

**Newsletter: August 2012**

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**August Meeting: Thursday, August 23, 2012, 6:15 pm at Crow Canyon Country Club**

**SPEAKER: Craig Cheslog**

**Principal Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at California**

**TOPIC: "A Blueprint for Great Schools" 7:15 pm (Dinner option begins at 6:15 pm)**



Craig Cheslog currently serves as the Principal Advisor to California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson at the California Department of Education. Craig's responsibilities in this role include serving as personal strategist, advisor to, and spokesperson for Superintendent Torlakson; serving as the Superintendent's liaison to other major external individuals and organizations; coordinating major education initiatives; and managing the Superintendent's Initiatives Office. Prior to joining the California Department of Education in January 2011, Craig served as the District Director for Assembly Member Tom Torlakson, after previously with serving in the same capacity for then-State Senator Torlakson. Among his responsibilities then were managing

the day-to-day operations of the Torlakson's district offices, serving as the primary liaison with local elected officials, directing constituent outreach and assistance activities, and representing Torlakson at meetings and events. Craig is also the President of the Lamorinda Democratic club.

**LOCAL SPEAKER: John Roe- SRVDC Club Member, Shop Steward and Special Projects Representative for the United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 5**

**Topic: Why You should vote No on Prop. 32**

John has been actively involved in numerous labor actions and campaigns over the years of behalf of workers' rights and in support of many Democratic candidates and issues. This year again, John will be coordinating phone banks, canvass walks and Get out the Vote on behalf of Democratic candidates in Contra Costa. On behalf of his efforts, John was honored as the "Political Activist of the Year" in 2009 by the Contra Costa Central Labor Council.

**Dinner is \$25 per person for members and their invited guests, \$30 for others.  
A limited number of seats are available for those just wishing to hear the presentations-  
Suggested donation is \$5**

**RSVP: Mail checks, made out to Jim Donnelly, to 373 Century Circle, Danville, CA 94526  
Or call him at (925) 570-9289**

**Please RSVP no later than Monday, August 20, 2012.**

## **In this Issue**

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## **Presidents Corner**

I just got back, this evening (Saturday) from a wonderful week of salmon & trout fishing on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers in Alaska. The weather was great and so was the fishing. The good news is that I caught enough salmon to have some for smoking for our SRVDC Bar-B-Que. This year we are using the event as a fund raiser to help support the Democratic office in Walnut Creek and on other election activities between now and November 6. So I really look forward to your support for this Bar-B-Que. There will be lots of good food, margaritas and live music.

This month's dinner meeting will include a talk by John Roe on why you should vote No on Proposition 32. This bill is presented as campaign reform; however, it is yet another attempt to smother labor's voice and to weaken the Democratic Party. Come to the dinner and learn more. This proposition has been on the ballot before and soundly defeated by the people of California. This time the proponents, who claim to be democrats, have written language into the proposition to make it sound a bit like campaign reform- but it is not.

Mitt Romney's choice of Paul Ryan for his vice presidential candidate should leave no question in your mind about what the priorities would be for a Romney administration; more tax breaks for the wealthy, more taxes for the middle and lower classes, more cuts to social programs and AN ALL OUT ASSAULT on MEDICARE and SOCIAL SECURITY. Do not believe the BS that will be aired ad nosium between now and the election. Undisclosed sources will be paying the top political consultants to put out ads to hide the reality of a Romney administration and direct voter's attention to areas where they think they can hurt Obama. In my opinion it is obscene the amount of money that will be spent to win this election, and I blame the Democrats as well as the Republican and their Tea Party associates. Be aware that very rich very conservative

zealots are pumping millions of dollars of their personal wealth into trying to elect Romney and Tea Party affiliates to the legislature.

We have a lot of work to do between now and the election to get President Obama re-elected and to return our excellent local Democrats to their offices. Take some time to volunteer for voter registration or go to the Democratic Campaign office on South Main in Walnut Creek

Have a good month!

Jim Donnelly- President SRVDC

## **Annual SRVDC Bar-B-Que, Saturday, September 8, Jim Donnelly's House in Danville**

We are having our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bar-B-Que on Saturday, September 8, 2012 from 12- 4 PM at Jim Donnelly's house in Danville. This year we are making this a fund raising event to support our local Democratic activities for this fall. There will be smoked salmon and halibut (the amount depends on how well fishing goes for Jim's upcoming trip to Alaska in August), Smoked tri-tips, chicken and sausages as well as a Caesar salad prepared by Jim. There will also be plenty of Jim's famous Margaritas to cool off with. We are asking people to bring an appetizer, side dish or desert to round out the meal.

We will be joined by Congressman Pete Stark, State Senator Mark DeSaulnier, Assemblywomen Joan Buchanan and other locally elected officials and prominent Democrats. Eric Swalwell will also be attending.

We are requesting a donation of \$15 per member and \$20 per non-member with the proceeds going to either the Walnut Creek office or for a newspaper ad in support of our Democratic principles before the election.

## **Member Editorials**

Each month we invite you to present your views on about any subject you wish to discuss. This is an important way to understand what major concerns for our members are. Surely there are things going on that make your blood boil. Let it out, express your opinions here.

### ***. Graphic: A Day in the Life of Big Oil***

Every hour so far in 2012, the five largest oil corporations have recorded a \$14,400,000 profit. And every hour, they received more than \$270,000 in federal tax breaks. That adds up to \$2.4 billion in subsidies every year for the five largest oil corporations — Royal Dutch Shell, ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, and ConocoPhillips — all ranked as the top 9 companies in the world.

Even though BP posted an unexpected second-quarter loss, these five companies are on track to meet last year's record profits. Put these numbers into context, and they are not so

“disappointing”: Big Oil profits more in one minute than what 96 percent of American households earn in one year. Even so, Mitt Romney and House Republicans want to double what the five companies receive in federal tax breaks to \$12.8 million per day, even though the three publicly owned U.S. companies paid an average tax rate of under 17 percent.

The attached graphic illustrates where Big Oil directs these profits and its pollution over the course of a day:

## Reports from our Elected Officials

### Congressman George Miller

#### Miller votes to protect tax cuts for middle class, end Bush tax cuts for richest 2 percent

August 1, 2012 6:32 PM

Miller votes to protect tax cuts for middle class, end Bush tax cuts for richest 2 percent

Washington, D.C. -- Rep. George Miller (D- Martinez) said today he was very disappointed that the House of Representatives blocked a Democratic plan to protect tax cuts for middle class families and warned that taxes for the middle class are likely to go up next year if Republicans in Congress refuse to compromise.

"Today, I voted to cut taxes for every American family," said Miller. "I think that's fair and it is the right thing to do for our country and our economy. But Republicans in Congress blocked our middle class tax cut because they are insisting on keeping a special tax cut for America's richest 2 percent as well. That's not fair, and it is not necessary. They are holding every middle class family's tax cut hostage just so the richest 2 percent of Americans, people who don't need it and in most cases are even asking for it, will get another enormous tax cut.

"The Republican majority in the House of Representatives has once again squandered an opportunity to come together on something we can all agree on -- a tax cut for every family on income up to \$250,000 per year. No matter how much your family earns, under our plan, you would get to keep your tax cut on the first \$250,000 of taxable income. But families that earn more than that will not get another tax cut on the taxable income above \$250,000. I think that's a good plan for our country.

"President Obama supports it. The U.S. Senate just voted for it last week. And House Democrats support it. This is something that could be done on a bipartisan basis for the American public. The only people standing in the way of a tax cut for the middle class now are Republicans in the House who just blocked it because they are insisting that millionaires and billionaires should get a special tax cut again. Congress can and should do better than that."

## **Congressman Jerry McNerney**

### **Staying power: State-of-the-art clean energy behemoth dedicated in Lodi**

*August 11, 2012*

LODI - It's going to power Lodi homes and businesses, BART trains, and even that crazy Internet technology that no one quite understands yet but is very cool anyway: the Cloud.

Dignitaries and officials from 13 agencies that make up the Northern California Power Agency gathered Friday to dedicate the Lodi Energy Center, a 300-megawatt natural gas power plant that is the first of its kind to use a "fast-start" that can ramp as much as 200 megawatts in 30 minutes. Most power plants take a minimum of 90 minutes.

"It's a first, and it's going to be a model for many others," Lodi City Manager Rad Bartlam said. "It is good. It's exciting."

The \$500 million project - \$388 million for construction and \$112 million in debt service - was touted Friday for being the cleanest energy source in California and an economic stimulus project that created 300 construction jobs and will continue to employ a staff and maintenance crew.

The 100-foot-tall plant utilizes a natural gas turbine and then converts the wasted steam from the process to produce clean, efficient energy. The plant goes online in about six weeks and will deliver power to 13 agencies. Lodi will use 9.5 percent of the plant's power, about 28.12-megawatts, through its Electric Utility to serve homes and business customers.

One third of the plant's power will be used by the California Department of Water Resources to pump water "for millions of Californians," Healdsburg Mayor Gary Plass said.

Other major users include the Modesto Irrigation District and Silicon Valley Power in Santa Clara, where technology companies need to power the computer servers that store information and make up the Cloud. The Cloud is where companies such as Amazon and Apple create customer-accessible accounts and store electronic purchases such as mp3 music files and e-books.

Friday's dedication included hearty thank yous to many in the crowd of 200 who came together to work on the long-planned project and its two-year construction cycle.

Assemblywoman Alyson Huber, D-Lodi, was impressed that the plant was "built on time and on budget."

Three video messages from Gov. Jerry Brown, Rep. Jerry McNerney and Sen. Barbara Boxer

also highlighted the positives of the power plant.

"It's a big winner," Brown said in his message. "It's new (technology). It's jobs, and it's reliability."

The project was not without its controversies. Some questioned whether construction workers were hired locally as contract guidelines required. A labor group that represents nonunion construction companies also was outspoken in criticizing a project labor agreement the NCPA entered into with union affiliates, which included a \$90,000 payment from the power agency to a union group fund.

Officials on Friday denied those assertions, saying the Lodi Energy Center employed 80 percent of its construction workers locally and hired soldiers who returned from war.

"These union agreements would cut bid competition, raise costs, and prevent ratepayers from getting the best quality construction at the best price," said Kevin Dayton, a former representative of the NCPA foe, Associated Builders and Contractors.

Dayton and his colleagues made little to no impact on the construction of the project, however. And, those who were key figures in building the plant maintain that the NCPA and the state are better off for it.

"I know and feel good that this plant will be serving the power needs of Lodi and all the participants for decades," said Lodi Councilman Larry Hansen, who also serves on the NCPA board. "I'm really grateful this plant was built in Lodi."

### **Congressman John Garamendi**

## **Congressman Garamendi Urges Levee Repair & Flood Control Investments at Transportation & Infrastructure Stockton Field Hearing**

August 16, 2012 3:27 PM

**At a Congressional field hearing in Stockton, Congressman Garamendi urged lawmakers to invest in levee repairs to prevent disastrous flooding.**

STOCKTON, CA – Congressman John Garamendi (D-Fairfield, CA), a former Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Delta resident for more than three decades, today testified at a field hearing of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management. The hearing focused on "California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Planning and Preparing for Hazards and Disasters."

Garamendi testified on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Coordination Task Force's important progress in developing an emergency response framework for the

Delta. In addition, he focused on the need for risk reduction measures that could help avoid the occurrence of a flood catastrophe, particularly levee repairs.

"We must prepare for disasters, but an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The government has been using the Delta levees to transport water to exporters since the inception of the Central Valley Project, and now the Delta's levees are in desperate need of repair. It's time for the state and federal water agencies to make investment in regional flood control infrastructure a top priority." Congressman Garamendi said. "We also must increase water storage and recycling technologies, which will help prevent a statewide economic crisis by reducing the harm of a flood on California's water supply."

The Congressman's complete prepared remarks are at the bottom of this release.

Garamendi has been a leader in protecting the Delta for decades and has long been an advocate for an "all-California" water policy that emphasizes water recycling, conservation, storage, levee improvements, and habitat restoration.

Most hydrologists agree that the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is the second most vulnerable flood prone region in the nation, behind only New Orleans.

### **Congressman Pete Stark**

## **Stark Announces \$5 Million in Housing and Shelter Grants for Alameda County**

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) announced nearly \$5 million in grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing (HUD) and Urban Development to Alameda County. The money will help improve housing and economic opportunities for moderate-, low-, and very low-income individuals in Alameda County.

**Rep. Stark:** "I am very pleased to see that Alameda County is receiving the funding and support that it deserves. The County continues to work tirelessly on behalf of those in need, and this federal support will help our local government to provide ongoing assistance to low-income people and families, emergency homeless shelters, and affordable housing."

### **The HUD grant money will be awarded through:**

- Two Community Development Block Grants totaling more than \$2.5 million, in order to help local government create and expand housing and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals.
- Two Emergency Shelter Grants totaling \$200,470, which will fund quality improvements and expansion of homeless shelters.
- One grant through the HOME program totaling nearly \$2 million, which will help support housing



## **State Senator Mark DeSaulnier**

### **LAWMAKERS CONDEMN PLAN FOR MASSIVE DELTA WATER PROJECT**

July 25, 2012

Senators Wolk, DeSaulnier denounce Governor's 'path forward' as step backward

SACRAMENTO-Senators Lois Wolk (D-Davis) and Mark DeSaulnier (D-Concord) condemned an announcement today that the state is charging ahead with plans to build two colossal tunnels to siphon massive quantities of water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, despite significant concerns with the proposal.

"I'm disappointed. Californians resoundingly rejected the same 'plumbing before policy' approach in the Delta 30 years ago. We already learned this lesson. It doesn't need repeating. This is a step backward," said Senator Wolk, who spoke out against the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) released by Governor Jerry Brown and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar at a rally today on the steps of the State Capitol, attended by federal, state, and local representatives of the Delta, as well as environmental and fishing groups.

"This plan stakes the Delta's future on a wink and a promise. Trust us, they say. We'll build now and protect the Delta later. Well, trust is earned," said Wolk.

Wolk and DeSaulnier represent the majority of the Delta in the State Senate. Wolk represents all or part of Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo Counties—four of the five counties in the Delta. DeSaulnier represents Contra Costa County. As of today, Contra Costa, Sacramento, and San Joaquin Counties have voted to oppose the plan.

"We're being asked to take a lot on faith," said Senator DeSaulnier. "We're being asked to believe that in the future the amount of water diverted from the Delta will be based on science, when science has been persistently ignored up to this point. We're being asked to believe that fish will miraculously need less water to survive in the future, and that returning water exports to the levels that first decimated Delta fisheries will help restore the estuary. That's a lot to ask. Too much."



Wolk and DeSaulnier noted the risks the plan poses to the Delta and the unprecedented control over the state's water and the future of Northern California's ecosystem and communities that the project gives to the same water exporters that have driven the system to collapse.

"This plan justifies tremendous risks to the people, economy, and ecosystem of this extraordinary estuary in order to appease the excessive demands of a select group of politically powerful water interests," Wolk said. "It will also use billions in higher water rates and taxpayer borrowing to build the largest, most expensive state-sponsored water project in half a century, even before we know if it can be used. We are supposed to trust that a project with no legislative oversight, no public accountability and no budget control will be built without waste, tax increases, costly overruns and errors. California can't afford that multi-billion dollar gamble."

Wolk and DeSaulnier also criticized the absence of plans to:

- Reduce demands on the Delta through aggressive development of water recycling, conservation and desalination in Southern California, the Bay Area, and the Central Valley-- alternatives that are more effective and far less expensive than a major infrastructure project;
- Strengthen key levees in the Delta, protecting lives, habitat and billions of dollars of transportation, energy, farming, and water infrastructure; and
- Partner with Delta communities who have a proven track record of successfully implementing innovative restoration programs.

"You can't restore the Delta without the active participation of the people and communities that live in the Delta," said Wolk. "When the state's plan for the Delta incorporates these truths, the trust will follow. When we restore that trust, we can restore the Delta."

While specifics of the BDCP were formally announced today, the plan's general framework has been widely known for months. Federal and state representatives including Wolk and DeSaulnier urged that the plan to build the Delta tunnels be put on hold until they could be vetted and details could be made available for public review. Their requests went unanswered.

### **Assembly Woman Joan Buchanan**

Thursday, 09 August 2012 08:42

Buchanan named by Speaker Pérez as Chair of the Assembly Education Committee

(Sacramento, CA)— Speaker John A. Pérez has named Assemblymember Joan Buchanan (D-Alamo) as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Education. The Speaker announced yesterday changes to his leadership team and appointed new committee chairs. The changes take effect this Friday, August 10th.

“I am honored that the Speaker has chosen me for this position,” said Buchanan. “I look forward to working with my colleagues and with stakeholders in the education community on legislation that will make the best use of our resources to benefit California’s students.”

Assemblymember Buchanan has been a member of the Assembly Education Committee since she was first elected in 2008. Before being elected to the State Assembly, Buchanan served on the San Ramon Valley School Board for 18 years. She is also a member of the State Allocation Board and the Assembly representative on the State Advisory Commission on Special Education.

“We currently are facing unique challenges in funding education in our state,’ Buchanan continued, “but we will hold steadfast to our mission of preparing students to be the workers, leaders, and innovators of tomorrow’s global economy.”

Education has been a lifelong priority for Assemblymember Buchanan. While raising her five children, she was very involved in PTA, was a youth soccer coach, and classroom computer mom. A graduate of San Francisco public schools and UC Santa Barbara, Joan has first-hand knowledge of California public schools at every level as a student, parent, community advocate, and elected school board member.