The Federal Bureau of Land Management said Thursday it will consider amending a desert land use conservation plan, which could reopen millions of acres “to seek greater opportunities for renewable energy generation.”

BLM said it will open a 45-day public comment period on 10.8 million acres of BLM managed land for possible changes to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The majority of that land is in San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

Opposition to the announcement was swift.

“The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan was developed in 2016 as a way to both preserve desert ecosystems and allow for the development of renewable energy projects,” said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif, in a statement. “It’s a balanced plan that resulted from years of careful analysis and wide-ranging community engagement.”
“This creates chaos,” said Frazier Haney, director of land conservation for the Joshua Tree-based Mojave Desert Land Trust. “Anyone who cares about public lands should be concerned about it.

“As a local land trust that has been involved in land use planning, we believe that the past eight years have produced certainty for both industry and communities,” Haney said. “By rolling back these planning efforts, this administration threatens not only conservation land but California’s ability to move forward efficiently with energy development.”

In an interview, Karen Douglas, California Public Utilities Commission chairwoman, said that “brand new data collection and scientific analysis” went into creating the DRECP and “anyone thinking about changes needs to put forward a case… that would really justify coming to different conclusions.”

There are important interests that the state has here, both with the work with the BLM… and the certainty we have that Californians care deeply about public lands,” Douglas said.

At the time the DRECP was approved, federal and California officials hailed it as an unprecedented model for land use planning and for state and federal collaboration.

The BLM said its action is in response to President Trump’s order to review regulations that unnecessarily impede energy development.

“We need to reduce burdens on all domestic energy development, including solar, wind and other renewables,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Katharine MacGregor. “This process will help us find ways to make more federal land available for renewable energy projects as well as wireless broadband infrastructure.”

Douglas said that California “has moved very quickly” in meeting its energy goals, and while large-scale desert projects pioneered the initial transition to alternative energy production, the state is looking to a more diverse geography for future projects and “not just in the desert.”

The state is also looking at doing more small-scale projects,” she said.

“The administration has talked a lot about wanting localities and states to make decisions and this (the DRECP) is exactly what they have been asking for,” said David Lamfrom, California Desert director for the National Parks Conservation Association.

“This plan represents almost a decade of work and the voices of thousands of people and input from local communities and every level of government and planning area,” said Lamfrom, who is based in Barstow.

Ileen Anderson, senior scientist, for the Center for Biological Diversity in Los Angeles, said her organization will “defend the plan…we will not let it go without a fight.”

While the center was not pleased with everything in the plan, it was a compromise that strikes a balance to move California into a new era away from fossil fuels.

Unless the government takes a “fast-track” approach to dismantling the DRECP, “it could take years” for Trump administration changes to occur,” Anderson said.

In California, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed an order in 2008 requiring 33 percent of California’s energy production to come from renewable sources by 2020. More recently, Gov. Jerry Brown Jr. signed into law a measure requiring retail sellers and publicly owned utilities to get 50 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2030, the BLM statement said.

Renewable energy associations and local governments expressed concerns to the Department of the Interior that the DRECP did not designate enough public lands for future renewable energy development.

Furthermore, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and the Blythe City Council said the regulatory burdens created by the DRECP would make projects too costly to build, put undue pressure on private lands, and inhibit economic growth and job creation.

Douglas said the DRECP plan designates 600 square miles of desert for large-scale energy development and that “is very much sufficient to accommodate renewable energy needs on public lands.”

These entities recommended a more efficient, streamlined and balanced approach to renewable energy development on both public and private lands, the BLM statement said.

The comments sought in this new Federal Register notice will be used to help set the parameters, or scope, of the review of the DRECP.

The notice asks for comments on how land designations identified in the plan might affect the development of solar, wind or other renewable energy resources.

The entire DRECP planning area covers approximately 22.6 million acres of both federal and non-federal land in seven counties: Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego. The Federal Register notice specifies that the BLM will consider amendments to the California Desert Conservation Area, the Bakersfield Resource Management Plan, and the Bishop Resource Management Plan.
Trump plan could undo preservation of millions of acres of California desert for renewable energy development – San Bernardino Sun

Comments should be sent to the BLM-California State Director, 2800 Cottage Way, Rm W-1623, Sacramento, CA 95825, or electronically to BLM_CA_DRECP@blm.gov.

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Jim Steinberg

Jim Steinberg is a national-award winning environmental writer. He also covers medical and healthcare issues, drones and aviation, military and the cities of Fontana and Rialto.

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WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is threatening to scrap a major Obama-era agreement that sought to protect millions of acres of the California desert by placing sensitive areas off-limits to major solar- and wind-energy installations.

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan covers more than 10.8 million acres, a large percentage in San Bernardino County, and was designed to guide energy facilities to parcels where they are least likely to cause environmental damage. The administration’s announcement that it will reconsider the plan touched off an immediate backlash in the West. The Trump administration's action could also open up sensitive desert areas to off-road vehicles, mining and grazing.

“Scrapping the plan now is a complete waste of time and money, and I oppose this,” said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. Other leaders in California agreed. The California Energy Commission, which took a lead role in developing the desert management plan, says the state will have no problem meeting its aggressive clean energy goals without rolling back the protections.

The move by the administration comes as some energy firms and local governments complained the plan was too restrictive, placing off-limits land they have been seeking to develop.

The bid to revise the plan threatens to set off new tensions between conservation groups crusading to protect habitat, such as the desert tortoise, and solar and wind developers eager to meet the West’s escalating demand for clean energy. It also raises tensions between Washington and California.

The Bureau of Land Management says it was moved to consider changing the plan “in response to President Trump’s order to review regulations that unnecessarily impede energy development.” It points out that under the conservation plan, only 7 percent of the millions of acres it covers is available for renewable energy leasing.
“We need to reduce burdens on all domestic energy development, including solar, wind and other renewables,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Katharine MacGregor. The Trump administration points to California’s own aggressive mandates for renewable energy in justifying the move. It also cites complaints from the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and the Blythe Council that the conservation plan could inhibit energy development.

Yet any changes threaten to intensify the costly and time consuming lawsuits and bureaucratic hurdles that commercial scale projects can bring. Facilities built on lands the management plan designates for them are eligible for fast-track permitting. As the Trump administration suggests unraveling the year-old management plan could speed the production of clean power in California, the states own officials say it would have just the opposite effect.

State officials are likely to fight any moves by the Trump administration to shrink the areas the plan protects. They say it is absolutely unnecessary to put commercial scale clean power projects in those areas to meet California’s renewable energy goals. Some also warn tearing apart the plan would undermine the state’s efforts to shift toward more clean power, exposing energy companies to the litigation and bureaucratic delays that the carefully brokered plan was designed to help them avoid.

“This is not needed,” said Karen Douglas, who is on the state energy commission. “We have sufficient land designated in this plan to support meeting our renewable energy goals.”

The administration’s proposal goes beyond exploring an expansion of the lands available for solar and wind. It will also consider whether more of the desert should be opened to off-road vehicles, mining and grazing.

Alex Daue, assistant director for energy and climate at The Wilderness Society, called the action a “cynical attempt by the Trump administration to undermine both renewable energy and conservation. ... Reopening the carefully crafted, balanced plan will only result in uncertainty, conflict and worse outcomes for renewable energy, recreation and conservation.”

The conservation plan, which stretches 350 miles across California, was developed over eight years. The Obama administration considered more than 14,000 public comments in developing it as a roadmap for renewable energy infrastructure on public lands.

It set aside 3.9 million acres to be permanently protected, including the Silurian Valley and the Chuckwalla Bench. Another 1.4 million acres were designated areas of critical environmental concern. And 388,000 acres were designated as appropriate for
commercial scale renewable energy projects.

The state was a major player in the development of the plan, with the California Energy Commission on the team of agencies that oversaw it.

“It’s a balanced plan that resulted from years of careful analysis and wide-ranging community engagement,” Feinstein said. “I question the logic of reopening this carefully crafted compromise that was so recently settled.”

Renewable energy advocates say they are skeptical of the administration’s intentions. It has so far not shown itself to be particularly enthusiastic about clean power. The president recently imposed hefty new tariffs on imported solar panels over the vocal opposition of much of the industry. The Solar Energy Industries Association projects the tariffs will cost 23,000 mostly blue collar American jobs, as less solar is installed and billions of dollars of projects are scaled back because of the tariff. And industry analysts say the tariffs are unlikely to bring back to America any of the panel manufacturing jobs Trump envisions.
Drought deepens dramatically in Southern California

By Ellen Knickmeyer and Rich Pedroncelli / Associated Press

PHILLIPS STATION — California is rapidly plunging back into drought, with severe conditions now existing in Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties — home to one-fourth of the state's population, a U.S. agency said Thursday.

The weekly report released by the U.S. Drought Monitor also shows 44 percent of the state is now considered to be in a moderate drought. It's a dramatic jump from just last week, when the figure was 13 percent.

“It's not nearly where we'd like to be,” Frank Gehrke, a state water official, said after separately carrying out manual measurements of winter snowfall in the Sierra Nevada, which helps supply water to millions of Californians.

Overall, the vital snowpack stood at less than a third of normal for the date.

California lifted a drought state of emergency less than a year ago. A rainy winter snapped a deep five-year drought that forced water conservation.

The figures from the federal agency came amid growing concern among state officials about another dry winter.

The dry spell is acute in Southern California. Los Angeles and some surrounding areas have received only one significant storm in nearly a year. The region is now seeing record-setting heat.

The reading detailed Thursday shows the drought has significantly worsened in 5 percent of the state.

California's water managers trekked to the mountains to check the snow depth — one gauge of the state water supply. Electronic sensors show statewide snow levels at 27 percent of normal.

At the peak of California's recently ended five-year drought, Gov. Jerry Brown ordered 25 percent water conservation in cities and towns.

Heavy rains in Northern California last year finally snapped the drought, and Brown declared the emergency over in April.

But the drought never really seemed to end in some Southern California areas, notes Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at University of California, Los Angeles.

In Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, west of Los Angeles County, the lack of rain and dry vegetation were perfect fuel for a December wildfire that grew to become the largest recorded in state history. When it finally rained, the scorched earth turned into deadly mudslides.

Doug Carlson, spokesman for the state's Department of Water Resources, which carries out the snowpack surveys, said the dry weather is a growing concern, although reservoirs are still fuller than usual thanks to last year's rain in Northern California.
The East Valley Water District took the first historic step to improve the groundwater storage system in the Bunker Hill Basin. The goal is to meet the needs of this growing region.

The board of directors voted unanimously on Wednesday, Jan. 24, to support the formation of the Groundwater Council.

Fifteen other water agencies, cities and assorted entities are scheduled to vote on the memorandum of understanding to create the governance document during the next two months.
The council aims to expand groundwater storage, allocate costs equitably and create an organizational structure to administer the process.

In short: Figuring out how to survive drought conditions that have plagued the San Bernardino Valley for decades.

Twenty-year droughts

Bob Tincher, deputy general manager of the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, told the board that local rainfall supplies fulfill about three-quarters of the region’s needs.

“That could be a challenge if we have dry conditions that we’re not expecting,” Tincher said. “We do not have enough local supplies to meet our ongoing demands.”

A drought from 1945 to 1965 prompted the Valley District to join the State Water Project so it could buy water from Northern California.

John Mura, general manager of the East Valley Water District (East Valley) called the creation of the Groundwater Council the biggest step since that decision. Taxpayers agreed to pay for the imports through property taxes.

“Fast forward to right now and we have been in a 20-year drought with no end in sight,” Tincher said.

His Power Point presentation showed that demand exceeds supply. Water historians say California droughts have lasted for centuries.

Groundwater history
The Conservation District has been storing water underground in the San Bernardino Ground Basin since 1909, spurred by a 5-year drought from 1898 to 1903. The federal government set aside four sections for water conservation. (A section is 1 square mile or 640 acres.)

Led by Francis Cuttle of the Riverside Water Co., percolation ponds were dug and the Cuttle Weir (a low dam built across a river to raise the level of water upstream and to regulate the flow) was completed in 1914, according to the Conservation District’s update of its strategic plan finalized in December.

San Bernardino County supervisors created the Conservation District in January 1932 from earlier associations. The Valley District, formed in 1954 serves as a wholesale supplier for 13 water agencies that fill the needs of 695,000 people on 353 square miles.

Spark of the idea

In 2005, the Local Agency Formation Commission, which controls district boundaries, eliminated the Conservation District’s sphere of influence. In 2009, the commission proposed consolidating the Conservation District with the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District. The commission did not merge the districts.

Instead, it accepted the proposed Groundwater Council to expand cooperation and as an alternative to consolidation.

In 2015, all the entities that benefit from the Bunker Hill Basin participated in a Watermaster Collaborative to discuss the Groundwater Council.
Equitable allocation

The Groundwater Council agreement includes an equitable allocation method to fairly allocate supplies and burdens to each party, says the East Valley district staff report.

“Currently, the way we run supplement water into the valley is essentially on a voluntary basis,” Tincher said. “An agency orders the water, we deliver the water and that agency pays for the water.”

Or not, depending on historic habits.

Under the new system, everybody pays the same for water and pumping proportionally.

Mura pushed for a system that would allow users to pay their fair share with water or money. Recycled water returned to the basin would count as a portion of the share.

Tincher said operations and maintenance costs are estimated at $1 million. The purchasing of water for recharge is estimated at $4 million per year. He added that this is not a fixed amount. It will be evaluated every year by the council.

The more you pump the more you pay

The team developing the Groundwater Council evaluated each water agencies' needs to estimate future needs and costs through 2040.

San Bernardino is the county's largest city and largest user. It would pay $1.4 million based on pumping water out of the basin in 2017. The city will have the largest voting weight, 37.84 percent. Redlands would spend $675,115 last year. Its voting weight will be 21.23 percent.

“The agencies that pump the most generally end up paying the most,” Tincher said. “The voting on the council would be weighted based on how much you pay.”
Mura said these complicated issues have been pored over for the past 2 1/2 years. When the agreement was reached in the 1960s to import State Water Project water it was silent about who pays for pumping water out of groundwater storage, “which puts the Valley District in the unenviable position where they're begging people do the right thing.”

Under the current system, every year the lead agency would have to “re-invent the wheel.” The Groundwater Council will tap into imported water when it is cheapest and agencies that tap into groundwater storage will pay their fair share, being assured the water would be available when they need it.

Supporting documents did not specify which users dodged pumping fees.

Seeking sustainability

“The good news is that in the valley we have a lot of supplemental water resources available to us,” Tincher said. That includes local rainfall carried by the Santa Ana River and other tributaries, recycled water and water imported from Northern California.

“We have the supplies available to tip the scale toward sustainability,” he said.

Storing imported water

The region set a record for the amount of imported water that recharged during the 2016-17 water year (July 1 to June 30). More than 16 billion gallons of water went into underground storage, reflecting 94 percent of the total water demand for residents of San Bernardino, Redlands and Highland, Daniel Cozad, general manager of the conservation district, said in a press release.

“The Groundwater Council enables us to continue proactive basin management toward achieving the ideal storage and water levels in the basin,” Cozad said. “Storing water in wet years will provide all pumpers with a reliable source of water during droughts and help prevent the region from purchasing water on the ‘spot market’ at much higher prices.”

Tincher said the Groundwater Council will take a proactive approach in storing State Water Project water so supplies will be available if another drought compels the state to restrict imports.

“We're not just buying the amount of State Water Project water we need for today,” he said, “we're actually buying the amount of State Water Project water we need for tomorrow.”

Recycling

In a commentary that appears on Page 9 of this edition, Mura, Headrick and San Bernardino City Manager Andrea Millier explain that litigation between the three agencies stalled efforts to create two new water recycling projects.

“Approximately 700,000 people in the San Bernardino Valley depend upon groundwater from the San Bernardino Groundwater Basin for the majority of their water supply,” they write. “This shared resource served as the ‘common ground’ that brought the parties together.”

The agreement will result in the development of two new recycled water supply projects, San Bernardino's Clean Water Factory and East Valley Water District's Sterling Natural Resource Center. The projects are expected to deliver 11 million gallons a day into the San Bernardino Groundwater Basin.

The Clean Water Factory will include the existing San Bernardino Water Reclamation Plant, just north of the confluence of the East Twin Creeks and the Santa Ana River at 399 Chandler Place, San Bernardino.

The Sterling center, at Del Rosa Drive and 6th Street in Highland, is expected to open this year. The center will treat up to 10 million gallons of wastewater per day and generate 11,200 acre-feet of reclaimed water each year.

The labyrinth of water agencies in the San Bernardino Valley has an astonishing amount of plans and projects under way in addition to the groundwater council and recycling projects.

The sedimentation basin
Work has begun on a $15 million, 700-foot-long, 140-foot-wide “sedimentation basin” just downstream from the Seven Oaks Dam to produce more sediment-free water to refill local groundwater basins.

Moving the Foothill Pipeline

With an $8.5 million investment from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, the Valley Municipal will move the Foothill Pipeline from the front of its casino to the back.

Valley Municipal will invest $2.5 million in the project, which will make the pipeline more flexible in case of an earthquake along the San Andreas Fault, which is near the casino.

The Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan

The plan aims to protect endangered species in the wash between Highland and Redlands, such as the Santa Ana River woolly-star, a plant that grows to about 3 feet and flowers in spring.

Highland and Redlands are working on trails in the area.

PARTICIPAING ENTITIES

Water agencies

Besides EVWD, seven water agencies are considering the creation of the Groundwater Council. Voting rights are apportioned based on cost incurred for each agency.

The highest cost in 2017 was borne by the city of San Bernardino at more than $1.4 million. Its votes will comprise more than 37 percent of the total.

The lowest cost, $120, was incurred by the Bear Valley Mutual Water Co. Its voting weight would be zero.

The users that pump the most pay the most, but the largest users get a larger percentage of the vote.

- **East Valley Water District**: Costs 2017: $442,602. Voting weight is 14.08 percent. Approved.
- **Fontana Union Water Co.**: Costs were not available.
- **Muscoy Mutual Water Co. No. 1**: Costs $44,106.
- **San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District**: Costs $1,987.
- **Terrace Water Co.**: Costs $15,082.
- **West Valley Water District**: Costs $262,360. Voting weight is 7.02 percent.
- **Yucaipa Valley Water District**: Costs $14,603. Voting weight is 0.39 percent.

Cities

- **Colton**: Costs $114,889. Voting weight is 3.08 percent.
- **Loma Linda**: Costs $254,297. Voting weight is 6.81 percent.
- **Rialto**: Costs $322,534. Voting weight is 8.71 percent.
- **San Bernardino**: Costs $1,413,384. Voting weight is 37.84 percent.

Other users

- **Loma Linda University**: Costs $31,157. Voting weight is 0.83 percent.
- **Mountain View Power Co.**: Costs $84,747.
- **San Bernardino County facilities management**: Costs $17,976.

About the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District
The SBVWCD serves an area totaling 50,000 acres within unincorporated San Bernardino County as well as portions of the cities of San Bernardino, Loma Linda, Redlands, and Highland. The water recharged by the District serves more than 227,580 people in the District who use well water through partner water agencies. In addition, cities and agriculture in Riverside County pump and use water recharged by the District. SBVWCD recharges native river, creek, and State Project water on behalf of producers and water partners. Visit www.sbvwcd.org.

About San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District

Valley District provides supplemental State Water Project water to 13 retail water agencies from Rialto to Yucaipa that collectively serve more than 700,000 business and residential customers. In addition to providing supplemental water from Northern California, Valley District manages groundwater storage within its boundaries. The San Bernardino-based agency was formed in 1954 - in the midst of a 20-year drought - to find a way to import supplemental water into western San Bernardino County to make up for shortfalls in local water supplies. Visit www.sbmwd.com for more information.

RANCHO CUCAMONGA (CBSLA) — The family of Gerardo Vasquez says it’s out of character for him to just disappear and not contact them. That’s why they’re now putting up flyers. They’re worried that what they saw in that video might have left him with some serious injuries.

Isis Trujillo and her family have been posting flyers all over the Inland Empire, hoping someone can help them find their cousin. They don’t know what happened to the 21-year-old after video was taken early last Friday morning, showing him being kicked and punched by two San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Deputies.

The sheriff’s department says he was released from West Valley detention center. His family wants to make sure he’s not injured and then see what he has to say about his confrontation with the deputies.
"When we saw him pinned down by two deputies on the floor, already handcuffed, we were like in shock," cousin Isis Trujillo said.

Trujillo says her cousin had gone out with friends earlier in the evening. She doesn’t know why or how he ended up alone on Highland Avenue, and she doesn’t understand why deputies were trying to detain him.

“He’s never been in trouble with the law, we’ve never had trouble with him with the law, from what we know, nothing at all.”

She does admit he struggled with depression in the past. That’s one of the reasons they hung his picture around Community Hospital of San Bernardino. It’s one of the places he had been treated.

“They released him and since then, he’s been completely fine. He had a job, he was applying for college, he was doing great,” Trujillo said. “We want to know both sides of the story, because we deserve to know both sides of the story.”

The sheriff’s department has put the deputy involved on administrative leave while they investigate the use of force in this incident. That’s why they say they can’t answer questions about what happened to Vasquez.
The San Bernardino International Airport (SBD) is preparing for a full-scale, multi-agency emergency response exercise scheduled for 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, Feb. 28.

The simulated real-time emergency exercise is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirement of the airport every three years since last year's upgrade to Class-I air space for regular commercial service.

According to SBD Executive Director Mike Burrows, the airport previously held a Part 139 classification and held tabletop exercises. The airport has held large-scale live exercises in the past but not since the late 1990s. The exercise will involve coordination with local emergency response agencies and serve as a test of the airport's emergency plan.

“The exercise is meant for us to put to practice all elements of our emergency plan,” said Burrows. “Our airport operator and airport manager have done a considerable amount of planning for the exercise.”

While the details of the simulated emergency will not be known until the exercise goes live, it will involve a mass casualty incident with a twin-engine Airbus A320 provided by Unical, according to Airport Manager Liliana Valle.

In addition to participation from six area fire departments, six hospitals, San Bernardino Police Department and San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, about 90 college student volunteers from Crafton Hills College and Victor Valley College will act as victims.
Over the past several months, wildfires across California have claimed many lives, including a firefighter and dozens of horses, burned more than 260,000 acres, displaced 200,000 residents and destroyed 1,000 structures.

As Governor Jerry Brown toured the ruined neighborhoods, he declared that California wildfires are “the new normal and this could be something that happens every year.”

Climate change and poor planning policy has brought about the “new normal.” California faces drier weather conditions and neighborhoods are built to the edge or into high fire risk areas. As Governor Brown stated, we can expect more fires that bring greater death and destruction.

It is against this harsh reality that the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors will decide to approve or deny the construction of Lazer Broadcasting’s proposed radio tower on a steep hill covered by dense chaparral next to Wildwood Canyon State Park.

The proposed radio tower would allow the Riverside County radio station to increase its advertising profits by reaching a larger audience while putting our local communities at greater risk for wildfires.

According to Cal FIRE’s Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps, the proposed tower site is located in a very high severity zone. This designation means that we should be reducing fire threats and not adding to them. Why make the situation worse by erecting a tower and constructing an electrical shed that inherently creates fire hazards? There are other locations available without these fire risks.

Strangely, the County of San Bernardino planning staff agreed to reduce the project’s fire setbacks from 100 feet to 30 feet and no longer requires access for fire safety vehicles in this rural area. Their rationale: if the tower catches fire, they will let it burn. That is fine for the tower, but what about the 200 nearby homes? We just saw how quickly wildfires can spread in a rural setting. The Tubbs fire in Northern California that killed 44 people this October is a recent reminder. This reckless policy endangers lives and threatens our communities.

The Board of Supervisors must demand the proposed tower is moved to an alternative site. With the new normal of more fires and increased death and destruction, why would the Board of Supervisors even consider approving the construction of a radio tower and power equipment in a very high fire severity zone?
Don't put company profits before community safety.

Dick Riddell

Yucaipa City Councilman
The San Bernardino City Council on Thursday unanimously approved the extension of a temporary ban on certain marijuana activities in town, ensuring the city keeps control of the regulation process.

The moratorium was extended another 10 months and 15 days, though it can be ended sooner should marijuana regulations be adopted by the city council.

Before a crowded Council Chambers, the body emphasized the importance of getting a marijuana ordinance on the books as quickly as possible.

The industry is here, Councilman Henry Nickel said. “We do need to get this done in short order. The industry deserves this, the consumers deserve this and the community deserves this. The limbo needs to be put to an end.”

Councilman Fred Shorett said he wants any law adopted by the council to be “bulletproof.”

An hour-long public hearing before the vote featured business owners and industry experts. Pleas were made to the council to let the temporary ban expire Friday and accept state rules as city law.
Measure O, the voter-approved ballot measure requiring the city to allow dispensaries in certain areas of town, currently is law here, though in his tentative ruling, San Bernardino County Superior Court Judge David Cohn declared the measure invalid. Cohn's final, written decision is expected any day now.

What are the marijuana laws in your California city? Explore our database of local cannabis policies here.

Tags: government, marijuana, Top Stories PE, Top Stories Sun

Brian Whitehead covers San Bernardino for The Sun. Bred in Grand Terrace, he graduated from Riverside Notre Dame High and Cal State Fullerton. For seven years, he covered high school and college sports for The Orange County Register. Before landing at The Sun, he was the city beat reporter for Buena Park, Fullerton and La Palma.

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When California voters legalized recreational weed in 2016, they made the law retroactive, allowing residents to petition to overturn or reduce old convictions for possession, cultivation and distribution of marijuana.

But it is a difficult and expensive legal procedure, advocates say, and many people are not even aware they are now eligible to clean up their records. State courts received 4,885 petitions in the first 11 months after Proposition 64 passed, while the pro-legalization Drug Policy Alliance found more than 460,000 arrests for marijuana offenses between 2006 and 2015 alone.

Assemblyman Rob Bonta is hoping to simplify the process. The Alameda Democrat’s Assembly Bill 1793 would require courts to automatically expunge the records of Californians convicted of offenses that are now legal under Proposition 64, such as possessing up to an ounce of weed and growing up to six plants for personal use, and to resentence those individuals whose crimes, such as selling marijuana, were reduced from felonies to misdemeanors.
"We're just saying, 'Move it along. Get it done,' " he said.

The legacy of racially unequal enforcement also motivated the measure. California police arrested black people for marijuana offenses at more than twice the rate of Latinos in 2015, according to the Drug Policy Alliance, and more than triple the rate of white people.

Bonta said his bill could provide a fresh start, including better employment and housing opportunities, to those who may not have the resources to petition in court: “It tries to create some justice where there was such injustice in the failed War on Drugs.”

AB 1793 faces high hurdles; it requires a two-thirds vote, and could face heavy opposition from the same law enforcement groups that campaigned against Proposition 64. Associations representing police chiefs and district attorneys said they have not yet taken a position on the bill.

As it moves it way through the Legislature this session, however, momentum may be building in local communities. San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón announced this week that his office plans to wipe more than 3,000 misdemeanor marijuana convictions dating back to 1975, and will review nearly 5,000 more felony cases for possible resentencing.

Alexei Koseff: 916-321-5236, @akoseff

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BUSINESS

NASCAR revs marketing engine for millennial, Hispanic audience
When Gilbert Ornelas was growing up in Fontana, he could hear the engines’ roar from what was then the California Speedway, where NASCAR has raced since 1997.

Twenty years ago, Ornelas did not fit the profile of the average NASCAR fan, but that has changed. He’s all in — originally a Jimmie Johnson fan (California guy, drives a Chevrolet) and more recently following Mexican driver Daniel Suarez.

“Come on — how many Mexicans are in NASCAR? And he is driving a Toyota, and I am not a Toyota fan. Look at what I am sacrificing to be with this guy! But if this guy wins a championship, it is going to draw a lot of Mexicans into it,” he said in a telephone interview. He says he will still follow Johnson as well.

Ornelas, 35, recently married, living in La Habra and working as a freight forwarding operator, said he plans to be at the Monster Energy Cup Series Auto Club 400 race March 18 at what is now the Auto Club Speedway in Fontana. Fortunately for Ornelas, the race is scheduled a few days before he and wife Jessica start their honeymoon.

Whether he knows it or not, Ornelas has his own fan following.

The folks at Auto Club Speedway have been working for at least a decade to make the NASCAR event inviting for Latinos, who make up more than 49 percent of San Bernardino County’s population and more than 45 percent of Riverside County, the majority of Mexican origin.

This year’s “The Fastest Sunday of the Year” marketing campaign for the long race weekend, is “threading the needle” between engaging traditional core NASCAR fans and trying to entice a new audience to the events, promoters say.

NASCAR in recent years has been struggling with decreasing Nielsen ratings on television, and fewer fans in the seats on race days across the nation. The Fontana track has taken its lumps along with other venues across the country.
From 2004-2010, there were two annual NASCAR races at the track. Now it's one race, but the remaining March date appears to sell out or come close but with a lower capacity after the grandstand was reduced to 68,000 from 92,000 seats. Such seat reductions have taken place at other tracks around the country in recent years.

Attendance strength is anecdotal. International Speedway Corporation, which owns or operates 13 racetracks across the country, does not release figures.

The effort to get more fans watching at home and filling seats at the raceway is aimed at a younger demographic, said Josh Avila, senior director of consumer marketing for Auto Club Speedway.

“The Fastest Sunday of the Year” marketing poster for 2018 brings forward all of the long weekend's attractions surrounding the race, including food, entertainment and lucha libre that leads up to the 12:30 pm Sunday race time, he said in a telephone interview.

The brightly colored movie-style graphic gives a nod to the race with a large image of a helmeted driver and a small down-page logo, but the big words focus on what Avila calls the “sensory overload’ of the event, an entire weekend of food and entertainment.

Avila said lucha libre, with masked freestyle wrestlers such as Blue Demon Jr. who are superstars in Mexico, has been a feature of the pre-race events for several years, and events appealing to Hispanic families go back about a decade.

Food offerings include King Taco as well as Pink's Hot Dogs. Entertainment lineups include a Viva La Fiesta stage — last year it featured Mariachi Los Reyes— and the honorary starter for 2017 was Grammy-winning singer Pepe Aguilar.

“We did a little bit of research, and there is a current non-fan who, when they attend the race, they are blown away by it,” said Jose R. Villa, the president and chief strategy officer of cross-cultural marketing agency Sensis, which was brought to create the 2018 campaign.

Introduced to NASCAR in 2011 at the urging of his future brother-in-law, Ornelas said he was drawn in by the action.

“Once I saw the race, I was hooked,” he said in a telephone interview. “Once I saw the cars — it was a spectacle, it was really intriguing,” echoing Villa’s observation.

Orneals goes to events with his brother-in-law and two others, but Ornelas said he is the only one in his immediate family that follows NASCAR.
“They ridicule me — they don’t like it at all. My brothers are all sports guys and they will say stuff — but you can tell they are interested. They have to watch it for themselves...you are not going to learn it in a day.”

There will be an across-the-board campaign, from social media to radio to television, as well as billboards and posters, to alert longtime fans and draw in new ones, Villa said.

“There is an openness by millennials,” for such events, Villa said. “We just need to get them out to that first race,” and turn it into what he called an “iconic event,” where the emphasis is on the entire experience, not just the race.

And while the campaign wants to get every possible fan through the gate, “millennial in Southern California skews Hispanic,” Villa said.

“NASCAR is doing the right thing. It just makes sense,” said Inez M. González, director of the Latino Communications Institute at Cal State Fullerton. “Any business that wants to see growth will target and young and diverse audience, and Latinos are the largest of the racial/ethnic groups.”

And they are younger. A 2016 Pew Research Center analysis concluded nearly six in 10 Hispanics are millennials, or younger. In the Riverside-San Bernardino market, the top radio station is Spanish-language KLYY-FM, one of the four Spanish-language stations in the area’s top 10 stations.

In 2016, Latino buying power was $1.4 trillion, nearly 10 percent of total U.S. buying power for that year, according to a report by the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia.

NASCAR’s “long-term strategy has been to welcome Latinos,” González said. She compared Suarez’s presence in the circuit to the Los Angeles Dodgers introduction of pitcher Fernando Valenzuela in 1980, “having a winner that Latinos can identify with.”

She also said Latinos, if attracted, will bring their families with them, “so it’s a smart move.”

There is one cross-cultural element: Ornelas texted that his wife Jessica “has to put up with me and my NASCAR obsession.”
Man and woman arrested for allegedly abusing their 2-month-old baby

Feb 1, 2018

A man and woman from Highland were arrested on a charge of willful cruelty and inflicting great bodily injury upon their 2-month-old baby, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

On Jan. 24, Robert Bellet, 30, and Annelese Ortega, 28, took their son to Loma Linda University Medical Center (LLUMC) for an unexplained injury to his ear. During a medical examination, the victim was found to have a partially severed ear which required stitches.

Forensic pediatricians from Loma Linda University Medical Center examined the victim and discovered he had multiple rib fractures in different stages of healing, a skull fracture and several additional injuries consistent with suspected child abuse.

Following an extensive investigation, along with collaboration with forensic pediatricians from LLUMC, Bellet and Ortega were arrested on Jan. 25. Bail was set at $250,000 each.

Anyone with information about this case is urged to contact the Specialized Investigation Division, Crimes Against Children Detail, Detective MJ Higgins at (909) 387-3615. Callers wishing to remain anonymous are urged to call the We-Tip Hotline at 1-800-78-CRIME (27463).
Local News

Learn about the ecology and botany of Tejon Ranch at Sierra Club program

By STAFF REPORT |
February 1, 2018 at 11:48 am

Botanist Nick Jensen will present “Tejon Ranch: A Biological Treasure” when the San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club meets 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, at the San Bernardino County Museum, 2024 Orange Tree Lane, Redlands.

Jensen, who recently received his doctorate in botany at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden/Claremont Graduate University, will discuss his research on the ecology and botany of Tejon Ranch. Over the past two years working on Tejon Ranch, he has made more than 4,000 herbarium collections representing at least one new species, dozens of new populations of rare species and many range extensions.
Sky lupine (Lupinus nanus) in the San Joaquin Valley (Photo by Nick Jensen)

At 270,000 acres, Tejon Ranch is California’s largest contiguous piece of private land. It is primarily in the Tehachapi Mountains of Kern County and it occupies one of the most complex ecological areas in the California — the convergence of the San Joaquin Valley, Sierra Nevada, Western Transverse Ranges and Mojave Desert.

Tejon Ranch was once the focus of a long fight to preserve its unique flora, fauna, scenic and recreational attributes, according to a press release from the Sierra Club. Before 2008, Tejon Ranch was closed to scientific research. Now, 240,000 acres, nearly 90 percent of the ranch, have been conserved under the Tejon Ranch Conservancy.

Jensen’s research interests include biogeography, rare plants and biodiversity. He is also interested in gaining a greater understanding of the threats to California’s plants. He has served as director of the rare plant program for the California Native Plant Society and has worked as a botanist for the U.S. Forest Service, Chicago Botanic Garden and the private consulting industry.

Parking and admission are free, but donations are accepted to help with room rental.

The San Gorgonio Chapter of the Sierra Club covers the geographic area of San Bernardino and Riverside counties. Information: sangorgonio2.sierraclub.org/

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Staff report
County crackdown on sex trafficking nets 42 arrests with focus on Victorville, Ontario and San Bernardino

By Staff Reports
Posted Feb 1, 2018 at 3:20 PM
Updated Feb 1, 2018 at 3:20 PM

Authorities successfully rescued 11 human trafficking victims as part of three-day sting operation targeting sex trafficking through various cities in the county, including Victorville.

The County’s Human Trafficking Force recently participated in the fourth annual “Operation Reclaim and Rebuild” enforcement operation, conducted by the Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force.

Enforcement operations were conducted Jan. 25-27 throughout the county, with a particular focus on San Bernardino, Ontario and Victorville.

“Specific areas were selected for enforcement by investigators, due to the high volume of activity and advertisements directly related to the commercial sex trafficking industry,” officials stated Thursday.

The operation ultimately netted 42 arrests for various violations associated with prostitution and other crimes. Of those arrests, one suspect was arrested for felony pimping/pandering, and three additional suspects were arrested and charged with felonies involving gun possession, high capacity magazines, and ammunition.

During the operation, investigators also identified and successfully rescued 11 adult victims of commercial sex trafficking, officials stated.

The San Bernardino County Human Trafficking Task Force is made up of investigators from the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, San Bernardino County District Attorney’s Office, San Bernardino Police Department, Ontario Police Department, San Bernardino Unified School District Police, Office of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Anyone wishing to report activities or concerns related to Human Trafficking to the San Bernardino County Human Trafficking Task Force can do so directly by calling 909-387-8400 or by email at ""
Universal Basic Income Is Getting a Trial in Silicon Valley

POSTED BY: NEXT CITY  FEBRUARY 1, 2018

By Rachel Dovey.

A pilot program in the struggling city of Stockton, California, will track the impacts of universal basic income (UBI) on some of the city's poorest residents this year. The no-strings-attached funding — $500 per family, per month — comes courtesy of the Economic Security Project, a program co-chaired by Facebook executive Chris Hughes, and the Goldhirsh Foundation.

As it's gained popularity in the U.S. and Europe, UBI has also gained an unlikely mix of supporters — and critics. It was part of the policy platform outlined by the Movement for Black Lives in 2016, a kind of reparation "provided to all black individuals to prevent the risks of dropping into total poverty," as Johnny Magdaleno wrote for Next City at the time. It's also been embraced by many, like Hughes, who are high up in the tech world. As Mark Zuckerberg writes long Facebook posts extolling the virtues of UBI and Uber execs pursue it as the answer to a system of contract-only workers and automation (that they themselves helped create), some have questioned whether UBI is simply a trendy new way for corporate heads to keep up their tax-evading, workforce-shrinking ways — without too much guilt.

Those questions could easily apply to the Stockton pilot. Time reports:
It's no accident that much of the support for UBI comes from Silicon Valley, where the potential for mass unemployment is starker than most other places in the U.S. Major companies there are in neck-to-neck competition to create labor-saving technologies — such as self-driving cars — that will inevitably replace greater numbers of humans with automation and robots.

Stockton is a town already facing these problems — the city has been plagued by a lack of job opportunities, low wages and high housing prices as Silicon Valley exploded around it, replacing once attainable middle-class security with a job market that requires highly skilled workers and relies heavily on automation, according to KQED News. The Bay Area city even had to declare bankruptcy in 2012.

On the one hand, all those factors make the once-agricultural California city the perfect place to test out UBI.

**Read the full story at Next City.**

Comments

comments
Sonoma County agreed Monday to outsource the processing and approval of thousands of permits related to the rebuilding efforts in unincorporated areas devastated by the October wildfires.

The Board of Supervisors signed off on a $20 million, three-year contract with San Ramon-based West Coast Code Consultants Inc., which will set up a special fire-related permitting center inside modular buildings at the county administrative center in north Santa Rosa.

In hiring the outside planning firm, county officials are aiming to establish a permitting process for fire victims that's both faster and cheaper than the county’s normal way of doing business.

The new permit center has its work cut out already: Staff members estimate the fires in October claimed an estimated 2,000 residential units and another 1,000 residential accessory structures in the unincorporated county alone.

Supervisor David Rabbitt admitted the county can’t prevent some fire victims from deciding not to rebuild, but it can make parts of the rebuilding effort smoother.

“What we do control is the county process,” Rabbitt said. “And within that process, what we control is time and money.”

The county’s move follows a similar approach taken by the Santa Rosa City Council, which in November approved a $9 million contract with Bureau Veritas North America Inc. to establish a separate permit process for fire-ravaged properties within city limits.

Under the county’s new model, a range of fees for properties in the burned areas have been reduced around 30 to 40 percent. Impact fees — generally charged to cover the
added strain a new development places on county roads, parks and other resources — were already waived entirely.

County officials exhibited a few case studies of how the fee changes would translate to real projects, with total permit fees ranging from more than $5,500 to nearly $6,800. Home sizes in those examples ranged from nearly 1,700 square feet to nearly 2,300 square feet, and they had garages, porches and retaining walls of various sizes.

The contract further seeks to guarantee faster time frames for the planning process in the burn areas. Initial plan checks should take five business days or less and rechecks shouldn't last more than three business days. Ten percent of the permit fees will be refunded to the client if West Coast Code Consultants fails to meet the turnaround time, county officials said.

Supervisors were eager to get the new permit center up and running, but also want to take further steps later to reduce costs and timing even more.

Rabbitt, an architect, said he'd prefer a firmer commitment on how fast building permits would actually get issued. He and other supervisors are also interested in testing a model where licensed designers could self-certify their plans are up to code without having to go through an extensive county-sponsored review.

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins suggested finding a way to help homeowners cover the cost of their permit fees if they don't have enough help from insurance — or don't have insurance at all.

“Our biggest concern, of course, is those folks who are underinsured for whom that five, six, seven thousand dollars might make or break their ability to rebuild or cause them to change the size of their dwelling, which ultimately results in a loss of equity,” Hopkins said.

Already, the county has issued permits for eight new single-family homes and 18 remodels of homes that were damaged but not destroyed in the burn areas, according to Permit Sonoma director Tennis Wick. Residents who had their permits processed under older fee schedules will be issued refunds, Wick said.
The county has the modular structures installed for the new permitting center, but another few weeks are necessary to get the staffing in place and systems to prepared to handle the influx, according to Wick.

“We’re starting a $20 million enterprise,” Wick said in an interview. “This is not something you want to leap into.”
Should Castle Rock reverse its 25-year ban on pit bulls? (2 letters)

By DP OPINION | openforum@denverpost.com
February 1, 2018 at 4:05 pm

Castle Rock is considering lifting its ban on pit bulls, which has been in place for more than 25 years. Castle Rock imposed its pit bull ban in 1992, three years after Denver took the lead on the issue following a couple of brutal attacks by pit bulls in the city — one killed a 3-year-old child in 1986 and another severely injured a man in the alley behind his home in 1989.

Re: “Across metro Denver, pit bull bans have been on the books for years. Now, one community might change that,” Jan. 28 news story.
I commend Castle Rock for reconsidering its pit bull ban, and The Denver Post for noting this important review. The incidents over 25 years ago were indeed horrific, but increasing evidence has shifted from blaming the breed to a focus on the specific animal and, usually, the human owner. Bully breeds have had a surge in popularity in areas where they are not banned and killed, and yet there has not been a commensurate increase (or even a presence) in dog attack horror stories.

News stories often require equivalence (“What does the opposing side think?”). Unfortunately, The Post chose a website (DogsBite.org) that is growing more isolated from the discourse on this topic, because their purported facts don’t withstand scrutiny. As this important discussion continues, I urge The Post to fact-check these responses. Or better yet, turn to reputable national organizations which can provide a balanced, more accurate analysis of the issue.

Dan Fishbein, Arvada

Pit bulls are the breed of choice for dogfighters and other abusers, and they constitute a high percentage of dogs in shelters. When pit bulls lash out, the results are often fatal: In December and January, pit bulls reportedly killed three women in separate attacks.

Legislation saves lives. In San Francisco, the number of pit bulls euthanized by animal control dropped 24 percent 18 months after a pit bull sterilization ordinance passed. One year after San Bernardino County, Calif., passed a breed-specific law, dog bites decreased nearly 10 percent. Nine years after banning pit bulls, bites involving the breed in Aurora decreased 73 percent and euthanasia of pit bulls decreased 93 percent.

Breed-specific protections and regulations are vital to prevent more pit bulls from being abused — and attacking.

Teresa Chagrin, Norfolk, Va.

The writer is an animal care and control issues manager for PETA.

Submit a letter to the editor via this form or check out our guidelines for how to submit by e-mail or mail.
Homeownership in Los Angeles and Orange counties was at a nine-year high at year's end, but the region is still among the nation's laggards in residents living in their own homes.
The U.S. Census Bureau reported Tuesday, Jan. 30, that 51.2 percent of households in Los Angeles and Orange counties lived in residences they owned in the fourth quarter, the fourth-lowest level among the nation’s 75 largest metropolitan areas behind Fresno, San Jose, and New York City. (FYI: best was Fort Meyers, Fla., at 74.9 percent!)

The high cost of housing makes ownership difficult in the L.A.-O.C. market, though the new census stats suggest the strong local job market is creating enough high-paying jobs to make recent purchases slightly more affordable for some families.

The final 2017 reading tied the year’s final quarter as the highest L.A.-O.C. ownership measurement since 2008. It was also an improvement on 46.6 percent in the third quarter — second worst in the U.S. — and up from 48.4 percent — the nation’s lowest — in 2016’s final quarter.

A similar upswing in ownership was seen statewide as 55.1 percent of California households lived in residences they owned in the fourth quarter. That was the third-worst in the nation behind Washington, D.C., and New York, but it’s also the highest level since 2011’s third quarter. (FYI: best was West Virginia at 74.5 percent)

In the previous quarter, statewide ownership was 53.5 percent — fourth worst — and a year ago it was 54.6 percent, third worst.

In the Inland Empire, ownership was 61 percent at year’s end, only 53rd among the top 75 markets. That ownership level was up from 59.2 percent in the previous quarter — ranked No. 57 — but it was down from 64.4 percent in 2016’s final quarter when Riverside and San Bernardino counties ranked 30th best.

The overall U.S. ownership rates were 64.2 percent in the fourth quarter, highest since 2014’s third quarter and up from 63.9 percent in the third quarter and 63.7 percent a year earlier.

The report also highlighted another local housing challenge: limited rental options.

Only an average 4.1 percent of L.A.-O.C. rental properties were vacant last year — fifth lowest among the top 75 markets. That was a small increase over 2016’s 2.9 percent — the nation’s second-tightest rental market.

In Riverside and San Bernardino counties, rental vacancy averaged 5.6 percent last year, seventh lowest in the nation. That was unchanged from 2016 when the Inland Empire had the sixth fewest vacancies.

DID YOU SEE …
Cities and counties that don’t meet homebuilding goals are subject to streamlined construction approvals under SB 35, a new law adopted to address the California housing crisis. (File photo by the Orange County Register/SCNG)

By JEFF COLLINS | JeffCollins@scng.com | Orange County Register
February 1, 2018 at 7:42 pm
The state housing department released its first list showing how many California cities and counties are meeting their local homebuilding goals.

The conclusion: More than 500 local jurisdictions — 98 percent of those in the state — are failing.

As a result, local governments will be required to expedite the approval process for new home developments that include affordable housing units, the California Department of Housing and Community Development announced on Thursday, Feb. 1.

Just 13 local jurisdictions made the list of those that have approved enough housing for all income levels, including sufficient affordable housing. The cities of Beverly Hills, San Fernando and West Hollywood made the list, as did Carpinteria and the San Diego County town of Lemon Grove.

The rest – 526 California cities and counties – either failed to meet their minimum housing goals or have yet to submit their 2016 progress reports, the state report said.

Under Senate Bill 35 — one of 15 new laws approved last year to address California’s housing crisis — developers seeking permits in those jurisdictions can get streamlined approvals, granted without their needing to appear before city councils and county supervisors, as long as they meet certain conditions.

For example, the housing projects must be adjacent to existing urban areas, meet existing zoning laws and set aside either 10 percent or 50 percent of their new homes for low-income residents.

The law seeks to increase homebuilding in the state by taking the approval process away from local politicians who fail to approve adequate construction.

State reports found local jurisdictions frequently give in to pressure from constituents who flock to city halls and county governments to protest new developments in their neighborhoods. So-called NIMBY’s, or “not in my backyard,” supporters, are reluctant to accept new housing in their communities, particularly affordable housing, fearing it will bring increased traffic, congestion and crime. State environmental regulations and “impact” fees imposed on developers also have been credited for slowing homebuilding in the state.

SB35 backers believe increased homebuilding will ease soaring housing costs by increasing the supply to meet burgeoning demand.
In 148 jurisdictions, developers will qualify for streamlined approvals if they set aside half of their new units for low-income residents. Those jurisdictions — the city of Los Angeles and unincorporated Orange County among them — failed to make sufficient progress in approving low-income housing, the state said.

In 378 additional jurisdictions, developers must set aside 10 percent of their units for low-income residents to qualify for streamlining. Those cities and counties made insufficient progress in approving enough homes even for average and upper-income households.

Under California law, each region needs to conduct a housing-needs assessment every five to eight years, then zone enough land to ensure there's adequate housing for all income levels.

“SB35 looks beyond planning to see if cities/counties have permitted housing in line with their need,” a housing department news release said. “When they have not, they are subject to SB35.”

Southern California cities subject to the 50 percent low-income set-aside include Pasadena, Rancho Cucamonga, Rancho Palos Verdes, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Fullerton and Irvine. The 50 percent rule also applies to San Francisco, San Jose and San Diego.

The report showed, for example, that Los Angeles and Irvine approved just a third of the low-income units required. Anaheim reportedly met only 8 percent of its low-income housing needs, while Pasadena approved 59 percent.

In the cities of Riverside and San Bernardino, developers must set aside just 10 percent of their units for low-income residents to qualify for streamlining. The 10 percent rule also applies to Long Beach, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Huntington Beach as well as unincorporated Riverside and San Bernardino counties, the report said.