

Opinion: Politicians can't have it both ways

By Dan Walters, CALmatters

Suing oil companies for causing climate change has become a popular exercise in California's coastal communities.

Officials in five cities and three counties have filed suits, alleging that the companies knowingly emitted greenhouse gases that will damage those communities as oceans rise, and should pay for it.



Dan Walters

As CALmatters environmental writer Julie Cart says in a recent article about the phenomenon, "California is the epicenter of so-called climate-attribution science." She quotes Peter Frumhoff, director of science and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists, on the theory behind the suits: "There's really a quite robust ability to characterize the extent to which climate change impacts have worsened."

Moreover, Frumhoff told Cart, by combining data from oil companies' annual accounting and reports from environmental monitors, "one can then connect the dots and assign a cost."

It's easy to file a lawsuit that pleases "progressive" local voters. However, winning in court is another matter, and by just filing the actions, California governments may be risking

their ability to borrow money at low rates.

Jay Newman, a former hedge fund manager specializing in governmental debt, points out in a recent Wall Street Journal article that localities alleging calamitous effects of climate change are not mentioning those supposed effects in the required disclosures accompanying their debt issues.

“By the end of this century Oakland, Calif., will be experiencing a ‘100-year flood’ every week,” Newman writes. “At least that’s what the Oakland city government argued last year, when it filed a lawsuit against several oil companies for contributing to climate change. The city forecasts that rising water levels in the San Francisco Bay will threaten the sewer system and other property ‘with a total replacement cost of between \$22 billion and \$38 billion.’

“Suppose you hold some of Oakland’s municipal bonds. This climate apocalypse sounds like a serious risk, right? Yet a recent prospectus for Oakland’s general-obligation bonds shrugs off the threat. ‘The city is unable to predict when seismic events, fires or other natural events, such as sea rise or other impacts of climate change or flooding from a major storm, could occur,’ the prospectus states. And even if such events occur, the city can’t be sure ‘whether they will have a material adverse effect on the business operations or financial condition of the city or the local economy.’

“Other California localities have told courts one thing and investors another regarding climate change. In a similar lawsuit, San Francisco claims it faces ‘imminent risk of catastrophic storm surge flooding.’ But in a bond offering last year, the city said it is ‘unable to predict whether sea-level rise or other impacts of climate change or flooding . . . will occur.’ San Mateo County claims in another suit that there is a 50 percent chance that a ‘devastating three-foot flood . . . occurs before 2030.’ The county uses boilerplate similar to San Francisco’s to play down such risks in its

communications to bondholders.”

Newman notes that Exxon is citing these discrepancies in fighting the suits in a Texas court, arguing that they “indicate that the plaintiff municipal governments do not actually believe the allegations in their complaints and that the allegations were not made in good faith.”

The bigger effect, potentially, is what happens when the plaintiff localities seek additional loans. If they include their apocalyptic projections of their lawsuits into their debt disclosures, they might find that they can’t borrow or will be paying much higher interest rates. But if they don’t, they will undermine their lawsuits.

They can’t – or shouldn’t – have it both ways. Actions, even filing lawsuits, have consequences.

CALmatters is a public interest journalism venture committed to explaining how California’s Capitol works and why it matters.

Letter: LTUSD making school sites safer

To the community,

Our hearts go out to the families and victims of the inconceivable act of violence at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. We are deeply saddened over the senseless loss of so many lives.

In the wake of this tragedy, the district would like to ensure families and staff that district leadership, in partnership

with local law enforcement, continues to make school safety a top priority. Each time a mass casualty incident (MCI) occurs in this country, the school site and district safety and security teams review and refine their security policies and procedures according to information gleaned from an incident.

Just this week, the district completed an active shooter event training facilitated by FBI Agent Glenn Norling. Additionally, the district maintains an assessment and list of recommended strategies for the safety and security of students, staff, visitors, and property, for each school site and will be making recommendations to the board of education for enhanced security measures.

In addition to performing regular lock-down, shelter-in-place, and evacuation drills at our school sites, the district currently:

- Employs one full-time school resource officer (SRO/police officer) at South Tahoe High School/Mt. Tallac;
- Employs three full-time campus security assistants at South Tahoe High School/Mt. Tallac;
- Maintains 52 active cameras on and around South Tahoe High School/Mt. Tallac.
- Employs one full-time and one part-time campus security assistants at South Tahoe Middle School.
- Maintains one on-call school resource officer at all schools.
- Maintains 24 active cameras on and around South Tahoe Middle School.

The district will soon be recommending the following security enhancements to the board of education:

- A full-time school resource officer at the middle school who will also support the elementary school campuses on-call.

- Additional part-time campus security personnel at the elementary campuses.
- Fencing and barriers intended to restrict entry and exit areas at the middle and high schools.
- New procedures for entry and exit at middle and high schools.
- Additional signage for visitor entry, wing, and classroom identification.
- 28 additional cameras to be installed at the middle school.
- 20 additional cameras to be installed at the high school.

However, beyond the aforementioned safety and security measures, LTUSD recognizes and firmly believes that the grass roots issue plaguing our country and our schools is mental health. The district intends to augment its existing counseling, intervention, and wraparound services programs, by adding social workers at the elementary schools, and by continuing to forge valuable partnerships with the Family Resource Center, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, Tahoe Turning Point, Live Violence Free, Mental Health, Barton Health, and our local law enforcement agencies.

With education, preventive intervention, treatment, and enforcement, Lake Tahoe Unified School District is doing all that it can to ensure the safety and well-being of its students and staff. Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Superintendent with any concerns for your child or the safety of your campus.

Respectfully,

Jim Tarwater, superintendent Lake Tahoe Unified School District

Coyote recovering after container removed from its head

By Benjy Egel, Sacramento Bee

Things are looking up for a Northern California coyote saved by a human search party last week.

The female coyote was rescued Feb. 5 after wandering around Placer and El Dorado counties for at least 13 days with a hard plastic container securely fastened to its head. It was emaciated and dehydrated, and had wounds near its ears as well as tick and flea infestations.

[Read the whole story](#)

Study: Cloud seeding really does work

By Matt Weiser, Water Deeply

Cloud seeding has become big business worldwide as a means to boost water supplies. Utilities and governments spend tens of millions of dollars on the process, which is especially common in Western states that rely on winter snowpack to meet year-round water demand.

The basic process involves spraying silver iodide from a plane as it flies through storm clouds. The silver iodide induces moisture in the cloud to form ice crystals, which then (hopefully) fall out as snow.

Some studies have estimated cloud seeding can boost snowfall by between 8 and 15 percent. This figure was derived by comparing snow depth on mountains beneath clouds that were seeded, compared to nearby mountains in unseeded areas affected by the same storm. And it was deduced that seeding made the difference.

Read the whole story

Trump budget would boost Yucca project, cut Nevadans' safety net

By Yvonne Gonzalez, Las Vegas Sun

President Trump rolled out his budget proposal this week, reiterating some unfulfilled objectives from his first budget and reaffirming his priorities.

The \$4.4 trillion 2019 budget rolls back Medicaid funding and Obamacare provisions impacting older adults. Among the expenditures: \$716 billion for national defense spending and money for a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

After a year of failing repeatedly to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, which has helped many purchase insurance but resulted in higher premiums for some, the Trump administration is proposing to revisit the effort. The

president's budget suggests a solution similar to a plan that Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., helped craft that would put block grants in place of ACA funding and cap Medicaid.

Read the whole story

Wearable technologies help Olympians

By Jaci VanHeest, The Conversation

As Fitbits and other wearable activity monitors change how regular people exercise and track their activity, they're having similar effects on how Olympians train and recover between workouts.

It's long been common for coaches to use video cameras to show athletes what their form and movements look like, to track progress, and to fine-tune exactly the right technique for, say, taking off for a jump or landing after a particular trick. But those only show what's going on from the outside.

Now, wearables, biometrics and apps analyzing their data are becoming much more common for athletes at all levels, giving indications of what's going on inside an athlete's body. I have worked as a sport physiologist with elite athletes for two decades, including with USA Swimming and U.S. Figure Skating; there's not yet much research about the results in figure skating, but wearables have helped coaches, athletes and sport scientists in other sports like swimming, cycling, soccer and volleyball.

Beating how fast?

The most basic measurement of how hard an athlete's body is working is how fast her heart is beating; many wearable devices track their user's heart rate in real time. Trainers can measure how fast an athlete's heart beats during maximum exertion in a test on a treadmill or skating increasingly fast across the rink.

Then, during workouts, a coach can determine how hard the athlete is working by comparing his real-time heart rate to his maximum. When a person's heart is beating almost as fast as it can, that's pushing nearly as hard as a person's body can. When an athlete's heart rate is closer to half its maximum, the body is working at an intensity that allows the skater to recover from more demanding efforts. By tuning the workout to keep the athlete's heart rate in certain ranges for certain periods, a coach or sport scientist can optimize both exertion and recovery time. That way, the body's muscles and cardiovascular system are well trained and in top form for competition.

How many landings?

Figure skaters and many snowboarders and skiers are among those whose competitive performances include jumps – which means they have to practice intensively for each one. Those leaps, and their landings, exert enormous amounts of stress on athletes' bodies – ranging from eight to 14 times the person's body weight for a brief moment. A 100-pound skater who jumps 50 times in a typical daily workout for five training days is loading 160 tons of cumulative weight on her bones during that training week. The forces are absorbed by muscles and bones in the feet and legs, as well as the torso.

That's a lot of stress, and a lot of potential for injury. In figure skating, for example, 70 percent of injuries are from overuse – primarily from the accumulated effects of those impacts. Wearable monitors can track how many jumps a person takes and measure the rotational, gravitational and other

forces involved in the jumps and landings. These readings can help coaches ensure athletes develop strength and endurance while warning of potential for injury.

More sophisticated biosensors embedded in clothing keep track of an athlete's body temperature, movement and breathing rate and other data, also helping coaches fine-tune workouts to optimize performance.

Getting enough rest?

Crucial elements of Olympians' top performance come while away from practice sessions – including when they're eating and sleeping. Athletes can use smartphone apps to record what they eat and when, tracking how many calories they take in, as well as amounts of nutrients like proteins, carbohydrates and fats.

Similarly, sleep-tracking devices use accelerometers to track a person's movements – and sometimes heart and breathing rates – while they're asleep. The data can reveal indicators of how well the person rested, such as how much a person moved around in bed at night. That can help coaches choose appropriate workouts depending on how tired an athlete is.

Wearables make available all these data – about nutrition, exertion, stress forces, rest and recovery – that coaches and athletes alike can use to improve training, boost performance and, ideally, make it to the top of a medal podium.

Jaci VanHeest is an associate professor of education at the University of Connecticut.

Squaw's Bennett leads Team U.S. in downhill

By U.S. Ski & Snowboard

Racing under bright sunshine and on a perfect track, Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) led Team USA in the downhill, finishing 16th at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games Thursday.

"I treated this run like any other run," Bennett said. "I just didn't perform the way I wanted. I will use this run to move forward, over the next four years, and I will be ready for the next Olympic Winter Games."

Aksel Lund Svindal won Norway's first-ever downhill gold. His countryman Kjetil Jansrud won the silver medal. Switzerland's Beat Feuz won the bronze.

"I am super happy how I approached today and how I skied," said Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah), who was 20th. "I was skiing at a really high level and I am proud of that. Some things happened with the wind and made it very difficult for anyone in the middle of the pack to break the top 10. I have no control over that so I am just happy how I executed my run."

Ryan Cochran-Siegle (Starksboro, Vt.), who replaced Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) after he suffered a season-ending ankle injury in Wednesday's downhill training, was 23rd.

"I feel for him (Biesemeyer) right now," Cochran-Siegle said. "When I was coming back from my injury we were working closely together, so I understand what he is going through and I only want the best for him. I am going to try best as possible to send him positive vibes and race with him again soon. I am proud of my run today and excited to race tomorrow."

“Coming into today I felt excited,” said Wiley Maple (Aspen, Colo.), who made his Olympic debut and finished 30th. “I was looking forward to racing. The Olympics are notorious for allowing anyone to do anything. I didn’t come in with the highest expectation but there is always a little bit of a dream that if I do ski well, maybe I could sneak into the top. I wasn’t too nervous, I just felt excited to be here.”

Thursday’s downhill was originally scheduled for Sunday, but high winds at the Jeongseon Alpine Centre forced Olympic organizers to reschedule the event.

“There is a great energy in this group of skiers,” said men’s coach John McBride. “Although it is very difficult to have three athletes get hurt, there is a lot of positive momentum moving forward. I am very proud of the way everyone skied today. These athletes put a plan together and executed that plan. That is what I am most proud of. Their result isn’t indicative of their performance – that is just a part of the sport.”

Classical Tahoe announces 2018 festival season

Classical Tahoe celebrates its seventh season of bringing orchestral music to the Lake Tahoe region in a 12-concert series from July 20 to Aug.12.

Musicians from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic and the symphonies of San Francisco, Seattle, Dallas, Toronto, Vancouver, Leipzig Gewandhaus and other exceptional orchestras will join the ensemble.

In 2018 Classical Tahoe presents the world premiere of “Double Concerto for Violin and Cello” by award-winning composer and musician Chris Brubeck, featuring world-renowned artists Jaime Laredo, violin and Sharon Robinson, cello.

An expanded orchestra allows the festival to offer larger symphonic repertoire, ranging from Brahms Symphony No. 2 to a celebration of Leonard Bernstein’s birthday anniversary with the suite from the ballet Fancy Free.

Concerts begin at 7pm at the Classical Tahoe Pavilion at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. Ticket prices are \$25, \$55, \$85 and \$120. Chamber music concerts are \$30. Student tickets are offered at a 50 percent discount. Season subscriptions go on sale March 15. Single tickets go on sale April 1.

For tickets and the schedule, go **online**.

EDC uses wrong address on return envelope

El Dorado County Assessors Office sent some Business Property Statements (571-L) that included a return envelope with a Napa County address.

The Napa County Assessor’s Office has agreed to forward any mail to El Dorado County.

The county said every effort will be made to ensure that statements filed timely and using the wrong envelope are not charged with a late filing penalty.

It is estimate less than 500 statements have the wrong

envelope.

The correct address is: El Dorado County Assessor, Business Division, 360 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA 95667.

For more info, call 530.621.5716.

Little consensus on VHR issues in El Dorado County



El Dorado County residents on Feb. 12 vent about VHRs to staff and electeds. Photo/LTN

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – The conversation has not changed. Proponents: Vacation home rentals are a fact of life in a tourist town. Opponents: VHRs ruin neighborhoods.

This week Sue Novasel and Mike Ranalli, the two El Dorado County supervisors who make up the ad hoc VHR committee, got

an earful from people about the issue. While some spoke to specifics about the Apple Hill area, most were Tahoe residents with local opinions. About 70 people filled the CCC room in Meyers on Feb. 12.

The electeds were joined by reps from the county's legal department and Chief Administrative Office. They along with fire and law enforcement are the internal team at the county working on the issue.

The complaints in the county are much the same as they are in South Lake Tahoe, with noise, trash and parking the primary problems. Then there are those who think this is a commercial business, when it's not. And others believe the only place for a tourist is in a hotel.

Jobs and revenue for the county are some of the positives about the short-term rentals.

Monday's meeting was mostly an opportunity for county reps to listen to concerns. But it was stated by more than one attendee that it is time for action, which includes compromise.

On March 3 from 1-3pm at South Tahoe Middle School's multipurpose room the entire Board of Supervisors will reconvene. This is a continuation of the **Feb. 1 meeting** that was canceled because of overcrowding.

The county's working group has conceptually agreed to the following in regards to VHRs:

- Inspections for safety and compliance before a permit is issued.
- Doing an analysis to determine which county department should handle the issue.
- No warning for first violation.

- Increase penalties, with possible permit revocation after three incidents in an 18-month period.
- A maximum occupancy between 10pm and 8am.
- Exterior signage.

Those are just a fraction of the regulations on the table to be further vetted, then adopted, implemented and enforced.

Ranalli said the county is the process of rejiggering how it does enforcement on all issues, not just VHRs.

Novasel agreed more needs to be done about the whole issue, and that people need to feel safe.