

POLICY WATCH – February 2024

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In this issue, we share the candidates and ballot measures that NBLC has endorsed and urge you to please vote in the primary, March 5th. We can make a strong statement with our votes that we want action on addressing the most challenging issues facing the North Bay. Please make your voice heard.

We also welcome new board member, Abhishek Dosi, Kaiser Permanente- Santa Rosa Service Area. NBLC is eager to work closely with Kaiser Santa Rosa on compelling issues like housing, homelessness, workforce development and education. We will continue to collaborate and lend support to policies and programs that contribute to healthier communities.

Coming up, we begin informing you about a proposed bond measure slated for November that could make a big dent in our region's need for more housing. NBLC has been regularly attending regional Bay Area Housing for All (BAHA) coalition meetings and keeping a close eye on progress with the proposal. Also, we hope you will Save the Date for our Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon on May 16th. We had 20 outstanding nominations this year! Thank you to all who took the time to submit a nomination. Please stay tuned as we will announce the honorees in our next issue!

Best regards,



Joanne

Please Vote: NBLC Endorsements for the March Primary

NBLC urges everyone to register and vote in the March Primary on Tuesday, March 5th. The Leadership Council focused our endorsements on candidates and ballot measures that align with our top priorities, including economic resiliency, workforce housing, workforce development/education, and transportation.

In making endorsements, NBLC looks for candidates that show they take a balanced approach to solving problems; understand the interplay between the economy, environment and equity; have roots in the community; and are committed to serving their constituents by being accountable and transparent in their decision-making.

NBLC Endorses these Candidates:

Assembly - District 2: Chris Rogers

Chris Rogers' lifelong ties to the North Coast and his record of service in Santa Rosa, by far the largest city in the 2nd District, make him the best choice for state Assembly. From his years working as a staffer to Sen. Mike McGuire, Rogers has a deep understanding of the North Coast communities. Rogers' time on the Santa Rosa City Council shows he prioritizes the crucial issues— including economic revitalization, healthcare access, housing, climate adaptation and fire insurance affordability.

Marin County Supervisor – District 2: Brian Colbert

Brian Colbert is currently on the San Anselmo Town Council. His background in business served his community well when he provided leadership on how the cities could recover from the pandemic, including being on the steering committee for the County's first Economic Vitality Strategic Plan. Colbert also was President of the Council of Mayors and Councilmembers where he led on issues like improving the economic recovery, fire prevention and emergency preparedness measures, and preserving open space. He is chair of the Transportation Authority of Marin and Marin Transit board. He is currently the Director, Business Development and Patient Experience for an innovative medical practice in San Francisco.

Marin County Supervisor – District 4: Dennis Rodoni

Dennis Rodoni has proven his skills at addressing the challenges of District Four's diverse geographic and demographic breadth. Rodoni's balanced approach and experience as a small businessman has allowed him to make progress on handling tourists' overload, issues with the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, and housing affordability. We appreciate his leadership on the Cleaner California Coast project and commitment to listening and responding to his constituents.

Sonoma County Supervisor – District 2: Rebecca Hermosillo

Rebecca Hermosillo, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, has deep roots in the community. She was born in the Sonoma Valley and grew up on the Leveroni Dairy, where her father worked milking cows. Hermosillo worked for a tech company and became executive director of the Valley of the Moon Teen Center. For the past 11 years, she has been on the district staff of Rep. Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena. Hermosillo brings experience in business, the nonprofit sector and government service to the Board of Supervisors. That package of experience and knowledge will serve her well as Supervisor.

NBLC Endorses Proposition 1:

Prop 1: "Treatment not Tents," is a bond initiative and mental health system reform on the March 2024 ballot that will help Californians most in need of mental health treatment get the care they need, fund substance abuse treatment, enhance programs that help veterans and other Californians experiencing homelessness be safely off the streets.

If approved by voters, Proposition 1 will authorize \$6.38 billion in general obligation bonds to finance, among other things, more treatment beds and supportive housing units for Californians with severe behavioral health challenges and substance use disorders. Specifics of the measure can be found [here](#).

Bay Area Housing for All - Hope for Improving the North Bay Housing Crisis

It's no secret that there is a housing crisis in California that's also particularly severe in the North Bay. And while efforts have been made since the Great Recession in 2008 to get more housing built, the programs and funding haven't been able to meet our need for more housing. If you compare California to states like Texas and Florida, we are falling way behind in housing production. Every employer we speak to names recruiting and retaining staff as a top issue they face. Roadblocks seem to exist to prevent a sustainable, vibrant, and diverse North Bay.

In [**How do you solve the California housing crisis? California Association of Realtors looks at the American Dream in the Golden State**](#) by Sarah Wheeler, we learn that in California, "... the largest state by population, one out of every eight Americans lives in the Golden State, but the homeownership rate is dismal. According to Ben Metcalf, managing director of the Turner Center for Housing Innovation at UC Berkeley, the homeownership rate for California is 50 percentage points lower than the rest of the nation at only 44% in 2021. That represents a serious downtrend from a 50% homeownership rate in 2000," says Wheeler.

Why? Wheeler says, "Notoriously high home prices are to blame, with monthly payments for a typical California home sitting at more than \$5,500. The Turner Center has shown that about half of the homeownership gap is directly attributable to the affordability crisis, which in turn is a direct consequence of a housing supply shortage. 'We've made it difficult to build new housing,' Metcalf said, citing environmental regulations, building codes, local control and the opposition to building infill multifamily housing."

Robert Kleinhenz, director of the Office of Economic Research at California State University, "noted that the state has been woefully undersupplied for years. In 2000, the California Association of Realtors estimated that the state would need about 250,000 new units a year to keep up with demand. But Kleinhenz said the state has never gotten close to that number, so it's now 2 to 2.5 million units behind. 'The increase in home prices is due to increasing demand versus supply — we have to build more,' Kleinhenz said. 'How many housing units are we building? For the last 10 years, building permit numbers never surpassed 120,000 units.'"

Selma Hepp, chief economist at CoreLogic, pointed out "that in 2023 the entire state of California issued only 70,000 permits for single-family homes — about the same number as the Houston metro area. 'California [has been] the most inventory-constrained market for years.' As a result, the housing gap is creating a labor force gap as well. 'Think about year over year the numbers of people leaving California.' Hepp said. 'We need to shift the conversation to: How do we ensure kids can stay here and have the same opportunity as we did?'"

How to incentivize the production of housing has been THE question for decades. Wheeler said, "Metcalf said there have been 140 distinct pieces of legislation on housing affordability since 2016, but those laws haven't made much impact in the permitting numbers. The passage of SB 9 in 2021 outlawed single-family zoning, and there have been numerous attempts to expand the ability to build accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to increase density."

"Ministerial approval — a streamlined permit process that doesn't require public hearings or sign-off by local officials — took effect in California in 2018 and has the potential to move housing forward. But even with all of these laws, costs and local regulations are still limiting factors for development."

What more is needed? Some think the modernization of the California Environmental Quality Act is key, others see better zoning, including the reuse of commercial buildings now vacant because of more remote working, and government funded low-interest loans. But one new effort to build more housing is coming: a ballot measure for a Regional Housing Bond to fund construction of affordable housing.

The Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) – the first regional housing finance authority in the state – wants to place a \$10-\$20 billion affordable housing bond measure on the November 2024 ballot to benefit the nine-county Bay Area. This money would be used to build affordable homes and help keep existing housing affordable in every county.

A \$20 billion bond could create 80,000 new affordable homes — over two times more than what would be possible without a bond.

80% of the bond revenue will go directly to the nine counties and four cities—San Jose, Oakland, Santa Rosa, and Napa—letting local governments determine how best to produce and preserve affordable housing for their own communities.

BAHFA will invest 20% of the bond revenue in affordable homes throughout the region, while also generating new housing resources to support affordable housing development long after the bonds are fully spent.

Through the measure, each of the nine Bay Area counties and the four cities will adopt their own expenditure plan for how they propose to spend the money. BAHFA will review each plan and confirm that it meets basic criteria.

The majority of funds (at least 52%) must be used to produce new housing, and most of that new housing should be affordable to low- and extremely low-income residents.

NBLC is monitoring the bond development and working with other business-oriented groups to ensure that the money from the bond achieves its purpose of spurring new housing construction. One area of focus is to have bond money help cover the costs of inclusionary zoning units in market rate projects. Inclusionary zoning has proven to be a deterrent in new housing construction and having those costs covered could produce more housing that otherwise could not be built.

Save the Date: Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon on May 16th

Leaders of the North Bay Awards will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel on May 16th from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Save the date!

Members in the News

College of Marin's 2024 Spring Plant Sale is coming soon!

The IVOFG Spring plant sale will take place on two weekends this year, don't miss it!

The LIME Foundation's NextGen Trades Academy Connects Students with Careers

The LIME Foundation's president Letitia Hanke is actively supporting the next generation and achieving success!

Buck Institute Scientists Discover a Potential Way to Repair Synapses Damaged in Alzheimer's Disease

A new study proposes a strategy for reversing the memory problems that accompany Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, exploring an alternative to the laser-focused approach of big pharma to target toxic tau proteins known to go hand in glove with these diseases.

Redwood Credit Union Names Senior Vice President of Business Services

Redwood Credit Union has hired Steve Ward as senior vice president of business services.

Buck Institute Receives \$21 Million Hevolution Foundation Grant

The Buck Institute for Research on Aging and the Hevolution Foundation have announced a novel multi-year partnership.

New Drug-Like Molecule Extends Lifespan, Ameliorates Pathology in Worms and Boosts Function in Mammalian Muscle Cells

Researchers at the Buck Institute have identified a new drug-like molecule that keeps mitochondria healthy via mitophagy, a process that removes and recycles damaged mitochondria in multicellular organisms.

Buck Scientists Discover a Potential Way to Repair Synapses Damaged in Alzheimer's Disease

While newly approved drugs for Alzheimer's show some promise for slowing the memory-robbing disease, the current treatments fall far short of being effective at regaining memory.

Sonoma County Winegrowers Announce a Collaboration with John Deere for 'The Farm of the Future'

Each year, when many of Sonoma County's 1,800 certified sustainable winegrape growers gather for the Sonoma County Winegrowers' (SCW) annual meeting, they want to know what is next for one of the world's most sustainable winegrowing regions

Sonoma State University and Others Say California Sea Otters' Return Shows Conservation Payoff

In a groundbreaking study published today in Nature, scientists reveal that the return of sea otters to their former habitat in a Central California estuary has slowed erosion of the area's creekbanks and marsh edges by up to 90%.

Redwood Credit Union Named One of "America's Best Credit Unions" By Newsweek

Redwood Credit Union has been recognized by Newsweek as one of "America's Best Credit Unions 2024."

Midstate Construction Completes St. Clare at Capitol Park (formerly Capitol Park Hotel)

General Contractor Midstate Construction Corporation and Developer Mercy Housing recently completed the St. Clare at Capitol Park (formerly Capitol Park Hotel), renovating a historic 112-year-old hotel into 134 units of permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness in Sacramento, CA.

Recology's New \$35 million Santa Rosa Recycling Facility Claims 166% Increase in Trash Sorting Rate

Recology, which picks up garbage, recyclables and yard waste in parts of Sonoma, Marin, Napa and Solano counties, on Thursday gave its first look at \$35 million in upgrades to its sorting facility in southwest Santa Rosa.

Ultragenyx Announces Completion of Dosing Across Stage 1 Cohorts in Pivotal Phase 1/2/3 Cyprus2+ Study Evaluating UX701 Gene Therapy for the Treatment of Wilson Disease

Ultragenyx Pharmaceutical Inc. (NASDAQ: RARE) today announced that all patients have been dosed with UX701 across the three dose-escalation cohorts in Stage 1 of its pivotal Phase 1/2/3 Cyprus2+ study.



Who We Are

Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org