has preserved an additional 33 million, Obama said.

"Understand, we're not talking about a big federal agenda being driven out of Washington," he said. "We're talking about how we can collect best ideas on conservation, how we can pursue good ideas that local communities embrace, and how we can be more responsible stewards of tax dollars to promote conservation."

He also touted the initiative as a job creator for the tourism and recreation industries, saying it is the "right thing to do for our economy." The initiative is vital even at a time of recession and two wars because "even in times of crisis, we're called to take the long view to preserve our national heritage," he added.

Salazar said the conference marked the beginning of a "collective conversation" on how best to preserve outdoor spaces. He cited the need for wildlife corridors throughout the country to connect smaller patches of protected lands to protect species. Sutley emphasized the need for urban parks, calling them "refuges in an ocean of asphalt."

Numerous conservation groups strongly praised the administration for holding the conference but encouraged the White House to fully fund land acquisition and other conservation programs.

"For America's Great Outdoors to succeed, the administration must be prepared to put meaningful funding behind programs that protect land, provide assistance to communities, put park rangers on the ground to serve school and youth groups, and foster public-private conservation partnerships," Tom Kiernan, president of the National Parks Conservation Association, said in a statement.



CAPITOL WEEKLY

THE NEWSPAPER OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

LAO: A heavy hitter in the fight over environmental issues

By **John Howard** | 04/08/10 12:00 AM PST

In the battlefield that is California's greenhouse gas emissions law, the opposing forces have been clearly defined: Industry and business interests seek limits or an outright repeal, while environmental groups, their allies and – thus far – the public favor the statute.

But a third major player has gradually entered the fray over the past year: the Legislative Analyst's Office.

For a nonpartisan office that advises lawmakers on the state budget and myriad fiscal issues, the appearance of the LAO is a surprise, not only in air-quality issues but in an array of other environmental questions facing the Capitol.

"I would generally agree that we are seeing more LAO reports on environmental issues," said Assemblyman Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael, "but why might that be? It's the fact that AB 32 is a big deal, the fact we are in a down economy and the fact that some continue to look at environmental programs and environmental regulations as somehow being at odds with economic growth," he said.

Paul Mason of the nonprofit Pacific Forest Trust says the LAO is playing an important environmental role, but wonders if the office is being stretched too thin.

"I really appreciate the LAO. On the question of how do we get fire protection into State Responsibility Areas, they are the only ones making sense of the issue," he said. "They are responsible and they are invaluable, but they are not magic. I do think there is a risk in asking them to do too many things that are beyond their capacity."

Sen. Joe Simitian, D-Palo Alto, the chairman of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee, raised a similar point.

"There are only so many hours in the day, and there is always the question of whether or not the necessary expertise is available," Simitian said. "But I am a fan of the LAO and I value their work product. It's one of the few places we can go to in the building to get a genuinely nonpartisan, reasonably objective assessment."

"They do a remarkable good job of making their presentations without ego, without attitude and without pride of ownership. That's a very welcome approach, in my view," Simitian added.

The LAO's scrutiny over the past year has been directed at legislation, at the administration's budget proposals, at air-quality enforcers, at university economists and others. Some of its analyses have been done as part of its established routine, some have been produced in response to questions from legislators.

But however they're done, they are having a significant and increasing impact on the public, according to elected officials, environmentalists and state staff people interviewed by Capitol Weekly. The analyses – all linked to fiscal implications -- have dealt with carbon emissions, renewable energy, groundwater management, flood protection, air quality, offshore oil drilling, fire fighting and even power plant siting.

"It's all of the above. This is an issue that is really important. When you are talking about AB 32, you are talking about a statute that impacts some 70 some odd measures. Because of that, have received several requests for analyses," said Tiffany Roberts, the LAO's fiscal policy analyst who specializes in resources.

The variety of reports has something for everyone, Huffman said. "Folks like me treat the LAO reports like a menu in a Chinese restaurant, where you can order what you like. They are generally pretty good...although they completely missed it on marine protections and on AB 32."

"A value of their work is that the LAO is not insider-driven. The LAO is designed to be an outsider and to bring an outsider's perspective to their analyses, and I think that's great. The LAO is the Legislature's nonpartisan fiscal adviser, and traditionally gives guidance to lawmakers on spending, taxes, and borrowing, while providing detailed, line-by-line analyses of the state budget for such programs as education, health and social services. The LAO determines the fiscal impact of proposed ballot initiatives, assesses the dollars-and-cents impact of proposals at the request of individual lawmakers.

The LAO has chided both industry and the Air Resources Board for flawed economic analyses related to AB 32 and has aggressively questioned the sophisticated models used by both sides to justify conclusions. AB 32 is the state's 2006 law to curb climate-changing greenhouse gases and it is a flash point of debate between business interests and environmentalists.

Last month, the LAO dismissed two widely-reported university studies – both commissioned by business interests – that showed AB 32 costing California hundreds of billions of dollars in lost economic output. Both studies "have major problems involving both data, methodology and analysis. As a result of their shortcomings, we believe that their principal findings are unreliable," the LAO said.

Earlier, the LAO directed its fire at the ARB, the state agency that is charged with enforcing AB 32. The LAO questioned a "scoping plan" presented by the ARB, saying its analysis of a proposed cap-and-trade program for emission credits was unclear, its assumptions for a low-carbon fuel standard were weak and that its economic analyses "rely so heavily on a small number of key assumptions."

The LAO noted that the board "intentionally excluded the costs/savings for some of the non-AB 32 measures, including the million solar roofs initiative, but included the cost savings of others...." The selective approach "substantially affects the ARB's bottom line economic projections for the plan," the LAO said.

The ARB is in the midst of updating its scoping plan, responding in part to the LAO's observations, which were contained in a March 9 letter to Assemblyman Kevin De Leon, D-Southgate.

But AB 32 is only one environmental issue examined by the LAO.

"There is increased activity at the LAO, but it is coming from legislators making requests. The legislators are asking for clarifications of environmental issues, probably because the economy is in such dire straits," said Assemblyman Dan Logue, R-Chico, who has been sharply critical of AB 32.

“I think part of this is budget driven, the other part is that we are trying to find our way out of the recession. I think it is a sign of the times.”

The reason the LAO is in the environmental policy arena is because it is charged with following the money. And virtually hot-button environmental issues up for debate – greenhouse gases, offshore oil exploration, renewable energy – entail potentially billions of dollars in costs. The issues also involve programs that are viewed as favorites of lawmakers or the governor – and thus especially sensitive.

For example, the LAO skewered a number of the governor’s environmental proposals in the state budget. The office recommended rejection of a \$23 million plan for recreation and wildlife, rejection of an emergency flood fund, rejection of a new property tax to pay for fire fighting, and rejection of a plan to use offshore oil money to pay for state parks. The LAO also said the administration is developing renewable energy rules that circumvent the Legislature’s authority and have “led to inefficient duplication of efforts by state agencies and a waste of state resources.”

It is precisely that fiscal expertise that has led the LAO into disputes over environmental issues. Perhaps the best example of that is AB 32, which requires California to cut its carbon emissions to 1990 levels in 10 years.

In the view of most scientists, carbon emissions contribute to global warming, the steady but gradual increase in the earth’s temperature. But the debate over AB 32 is not focused on the validity of global warming but over the economic impact – in other words, the cost to businesses – of actually putting AB 32 into effect.

A recent survey conducted by Field Research showed public support for AB 32 from 58 percent of registered voters, although it noted there were some doubts about the economic impacts of the law.

The biggest dollar-intensity piece of AB 32, the creation of a market place to buy, trade and sell emissions credits, has not yet been established. The system, guided by regulations written by the ARB, includes a cap on emissions that will be gradually ratcheted lower as companies turn to improved technology. It calls for the distribution of the credits, although the value of those credits, thus far, is unknown, and includes an expanded regulatory scheme to enforce its rules. It is seen as a precursor to greenhouse gas rules in other states.

The LAO, hired by a Legislature controlled by Democrats, has waded into that debate. And, despite the partisan furor over environmental issues, the non-partisan shield remains intact.

“I think the LAO is a very professional institution and you would never know they were hired by Democrats if you look at their work. I don’t think any of us know what were going to get when the LAO undertakes a study,” Huffman said.



CAPITOL WEEKLY

THE NEWSPAPER OF CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

State holds its breath as income taxes roll in

By **Anthony York** | 04/08/10 12:00 AM PST

There isn't much good news when it comes to the state budget these days. The state is still facing an estimated \$20 billion deficit -- a number that one Democratic Assemblywoman suggested this week was actually closer to \$27 billion.

But quietly, state revenues are coming in above and beyond last year's projections. And with the state entering the critical mid-April income tax collection season, the next few days could be crucial in framing the state's budget picture for the next year.

State Controller John Chiang will release updated revenue numbers some time before Friday that will provide a hard count of the state's cash through the month of March. So far, revenues are up close to \$2 billion -- or 3.9 percent above projections for the fiscal year, according to Chiang spokesman Jacob Roper.

The increases have come in all three major revenue sources for the state. Personal income tax revenues are up by \$869 million over projections for the year. Sales taxes are up by more than \$717 million, or 4.2 percent. Corporate taxes are up by \$277 million -- about 6.9 percent over original estimates.

State general fund revenues for the year were estimated at \$88.1 billion. Revenues for the 2010-11 fiscal year are estimated at \$89.3 billion.

But the taxes that are due on April 15 are scored as income for the 2009-10 fiscal year. This year, Chiang has launched a new Web site so that you can follow the state's cash situation as the income tax filings trickle in.

You can track the income taxes day by day at http://www.sco.ca.gov/april_2010_revenue_tracker.html.

Income tax revenues account for the single-largest funding source for state government. According to Roper, personal income tax receipts comprised about 51.3 percent of the state's general fund revenues in 2008-09. About 17 percent of the total income tax revenue comes in during the month of April.

So how do the numbers look so far this year?

Department of Finance spokesman H.D. Palmer says the governor's office is expecting to collect about \$10.5 billion in personal income tax during the month of April. In April 2009, the state collected about \$7.4 billion in income taxes, according to figures from the controller's office. About \$4.5 billion came between April 14 and April 24, as bean counters tallied the returns filed by the April 15 tax deadline.

Overall, income taxes for 2009-10 are expected to comprise \$46.6 billion of the \$88.1 billion general fund revenues. The state's general fund revenues are estimated to be slightly higher next year, with revenues growing to \$89.3 billion for the 2010-11 year.

If nothing else, the controller's Web site illustrates California's propensity to procrastinate when it comes to filing taxes. Between April 1 and April 6, the controller reports collecting just \$290 million. That means there's still billions of dollars worth of income tax revenues, give or take, expected to come in over the next three weeks.

Once the numbers are tallied, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger will revise his January state spending plan. A Schwarzenegger spokesman says the governor's "May Revision" is expected to be unveiled on May 14.



Governor appeals judge's ruling to block furloughs

By **John Howard and Anthony York** | 03/25/10 12:00 AM PST

The Schwarzenegger administration was headed to court Wednesday to block a judge's ruling ordering an immediate halt to the forced furloughs of thousands of state workers in more than five-dozen departments.

The ruling earlier in the day by Alameda County Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch is the latest in a series of decisions by the judge that favored public unions in their dispute with the administration, which says the necessary to help balance the state's books.

The judge ruled that state employees who are paid out of special funds fueled by fees and not out of the state's main General Fund should not be subjected to the furloughs.

Labor lauded Roesch's ruling.

"The decision appears to require the governor to put the furlough employees in those special fund departments back to work immediately," said Chris Voight, staff director of the 3,000-member California Association of Professional Scientists. About four out of five CAPS members are paid through special funds.

"We've urged him to eliminate the furloughs for everybody," Voight added. "The furloughs were a bad idea to begin with."

In Wednesday's ruling, Roesch said furloughs pose "irreparable harm" to state workers who have been forced to absorb what amounts to about a 14 percent reduction in their pay. He lifted the stay on furloughs, but declined to lift the stay on back pay.

As the fight over furloughs winds through the legal system and the legislative process, the issue is on the verge of being obsolete. Schwarzenegger has not proposed furloughs in his 2010-11 budget, opting instead to realize savings from state worker attrition.

But the court proceedings could have a lasting effect on future governors' ability to unilaterally impose furloughs upon state workers. Schwarzenegger used furloughs as a way to trim about \$1.3 billion out of the budget in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Gov. Schwarzenegger, who announced he intended to veto legislation to stop the furloughs, said the continued furloughs were necessary because “we don’t have enough money. I mean, we are in a recession and we just have to go and live within our means.” He made the comment at a Sacramento event in response to a reporter’s question.

“When you look at these furlough cases, I mean, we win some, then you lose some, then you win some, then you lose some,” he said. “It will go back and forth like that. But the bottom line is we’re going to keep the furloughs in place until the end of this year and we will not make any exemptions, we will not go and sign the bill that the legislators sent down to change the furloughs or anything like that.”

The unions contended furloughs – three unpaid days -- violated the unions’ collective bargaining agreements. The administration and lawmakers sought the furloughs, which by one estimate save the state more than \$4 billion annually, in order to balance the state budget. According to the administration, California faces a \$20 billion shortage through the middle of next year.

The administration said the furloughs, which had been the target of dozens of lawsuits, were a necessary cost-cutting device. The furloughs had been scheduled to end by June 30, and an across the board pay cut is contemplated instead.

The state has estimated that some 53,000 state employees in 68 departments are affected by the furloughs, although union sources say the number is higher, perhaps 75,000. A spokeswoman for the governor said the administration was fighting Roesch’s decision.

“We are appealing the judge’s decision to stop furloughs going forward,” said Schwarzenegger spokeswoman Rachel Arrezola. “There are over two dozen cases on the furloughs. Ultimately, the California Supreme Court will decide on this issue. We are confident they will rule to uphold the governor’s furlough authority,” she said.

Roesch did not rule on the question of whether the state owed the workers back pay for the forced furloughs, delaying a decision until the case is resolved on appeal.

The next general furlough day is Friday, April 2. The governor seeks a delay of Roesch’s appeal to allow the furloughs to continue until the issue is decided. Arrezola said the administration was “hopeful they would issue a temporary stay by then.”

Schwarzenegger, Calderon propose relaxing environmental laws for development

By Rebecca Kimitch, Staff Writer

Posted: 02/20/2010 06:09:48 AM PST

Dozens of large developments across the state could be exempt from environmental regulations if a proposal intended to create jobs gets legislative approval during the upcoming budget debate.

The initiative, backed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Assemblyman Charles Calderon, D-Industry, would exempt annually 25 projects from legal challenges under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The bill's backers say the legislation is necessary to create jobs by jump starting construction projects that are caught in inappropriate legal challenges.

"We have to get this economy moving, and we can't do that if we allow our own rules to prohibit people from getting back to work," said Assemblyman Anthony Adams, R-Claremont.

A similar exemption was made last year for the proposed construction of a NFL stadium in Industry. The 25 projects that would be protected by the measure have not yet been identified.

Under CEQA rules most development projects requiring local or state approval must be vetted for environmental impacts on the surrounding area. In many cases the review process includes input from those who would be most affected by the development.

Projects determined to have environmental consequences can be rejected outright. Or, the developer can be forced to take extra steps to mitigate environmental impact.

If someone feels that environmental review or mitigation is inadequate, he or she can sue.

Under Calderon's proposal, projects made exempt from CEQA rules couldn't be stopped through legal challenges by neighborhood groups, environmentalists, cities or anyone else worried about the environmental impact.

"It takes away from the community an impartial judge, a man or woman in a black robe, to decide whether an environmental review has been done properly," said David Pettit of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

And ultimately, it could mean projects are constructed with little consideration for the surrounding air, traffic, water, nature and aesthetics, Pettit said.

But, Calderon said groups use legal challenges allowed under CEQA to carry out agendas unrelated to the environment. He cited examples such as labor groups wanting to be recognized as the bargaining agent in a project, or environmental groups wanting money for an environmental trust fund.

"The process is misused, the government agency is ignored," Calderon said. "The court should be a last resort, but it is quite the opposite."

"CEQA is a great law, one of the most visionary laws of this country. It looks at how a project is going to effect its surroundings in the future. It is worth some abuse, but not as much as has been going on," Calderon continued.

Environmental attorney Sean Hecht, executive director of UCLA's environmental law center, said a citizen's ability to challenge a project's environmental review in court is "essential" to CEQA, providing the only check and balance for the review.

"Judicial review is the only way of ensuring environmental review under CEQA actually complies with the law, because there is no state oversight agency to ensure compliance," he said.

The proposal would still require the 25 projects to conduct environmental reviews, Calderon and bill supporters point out.

Pettit questioned the assertion.

"If you have a local agency that likes the project and really wants the project, you have to ask yourself what kind of review they are going to give," Pettit said. "Instead of a detailed EIR with expert reports and modeling about future impacts of a project, they'll turn in a stack of newspapers. If they have a compliant agency that likes the project, it will get approved."

Calderon said skeptics should have confidence in the government's ability to make good decisions.

"At some point in time there has to be some trust in government to do their job... They don't have any motivation to pollute the environment," Calderon said.

As the legislation is written, the Governor's Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing would select exempt projects based on the number of jobs created and the amount of capital invested. The bill calls for the exemptions to be handed out equally between public and private entities and divided equally throughout the state.

Critics charge the exemptions will be given to the most powerful developers with environmental problems they want to avoid revealing or fixing.

"It is going to be a race to the trough, some very ugly politics," Pettit said.

Sen. Alan Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, agreed.

"It just provides benefits to certain individuals who have access to government," said Lowenthal, who described himself as "tremendously disappointed" by the legislation.

Calderon acknowledged an "element of unfairness" in how the exemptions will be granted.

"But the legislature isn't going to enact this because they want to give advantage to one group over another. We are enacting this because ... we need to create jobs ... We are dealing with the greatest good for the greatest number, and those are big projects," he said.

Calderon and other lawmakers said they will establish further guidelines on which projects should be awarded, such as whether they have already agreed to environmental remediation.

Still, Assemblyman Mike Eng, D-El Monte, couldn't guarantee his support, even with those criteria.

"Each project should be taken on a case-by-case basis if they are going to ask for a CEQA exemption ..." Eng said. "We've demonstrated we've been able to make that deliberation, as we did with the stadium in Industry. But to say now that we've done that, let's make it a cookie cutter for 25 other projects, well there is going to be something lost with that and it is the democratic process."

Whether the proposal has any chance of moving forward could hinge on budget debates. The proposal is intended to be part of the budget.

"We are going to have to make significant cuts that will impact people and we have an obligation to balance that with getting people back to work," Calderon said.

But Lowenthal called the proposal a "non-starter" based on conversations with fellow Democratic senators.

"It is true California is in an economic crisis and it needs to set priorities, but that doesn't have to be done at the expense of who we are as a state ... don't do it by attacking the very reason people would ever want to come to California and that is because we have taken care of the environment," he said.

TO: Board Legislative Committee
(Chair Ted Radke, Doug Siden, Ayn Wieskamp and Alternate John Sutter)

FROM: Pat O'Brien, General Manager
Erich Pfuehler, Legislative Administrative Manager

SUBJECT: Board Legislative Committee Meeting
WHEN: Friday, May 21, 12:45 p.m.
Lunch will be served

WHERE: Board Room, Peralta Oaks

Items to be discussed:

- I. STATE LEGISLATION/ISSUES
 - A. NEW
 - a. PROPOSED LEGISLATION

SB 845 (Committee on Budget) & AB 1638 (Committee on Budget) – Funding for Countywide Strategic Action Plans. (3/17/10)

This is the current germination of California Forward and Fred Silva's idea to enable cities and counties to join with school districts to raise revenue for specific projects. These two bills are identical and would set up a process where a \$0.01 increase in sales and use tax could be approved in each county to achieve common community goals. The bill authorizes local government entities to develop and implement a Countywide Strategic Action Plan to establish goals, increase efficiency and improve local services. The Plan is developed by the county supervisors in consultation with local agencies responsible for services such as education, public safety, public health and welfare, etc. In the process, an assessment of publicly funded programs will be made to see if services are being effectively provided, where improvements need to be made, and make recommendations about where those that are "duplicative, obsolete, ineffective or no longer a priority" can be eliminated. The Plan can be adopted by a majority vote of the members of the county board of supervisors. Resources raised by the \$0.01 increase in sales and use tax is to be allocated to the county and cities in the county pursuant to the Countywide Strategic Action Plan. There is no mention about the role Special Districts could or should play in either developing the plan or meeting community needs. Additionally, there is no specific allocation of revenue to Special Districts.

Staff Recommendation: OPPOSE, unless amended

AB 2103 (Hill) – San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority Elections Clarification. (4/22/10)

This bill seeks to clarify that any regional initiative to raise revenue for the work of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (on which Director Sutter serves) can pass by the proper ratio (2/3rds or 50% +1) cumulatively throughout the nine

county Bay Area. Conversely, it ensures any initiative would not have to pass in each county by either 2/3rds or 50% + 1. The Authority's mission is to formulate a strategy for raising local revenues to help restore 36,000 acres of publicly owned Bay shoreline into tidal wetlands. The estimated cost of such an endeavor is about \$1.43 billion over 50 years. There is some federal and state funding available for these projects, but it is only a fraction of the need. The Authority is responsible for raising additional revenue to narrow the funding gap and help leverage further federal and state funding. According to the author's office, this bill is consistent with the Legislature's intent that voting on region-wide funding mechanisms shall be decided by tabulating the votes of the whole

Staff Recommendation: SUPPORT

AB 2679 (Eng) – Public Building Energy and Water Consumption Reductions. (4/28/10)

This bill requires reductions in energy and water consumption in public buildings. Public buildings include “state, county, city, and city and county buildings funded with money from the General Fund.” It does not specifically mention Special District buildings. The bill applies to existing buildings and would require public buildings have net zero energy consumption by 2030. The bill is supported by Environment California. District staff thinks that given the current economic climate when the state, counties and cities are laying people off, this is the wrong time to enact this law and, therefore, recommend the District oppose the bill.

Staff Recommendation: WATCH

SB 1061 (Hancock) – Funding for Bicycle-Pedestrian Pathway on the Bay Bridge. (4/8/10)

This bill would allow San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge toll revenue to be used to construct a bicycle-pedestrian pathway on the western span of the Bay Bridge. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission estimates the cost to construct a bikeway on the 1.9-mile western span of the Bay Bridge would be over \$518 million, representing just .2% of the unbuilt mileage of the Regional Bikeway Network, but 37% of the cost. The bill is supported by the Bay Area Bicycle Coalition and is co-authored by Senator Mark DeSaulnier.

Staff Recommendation: SUPPORT

SB 1205 (Corbett) – San Francisco Bay Area Disaster Recovery Authority Act. (4/13/10)

This bill would establish the San Francisco Bay Area Disaster Recovery Authority to create a long-term regional recovery plan, to be implemented before and after an earthquake or other disaster occurs in the Bay Area, by cooperating with various stakeholders in the Bay Area, including, but not limited to, the cities, counties, special districts, schools, emergency operators, hospitals, members of the public, private businesses and nongovernmental organizations. The bill would authorize the Authority to raise funds and award grants for the purpose of maintaining and

enhancing the region's resiliency following a disaster. Priority would be given to strategies identified in the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The bill is supported by ABAG.

Staff Recommendation: SUPPORT

B. ISSUES

- a. State Budget Update
- b. State Parks Access Pass Ballot Initiative Update

2. FEDERAL LEGISLATION / ISSUES

A. NEW

a. PROPOSED LEGISLATION

H.R. 996 (Fudge) – To designate September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month (12/19/09)

This resolution expresses the support for designating September as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. The resolution acknowledges First Lady Michelle Obama's efforts to raise awareness about Childhood Obesity and is supported by a number of health and nutrition groups, the United Way, YWCA and the National Football League. East Bay Reps. Lee and Stark support. The resolution is pending in the House Energy and Commerce Committee, on which Rep. Jerry McNerney serves.

Staff Recommendation: SUPPORT

HR 5061 (Speier) - San Francisco Bay Improvement Act of 2010 (4/15/2010)

This bill authorizes \$100 million dollars a year from FY 2011 to FY 2021 for projects which improve the health of the San Francisco Bay. It creates an advisory committee and establishes a San Francisco Bay Program Office within Region 9 of the Environmental Protection Agency. The bill itself does not specify which projects are to be funded, but it makes it clear that only projects identified in the "comprehensive plan" are eligible for funding. The bill is supported by Save the Bay, the entire East Bay Congressional delegation, and Contra Costa County Supervisor John Goia recently testified in support of the bill in D.C.

Staff Recommendation: SUPPORT

B. ISSUES

- a. Transportation Update
- b. Water Resources Development Act Update
- c. Let's Move Initiative Update

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

4. STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

5. CORRESPONDENCE AND ARTICLES

- a. "Deep cuts likely in updated state budget", SFGate.com, May 10, 2010
- b. "Alice Waters push for local, organic setting national agenda, SF Gate.com, May 9, 2010
- c. "Development: Appropriators to examine funding for 'livability' programs", Environment & Energy Daily, May 3, 2010
- d. "Vorderbrueggen: Martinez gears up for political sport", Contra Costa Times, May 1, 2010
- e. "Big bucks pushing to 'Stop Hidden Taxes'", SF Gate, April 22, 2010
- f. "Obama hails the great Outdoors from inside the Interior Dept.", Los Angeles Times, April 16, 2010
- g. "The poll Democrats need to know about", HuffPost Social News, April 15, 2010
- h. "Questions for Jon Jarvis, director of the National Park Service, Washington Post, April 19, 2010
- i. "Obama launches America's Great Outdoors conservation initiative", Washington Post, April 17, 2010
- j. "Public Lands: Obama unveils new conservation strategy for 'America's great Outdoors'", Greenwire, April 16, 2010
- k. "LAO: A heavy hitter in the fight over environmental issues", Capitol Weekly, April 8, 2010
- l. "State holds its breath as income taxes roll in", Capitol Weekly, April 8, 2010
- m. "Governor appeals judge's ruling to block furloughs", Capitol Weekly, March 25, 2010
- n. "Schwarzenegger, Calderon propose relaxing environmental laws for development", Whittier daily News, February 20, 2010

