

San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Prosecution rests for final defendant in San Bernardino County Colonies corruption trial

By Joe Nelson, The Sun

Thursday, June 29, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO >> After nearly seven months of sometimes confounding testimony, the prosecution rested this week in San Bernardino County's Colonies bribery case.

The defense will next argue for dismissal of the charges that claim a developer made payoffs to get a 2006 Board of Supervisors approval for a favorable \$102 million land dispute settlement.

Prosecutors rested their case Wednesday for three of the defendants and Thursday for Jim Erwin, a fourth defendant who has a separate jury. Each time, jurors applauded.

Judge Michael A. Smith set Wednesday and Thursday of next week to consider defense motions that could result in tossing some or all of the charges against Erwin, a former assistant assessor; Jeff Burum, a Rancho Cucamonga developer; former county Supervisor Paul Biane; and Mark Kirk, the former chief of staff for former county Supervisor Gary Ovitt.

The dismissal motions are routine. They let the judge rule on the strength of the prosecution's case after it has presented all of its witnesses and evidence before the trial moves on to any defense presentations, final arguments and jury deliberations.

If the case is still in play, defense witness testimony is projected to start July 12 and go through month's end; closing arguments are expected for mid-August.

Prosecutors from the District Attorney's and state Attorney General's offices are jointly prosecuting the case.

They allege Kirk, Biane and former defendant Bill Postmus each took \$100,000 bribes, which were reported as contributions to political action committees from Rancho Cucamonga investor group Colonies Partners LP, to gain approval for the \$102 million court settlement over flood control work at Colonies' 434-acre residential and commercial development in Upland, Colonies at San Antonio and Colonies Crossroads, respectively.

The prosecution's case has depended primarily on circumstantial evidence and the testimony of Postmus, a former county assessor, and his former assistant assessor, Adam Aleman, who both struck plea deals with prosecutors to cooperate and testify in exchange for lighter sentences.

Postmus was chairman of the Board of Supervisors when it approved the Colonies settlement 3-2 in November 2006.

Defense attorneys attacked both men's credibility during trial.

Aleman's accounts of 2006 meetings where he claimed to have witnessed Postmus, Burum and others discussing the Colonies case before settlement did not stand up to defense scrutiny. In one instance, Aleman described a

meeting at a country club patio that defense attorney Jennifer Keller said could not have taken place when Aleman said; the facility was torn down at that time for remodeling.

Postmus, whose affiliated PACs received a total of \$100,000 from Colonies Partners in June 2007, insisted during his eight-plus days on the witness stand that he never considered the PAC contributions a bribe, that Burum never crossed the line into bribery, and he knew nothing of the PAC contributions until after the settlement.

A methamphetamine addict during the time of the Colonies settlement, Postmus said on the witness stand, "My mind is kind of messed up." He has claimed sobriety since 2012.

All the defendants have denied any wrongdoing. They said the contributions, which were from Colonies Partners, where Burum is one of the co-managing partners, were public donations to legal political action committees and were part of Colonies' attempts to mend fences after the contentious legal dispute, and were available online for public review.

Prosecutors, however, allege the political action committees were a sham — secretly controlled by the county supervisors who approved the settlement or members of their staff.

David Ellis, a political operative and former campaign manager for San Bernardino County District Attorney Mike Ramos, took the witness stand as the prosecution's final witness Thursday. He testified before Erwin's jury only.

Prosecutor Lewis Cope questioned Ellis, a former friend of Erwin's, about covering legal expenses for civil litigation Erwin was involved with in 2007, when he was sued by the San Bernardino County Public Attorneys Association for alleged breach of contract involving negotiations the union was involved in with the county at the time. The case was ultimately transferred to Orange County and subsequently dismissed.

Cope presented copies of checks, two from April 2007 and one from December 2008, totaling \$11,000, which were to cover fees to Erwin's attorney, Alan Mohill, who represented him in the lawsuit.

One check for \$2,000 was paid to Mohill from Ellis' Neighborhood Preservation Coalition PAC on April 12, 2007, one check totaling \$1,500 was paid to Mohill from Ellis' Committee Against Corruption PAC on April 16, 2007, and another check for \$7,500 was paid to Mohill, also from the Neighborhood Preservation Coalition PAC, on Dec. 3, 2008.

Cope also presented an April 2007 email Erwin sent to Ellis and the treasurer of his PACs, requesting they bill his Committee for Effective Government PAC \$3,000 to cover some of his attorney's fees already paid for through Ellis' PACs.

Prosecutors allege the litigation Erwin was engaged in at the time was not political in nature and that the legal fees therefore did not qualify as legal PAC expenditures. Erwin maintains that the litigation was political in nature.

Prosecutors allege that Erwin failed to report the \$7,500 as income on his 2008 tax return and as a gift on his Form 700, which lists all income, assets and gifts to public officials. At the time of the \$7,500 payment, Erwin was an assistant assessor for the county, and therefore obligated to report it on his Form 700, prosecutors allege.

The state Fair Political Practices Commission, which penalizes public officials for campaign finance and Form 700 violations, never received any complaints about Erwin's alleged violations.

NEWS > CALIFORNIA NEWS

'Alcohol & testosterone' fuel most Colorado River boating calamities, water-patrolling deputies say as 4th of July nears



San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy William Poe patrols Pirates Cove, halfway between Lake Havasu and Laughlin Tuesday. San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy William Poe patrols a portion of the Colorado River along both the Arizona and California border on an extremely hot day Tuesday June 28, 2017. (Will Lester-Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

By **MARK MUCKENFUSS** | mmuckenfuss@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

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William "Billy" Poe knows nearly every curve and inlet of Lake Havasu's shoreline, as well as the Colorado River as it extends north toward Needles. But for him, its geography is marked as much by names — Copper Canyon, Devil's Elbow and Body Beach — as it is by the lives that have been lost in accidents on the waterway.

Poe, 36, a boating officer for the San Bernardino County Sheriff, has been patrolling this strip of water that cuts a blue streak through craggy, barren desert hills, for 10 years.

He's known the region much longer than that. As a Lake Havasu City native, he grew up on the lake famous for its London Bridge, which chainsaw magnate Robert McCullough bought and reassembled here in 1971.

"I started boating here 30 years ago," Poe said. "I've seen everything."



A lot of those things, those involving injury and death, he would rather not have seen: speedboats flipping over at 100-plus mph, Jet Skis crashing into one another and vacationers falling off boats and being consumed by propellers.

"We had a double fatal June 10," Poe said.

A speedboat rolled, ejecting six passengers. Bruce Buchanan, 51, of Redondo Beach, and Jennifer Renee Martin, 31, of Los Angeles, were killed. It took divers two days to find Martin's body. Ten days later, a 36-foot Skater boat made a hard turn and flipped, ejecting three people, one of whom was seriously injured.

Boats sometimes run aground at night.

"People will be doing 90 and plow into the shore and eject everyone," Poe said. "It happens fairly often."

Poe and other officers spend their days trying to prevent such incidents. With a fleet of 12 boats — at least three of which on the water on any given day — the officers work 10-hour shifts, spotting violations, providing advice, checking safety equipment and writing citations, many of which are for boating under the influence.

"The majority of the issues are alcohol," Poe said.

Despite the recent voter approval of recreational marijuana in California, Poe said he and his colleagues have not seen an increase in pot use.

"It hasn't gotten to the boating community yet," he said. "It is obviously against the law to be impaired by the use of any drug."

And while recreational marijuana may be legal in California, it is not legal in Arizona. The state line runs down the middle of the waterway, which would seem to create an enforcement problem. But an agreement between California, Arizona and the federal government, allows officers to enforce the laws of any of those entities on the lake and river, as well as 25 miles beyond the shoreline. A boater doing something illegal under Arizona law can be cited for that violation even if takes place on the California side of the river and vice versa.

In Arizona, a boat passenger can ride on the transom — the part of the boat between the motor and the seat compartment — at wakeless speeds. In California, if the boat is underway at any speed, sitting on the transom is illegal. The officers on the river enforce the California version of the law.

"One of the main problems is transom riding," Poe said. "They'll be sitting on the swim platform with their feet in the water, and the prop's like a foot away. We yell at them to get back in the boat."

Or ticket them, as in the case of Brian Raleigh, 48, of Cave Creek, Ariz. Raleigh and his family were pulling two riders on a tube off the back of his boat, near the California shore, when Poe stopped them. Raleigh's 18-year-old son was sitting on the transom.

"You obviously know why I stopped you because when you saw me, you hopped back in the boat," Poe said, pulling up alongside the craft. "Go ahead and pull your skier in."

He explains the violation to Raleigh, who nods his head.

"I've been coming out here for 35 years," Raleigh said, acknowledging his familiarity with the law. "Rules are rules. They're there for a reason. We wouldn't want a little kid sitting there."

His wife Michelle, 50, was apologetic.

"It won't happen again," she told Poe.

Raleigh's boat is one of about half a dozen Poe will stop on what is a relatively calm Tuesday prior to the long July 4 weekend. It is the only ticket of the day that he issues. On a typical day, he said, he'll write 10-12 tickets, one of which is usually a BUI.

Violations run the gamut, he said, but most are fueled by "tons of alcohol and testosterone."

"We have a lot of issues with personal watercraft being reckless, spraying," he said. "They have to keep 100 feet away from one another when they're underway. They end up colliding and killing each other."

For more than 40 years, the lake has been a destination for skiers and partiers, or both. Popular areas have drawn hundreds of boats that park hull-to-hull, which in itself creates problems, Poe said.

He was gliding through Copper Canyon, where just four boats were floating near a popular rock formation that swimmers like to climb and leap off. Three young boys were testing their courage, jumping in unison into the water below.

"It used to be boat-to-boat back here," Poe said. If an emergency happened, "we couldn't get through, so we put in a fire lane."

Other areas that have gotten to be too popular in the past are now closed off during holiday weekends. One such area is the Sandbar, a shallow spot on the river past the north end of the lake.

"We would have 10,000 people on the Sandbar," he said. They were having fights and stabbings. We had officers in waist-deep water trying to control (the crowds)."

Not far north is Devil's Elbow, a sharp bend in the river where Poe says several people were killed in a boating collision two decades ago. The area is now designated as a no-wake zone, as is much of Topoc Gorge, a little farther up the river.

Randy Search, 56, of Lake Havasu City, said he nearly had an accident with his performance boat in the narrow section before the speed limit was reduced.

"I had a girl on a Jet Ski, she cut right in front of me," Search said. "It was pretty close."

Search said he's bothered by some of the unsafe things he sees people do on the water.

"Most people are pretty good, but there's a few idiots," he said. "They drive way too fast through the channel. They'll have kids with no life jackets. Their boats are overloaded. People on Jet Skis don't think they have the same rules, and they do."

Search was sitting on a pontoon boat belonging to his friend Vern McCallister, 55, of Lake Havasu City. They were parked on the beach in the London Bridge channel as the sun, which had blistered the region with 113-degree heat that day, dropped behind the desert hills.

Search said he is glad a California law going into effect at the beginning of next year will require boaters to pass an online safety course and obtain an operator's license. McCallister wasn't so sure.

"I have mixed feelings about it," said McCallister, a former Temecula resident, even though he's seen plenty of unsafe boaters. "Sometimes it feels like more California bureaucracy."

Two boats away, Mike Stoeber, 42, of Riverside, said he is glad boaters will have to get training.

"People don't know the markers," he said. "They don't know flat-wake driving or (nighttime signal lights). Last year a house boat came through here and hit a bunch of boats."

Some aspects of boat safety seem counterintuitive, said Poe. While speedboats and personal watercraft can be dangerous because of speed, he doesn't consider them the biggest menace.

"Pontoon boats are the most dangerous boats," he said.

Because of their structure, he said, there is an inclination for people to sit in unsafe places, such as at the bow of the boat.

"I lost an 8-year-old girl," he said. "She fell off the front and there was nothing between her and the prop."

Poe said he just wants boaters to think ahead and avoid potential hazards.

"A lot of our job out here is to educate the public and make sure they go home safely."

Boating Safety

Read and observe buoys: Most are informational and explain speed and operation restrictions.

Know what a no-wake zone means

Keep passengers within the manufactured seating area when underway

If you have skiers, know the appropriate use of warning flags

Make sure every passenger has a life jacket

Have the required fire extinguishers and make sure they are functional

If alcohol is being consumed, have a designated driver

Know the local geography so you can alert responders to your location in an emergency

Tags: **Echo Code**, **public safety**, **Top Stories PE**

MARK_MUCKENFUSS **Mark Muckenfuss**

Mark Muckenfuss has been a reporter since 1981. He worked at various publications including the San Bernardino Sun before coming to the Press Enterprise in 1999. He covers higher education, military affairs and, when the ground shakes, earthquakes. [Follow Mark Muckenfuss @PEdwriter](#)

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Firefighters continue to gain ground on Mart fire north of Highland

By Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Thursday, June 29, 2017



HIGHLAND >> Firefighters continued to make progress in containing the [Mart fire](#) burning in the mountainous terrain north of Highland Thursday, fire officials said.

Air and ground crews worked [building and reinforcing lines around the fire](#) bringing the blaze to 60 percent containment, according to the latest information released by the U.S. Forest Service in San Bernardino. The total acreage scorched was downgraded from just a little more than 900 acres to 670. As of 7:09 p.m. Thursday 125 firefighters were working the blaze.

At the height of the fire more than 500 firefighters and other personnel from Cal Fire, the San Bernardino County Fire Department, the U.S. Forest Service and other surrounding agencies [kept the fast-moving blaze from burning homes](#). Blackened and charred earth shows the flames came within a few yards of the hillside homes in the East Highlands Ranch community which sits in the foothills of East Highland.

The [Mart fire broke out Tuesday afternoon](#) in a field behind a Walmart on Highland Avenue near Highway 330 and quickly required officials to order the evacuation about 200 homes in the area east of Orchard Road, north of Highland Avenue and west of Church Street. Residents were allowed to return to their homes in the early-evening hours.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170629/firefighters-continue-to-gain-ground-on-mart-fire-north-of-highland>

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3 key takeaways from Redlands Mall overhaul meeting

By Sandra Emerson, Redlands Daily Facts

Thursday, June 29, 2017



REDLANDS >> To say Redlanders have opinions about plans to overhaul the [Redlands Mall](#) would be an understatement.

Residents and business owners filled the room Thursday at Speakeasy on State to hear more about the mixed-use development proposed by Brixton Capital, the company that [purchased the mall in 2014](#).

A few minutes into the developers' opening remarks, some of the 100-plus gathered started in with their questions, concerns and suggestions.

Lead developers Joe Graves and Greg Wattson fielded questions and attempted to assuage concerns about some of the proposed features and design, which was first unveiled June 9 at the annual State of the Community address.

“This community has been waiting a very long time and living with this eyesore for years and years and years,” Sally Robertson, a Redlands native, told developers. “Frankly, we were wondering where the hell have you been?”

Brixton envisions a walkable and liveable development featuring retail stores, such as boutiques and restaurants, on the first floor and apartments on the floors above.

Thursday's meeting was the first of possibly several seeking feedback from the community to ensure the project is embraced, Wattson said.

“If it's not supported it will fail,” Wattson said. “We'll do this once, twice, three times, as many times as we need to get feedback and make sure we deliver a product and asset that fits with the city.”

Here are the key takeaways from Thursday's meeting:

DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PHASED

The project will be completed in at least two phases, developers said. In the first phase, apartments, townhomes, retail and parking will be built on the west side of the property at Eureka Street.

The second phase would focus on developing the east side of the property on Orange Street, which could come five or six years later, depending on the market, Graves said.

This phase would add more first-floor retail with apartments on top and possibly two multi-story parking garages, with the help of the city, Graves said.

While it is still unknown when the project will break ground, the developer hopes to avoid a lengthy environmental impact review process once the city adopts its updated General Plan this fall. The plan already accommodates the project, which would allow the developer to bypass the process and start construction sooner, possibly in a year, Wattson said.

The developer will still need to conduct a traffic impact study and gain approval from the Planning Commission.

PARKING AND HOUSING AT CORE OF PLAN

The developer got some pushback from community members over the number of apartments proposed for the development.

Though plans could change due to demand, once both phases are complete, the development would include 410 apartments and 35 townhomes.

Wattson said developers are willing to look into the possibility of including more townhomes, but he noted that apartments allow for higher density and the option for residents to rent.

“We have some great apartment projects in the city that are very successful,” Wattson said. “We’re going to raise the bar, I promise you.”

Meanwhile, at project completion, the site would offer more than 400 parking spaces for its residents, and two multi-level parking structures as well as surface parking for retail patrons.

All of this will be accomplished by razing the current mall, developers said, with exception of the CVS Pharmacy, and expanding existing underground parking.

The developer wants to build townhomes on the parking lot currently at [Citrus Avenue and Eureka Street](#), which the city has required to remain available for public parking. Brixton, however, hopes to amend that requirement due to the amount of onsite parking it plans to add surrounding CVS.

For now, CVS and other businesses surrounding the mall on the property will get new facades and remain in their current locations, developers said. The CVS eventually is expected to move to the southeast corner of the property, at Orange Street and Citrus Avenue, and possibly gain a drive-through.

DESIGN IN FLUX

The architecture shown in the project’s conceptual drawings is not final.

Several members of the audience asked that the architecture be more reflective of the city’s character.

Marcus Paulson, an orthodontist and member of the Redlands Area Historical Society Board of Directors, brought the developer photos of historic Redlands buildings for inspiration.

“We lost so many good architectural buildings over the years to different mistakes the city has made or industry has made or business owners have made,” Paulson said. “We don’t want that to happen again. This is our chance here to make Redlands and keep it special. We don’t want just another mall.”

Paulson said the extension of State Street also needs to flow.

“We don’t want to lose our quaintness of our town and our State Street,” Paulson said. “This is the beloved State Street, the heart of the town. If we lose the heart, what happens to the body? It’s gone.”

The renderings were put together in time for Mayor Paul Foster’s address at the State of the Community event, Wattson said.

Part of the purpose of seeking community input is to get feedback on what the project should look like, Wattson said.

“Overall it needs to be completely revisited,” Wattson said, “and we will.”

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/government-and-politics/20170629/3-key-takeaways-from-redlands-mall-overhaul-meeting>

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Adelanto revenue projections jump, even as deficit talk won't scam

By **Shea Johnson**

Staff Writer



Posted Jun 29, 2017 at 4:55 PM

Updated Jun 29, 2017 at 4:55 PM

The draft budget for fiscal year 2017-18, which begins July 1, is more optimistic and reflective of the first real returns of Adelanto's commercial marijuana industry

ADELANTO — In four previous fiscal years, city general fund revenue has grown at a modest pace, from \$11.5 million in 2013-14 to an estimated \$13.7 million in the 12-month period ending Friday.

That estimated revenue even actually outperformed the initial projections of \$12.4 million, documents show, an indication of how easy it has been to be cautious with financial forecasts in a city long starving for sustainable and significant sources of revenue.

But the draft budget for fiscal year 2017-18, which begins July 1, is more optimistic and reflective of the first real returns of Adelanto's commercial marijuana industry. On Wednesday, the City Council approved the proposed spending plan, which includes \$17.2 million in projected revenue.

It's a sizeable leap forward, to be certain, bolstered by an estimated \$2.5 million in Measure R revenue, the city's voter-approved 5-percent excise tax on commercial cannabis activities.

Penny Rose, a financial consultant for Adelanto, said Thursday that the tax projection was calculated from 11 developers with projects to be completed and operational during the new fiscal year.

After the Council OK'd a voluntary payment of \$5 per square foot for developers, which effectively acts as an opt-out clause to Measure R, the 11 developers have each signed pledges to pay the square footage fee, Rose said.

Yet where as the draft budget shows a roughly 20 percent revenue uptick, it also anticipates expenses will increase from \$14 million to \$17.7 million, meaning the city is currently eyeing a nearly \$450,000 deficit.

Extra spending can largely be attributed to approximately \$2.4 million more in public safety contracts over the concluding fiscal year.

For several months, city officials have pointed to finally reversing an ongoing deficit as a watershed moment for Adelanto, while also offering hopeful prognostications of when that moment might occur. At last count, July 1 was the mark.

But Rose warned that July 12, when officials adopt the final budget, will be the actual reveal to whether the city had completed its red-to-black turnaround.

“When the draft budget was prepared, I only used revenue I could anticipate from past budget experience and the new Measure R tax ...,” Rose said in an email.

A property sale approved Wednesday and a new commercial marijuana development project that “has a very good likelihood of being approved by next council meeting” could turn the tide.

The final budget will also better detail Measure R and the alternative fee options, she said, which might positively impact revenue projections.

Mayor Rich Kerr had previously suggested the city could easily see \$30 million in yearly revenue once the industry is fully ramped up so it's not inconceivable that the deficit will be in the rear-view mirror sooner than later, particularly as new projects arise — in commercial cannabis and other sectors.

For now, a \$450,000 deficit would dig further into reserves that have dwindled since 2013 from \$5.9 million to \$3.7 million.

“It looks very likely that we will not have a deficit on the final budget version,” Rose concluded. “But I won’t count it until I know for sure.”

Shea Johnson can be reached at 760-955-5368 or SJohnson@VVDailyPress.com. Follow him on Twitter at [@DP_Shea](https://twitter.com/DP_Shea).

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Traffic stop nets guns, drugs and ex-felon's arrest Thursday

By Staff Reports

Posted Jun 29, 2017 at 8:42 PM

Updated Jun 29, 2017 at 8:49 PM

VICTORVILLE — A traffic stop led to a 44-year-old Victorville man's arrest Thursday after authorities found drugs, firearms and a plastic mask inside the car, authorities said.

Zachariah Pacillas was arrested after the Sheriff's Department High Desert Regional Gang Team pulled him over as they conducted a proactive gang enforcement sweep in unincorporated areas of Victorville on Thursday. County booking records show Pacillas was arrested in an area near National Trails Highway and Fern Way just before 5 p.m.

Authorities said a search of the vehicle netted a loaded AK-47 with a .30 round magazine, a loaded .357 Magnum and a "black plastic mask" inside the car's trunk.

Pacillas was also reportedly seen "reaching towards the center console area of the vehicle" during the traffic stop, where authorities said they found methamphetamine dumped out of its container.

Pacillas was arrested on suspicion of a slew of weapons-related crimes, including being an ex-felon in possession of an assault weapon, possession of a controlled substance while armed, possessing a large-capacity magazine, possessing a short-barreled rifle or shotgun, and illegal possession of an assault weapon, according to authorities and booking records.

He was booked into the High Desert Detention Center, where he remains in custody in lieu of \$50,000. Pacillas is expected to appear in court July 3.

'Desert Defenders' seek to protect Mojave monuments

By **Charity Lindsey**

Staff Writer



Posted Jun 29, 2017 at 5:48 PM

Updated Jun 29, 2017 at 5:48 PM

SAN BERNARDINO — “The Voice of the Mojave” was heard at this week’s San Bernardino County Board of Supervisor’s meeting, with more than 1,000 comments from “Desert Defenders” seeking to preserve regional national monuments presented in a document received by the board.

Earlier this year, President Donald Trump signed an executive order requiring the U.S. Department of the Interior to review and make recommendations to possibly modify or rescind prior monument designations. As part of the review process, the public has been asked to submit comments to U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

The county sent a letter to the Department of the Interior on May 31, stating its position “that any national monument designations should go through the legislative process, rather than by Presidential Proclamation under The Antiquities Act.”

“We saw the county’s letter to the Department of the Interior about the national monuments a few weeks ago, and felt like we wanted the county to know how well supported these monuments are,” Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT) representative Frazier Haney said.

MDLT had collected 1,050 comments from the public as of Monday, and is continuing to gather more, all in support of “leaving the boundaries and designation of the California Desert Monuments as they were originally intended.”

The Desert Defenders campaign comment period began May 10, two weeks after the executive order, which impacts four sites affecting San Bernardino County: The San Gabriel Mountains, Mojave Trails, Castle Mountains and Sand to Snow national monuments. While San Gabriel was designated in October 2014, the others were all established in February of last year.

“Our public lands are one of San Bernardino County’s greatest assets, providing recreation, solace, and stunning vistas within a few hours of millions of Southern Californians, and millions more from throughout the country and around the world,” the county said in its letter, signed by 1st District Supervisor Robert Lovingood.

As Haney explained at Tuesday’s supervisors meeting, the desert surrounding the monuments is also “interwoven with working class communities ... that use our public lands to hunt, camp, recreate, rock climb, jeep and explore.”

“Tourists from all around the world use these lands and the local communities benefit from the visits of those tourists by helping to charge up local businesses with those tourist dollars,” Haney said.

The most ardent of the supporters are those who’ve grown up in the region, like Mitchell VanHecke, who grew up in Barstow and commented in the campaign that “the desert holds a very special place in my life.”

“When the Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow monuments were created my sense of relief that the right thing had been done was enormous,” VanHecke wrote. “Theodore Roosevelt, a strong pro-America, pro-business president, first saw the need to protect those parts of this great American nation that were special as did many American presidents who followed. I oppose the current administration’s attempts to revoke or reduce protection to the two above monuments as well as the other monuments already in place.”

Phelan resident Tina Erway, an environmental scientist and biologist, wrote that, “We must remember the words that (Aldo) Leopold told us regarding the environment ... in order to preserve wildlife and historic sites for future generations to enjoy and learn from.”

MDLT will continue to collect comments through July 10. When addressing the county supervisors, Haney noted that the campaign has “demonstrated widespread public support” for the monuments, inviting a continued process with the county.

“We will not be silent,” the campaign said. “We are the Voice of the Mojave.”

For more information and to view the Desert Defenders campaign, visit www.mdlit.org.

Charity Lindsey may be contacted at clindsey@vvdailypress.com or 760-951-6245. Follow her on Twitter [@DP_Charity](https://twitter.com/DP_Charity).

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Bill would rename San Bernardino post office after late Stater Bros. leader Jack Brown

By Ryan Hagen, *The Sun*

Thursday, June 29, 2017



SAN BERNARDINO >> A bill to rename the U.S. Post Office at 390 West 5th St. after the late leader of Stater Bros., Jack Brown, was introduced Thursday by Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino.

The bill, H.R. 2979, would rename the San Bernardino Downtown Station as the “Jack H. Brown Post Office Building” in honor of the late executive chairman of Stater Bros. Markets and Inland Empire philanthropist.

“Jack H. Brown was a staple in the Inland Empire community, both as a business leader but also as an advocate for charitable causes,”

Aguilar said in a news release. “From supporting our kids through the founding of the San Bernardino Boys and Girls Club, to advocating for Inland Empire veterans, to donating tens of thousands of dollars to our local law enforcement in the aftermath of the Inland Regional Center terror attack, Jack always put our families first.”

Brown [died in November 2016](#) at the age of 78.

Phillip J. Smith, chairman of Stater Bros. Markets, thanked Aguilar in a news release.

“Jack was a devoted husband, father and grandfather to his family, and an advocate for the Inland Empire community for over three decades,” Smith said. “His efforts on behalf of San Bernardino County workers and families will be carried on by those who were fortunate to know him, and we hope that through this new dedication, his name will be with us and remembered for generations to come.”

The entire California Congressional Delegation has cosponsored the bill, according to Aguilar.

Brown began work as a box boy at the age of 13, and went on to serve as Stater Bros.’ president, chief executive officer and chairman for more than 30 years. During that time, Stater Bros. Markets became Southern California’s largest privately owned supermarket chain.

He also served in the Navy in the Pacific Fleet during the Vietnam War.

The post office, built in 1931, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

“This building is a good example of the federal building program in the 1930s, which resulted from a simple acceleration of the Keyes-Elliot Act of 1926,” according to its [nomination](#) for the register. “The building is a locally important example of early twentieth century architecture, in a town with few surviving buildings dating before 1950.”

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/government-and-politics/20170629/bill-would-rename-san-bernardino-post-office-after-late-stater-bros-leader-jack-brown>



POLITICS 06/29/2017 05:20 pm ET

California Refuses To Cooperate With Trump Voter Fraud Probe

“California’s participation would only serve to legitimize the false and already debunked claims of massive voter fraud.”



By Sam Levine

The California secretary of state is refusing to comply with a request from President Donald Trump’s voter fraud commission to provide personal information about the state’s registered voters.

Secretary of State Alex Padilla said in a statement Thursday that Trump’s voter fraud commission’s request of personal voting data on every American voter “is a waste of taxpayer money” that aims to ratify a false claim that millions voted illegally.

California, which had more than 19.4 million registered voters as of February, is the first state to announce it will not comply with the commission’s request. Trump’s commission on Wednesday asked all states to provide personal information about registered voters. Trump has claimed, without evidence, that millions voted illegally in last year’s presidential election.

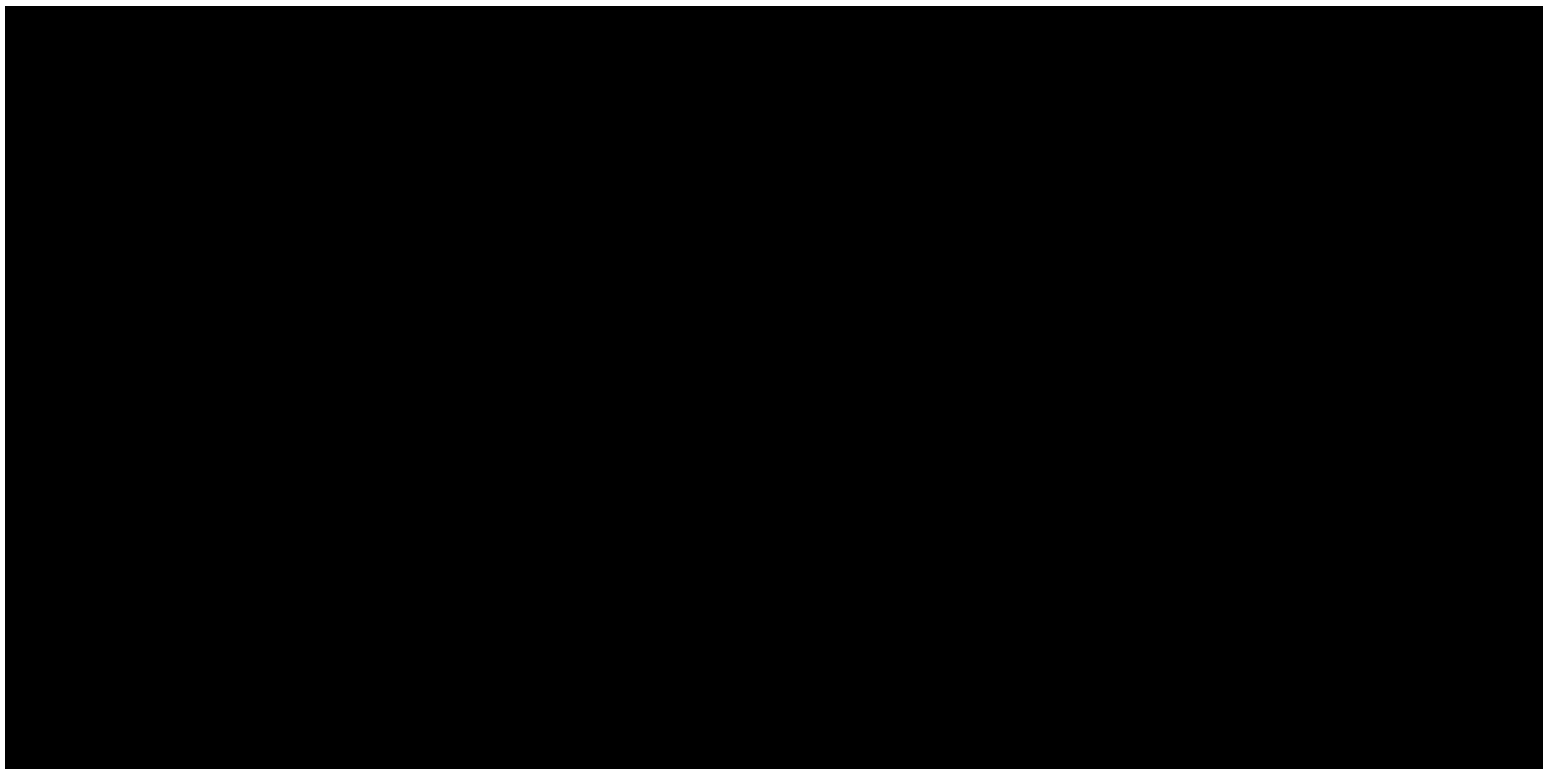
“I will not provide sensitive voter information to a commission that has already inaccurately passed judgment that millions of Californians voted illegally,” Padilla said.

“California’s participation would only serve to legitimize the false and already debunked claims of massive voter fraud made by” Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and Kris Kobach, vice chairman of Trump’s Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, Padilla continued. “The President’s Commission is a waste of taxpayer money and a distraction from the real threats to the integrity of our elections today: aging voting systems and documented Russian interference in our elections.”

Critics say that states would jeopardize sensitive personal information if they turn it over, and that the probe is designed to lead to more restrictive voter measures.

Kobach, also the Kansas secretary of state, has a history of exaggerating voter fraud, and has pushed a requirement that voters prove citizenship.

The committee has been slow to assemble, but will meet for the first time on July 19 in Washington.



All updates ▾

[State government](#)

JUNE 29, 2017, 2:57 P.M.

California's top elections officer to Trump's voting fraud panel: No



John Myers



President Trump's voter fraud commission will not be getting the names and addresses of California's registered voters. The panel's request was denied on Thursday by Secretary of State Alex Padilla, who said it would only "legitimize" false claims of massive election cheating last fall.

Padilla refused to hand over data, including the names, addresses, political



(Dylan Stewart / HS Insider)

party and voting history of California's 19.4 million voters. [Kris Kobach](#), the secretary of state of Kansas who serves as vice chairman of the [Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity](#), sent letters to all 50 states on Wednesday for information he said would help the group examine rules that either "enhance or undermine the American people's confidence in the integrity of federal elections processes."

Padilla, though, suggested the effort is little more than a ruse.

"I will not provide sensitive voter information to a commission that has already inaccurately passed judgment that millions of Californians voted illegally," he said in a written statement. "California's participation would only serve to legitimize the false and already debunked claims of massive voter fraud made by the President, the Vice President, and Mr. Kobach."

Last November, Trump tweeted that [California was one of three states where "serious voter fraud"](#) took place in the general election. No state or local elections official has found any evidence to back up the president's assertion.

Kobach's request says the panel seeks only "publicly available" information. Basic information about California voters is routinely shared with journalists, political campaigns and researchers after a written request and payment of a fee.

The letter asks for data including "information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information."

Padilla also criticized the selection of Kobach to help lead Trump's commission, accusing the Kansas official of past efforts at racial profiling and [suppressing voter turnout](#).

"His role as vice chair is proof that the ultimate goal of the commission is to enact policies that will result in the disenfranchisement of American citizens," Padilla said.

The presidential commission's first meeting is scheduled for July 19.



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Kevin Smith and Neil Nisperos | Inland Valley Daily Bulletin (Ontario, Calif.)

June 13, 2017 9:40 AM, EDT

Inland Empire Leads Southern California in Warehouse Growth



Daniel Acker/Bloomberg News

The Inland Empire led Southern California in construction of logistics and freight-related warehousing real estate, according to a report released from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp.

While just released June 12, the data is based on 2015 numbers. The report found logistics-type construction in the Inland Empire dwarfed the other counties, with 20.8 million square feet of space added in 2015 and another 16.7 million square feet under construction that year, according to the report.

In comparison, 3.6 million square feet of related real estate was added to Los Angeles County in 2015, with another 2.8 million under construction at that time.

It's best to position warehousing, logistics and wholesale trade facilities closer to population centers to provide quicker delivery times, especially with e-commerce, said Shannon Sedgwick, an economist with the LACEDC.

“The demand for large-scale warehousing operations has been continually increasing,” Sedgwick said by phone June 12. “The Inland Empire, with its relatively cheaper real estate and more industrially zoned land, a freeway network, and a built-in pool of potential workers, has driven the growth of the trade and logistics industry in the region.”

The study reveals that 598.3 million tons of freight valued at \$1.7 trillion moved throughout the region in 2015. That equated to a daily average of 1.6 million tons valued at \$4.7 billion.

Needless to say, all of that activity fueled lots of jobs.

A driver of employment

The LAEDC report shows that the region's trade and logistics sector employed 580,450 direct payroll workers in 2015, a 9.7% increase since 2005. An additional 273,840 jobs were supported through indirect effects and another 310,490 were supported by induced effects, creating a total employment impact of nearly 1.2 million jobs.

Indirect jobs include workers who don't directly produce goods or services but make their production possible or more efficient. Induced jobs take into account employees who work at local restaurants, gas stations, supermarkets and other businesses where trade and logistics workers spend their money.

The Inland Empire supported about half of those jobs and Los Angeles County supported another 40%.

Average wages are good

The pay isn't bad. The average annual wage in the trade and logistics industry in 2015 was \$63,130, about 14% higher than the \$55,310 average annual wage for all other industries in Southern California.

Wages were much higher in certain segments of the industry. Those involved in support activities for water transportation earned an average of \$111,120 a year, for example, and others who work in air transportation earned an average of \$75,710 a year.

A significant economic impact

Trade and logistics in Southern California generates \$224.6 billion in economic output annually, sustained by direct spending of \$131.9 billion, which includes \$43.5 billion in labor income paid to its employees, according to the report. Industry-related expenditures indirectly generate \$47.2 billion in spending at supplier businesses in the region, and compensation paid to employees fueled additional spending of \$45.6 billion.

But while wages are good, the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, Calif., are increasingly integrating automation in their operations — and that's displacing workers. Trade and logistics industries are looking to become more capital-intensive versus labor-intensive through the use of new technologies.

Local ports integrating automation

The Port of Los Angeles has been transforming its TraPac terminal over the last several years by outfitting it with massive robots. Some are tasked with moving shipping containers from ships and stacking them nearby, and others load the stacked containers onto trucks for the next leg of their journey.

“We have eight terminals here and one is TraPac,” port spokesman Phillip Sanfield said. “It's the only automated terminal and it was very expensive. The Port of L.A.'s investment in TraPac was more than \$400 million. We'll get that back and more over the course of their lease, but it's very expensive to do this. And it takes years for a company to plan and get the environmental approvals to build an automated terminal.”

The Port of Long Beach has also been outfitting its Middle Harbor terminal with automated equipment, which is expected to be operative by 2020.

Self-driving trucks are also being used in warehouses in the form of autonomous forklifts. More recently, the truck transportation and drayage (shorthaul) industries are looking at self-driving trucks as a way to reduce costs and boost their profit margins. But that's not going to happen right away.

“Regulations have to catch up with the technology,” Sedgwick said. “That kind of technology won't be widespread until that issue is resolved.”

The federal government has yet to establish laws that deal specifically with autonomous vehicles. But several states have opted to enact their own statewide laws. Another major hurdle to widespread adoption is the public's innate fear of seeing self-driving trucks on the road.

Automation in warehouses

Automation is also widespread in warehouse operations. Amazon is known for its orange Kiva robots, which transport shelving and bins to workers, who then pick the products. Several new startups are also poised to enter and transform the warehouse robot space. San Jose, Calif.-based company Fetch Robotics has created industrial robots that simplify warehouse product handling by following pickers to catch their selected items.

Fetch Robotics spokesman Tim Smith explains it this way: “Our robots are almost like moving pallets. “They don't necessarily replace jobs, but they can do the worst part of a job.”

When workers retrieve merchandise from the shelves in the warehouse they can place them on a Fetch device, which then takes the items to wherever they need to go in the building. That eliminates the need for an employee to walk miles and miles throughout the day to deliver the products.

“A map of the environment is created when a robot is installed and that usually takes two or three days,” Smith said. “We have about 15 customers all over the world. One is in Livermore and others are in Asia and Europe.”

Drone deliveries

The LAEDC report also notes that delivery drones are being readied by several companies — including Amazon, Google and UPS — to make deliveries to remote areas or areas with heavy traffic congestion more efficient.

But drones without direct supervision of a person are not currently legal in the United States. Until they are, delivery drones will still require a human component.

Technology isn't the only game changer in the trade and logistics sector. Labor issues, including disruptions and domestic outsourcing, have the potential to negatively affect the Southern California-based industry in terms of growth for trade volumes and wages, the report said.

LOCAL NEWS

Riverside official Emilio Ramirez joins state homelessness panel



File photo by David Bauman, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG

Riverside Deputy Development Director Emilio Ramirez stands near two Victorian homes the city was selling in 2015. He was named this week to a state homelessness council.

By **ALICIA ROBINSON** | arobinson@scng.com | The Press-Enterprise

June 29, 2017 at 11:30 am



Riverside Deputy Development Director Emilio Ramirez has been named to the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council, a new statewide group focused on getting people off the streets and preventing others from becoming homeless.

Gov. Jerry Brown's office announced the appointment of Ramirez and 10 others to the council on Tuesday, June 27. Ramirez, a 46-year-old Riverside resident, has worked for the city since 2011. He worked for Riverside County from 1999 to 2011, including five years as assistant director of its economic development agency.

The 15-member panel helps find resources for people who are at risk of becoming homeless or returning to housing, a Riverside city news release states. It also provides guidance on “housing first” strategies, which aim to get people into homes quickly while providing services.

“Helping people overcome the challenge of homelessness has become a key part of my professional life, and I am very excited about being able to provide some expertise on the state level,” Ramirez said in the release.

Tags: **homeless**

[ALICIA_ROBINSON](#)

Alicia Robinson

Alicia Robinson has been at The Press-Enterprise since 2007 and has covered Riverside and local government for most of that time, but she has also written about Norco, Corona, homeless issues, Alzheimer’s disease, streetcars, butterflies, horses and chickens. She grew up in the Midwest but earned Southern California native status during many hours spent in traffic. Two big questions Alicia tries to answer with stories about government are: how is it supposed to work, and how is it working?

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San Bernardino County Sun (<http://www.sbsun.com>)

Tunnel to nowhere? Elon Musk starts digging in Hawthorne, but to where?

Plan for underground freeways needs permits to get beyond parking lot at SpaceX

By Sandy Mazza, Daily Breeze

Thursday, June 29, 2017



Elon Musk's infatuation with tunnels has taken a turn, but where it leads is anyone's guess.

The founder of SpaceX and CEO of Tesla electric cars has unleashed his newest venture, The Boring Co., on an old parking lot outside the Hawthorne headquarters of SpaceX. There, a boring machine is completing the entrance to a tunnel he hopes will one day carry cars to LAX and beyond.

There's just one big problem — the company hasn't gotten permits to dig beyond the rocket company's property, at the corner of Crenshaw

Boulevard and 120th Street.

But, in typical Musk fashion, the project is moving full-speed ahead.

Musk is now seeking regulatory safety approvals to dig the first 2 miles of his futuristic subterranean vision, Hawthorne interim City Manager Arnie Shadbehr said Thursday.

“What they are doing now is only happening in their parking lot,” he said. “We have awhile to go.”

Boring entrance done

Meanwhile, the finishing touches are being put on the roughly 600-foot-long bore pit and tunnel entrance 20 feet beneath the ground-level lot.

On Wednesday afternoon, Musk tweeted that his tunnel-boring machine, named Godot, was making fast progress on his grand plan for underground freeways.

“No longer waiting for Godot,” Musk said. “It has begun boring and just completed the first segment of tunnel in LA.”

The celebrity-tech entrepreneur, whose wealth is estimated by Forbes to be about \$16.7 billion, outlined his hopes for the project during an [April TED Talk](#).

“Right now, I think one of the most soul-destroying things is traffic,” Musk said. “It takes away so much of your life. It's horrible. It's particularly horrible in L.A. We're trying to dig a hole under L.A. This is to create the beginning of what will hopefully be a 3-D network of tunnels to alleviate congestion.”

He has [met recently with Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti](#) and other politicians around the country to promote his plans for advanced-transportation systems like the Hyperloop concept he introduced in 2013.

Hyperloop mass-transit systems would move passengers at hundreds of miles an hour through pressurized tubes on pods, using electric power. But Musk has said his tunnels would be made to move cars, pedestrians and bicycles.

Boring regulations

The state Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Los Angeles County Fire Department and other regulatory agencies are reviewing The Boring Co.'s plans to dig under Hawthorne now, Shadbehr said.

The first 2 miles of the traffic-transport tunnel would travel from the parking lot along Crenshaw Boulevard, and then east under 120th Street. It would stop just beyond Hawthorne Boulevard, where additional permits would be needed to continue.

While the tunnel starts at a depth of about 20 feet, it would gradually deepen to 43 feet below ground, according to Shadbehr.

“We’re currently getting comments from all the underground utilities and agencies who have live underground substructures” that could be impacted by the project, Shadbehr said. “Tunneling has to meet all the regulatory standards and requirements by the state before we even consider issuing permits. We’re not there yet.”

Driving under LA

The transport tunnel would have standard 12-foot-wide traffic lanes, and be deep enough to avoid conflicts with underground infrastructure, he said.

In a [video rendering of Musk’s vision](#), electric cars are ferried into the tunnel system on underground elevators and moved around by an automated control system.

But success hinges on whether The Boring Co.’s engineers can tweak Godot, the boring machine, to make it faster and more efficient than any other tunnel-carving machine before it.

The goal, he said, is to make the device faster than SpaceX’s pet snail, Gary, which Musk said is much faster than existing tunnel-boring machines.

On Wednesday, Musk said that Godot hadn’t yet been made into a racing tunnel-borer.

“Gary (the snail) is a speed demon,” he wrote. “Long way to go before we beat him/her.”

Tunneling experts have called Musk’s plans to create a machine many times better than existing ones ridiculous.

“Just think about if someone said they’re going to design a new automobile and it’s going to be 1,000 percent more efficient,” said one expert, who asked not to be named. “Would you believe them?”

But Musk has proven detractors wrong before. He has used new technologies to make rockets and cars he was previously told were impossible.

URL: <http://www.sbsun.com/business/20170629/tunnel-to-nowhere-elon-musk-starts-digging-in-hawthorne-but-to-where>

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Homeless cleanups in L.A. have surged, costing millions. What has been gained?

By **Ben Poston and Doug Smith**

JUNE 30, 2017, 4:00 AM

Los Angeles public works crews have cleaned 16,500 homeless encampments since 2015, removing more than 3,000 tons of trash.

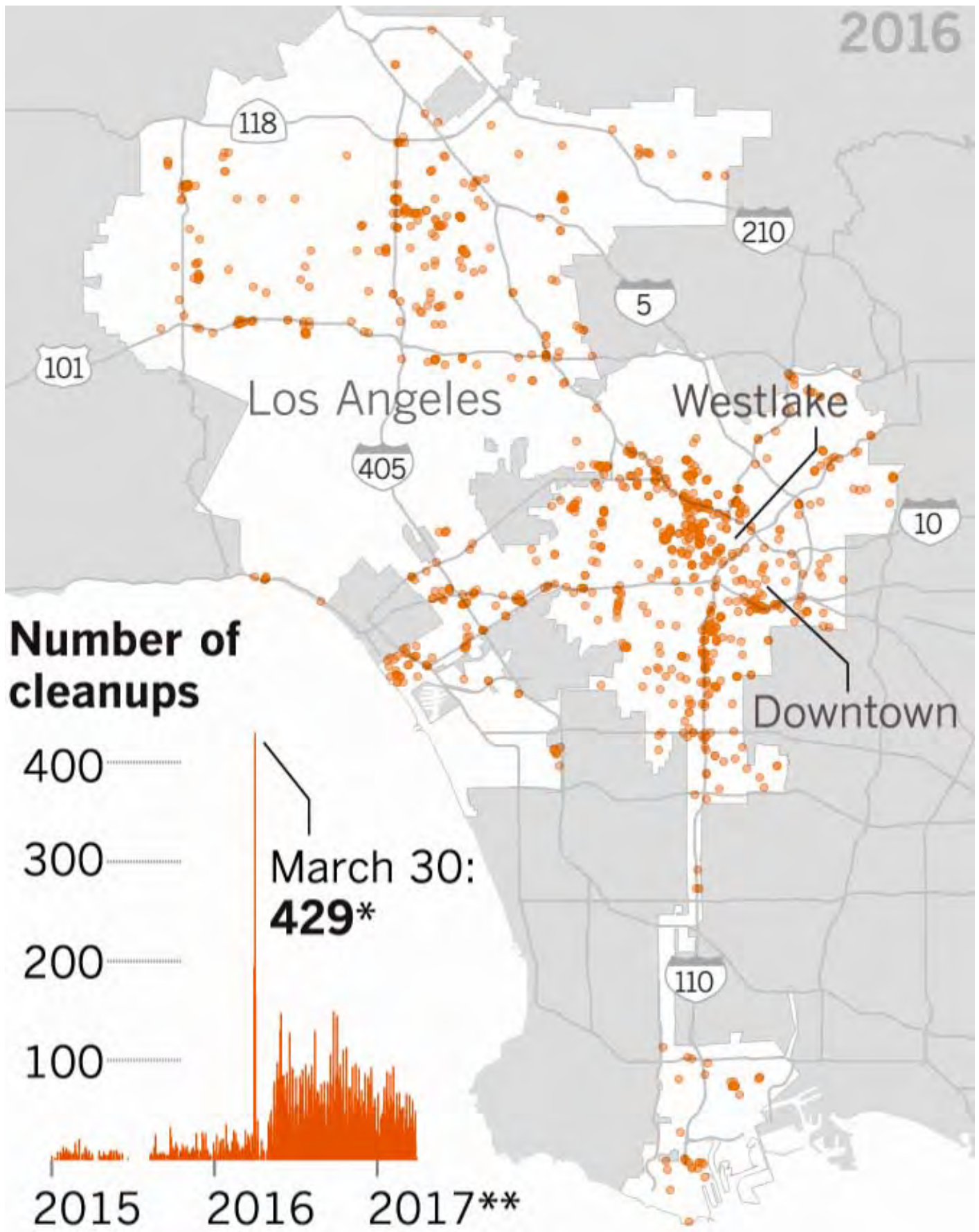
But the \$14-million citywide cleanup effort — increasing dramatically since it was launched — has made only a marginal difference in the number of encampments across the city’s sidewalks, alleys and riverbanks, a Los Angeles Times review found.

Inspectors for the city’s CleanStat program recorded 365 blocks with encampments at the end of last year, a 12% decline from the beginning of 2016. But other records suggested that after being cleaned, hundreds of encampments simply re-formed elsewhere, usually nearby. Meanwhile, the city reported an **18% increase** this year in those living on the streets.

Driven largely by complaints, the cleanups have become **recurring dramas** in areas favored by homeless campers — frustrating some residents who mistakenly may think that the city’s goal is to evict the street dwellers.

Homeless cleanup surge

City crews cleaned up more than 12,000 homeless encampments last year, a sevenfold increase over 2015. Downtown and Westlake led the city in cleanups.



*The large number of cleanups in March 2016 reflects the processing of a service request back-log and does not necessarily mean that all the work

occurred on those dates, according to a city spokeswoman.

* *Through March 25, 2017.

Source: Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation Graphics reporting by Ben Poston

Lorena Elebee / @latimesgraphics

Officials say it is only incidental that homeless people are displaced by the cleanups, which increased seven-fold last year over 2015. The increase effectively established a new city service — trash collection for people who live outdoors.

While residents and business owners may argue that the encampments should be permanently removed, legal settlements obtained by homeless advocates prevent city officials from confiscating homeless people's tents and other personal property, or evicting those who have nowhere else to go.

With those constraints, public health officials define their purpose narrowly as protecting public health and safety, and follow a stringent protocol to ensure that street dwellers can remove their valuables before the crews arrive.

Public works officials defended city's spending on the homeless cleanup effort, even though its impact may be hard to see.

“What might have happened had we not spent that money?” said Kevin James, president of the Board of Public Works. “Who might have ended up in an unsafe situation because of hazardous material or where someone is forced to walk into the street? ... The money is well-spent.”

But some business owners wondered if the city's efforts have been futile as they watch the steady carousel of homeless people who are moved from boulevard medians and beneath freeway overpasses only to return in days or weeks.

“[Work crews] clean up and they come right back,” said Joreen Chism, owner of LBI's Platinum Shears hair salon in North Hills. “It's just a never-ending cycle. You'd think they would come and find a place for them, but they don't. They just tell them to move.”

“

[Work crews] clean up and they come right back. It's just a never-ending cycle.

— Joreen Chism, owner of a North Hills hair salon, referring to the nearby homeless encampments



Jeannine Tantin, 50, pauses as she clears out her possessions near the 405 and 118 interchange. (Christian K. Lee / Los Angeles Times)

Around the corner from the salon, more than 140 cleanups have been conducted along Nordhoff Street near the 405 Freeway — among the most in L.A. for a single area, records show.

Citywide, nearly a quarter of homeless encampment cleanups occurred within 500 feet of a freeway, many along the 405 in the San Fernando Valley, the 101 in Hollywood and the 110 in South L.A.

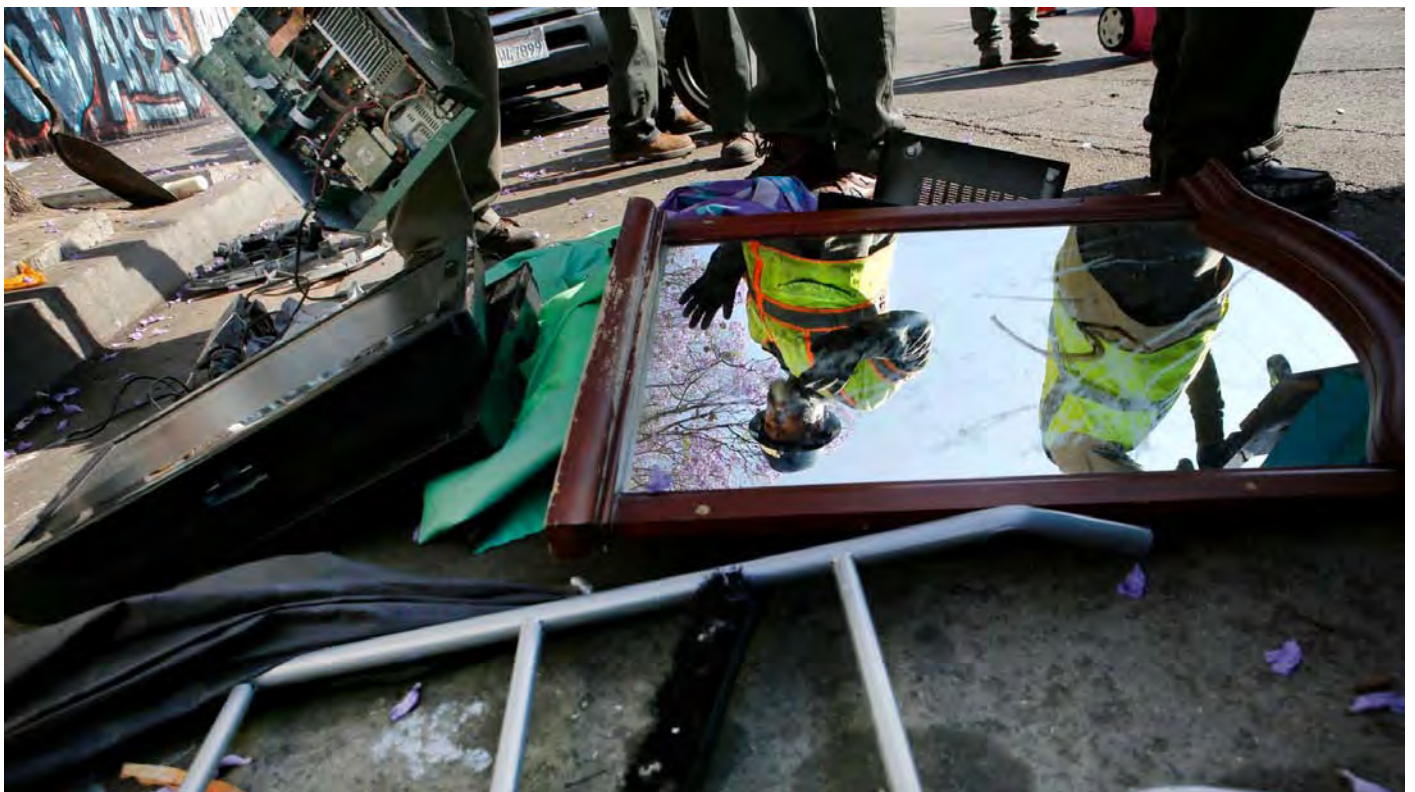
On a chilly morning in early May, Jeannine Tantin, 50, was packing her tent below the 405-118 freeway interchange in Mission Hills. The previous night, she had slept in a nearby underpass where crews have conducted more than a dozen cleanups. She said she usually moves her belongings before cleanup crews arrive, and often returns to the area for the shelter.

“They don’t really clean an area,” Tantin said. “They just take people’s stuff.”

Public Works Commissioner Heather Repenning said even if homeless people return to the same locations after cleanups, those areas are safer overall because of the city's work.

“Part of the homeless crisis is managing people who are living outdoors, and part of managing that is making sure the basic public health levels are met and that people have outreach done to them so they can know how to access services,” Repenning said.

Multiple pleas for service



Sanitation workers dispose of waste during a sanitation cleaning in Los Angeles. (Christian K. Lee / Los Angeles Times)

Some in the city frequently report homeless encampments, hoping the city will clean up the areas that often become sullied with litter and human waste.

Teri Markson, senior librarian at the Panorama City branch, has called the city's 311 line multiple times to request that encampments be cleared from the east side of the library. She has also called the local council office and the Los Angeles Police Department for assistance in the neighborhood where crews have completed nearly 500 cleanups.

“I do it all. Whoever gets here first,” she said.

After weeks of calls and emails, city crews removed encampment structures and carts near the library in April, but Markson arrived to work two weeks later to find a new encampment next to the building.

“Every library has an open-door policy. Our issue is not having them use the library; it’s the camping,” she said.

One piece of homelessness initiative

The cleanups are part of a \$100-million effort promised in 2015 to address the increase of homelessness in L.A., a problem that officials described as a “state of emergency.”

Since then, city voters have approved a \$1.2-billion bond to speed the construction of housing for the homeless, and county voters approved a quarter-percent sales tax increase to raise \$355 million a year to fund a 10-year plan to reduce homelessness. But cleanups will most likely continue for years before those efforts take hold.

When the cleanup effort started in 2015, areas where many of the city’s homeless inhabitants reside — such as the Arroyo Seco, Tujunga Wash and countless alleyways and sidewalks — hadn’t been cleared of garbage and bulky items for years, neighbors said.

City crews caught up with a backlog last March, recording 429 cleanups in a single day. Some locations have been cleaned repeatedly.

Councilman Jose Huizar’s downtown district, which includes skid row, led the city with nearly 900 tons of trash, according to the sanitation bureau.

What goes into each cleanup



LAPD officers speak with a man who is living in an encampment area in Los Angeles. Sanitation workers later cleaned the area. (Christian K. Lee / Los Angeles Times)

The process usually begins when someone submits a request by calling 311 or using the MyLA311 app. City sanitation workers scout the site to verify the existence of an encampment and then schedule it for cleanup, which occurs on average two weeks later, city data show.

Signs are posted 72 hours in advance to inform homeless people of the pending sweep. Outreach workers from the L.A. Homeless Services Authority visit the location to encourage residents to seek housing and treatment services.

On cleanup day, large trash trucks rumble down the street, accompanied by biowaste teams in white suits. Police officers are there in case anyone resists, something that officials said is rare.

The protocol requires sanitation workers to provide each homeless person with a 60-gallon plastic bag to fill with belongings. If there's too much personal property to fit in the bag, the remainder must be tagged and transported to a downtown storage facility to be held for 90 days. Often that doesn't happen.

“The majority are gone before we get there,” said Leo Martinez, who oversees homeless encampment cleanup for the city Sanitation Bureau. “There is very little

resistance and very little interaction.”

Shopping carts are classified as trash and loaded along with mattresses, chairs, tarps and other items left behind.

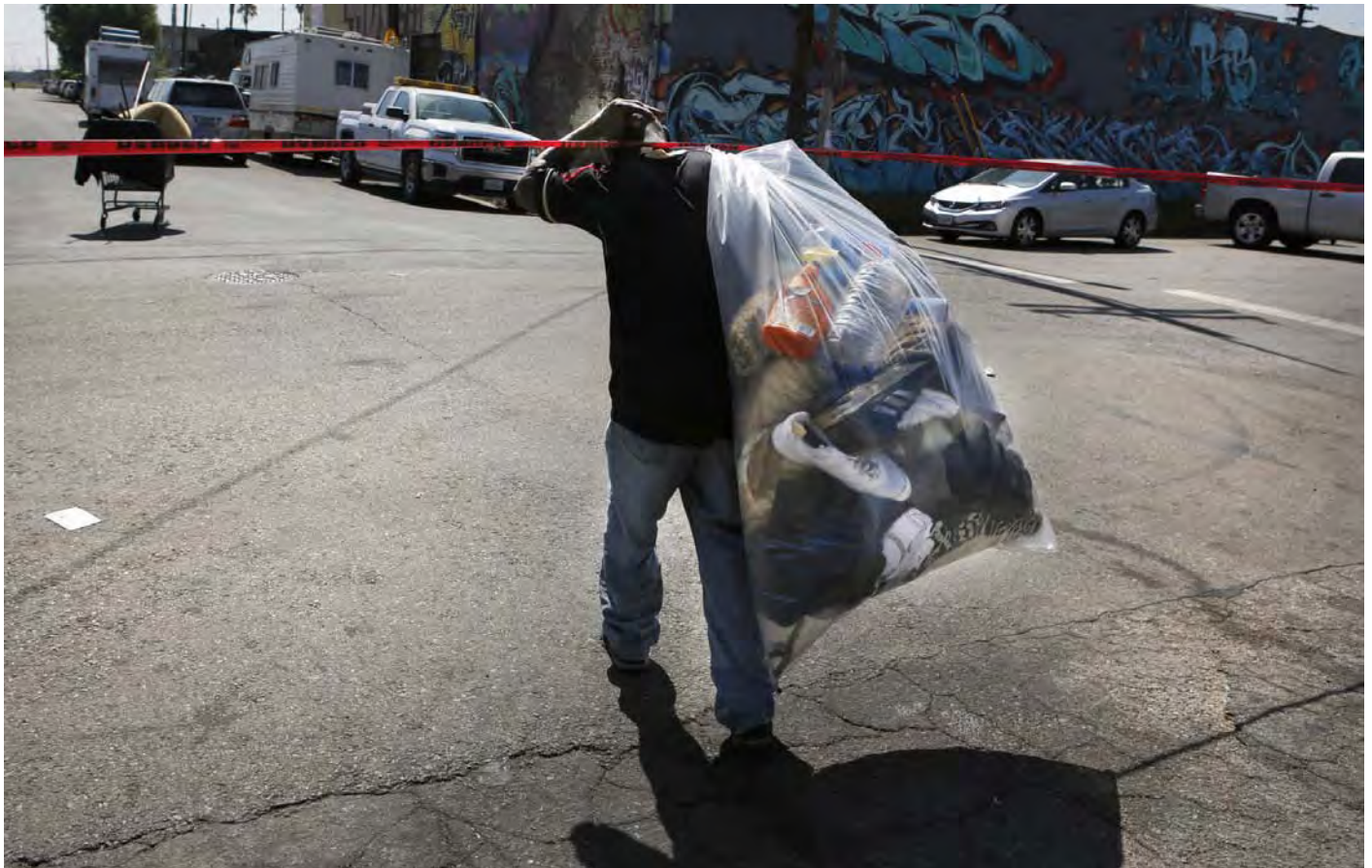
Drug paraphernalia, crude weapons and wooden pallets could be seen at one recent spot. A piece of plywood at an abandoned South L.A. camp was scrawled with the message: “This just ain’t no tent. It’s my home.”

Crews use rakes and shovels to remove items, being careful to avoid contaminated needles or other hazards, said sanitation Supt. Russell Zamora.

“I always tell my group don’t touch anything with your hands because you may think it’s just a pile of trash, but there may be a needle right in there,” Zamora said.

After collecting any material that appears contaminated for separate disposal, the biowaste team sprays the area with disinfectant.

Case study: South L.A. cleanup



A homeless man leaves an encampment area with his belongings in a bag. (Christian K. Lee / Los Angeles Times)

Danny Dancy was sitting glumly on a curb off Slauson Avenue in South L.A. near the encampment where he'd been staying for months. Ten minutes later, a sanitation crew arrived to clear the sidewalk of his belongings — the sixth such cleanup there.

“I imagine they are going to take everything,” Dancy said. “I think the money they spend could be put to a better use. It’s tough because you don’t have nowhere to go.”

But help was around the corner. Homeless outreach workers were on hand to share information about shelters and other services with street dwellers who were frustrated or confused about what to do next.

Jeremiah Diaz, an employee with the homeless outreach organization Hopics, said as the city has increased the frequency of cleanups, he has noticed that homeless residents seem more willing to accept help. During one cleanup in May on Grand Avenue in South L.A., his group persuaded three campers to move into a shelter.

Bathroom access on skid row is worse than in a Syrian refugee camp, report says



One of four self-cleaning public toilets on skid row, shown in a 2013 file photo. (Francine Orr / Los Angeles Times)



By **Gale Holland**

JUNE 30, 2017, 4:00 AM

Homeless people on skid row have less access to bathrooms than Syrian refugees living in a [United Nations](#) camp overseas, according to a report released Thursday by a group of homeless service providers, advocates and residents.

The report found only nine public toilets open at night for 1,800 homeless people sleeping on skid row sidewalks and alleys. The conditions violate sanitation standards that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees sets for long-term camps, including a Jordan installation for Syrian refugees, the report said.

During the day, more bathrooms are open, but the facilities still fall short of UN minimum standards by 64 toilets, the study found.

The bathroom crunch has persisted despite 2012 findings by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health that human waste, extreme overcrowding and exposed living conditions in the 50-block skid row district posed an increased risk of meningitis, staph, lice and fungal infections, along with hepatitis A.

The health department recommended that the city add toilets and access to soap, water and hand sinks, but skid row is still waiting, the report said.

“The lack of basic amenities like public toilets has gone on for so long that in skid row, the absurd has become the normal,” the report said.

“This is a public health crisis,” said Homeless Health Care Los Angeles Administrator Stephany Campos, who participated in the audit.

A spokesman for Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) said he had earmarked \$1.3 million in his 2017-18 budget for mobile showers and bathrooms, and the Department of Recreation and Parks is building two permanent restrooms in San Julian and Gladys parks on skid row.

“Everyone should be able to bathe or use the restroom safely and with dignity, and anyone who walks the streets of skid row knows that we need infrastructure that meets the needs of our unsheltered population,” Garcetti press secretary Alex Comisar said in an email.

The report, titled “No Place to Go,” calls for the city to provide 107 additional toilets by the end of the year. It was based on an audit in January and February conducted by the Los Angeles Central Providers Collaborative, the city-county C3 homeless outreach team, Los Angeles Mission, Midnight Mission, Downtown Women’s Center, the Inner City Law Center, and skid row residents and organizations.

The audit found 38% of the available bathrooms were broken during operating hours, and most lacked soap, paper towels and menstrual products. Homeless people have to ask guards to use mission facilities, and staff are stingy with toilet paper, the report said.

The bathrooms are also hard to get into, inaccessible to disabled people and provide no privacy, the auditors said.

“Users have to step over people sleeping in a crowded courtyard to get to the toilets and once inside, users discover that the stalls have no doors,” the report said.

Photographer Alexander Laurent, a former skid row apartment resident, said the sanitation problems affect not just homeless people but those who live in the 50-block downtown district’s buildings.

“The overwhelming environment, the smell, the unsanitary conditions definitely take a toll on you just as an observer,” said Laurent, who helped with the audit. “How are these conditions acceptable?”

The report called on the city to hire and train bathroom attendants selected from the skid row community to provide round-the-clock security and referrals to food, shelter, showers, clothes washers and healthcare. The attendants could be equipped with cellphones to report safety concerns or alert maintenance crews when repairs or supplies are needed, the report said.

“This collaboration must dedicate additional public resources to provide sufficient ... toilets that are functional and architecturally pleasing,” the report said. “The community will be better able to thrive when its members feel safe and comfortable and the community is cleaner, safer, more environmentally friendly and attractive.”

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Maersk's L.A. port terminal remains closed after global cyberattack



Maersk containers at a terminal in Germany in 2010. (Patrik Stollarz / AFP/Getty Images)

By **Alexa D'Angelo and Jill Leovy**

JUNE 29, 2017, 3:35 PM

The largest terminal at the Port of Los Angeles remained closed Thursday as Danish shipping giant A.P. Moller-Maersk continued to grapple with effects of a [cyberattack](#) that rippled across numerous countries Tuesday.

The terminal, leased by Maersk, has been closed since early Tuesday, and there is no word on when it will reopen, said Rachel Campbell, a Port of Los Angeles spokeswoman.

Maersk has said that 17 of its shipping container terminals worldwide were hacked and that, in response, the company deliberately shut down a number of its IT systems. It [announced](#) Thursday that it was “cautiously progressing toward technical recovery.”

At the Port of Los Angeles, one ship was anchored outside the breakwater Thursday waiting to dock, though officials were not certain when that can happen since the terminal must first confirm it is ready to receive

vessels, Campbell said. The seven other container terminals at the Los Angeles port remained open, Campbell said.

On Wednesday, Maersk said that most of its terminals were operational again. “Some of these terminals are operating slower than usual or with limited functionality,” it said.

All Maersk Line vessels are under control, employees are safe and onboard communication is functioning, the company said.

Maersk also announced Wednesday that it had online booking tools up and running again.

The computer worm affecting Maersk — dubbed NotPetya by some researchers to distinguish it from an earlier strain of malware it resembles — erupted Tuesday in Ukraine, affecting power, governmental and other concerns there. The worm quickly spread to many other countries.

Salim Neino, chief executive of Kryptos Logic, a Los Angeles cybersecurity company, said the worm infected 2 million computers in the first two hours after its release.

Cybersecurity experts, including those from Mountain View, Calif.-based Symantec, have reported that although this computer attack masquerades as ransomware, it’s not really intended to collect payments.

“We have no doubt that none of this was financially motivated,” said Vikram Thakur, a technical director for Symantec in Los Angeles.

Instead, security experts call it a “wiper.” This means infected computers cannot successfully be rebooted, and the encrypted files are forever out of reach.

The worm resembles May’s WannaCry attacks in some ways. It exploits the same vulnerability in unpatched Microsoft Windows operating systems using what is believed to be a program used for spying that was stolen from the U.S. National Security Agency this year.

But it propagates through other tricks as well, including stealing credentials. This makes it more dangerous, and capable of spreading even to patched Windows systems within the network.

Thakur said the attack “brings us to a new situation” where any weak spot in a network can propagate malware to connected devices. That means even users who dutifully update their computers “can fall prey to these kinds of attacks just because someone else on the network didn’t do something correctly,” he said.

Symantec reported that — outside Ukraine, where tax accounting software inadvertently helped deliver the infection — the U.S. has been hardest hit by the malware attack. But France, Britain and Germany also figure high among victims.

Among those hit were Memphis, Tenn.-based FedEx, which reported that operations and communications at its recently acquired TNT Express subsidiary in Europe were affected, though it said there was no data breach.

The types of companies victimized by this latest attack — shipping, pharmaceutical and energy companies — highlight the danger of cyberattacks in a world where information and operation systems are increasingly integrated, said Earl Perkins, research analyst at Stamford, Conn.-based Gartner Inc.

There is “a digital skin being stretched over all these machines,” Perkins said. He said that WannaCry, NotPetya and similar cyberattacks serve to warn that such interconnectedness heightens risks, and that the most advanced companies can sometimes be the most vulnerable.

[ALSO: California lawmakers have tried for 50 years to fix the state's housing crisis. Here's why they've failed »](#)

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This article is related to: [Cyber Crime](#), [TNT](#)



Four big ways California would be affected by the Senate and House Republican healthcare plans

Both bills would mean California would have to foot a bill amounting to billions.

By **KYLE KIM**

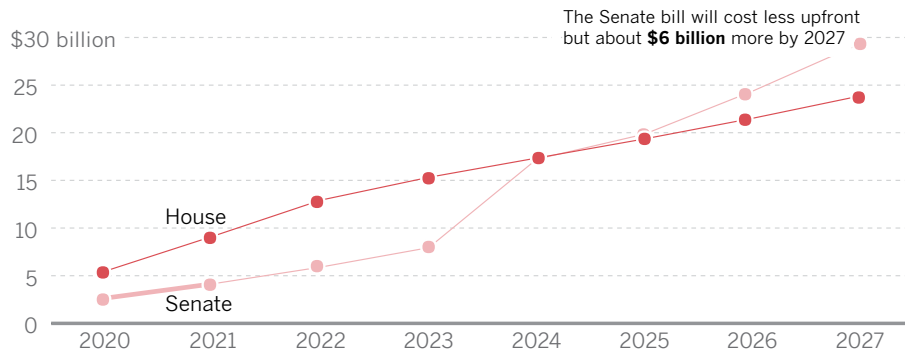
MARCH 22, 2017

UPDATED JUNE 28, 2017

The Senate and House bills would shift billions in costs onto California

The Senate bill would shift \$3 billion in costs to California's state government in 2020 and increase to \$30.4 billion by 2027, according to analysis by the California Department of Health Care Services (http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Documents/BCRA_Impact_Memo_062717.pdf). DHCS estimated the House proposal (https://www.gov.ca.gov/docs/3.21.17_AHCA_Fiscal_Analysis.pdf) would result in transferring nearly \$6 billion in costs to California in 2020 to \$24.3 billion by 2027.

Annual added healthcare costs that would shift to California



The decades-old Medicaid funding structure would change

California embarked on one of the most aggressive implementations of Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare). The expansion resulted in 4 million more people to Medi-Cal, the state's version of the federal Medicaid program for the poor. Medi-Cal now covers 13.5 million residents – 1 of

every 3 Californians – with medical, dental, mental health, substance use and long-term care services, according to DHCS.

Under the Affordable Care Act

- California and other states receive funding based on how much medical care each state's Medicaid patients receive
- The federal government pays for most of the Medicaid cost for states that expanded coverage to a wider group of low-income adults without children

Under the GOP proposal

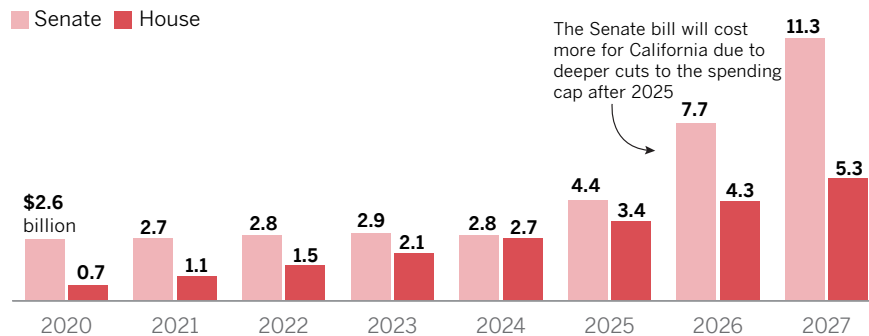
House version

- California would receive a fixed, annual per capita cap or a "block grant" instead of a per Medicaid-enrollee structure. If the state spends more than its annual limit, it would have to repay the federal share of that amount the following fiscal year
- Federal funding for states that expanded Medicaid would cease by 2020. Americans on Medicaid would also be required to refile paperwork every six months to continue receiving benefits, which the California Department of Health Care Services says would create a barrier, causing individuals to lose coverage

Senate version

- The Senate version would implement an annual per capita spending limit similar to the House bill until the start of the 2025 fiscal year, in which it will further reduce the spending limit more than the House bill. That means the cost burden will be "more catastrophic" for California, according to DHCS analysis.
- Federal funding for expanded Medicaid would be phased out by 2021

Estimated amount of Medi-Cal costs that would exceed the GOP's proposed limit



California's elderly and disabled

Both the Senate and House bills would cut 6% of federal funding for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) programs would be cut by 2020, moving \$400 million in costs onto California, according to DHCS. The state's IHSS program is

the largest in the country, allowing the elderly and disabled to receive care in their homes instead of in a hospital or other costly institutional settings.

Planned Parenthood services in California

Both bills would impose a one-year federal funding freeze any health clinics that provide abortion services. In the Golden State, that would affect the Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, which serves more than 600,000 Medi-Cal and Family Planning, Access, Care and Treatment program beneficiaries, who are predominantly low-income women (<http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-pol-obamacare-repeal/#womens-health>). The one-year prohibition would equal more than \$400 million in added costs to the state, according to the California Department of Health Care Services.

Sources: California Department of Health Care Services, Times reporting
Credits: Additional reporting by John Meyers

UPDATES:

June 29, 11:47 a.m.: This article was updated to include the California Department of Health Care Services's assessment on the Senate bill.

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