# Opinion: Expanding fracking in Calif. is bad policy

**By Michael Brune and Kathryn Phillips**

By signing Senate Bill 4, a severely compromised fracking bill, Gov. Jerry Brown has shown a lack of optimism and confidence in California's future at a time when the state has its greatest chance – and need – to move beyond oil and gas to clean energy. This is far less than we expect from a governor with the potential to be a visionary environmental leader.

In May, when questioned about fracking at a news conference, Brown said: "I have to balance my strong commitment to deal with climate change and renewable energy with what could be a fabulous economic opportunity." The governor shouldn't be reducing his commitment to fight climate change, he should reinforce it by replacing fossil fuels with clean energy. The true economic opportunity for California is in solar and wind, and in leading the nation and the world in demonstrating that containing climate disruption is an economic opportunity.

More than 43,000 Californians are employed in the solar-energy industry alone. One of the most successful new businesses in the state builds electric cars, wind energy is growing throughout the state, and our largest, most car-dependent city has set new standards for investment in clean public transit and renewable energy.

Fracking and well stimulation are the so-called "advanced" technologies that inject harsh chemicals and acids deep into the ground to break up and dissolve rock and sand to free hard-to-reach oil and gas deposits. Although SB4 began as a measure to require better regulation and greater disclosure

about fracking, by the time the Legislature passed the bill it had been weakened by amendments that the governor negotiated to dampen oil industry opposition.

An increase in fracking and well stimulation for oil in California will make us more dependent on the fuels that create climate disruption. It will also expand an industrial, polluting drilling process to thousands of square miles of Southern and Central California. By conservative estimates, extracting the estimated 15 billion barrels of oil contained within the Monterey shale formation would result in more than 6 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide pollution.

To put that in perspective, consider that the new federal fuel-economy rules for light-duty vehicles – standards inspired by California's own ground-breaking efforts – are expected to save Americans 12 billion barrels of oil by 2025 and a corresponding reduction in carbon pollution. Opening up the Monterey shale to fracking would more than erase any gains realized from those national fuel-economy standards.

Carbon pollution is not the only problem with fracking and well stimulation, either. A single well typically requires anywhere from 1 million to 5 million gallons of water mixed with harsh chemicals and acids. At some point, much – though not all – of that fluid returns to the surface. But what once was clear water is so hopelessly polluted with chemicals that the industry's response is to inject it into waste wells, where it can never again be used to water crops, serve as drinking water or flow in streams.

In other states, fracking has been responsible for extreme pollution of groundwater and surface water, air pollution and even earthquakes.

Given these negatives, are fracking and well stimulation to extract more oil really the best path for California's economy and environment?

Californians deserve the opportunity to consider this question before our state allows the expansion of fracking. If our labor, water and capital investment are going to be spent on creating more oil at the expense of public health and the environment, what alternatives must we forgo? As an economist would ask, what are the opportunity costs of fracking?

The opportunity costs include greater investment and a faster transition to cleaner fuels and renewable energy. They include jobs that contribute to society and don't come with high-risk exposure to cancer-causing chemicals. By investing our energy and human capital in more oil extraction, we give up opportunities to provide future generations with clean air, clean water and a shot at inheriting a world not devastated by climate change.

Californians are an optimistic, innovative people. The nation and the world look to our state for a vision of the future. But we can't build an economy of the future with fuels from the past. Our political leaders owe us the chance to move beyond fossil fuels and toward the clean energy that will power that future. That's why it's time for the Legislature and the governor to place a moratorium on fracking.

*Michael Brune is the executive director of the Sierra Club. Kathryn Phillips is director of Sierra Club California.*

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# Murder trial involving N. Tahoe man to begin

**By Charlie Brennan, BoulderCamera**

On the last full day of his life, Todd Klarkowski stood in his

house on Gilbert Street in Boulder and asked his common-law wife whether he should wear his prized and well-worn boots or his sneakers for an overnight business trip to California.

“He was set in his ways. He’d ask what I thought about something, 10 times, but still end up doing whatever it was he originally thought,” MacKensey Klarkowski said.

The two went back and forth, until she thought it had been hashed over enough.

“I finally said, ‘You better just wear those tennis shoes, because you’re going to have to run to catch that plane; you’re going to be late,” she said.

And so the morning of Feb. 4, Klarkowski laced on his athletic shoes. He took his son to school, and headed for Denver International Airport to board a flight to San Francisco. MacKensey Klarkowski claimed she rarely talked to him about his business affairs, and knew only that he planned to be back the next evening.

Klarkowski, 43, would be dead little more than 24 hours later.

On Feb. 5, three men – including one from Boulder – were killed in Sonoma County in what investigators have alleged was a botched marijuana deal. Three other men are facing murder charges in connection with the killings.

**The victims:**

Todd Klarkowski, 43, of Boulder, allegedly plotted with two others the purchase and transfer of 70 to 80 pounds marijuana from Sonoma County to Colorado.

Richard Lewin, 46, of Huntington, N.Y., is alleged to have introduced Klarkowski to the alleged California pot seller, Raleigh Butler.

Raleigh Butler, 24, of North Lake Tahoe was shot and killed

along with Klarkowski and Lewin in his mother’s rented home in Forestville.

The same day that Klarkowski flew west, Butler, 24, a passionate snowboarder and heavy metal devotee from Sebastopol – who of late had been living in North Lake Tahoe – called his grandmother to wish her happy birthday, just as his mother, Leslie King, had reminded him to do.

“And he did leave a really nice, cheerful loving message for her,” King said. She described the younger of her two sons as “charismatic, magnanimous, kind and generous with everything he did and felt. A real leader in the way of the heart.”

The day after calling his grandmother, Butler would die alongside Klarkowski and another man, 46-year-old Lewin, of Huntington, N.Y. All were shot in the head at close range in a bedroom at the home of Butler’s mother – she was away at the time – in Forestville, a small community in Sonoma County.

The three men were killed execution-style in what investigators believe was an alleged plot to move 70 to 80 pounds of pot from California to Colorado.

The crime shocked those who know both the victims and the suspected triggerman, and served as a reminder that even as states such as Colorado and California take steps to legalize marijuana, the illegal drug trade remains robust – and deadly.

**Read the whole story**

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# Indian casinos expanding

# beyond reservations

**By David Siders, Sacramento Bee**

With a referendum looming over the California Legislature's approval of a controversial Indian casino in Madera County, Gov. Jerry Brown said Friday that casino opponents are setting a bad precedent in what is likely to be a multimillion-dollar fight between casino interests.

"I think this is a dispute about money, mostly, money and competition," Brown told reporters after addressing tribal leaders at the Capitol.

At issue is the Legislature's approval this year of a casino for the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians along Highway 99, more than 35 miles from the village where tribal members live. Opponents of the casino, including New York-based financial interests and Table Mountain Rancheria, which operates a casino near the North Fork site, have raised nearly $1.7 million to support a referendum.

Andrew Acosta, a political consultant working on the campaign, said the group will submit signatures Tuesday to qualify the measure for the November 2014 ballot.

**Read the whole story**

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# Algae bloom killing fish in Stampede Reservoir

**By Barbara Barte Osborn, Sacramento Bee**

A massive fish die-off at Stampede Reservoir, 19 miles northeast of Truckee, is thought to be due to an algae bloom.

“The bloom appears to be causing oxygen to lower in the deeper water, and there are hundreds and hundreds of dead kokanee and lake trout,” said fisheries biologist Amber Rossi.

The lake, which is in the Sierra County portion of the Tahoe National Forest, is a popular fishing spot.

Concerned anglers have called the state Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Forest Service’s Truckee Ranger District office for several weeks, said Rossi, who is Fish and Wildlife’s fisheries biologist for Sierra and Plumas counties.

“We’re still getting reports,” she said Friday, “so apparently it’s still going on.”

**Read the whole story**

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# Prescribed burn planned for South Lake Tahoe

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will begin the fall-winter prescribed fire program Sept. 30.

The first operation will take place near Pioneer Trail and Al Tahoe Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe. Approximately 9 acres will be burned in one or two days.

Fall and winter bring cooler temperatures and precipitation, which are ideal for prescribed burning. Each operation follows

a prescribed fire burn plan, which considers temperature, humidity, wind, moisture of the vegetation, and conditions for the dispersal of smoke. This information is used to decide when and where to burn. The Forest Service tries to give as much advance notice as possible before burning, but some operations may be conducted on short notice.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size. The Forest Service staff coordinates with state and local county air pollution control districts and monitor weather conditions closely prior to prescribed fire ignition.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, Forest Service staff post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at (530) 543.2600, No. 6. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

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# Boreal fires up snowmaking guns

**By Jeffery Weidel, Examiner**

While many of Lake Tahoe's ski resorts are thrilled at seeing snowfall twice in the past week, Boreal Mountain Resort is taking a more pro-active approach: Boreal is making snow.

Boreal fired up 14 of its snow-making guns on Sept. 27 and if conditions warrant, Boreal could open in 30 days or less.

"Snow in September! This is awesome for us," said a Boreal

spokesperson Tess Hobbs said. “It’s great. Our crews wait for this all summer long. We’re all skiers, and to us this is the start of winter.”

A low pressure system moving across Northern California has brought reduced overnight temperatures which allowed Boreal to begin making snow to create a base for the upcoming ski and snowboard season.

**Read the whole story**

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# Mixed emotions as insurance exchanges set to open

**By Eric Whitney, NPR**

Tuesday is a big day for the White House. That’s when new open in every state, where people can buy the insurance the Affordable Care Act requires next year. They will also see if they qualify for new subsidies to help them afford it.

The day will be met by both intense scrutiny and complete cluelessness. Policy wonks will be watching like scientists running lab rats through a maze.

Camped on the virtual sidewalk outside the new exchanges, just waiting for the online doors to open, are people like Caroline Pearson, a vice president at Avalere Health, a Washington, D.C., consulting firm. She says she knows a lot of people who are just dying to take the federal government’s new health insurance shopping system for a spin when it opens Tuesday morning.

“I think that every health care researcher in the country is

going to immediately log in to the website – and hopefully not overwhelm the system and crash the website," she laughs.

Researchers like Pearson want to see if the technology really works. They want to compare prices across the country, know who's buying and how much people are willing to spend. They want demographics, consumer behavior, prices – data, data, data.

At the other end of the spectrum are the estimated 80 million Americans who say they don't know anything about the law and may not notice at all.

**Read the whole story**

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# Kokanee Trail Runs canceled

The 2013 Kokanee Trail Runs hosted by the Tahoe Mountain Milers Running Club has been canceled this year.

The U.S. Forest Service requested this because of the extensive forest thinning operations in the area where the running events occur, specifically between Taylor Creek, Fallen Leaf Lake dam and Cathedral Road.

The Forest Service's Fall Fish Festival and Camp Richardson Oktoberfest are still going on Oct. 5-6.

The next Tahoe Mountain Milers Race is Oct. 26 in Carson City for the Nevada Day 2 mile and 8K Run. Go online for more info.

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# U.S. receives a C on diet report card

**By Jenn Harris, Los Angeles Times**

With Cronuts, ramen burgers and calorie-laden mash-ups dominating our current food culture, it should come as no surprise that as a country we're not scoring high marks for healthy diets.

According to the Center for Science in the Public Interest's new American diet report card, we're barely passing.

The organization used data gathered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to give U.S. eaters a grade. The healthier the diet, the higher the grade. Americans have a GPA of 2.42 or as a letter, a C.

**Read the whole story**

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# 2013 Ironman Lake Tahoe

Sept. 22 was the inaugural Ironman Lake Tahoe that covered much of the North Shore and went into Truckee.