

## POLICY WATCH – April 2024

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April is Earth Month. At NBLC, we are part of a coalition of organizations that are working to address climate change and ensure that employers are part of the solution. In this issue we will share some of our climate commitments with you as well as share tips on how to Green Your Home. We also look into why small businesses are still facing challenges and learn how North Bay Leadership Council is taking action to address a specific challenge.

Don't forget to register for the Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon on May 16<sup>th</sup> at Embassy Suites, San Rafael and help us recognize the 2024 outstanding leaders in our community. Tickets can be found [here](#). Please visit [www.northbayleadership.org](http://www.northbayleadership.org) for more information.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne K. Webster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joanne

### April 22- Earth Day

Every year on April 22, we celebrate Earth Day. This day marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement in 1970, according to [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org). "Earth Day is a reminder of the importance of environmental conservation and sustainability, encouraging us to come together and take action for a healthier planet and brighter future." I hope you participated in one of the many earth day activities around the North Bay. It shows your commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability. Participating in Earth Day activities, such as tree planting, recycling drives, or cleanup days, reminds us that we need to continue to address climate change and promote climate action. At NBLC we have made climate change adaptation the umbrella over public policy work assessing the need for critical infrastructure improvements as well as future growth in the North Bay.

In our 2024 work plan, we made a commitment to support members' plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce climate change impacts. We will study ways to support new housing and commercial construction outside of disaster-prone areas and support efforts to drawdown carbon emissions. In collaboration with other leaders in the state, support a strategic plan for making the production of energy fossil fuel free to make the power grid sustainable and hardened to disasters.

“Climate-resilient infrastructure requires significant investment in planning, design, construction, and maintenance. Governments, private sector entities, and international organizations need to prioritize funding for climate adaptation projects and explore innovative financing mechanisms to support resilient infrastructure development”, according to [The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\) website](#). They are an international organization that works to build better policies for better lives. But let’s turn our focus more locally and talk about what home owners/builders in the North Bay can consider doing now..... In a recent Bank of America Insight newsletter, I learned that “residential buildings constitute 20% of both total energy usage and CO2 emissions in the US. If you’ve ever thought about [Making a house a \(green\) home](#), their latest piece notes that sustainable practices such as weatherization and energy-efficient appliances can help reduce energy consumption by up to 30%, water usage by up to 50%, and GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions by up to 40%, potentially translating to lower utility bills, higher sales premiums and lower costs of capital”. They go on to share that “Green homes offer substantial financial benefits to homeowners by reducing utility bills through decreased water, electricity, and heating usage. This cost-saving effect positively impacts mortgage payments, resulting in a 32% reduction in default risks and allowing banks to provide lower-cost capital. Beyond financial advantages, lower utility bills and improved indoor air quality drive consumer demand for these eco-friendly homes, which translates into enhanced returns, including higher leasing rates, faster sales, elevated sales prices, and increased rent prices. Moreover, green buildings with lower operational costs and healthier living environments experience heightened consumer demand, leading to higher sale prices, rent rates, and occupancy rates. Green certifications, based on an analysis of 42 studies by Dalton and Fuerst, result in a rent premium of 6.0% and a sales premium of 7.6%.”

“While the initial investment in greening a home can be high, it can offer substantial financial benefits to homeowners over time”, read the [full analysis here](#).

## How the Lack of Affordable Child Care is Impacting Businesses

North Bay Leadership Council actively supports quality early child education and care programs as part of its work plan for 2024. Our member employers are reporting that they and their employees are finding it more and more difficult to find quality, affordable child care in the North Bay, especially infant care. [A Care.com survey of child care costs released in early 2024](#) found that on average, families were spending about 24% of their household income on child care, with 60% spending 20% or more. The U.S. Health and Human Services Department defines affordable child care as no more than 7% of household income.

Lack of child care can hinder a business’s ability to grow. This is especially true for small businesses as reported by [Andy Medici, San Francisco Business Times, BizWomen](#).

Medici notes a new “survey of small-business [owners who are parents or have employees who are parents](#) by the Small Business Majority found 59% said lack of access to affordable child care is hindering their business growth. About 59% said their child care issues forced them to take substantial time away from their business, while 58% agreed that lack of affordable child care made it harder to start their business in the first place. While child care access is outside of the direct control of most small businesses, the survey made it clear it's weighing on their fortunes and their workers”.

He shares with us that “John Arensmeyer, founder and CEO of Small Business Majority, said 4 out of 10 small-business owners say they have lost out on business opportunities because of challenges with child

care. “Our research shows that child care is essential to the small business ecosystem and is a key factor in entrepreneurial growth,” Arensmeyer said.

The survey also found:

- Small-business owners saw their businesses suffer because of a lack of child care, with 56% saying a lack of child care forced them to take substantial time away from their business, and 39% said it caused them to lose out on business opportunities. About 26% said it forced them to shut down their business and rejoin the workforce.
- About 51% of small businesses said they’ve experienced lower productivity and 44% said they have been unable to operate longer hours when their employees face child care issues. About 31% reported lost earnings and 28% said they had to hire temporary workers to fill in child care gaps.
- Nearly three-quarters of entrepreneurs say that their employees adjust their work schedules due to child care issues at least a few times a month.
- About 62% of small-business owners experienced unplanned employee work absences and 30% said they had an employee quit — or have 27% turn down a promotion — due to child care issues. About 30% said they had a job candidate turn down an offer due to child care issues.

“As we’ve noted, child care businesses themselves are struggling due to the end of support from Covid-19 relief programs, demographic shifts and child care challenges for their own employees.

Janna Rodriguez, owner and founder of The Innovative Daycare Corp in Freeport, N.Y., said investments in child care are critical to removing barriers for economic growth.”

“Small child care businesses like mine rely on a small workforce to thrive,” she said. “But that workforce also desperately needs reliable, affordable child care themselves, and they may seek other employment or leave the workforce entirely if they can’t access affordable care.”

Medici continues, “the survey comes as the Small Business Majority and other advocacy groups push congress to pass the Child Care Stabilization Program, which would provide funds for child care centers and enact other measures to keep daycares from closing and encourage the opening of others. The previous \$24 billion Child Care Stabilization Program passed during the pandemic provided funds to keep child care options open — but that expired at the end of September 2023, creating what experts had warned was a child-care cliff. “

“[A separate survey by Motherly](#) found that about 18% of mothers changed jobs or left the workforce in the last year — with 52% of Gen Z and Millennial mothers say the reason why was lack of affordable child care. But it's not just risk of closures that is plaguing the child care industry, it's that rising costs would require remaining providers to raise rates to levels even less affordable for families.”

“[Recent data from Bank of America shows](#) that's the case so far. Households with child care payments saw that those payments were 32% higher in January 2024 than the 2019 average. Even as big increases in the Consumer Price Index and overall inflation have dropped from their 2022 peaks, day care and preschool costs are now outpacing inflation as a whole, Bank of America said.”

“Meanwhile, as higher-income households are making these bigger payments, Bank of America data shows low-income household child care payments are disappearing altogether, signs that they are no longer able to afford professional options.”

“About 79% of parents expect to be impacted in 2024 by the end of the stabilization funding for child care centers, and 54% are preparing to spend \$600 per month or more on child care — with 40% saying they are already spending more.”

## **NBLC Supports Our Kids Our Future**

North Bay employers of all sizes and industry sectors are feeling the burden of the child care crisis and want more quality, affordable child care for their workforce. [Our Kids Our Future](#) website reports that child care and preschool are unaffordable for most working parents and supply in Sonoma County is scarce, especially for infants and toddlers. The Sonoma County Child Care and Children's Health Initiative will raise approximately \$30 million annually, revenue that will address a set of critical priorities identified by our community. If passed in November, funds from the sales tax measure will develop more facilities where parents live and work, increase the number of slots available and pay a decent wage for child care and early education providers.

Overall, quality, affordable child care is not just beneficial to employees but also to employers, as it contributes to a more satisfied, productive, and loyal workforce. When employees have access to reliable child care, they are less likely to miss work due to child care issues. This leads to higher attendance rates and increased productivity. But it's not just about productivity, it's more about everyone's well-being. As a working parent myself, when my children were younger just knowing that they were well cared for while I was working, allowed me to focus on my job and not worry. Access to affordable child care can help level the playing field for working parents too, particularly mothers. When both parents have access to reliable child care, it reduces the burden on one parent (often mothers) to stay home and care for children, allowing them to participate more fully in the workforce.

NBLC Supports this initiative on the November 5<sup>th</sup> ballot in Sonoma County and recommends that you do too. To find out more, please visit their website here- [Our Kids Our Future](#).

## **Register Now for Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon**

We are excited to celebrate the Honorees for this year's Leaders of the North Bay Awards on May 16th.

### **The 2024 Leaders of the North Bay Honorees are:**

*United We Stand, Community Building:*

**Larry Florin**, Burbank Housing

*Paint the Community Green, Environmental Stewardship:*

**Sonoma County Winegrowers**

*The "Light Bulb" Went On, Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit:*

**Luana Vaetoe**, Becoming Independent

*Closing the D.E.I. Gap, Leadership involving uplifting unheard voices:*

**Dr. Mojgan Behmand**, Dominican University

*From Red Tape to Red Carpet, Leadership in Government:*

**Don Jeppson, City of San Rafael**

The Awards Luncheon will be held on May 16<sup>h</sup> at Embassy Suites, San Rafael. You can purchase [tickets here](#). Please visit- [www.northbayleadership.org](http://www.northbayleadership.org) for more information.

## **Members in the News**

### **SOMO Cowork's CEO and Co-Founder Maciej Plich Honored On the 40 Under 40 List**

Congratulations on this well-deserved honor Maciej!

### **Congratulations to Our Members Who Made The San Francisco Business Times Most Admired CEOs**

Well done Dr. Emil Kakkis of Ultragenyx and Kristina Lawson at Hanson Bridgett!

### **Canine Companions Behind Bars at San Quentin, Training Puppies to Be Service Dogs An Act Of Learning And Redemption**

These inmates are defined not by the crimes that sent them to prison but by what they bring to the prison puppy raising program, and what it's done for them.

### **Basin Street Properties Broker of The Quarter Dave Peterson of Keegan & Coppin**

Basin Street Properties is pleased to announce Keegan & Coppin's Executive Vice President, Dave Peterson, has been named our Broker of the Quarter for Q1 2024.

### **MarinHealth Surgery Center Sews Up New Deal**

MarinHealth Medical Center and UCSF Health are joining forces on an outpatient surgery center.

### **Dominican University Opens \$8M Student Services Building**

An \$8 million renovation that replaces a 1960s-era library space with a centralized student services center has opened on the campus of Dominican University of California in San Rafael.

### **Ultragenyx Announces Positive Interim Phase 1/2 Data in Patients with Angelman Syndrome After Treatment with GTX-102**

New data from the Phase 1/2 study of GTX-102 for the treatment of Angelman syndrome.

### **Kaiser Permanente Healthy Environment, Healthy People**

At Kaiser Permanente, on Earth Day and every day, we know that climate change affects the environment and impacts the health of our members and communities.

### **Ultragenyx Wins Gold-Level Team Massachusetts Impact Award from MassEcon**

Written in a LinkedIn post by Ultragenyx, "Last night, we were honored to accept the Gold-Level Team Massachusetts Impact Award from MassEcon for our company's outstanding contributions to the Massachusetts economy.

### **Canine Companions New dog Health Center Will Speed Expansion**

Canine Companions is the nation's largest trainer and provider of service dogs. The new 32,000-square-foot facility — which includes a veterinary hospital — marks a significant expansion for the nonprofit, founded in Santa Rosa.

### **Dominican University of California Connecting the Students to the Community**

Hands-on engagement with community partners – either through a service-learning placement or an internship – is a key feature of many students' Dominican experience.

### **Sonoma Valley Hospital Finalizing Contract with Anthem**

Sonoma Valley Hospital continues to finalize a contract that will provide the hospital with higher reimbursement rates for patient services and enable its patients to remain in network with Anthem Blue Cross.

### **Arrow Benefits Group's Rosario Avila 2024 Advisor of the Year Finalist**

While sitting in on benefits presentations 20 years ago, Rosario Avila noticed that the information provided to Spanish-speaking employees was often lost in translation.

### **Burbank Housing Working on 46 Units of Workforce Housing and a Daycare in Napa**

Burbank Housing is bringing much needed workforce housing to Napa County.

### **Sutter Health to Start Construction on Long-Planned \$442 Million S.F. Expansion**

Sutter Health is nearing the last phase of its long-planned build-out of its California Pacific Medical Center Mission Bernal hospital campus, with plans to break ground on a \$442 million care center next summer.

### **SMART Expecting 7% Rise in Ridership**

Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit continues to roll toward a standout comeback in ridership in the past four years, the transit agency chief told a Santa Rosa business group Wednesday.

### **Redwood Credit Welcomes New Vice President of Insurance Services**

Redwood Credit Union has hired Forest de Jong as vice president of insurance services (RCUIS).

### **Bank of America and Tory Burch Unveil Free Online Educational Resource for Women Entrepreneurs**

Bank of America and the Tory Burch Foundation today unveiled a new pillar in their long-term commitment to empower women entrepreneurs.

### **Ultragenyx Has Been Recognized as One of USA TODAY's Top Workplaces**

This award celebrates nationally recognized companies that make the world a better place to work together by prioritizing a people-centered culture and giving employees a voice.



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](mailto:info@northbayleadership.org)

[www.northbayleadership.org](http://www.northbayleadership.org)