



League of Women Voters of San Diego County

COUNTY VOTER

Winter 2009

An Inter-League Organization (ILO) - City of San Diego • East San Diego County • North Coast • Escondido

Website: <http://sdcilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

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Co-Presidents Letter

The ILO board has continued to follow the San Diego County Regional Water Quality Board (SDCRWQB) project action on Gregory Canyon. In November the SDCRWQB was considering Certification of a bridge to be built across the San Luis Rey River to connect the Gregory Canyon Landfill to State Route 76. The Board action was scheduled for November 18 and a public hearing was added to their agenda. The Gregory Canyon Bridge could endanger the existing water supply as the San Luis Rey River would become susceptible to water contamination from the continuous flow of traffic on the bridge. It was decided that County League should speak to the issue to present our concerns. Liz Kruidenier and I attended the hearing and I presented the following testimony:

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County includes the LWV of San Diego, LWV of North Coast, LWV of East County and LWV of Escondido. We are concerned that an adoption of the Draft Certification for the Gregory Canyon Bridge would threaten the San Luis Rey River and its important sources of drinking water. Water is a significant and vital resource for our County.

The Gregory Canyon Landfill would be built on a valuable and irreplaceable fractured rock aquifer. The vital water resources in Gregory Canyon provide crucial beneficial use to local residents and municipalities located near the proposed project. Building a landfill with a bridge over the San Luis Rey River would create a significant threat to the regions' precious drinking water supplies and threaten to destroy hundreds of acres of pristine open space and wildlife habitat. The lowered water quality could create human health risk.

The League supports the public right to know the potentially harmful effects of substances that they could encounter in their home, workplace and community. The LWV of SD County urges the California Regional Water Quality Control Board to consider water quality impacts of the entire project not merely the impacts of the construction of the bridge.

The SDCRWQB board members decided against the Application for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for a proposed bridge over the San Luis Rey River after listening to the public comments. They will review the water quality issues after the American Corps of Engineers and the EPA report on the Gregory Canyon Landfill.

Happy New Year 2010!

Nancy McCleary, Co-President

Combat Zoning and Land Use Discrimination/Workshop

Local Governments are targeting severe restrictions for sober living, independent living and residential treatment providers for persons with disabilities. Code Enforcement officers are improperly applying state laws to providers. Providers are going to have to find their voices and use them.

Learn the tools and how to use them to stop restrictive practices in your community. Tool Kit Training includes talking points – moving from defense to offense; ways to use data to your advantage; how to bring about effective community action; state and federal laws protecting sober living, independent living and residential treatment – what they are and how to use them; how to work effectively with local government staff and elected officials; learn what Housing Element law is and how to use 2010 to change the ways local governments treat providers of housing for persons with disabilities.

There will be a class in Escondido at the Fellowship Center in early Feb. 2010. PLEASE BECOME A FORCE AGAINST NIMBYISM. Sign up for free training for providers and advocates of residential treatment, sober living and other independent living for person with disabilities.

The class will be presented by Deborah Parker of Solutions for Treatment Expansion Project (STEP) Futures Associates. The date is unknown at this time but if you are interested, contact dparker@futureassociates.org or call 619.426.2505

REPORT ON VISIT TO VISTA DETENTION CENTER to Brainstorm How We Might Give Mental Health Support to Inmates and Families

Eric Revere, Duane Baird, Bob Brooks and I met Deputy Sheriff Dean Hardy, at 8:30AM in front of the flag pole at the Vista Detention Center on Monday, August 31st for our informational visit and tour of the Vista jail. Inside we were surprised to be greeted, in the board room, by Dick Conklin, BH Educational Liaison to the SDC Sheriff's Dept, the Deputy Director of the VDC and five other deputies including Janet Wright, whose degree is in Social Work. Deputy Dean Hardy,

who personally interviews every inmate and acts as the BH screening officer gave us a 30 minute slide presentation on the facts he felt we needed to know about the facility.

San Diego has 7 jail facilities scattered throughout the County, with an influx of 5,000 prisoners per day/146,000 per year. The list includes Vista and Descanso in the north, East Mesa, George Bailey and Las Colinas, for women only, to the east, Chula Vista in the south is the smallest and the largest jail is for men only in downtown San Diego. Both Las Colinas and SD downtown include a 24 hour psychiatric staff while George Bailey has no intake but provides longer term housing.

Vista's Detention Center holds 800 prisoners. It is a full service intake for both men and women, who are strictly segregated into different areas. The average length of stay is only 4 days so there are prisoners constantly arriving and leaving. There is a multi-disciplinary team that includes mental health to discuss treatment of the, at least, 25% who have medical problems, of which 125 suffer from some form of mental illness. Suicide in custody has been cut way down and inmates who are threatening are never left alone but paired up with other inmates. The mentally ill are treated humanely and housed appropriately.

After learning these facts we questioned our prison officials and found them as anxious as we were to forge links between NAMI North Coastal programs like Family to Family and the families of prison inmates who are seeking help and understanding of the problems of their loved ones. Although they told us that they could NOT identify who WAS in jail they could receive as much information as we wanted to send. In particular they need to know specific medications by name, authorizing physician and pharmacy of record. Everything is checked out as conflicting information is common even from families. They are encouraging visits by families and loved ones to support those who are locked up and very fearful and depressed by their present circumstances.

Thereafter, Dean took us on a tour of the Center and we saw the holding cells for both men and women, the visiting areas, the exercise yards and the seclusion room that contained a chair with restraints. We visited the medical facilities, met with the psychiatrist on call who was most knowledgeable, answered our questions freely and easily, and seemed delighted with our mission. Both he and Janet Wright, the social workers, were most encouraging and gave us many suggestions to consider.

We thanked Dean and all the prison officials we had met for their warm welcome and told them we would work on the best ways to provide the love and support our incarcerated loved ones need in keeping with the rules and regulations required. We felt our visit was a big success and that we are off to a good start. We plan to meet again in November with Dean Hardy and Janet Wright to present our ideas and work out a tentative plan of action.

ALLIANCE FOR REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

We met at Interfaith Community Services in October to update plans for the fall homeless shelter network. It will again provide 189 beds in locations throughout North County, including a two week rotational shelter at participating churches. Beds will be available starting in December and will continue through March. We hope eventually to establish a year-round capability. Right now we are working on an alternative transportation system utilizing vehicles already owned by providers, but not consistently used.

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT. A one stop/shop for all kinds of services in one place for homeless men and women took place the beginning of December in the City San Diego for the third year.

PROGRAM MEETING at North Coast BH Services. Michelle Romero, the longtime program manager, will be leaving the end of November. She said they continue to be open only to those with a severe mental illness discharged from either a hospital or a crisis center until they bring down from 900 to 750 their present patient load. It is slow going as each case is different and no one wants to be treated at a community health center even if they are stable and on meds.

She did compliment the RICA (Recovery Innovations of CA) trained peer support facilitators, saying they have been doing wonders working with the Homeless Outreach Team and trying to case manage those in the shelter beds.

NC MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY FORUM

The Forum of family members, providers, medical staff and consumers met in December to consider both the closing of Cresta Loma's IMD - Institution for Mental Disease - and the early discharge of mental health patients from TriCity Hospital. According to a Deputy Sheriff present, there has been an influx of patients recently from Cresta Loma to the Vista Detention Center. We are trying to find out whether they were released post 10/09 or before. The group will continue to investigate this situation with Heidi Shaffer, the County's IMD expert who will be coming to the January meeting. TriCity Staff will research early discharge as it has become too prevalent.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

The County continues for economic reasons to integrate physical/mental health so stabilized mentally ill consumers on meds are being persuaded to get their care at the community health centers. Those centers with psychiatrists are an easier sell, even though a lot of people really can get their milder antidepressants through a medical doctor. Change never comes easily and those with mental illness find it particularly hard, even though it is an opportunity to see a doctor who can treat their physical health symptoms, which a psychiatrist never does. Ultimately the hope is that everyone will have a med-

ical home either at a physical health or a psychiatric health center so that those diagnosed early might miss the more severe symptoms and make a faster recovery. In the meantime, both sets of physicians will need to be educated to work more collaboratively with each other to ease the transition, and there are MHSA dollars being used to provide this support.

Respectfully submitted: Liz Kruidenier
Vice-President of Mental Health

Electricity's Temporary Lull-Excerpts From November 11 EnergyBiz Insider

It's not the ideal way to curb electricity usage. But the preponderance of energy sources saved in the last year is because of the economic recession. The rest is because of conservation and demand response.

That's just part of what the North American Electric Reliability Corporation shared with reporters during its annual assessment of the electricity sector. While projections are not as rosy as they were a year ago, the group that oversees reliability of the bulk power system in the United States and Canada, is forecasting future growth at about 1.5 percent a year -- down from the 2 percent acceleration it predicted four years ago.

"The economic recession has essentially bought us a few years to address capacity and resource concerns across North America," says Mark Lauby, director of reliability assessments at NERC. "But the 'benefits' of reduced demand growth are expected to be short lived. The time is now to address concerns like transmission siting, secure smart grid implementation, and the integration of renewable resources."

The group says that over the next decade it expects 260,000 additional megawatts of renewable power to be added to the mix. Of that, wind will make up 229,000 megawatts, or 88 percent. Solar, it adds, will comprise 20,000 megawatts.

By 2011, it is projected that natural gas will overtake coal as the dominant fuel source for peak capacity generation in North America. By 2018, natural gas is forecasted to account for 32 percent of the on-peak resource mix -- a 38 percent growth rate, it adds, noting that natural gas is easier to permit and more environmentally friendly than coal.

The world is moving toward a carbon-constrained economy. As such, NERC is expecting the United States and Canada to do the same by setting stricter limits on coal capacity while at the same time enacting countrywide renewable energy portfolio standards.

The biggest impediment to reaching national goals, will be a congested transport system. Toward that end, NERC says that the region must build more than 11,000 miles of high voltage transmission lines by 2013 -- a difficult task given that such an achievement would double the average number of transmission miles constructed during the last 20 years. Already, it

adds, the Southwest Power Pool and the SERC Reliability Corp. are bumping up against their limits.

"The goal of investing in the nation's infrastructure as part of the economic recovery deserves widespread support and quick action," writes Len Rodman, chief executive of Black & Veatch. "In the long-run it's critical that the country gain competitive advantages that are part of the solution to repay the massive debt we are incurring," noting that investments in energy will jumpstart and sustain the economy.

Lengthy Delays - Shortage of transmission lines

The one constant in NERC's message from year-to-year is that if the United States does not ease the transmission permitting process and begin to lay the foundation for an expanded infrastructure, the results would be palpable. Not only would it affect overall reliability, it says, but it would also hurt the chances for renewable energy's success.

Such power facilities are often based in remote locations, requiring high-voltage transmission systems to ensure their energy supplies make it to population centers. The matter necessitates more involvement from state and federal lawmakers, the group adds, emphasizing that a better cost-sharing formula must be introduced to pay for the expansion and upgrade. The increased attention has forced Congress to give more incentives to transmission owners and to provide greater assurances to those lines considered to be in the country's national economic interest.

Altogether, the U.S. Department of Energy says that wind energy could provide 20 percent of the generation mix by 2030. The cost, the agency adds, would be \$60 billion spread over the life of the undertaking. A bigger and more modern grid not only would relieve congestion but it would also diminish the nation's reliance on fossil fuels. A cramped system, by comparison, forces utilities to rely on base-load coal and gas facilities that are nearer to customers they serve.

That's why the Obama administration has created a Memorandum of Understanding that will attempt to streamline the transmission permitting process by improving coordination among nine federal agencies and by creating timelines and deadlines to get the job done. Lengthy delays now obstruct the permitting process.

This is particularly true in the western states where the federal government owns more than one-half of the land and any interstate transmission line is likely to cross areas controlled by one or more federal entities, wind advocates say. Obama's new policy, they add, is necessary to complement a range of other, existing laws that determine how transmission is planned, paid for and permitted. Some of the strongest and most durable winds are based there, although a lack of transmission on such sites means that the energy source cannot easily be transported.



COUNTY LEAGUE DAY
COUNTY FIRE SERVICES

January 23, 2010
University Town Center – La Jolla Village
Wells Fargo Bank Forum Hall

All League members and their guests are invited

9:00 to 9:30AM

Check-in and refreshments

9:30 to 11:00AM

**CALIFORNIA STATE SENATOR –
Christine Kehoe, Senate District 39
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
Chair, Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Man-
agement
- Topic - State Funding of Fire Protection –
- Q & A to follow**

**The Forum Hall is located directly on top of the Wells Fargo Bank near Nordstrom. Con-
venient parking can be found near the Wells Fargo Bank.**

Cost: \$10/person –Please send your registration on or before January 19 to ensure receipt.

LWV of San Diego County
County League Day
January 23, 2010

The following will attend _____
Enclosed is my check for (\$10 per person) \$ _____

Local League Affiliation _____

Please send registration form and check to
Jane Slack
7247 San Luis
Carlsbad, CA 92011