

Weekly ReCAP for May 29, 2020

Next CPC meeting June 1, 2020 now starting at 3:00 p.m. to 5 p.m. Until the COVID-19 is resolved in our community, the CPC meetings will be held remotely by ZOOM and/or conference calling. To participate please watch for connection information from Jenny. New members are welcome, and members only will be able to participate in any closed session

The latest Covid-19 update from Dr. Kelaita on CCTV's YouTube page:

Local COVID-19 Update - Calaveras Public Health Officer Dr. Dean Kelaita May 26 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69LIN7w5NAs>

Jobless Rate Soars In State And Mother Lode

By Tracey Petersen / MML / **May 23, 2020**

Sonora, CA – While the state’s jobless rate hit 15.5 percent in April, Tuolumne County’s topped that while Calaveras came slightly under that rate.

California’s unemployment rate increased 10.2 percentage points since March when it was recorded at 5.3 percent, according to the figures released by the Employment Development Department on Friday. The number of unemployed Californians rose to almost 2.9 million over just two months, surpassing the previous 2.2 million peak during the recession that took more than two years to reach.

Tuolumne County’s rate surpassed the states and nearly tripled, skyrocketing from 6.2 percent in March to 17.2 percent in April, leaving 3,750 unemployed out of its labor force of 21,840. Calaveras County’s jobless rate soared by nearly double, reaching 13.3 percent last month from 5.4 percent the previous month. That resulted in 2,730 unemployed out of its 20,560-workforce. Marin County had the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 11.1 percent and Imperial had the highest at 28 percent. Below is an EDD chart outlining the change in the state’s labor force.

Every one of California’s 11 industry sectors lost jobs in April. The Leisure & Hospitality industry posted the largest job loss at 866,200, which was more than double that of Trade, Transportation, and Utilities at -388,700, the state’s second-largest industry sector loss. Mining & Logging posted the

smallest job loss at 500. This latest EDD report was conducted the week of April 12th with the number of claims highlighted in the graphic below.

Department officials note that the numbers will be higher for the entire month of April as it reports 5.1 million people have filed for unemployment benefits since March.

Calaveras Supes Decline To Be The First To End Local COVID-19 Emergency

[By Tori James](#) / MML / May 26, 2020

San Andreas, CA – A controversial agenda discussion as to whether Calaveras County should lift its local COVID-19 emergency led to thoughtful talk on growing frustrations over the state order.

District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills addressed concerns that bringing the topic to Tuesday’s agenda might be seen as political, pointing out that he no longer had any “political skin in the game.” Mills, who lost his bid for reelection to Amanda Folendorf, a current Angels Camp councilmember, and former mayor, will be leaving his post at the end of December.

Mills maintained that the board is expected to be an integral part of the process and would at some point have to terminate the emergency once it was past. He argued that the county has not seen anywhere near the number of coronavirus cases that were originally estimated when the local emergency went into effect back in March.

He pointed out that none of the 30 beds at the overflow facility set up at Calaveras High had been used. He also questioned the testing, calling it reactive when it should be done more randomly, and further opined that there was no evidence of community spread. “Our local system is not overwhelmed. We are not in a state of emergency as defined by state law,” Mills stated.

When asked to weigh in, OES Director John Osbourn reported that the county had already spent over \$600,000 in received funding, and costs such as for PPE and specific programs moving forward were contingent on following the state’s emergency order.

No County Has Yet Repealed Its Local Emergency

While the new testing site set to open this Friday at Calaveras County Fairgrounds is operated in part by the state, County Public Health Officer Dr. Dean Kelaita noted it was a joint activity. He stated, “Repealing the local health declaration of emergency blows a hole to our ability to get reimbursed for our own local activities being used to prepare and help operate the site.” He stressed, “The federal and state emergencies are still in effect. No county in California has repealed its local health emergency. That’s the most important part of this.”

The doctor maintained, “Aside from the funding and reimbursement issues, a local declaration of a health emergency sends a message to the residents of Calaveras County that we take their health and safety seriously and that we are in charge of our own destiny.” He added. “Most emergency responses in the United States are not meant to be a top-down thing but rather they are a bottom-up thing. It is local authorities that are the first line of defense. They filter up to governors and state governments... then to the national government, which coordinates the largest efforts.”

In finishing, he said, “So like I said, no counties in California have rescinded their local health emergency. I have yet to hear a medical or public health argument for why terminating...is a good idea in the middle of a pandemic. I don’t support it.”

District 5 Supervisor Benjamin Stopper noted, “We still have not received all Butte Fire funding promised...we would put ourselves further in the hole if we terminate the order at this time.” He later went on to express his frustrations at county services not being more readily available.

CAO Al Alt reported that staff was planning for the reopening of many services under health protocols that would protect workers and residents with an updated operational plan slated for the board’s preview around June 15. Stopper also argued for the board to consider how the supervisors could all return to the dais for in-person meetings, which District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli echoed. District 3 Supervisor and Board Chair Merita Callaway commented that there are still considerations to get past such as determining how the board can maintain sufficient distancing in the chambers.

Staying The Course, Albeit With Frustrations

A letter from a local doctor to stay the course and not undo all the progress residents have made by staying at home was read into the record after which four callers expressed various concerns with not opening up more fully if not completely now.

District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi acknowledged, “I am as frustrated by staying home like everybody else. Is it pragmatic? The rules are changing every week. I think we have to be practical... we have several disasters online...a lot to lose and the state has a big hammer over us.”

He added, “I think We have to realize we are a small county. We should never be poking someone in the eye, be it the federal or state government when we have our hand out. And that is exactly what we are doing...I think if we just stay the course we are going to evolve out of this and we will get reimbursed.”

Asked for his final say, Mills maintained there was no case for the emergency, and that if keeping it in place was solely for the considerations of maintaining funding or getting reimbursed, “it is a sad way to fly.”

Before closing comments and getting no response for a motion to consider ending the local emergency, Callaway summed up her take. “I feel financial and other risks – the county is not ready to open for business as usual.”

Calaveras Public Health Officials Confirm Fifteenth COVID-19 Case

By [Tracey Petersen](#) / MML / May 26, 2020

San Andreas, CA – A fifteenth person has contracted COVID-19 in Calaveras County.

Public Health officials relay the infected person is an older adult male from Valley Springs who is currently hospitalized.

“A person at any age can become seriously ill from COVID-19, that’s why it’s important to do everything you can to protect yourself, your family, and your community,” said Dr. Dean Kelaita, Calaveras County Health Officer. He added, “We live in a county with a much older population and older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness.”

A contact tracing investigation is underway to determine any possible persons who may have had close personal contact with the man. Health officials advise that close contacts will be assessed and monitored for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 illness.

“Despite recently opened areas of Calaveras County we are still in a pandemic, we must do our part to ensure the health and well-being of our most vulnerable groups,” said Dr. Kelaita.

The 14th case was reported on Sunday, as detailed [here](#), that adult man was not showing any symptoms, but was self-isolating. This latest case brings the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases for the county to fifteen with thirteen having since recovered and no deaths reported. It also includes eight females and seven males with one patient being under 17 years old. Click on the image box for more details.

Additionally, the health department is holding a Virtual Local Assistance Center (VLAC) from 9 a.m.- 11 a.m. on Friday, May 29th. It will provide a centralized location for older adults and people with chronic medical conditions to get information about services and resources currently available.

RCRC – The Barbed Wire – May 27, 2020

[Federal Relief to State and Local Governments](#)

Although the House of Representatives narrowly passed the [HEROES Act](#) last Friday evening, Senate Republicans have no immediate plans to advance another relief package. The Senate adjourned for the long Memorial Day week and will return on June 1 to consider a handful of appointments, work on the re-authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and address reforms to the Paycheck Protection Program (funds for the Paycheck Protection Program will likely be exhausted in late May or

June, which may put pressure on both houses of Congress to develop and enact some secondary relief package).

On Monday, Senator Bill Cassidy (R-Louisiana) and Senator Robert Menendez (D-New Jersey) [formally introduced](#) the *State and Municipal Assistance for Recovery and Transition (SMART) Act* (S. 3752). This [legislation](#) provides an additional \$500 billion in aid to state and local governments, territories and tribes to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, with the smallest communities in line for a direct slice of the money. It eliminates the current 500,000 resident population threshold, allowing every state, county, municipality, U.S. territory and the District of Columbia to qualify for [direct](#) federal assistance. Additionally, the SMART Fund targets funding to areas of greatest need based upon infection rates and revenue losses and overturns the U.S. Treasury's guidance on how state and local governments could use the CARES stabilization funding.

Under the new bill, \$16 billion would be set aside for Native American tribes. The remaining \$484 billion would be allocated to states, territories, the District of Columbia, counties and municipalities as follows:

- One-third of the \$484 billion would be distributed based on each state or territory's percentage of the U.S. population. Counties and municipalities would each get one-sixth of the state allocation, in proportion to their share of the state's population.
- One-third would be distributed according to each share of nationwide COVID-19 infections, with counties and municipalities again getting one-sixth of their state's money based on population.
- The final third would be parceled out based on each state's revenue losses as a percentage of combined state losses over the course of this year. Counties and municipalities again would get their one-sixth share, based on their revenue losses in proportion to overall losses in their state.

Each state would receive at least \$2 billion from the first two tranches — up from \$1.25 billion in the CARES Act — on top of any money they receive from revenue losses in the third tranche. The funds could be used for pandemic-related costs occurring in 2020 through the end of 2022, or to replace lost revenue during that period.

Senators Cassidy and Menendez first unveiled their proposal in late April. Since then, they made a key change by eliminating the floor in their original plan that would have limited aid to cities and counties with 50,000 or more residents.

On Tuesday, Congresswoman Sherrill introduced [H.R. 6954](#) to amend title VI of the Social Security Act to establish a Coronavirus Local Community Stabilization Fund. With bipartisan support from nine co-sponsors so far, the bill has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

Late this week, RCRC expressed to Congressional leaders the need to enact further federal assistance to states and counties. Read the letter [here](#).

RCRC Weighs in on Latest SB 1383 Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Organics Regulations

RCRC has, once again, provided extensive comments on a draft of CalRecycle's Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Organics regulations, which the agency has been developing pursuant to 2016's Senate Bill 1383 (Lara). The most recent draft was made available for 30-day comment in response to the Office of Administrative Law's rejection of the previous draft and direction that the agency re-draft several portions of the regulations for the sake of clarity.

The most recent draft's amendments were largely cosmetic, but it did make some dramatic changes to enforcement and penalty language that could impact local jurisdictions trying to comply with the requirements in good faith. RCRC pointed out those changes in a letter filed with the agency on May 19, 2020 and stressed the difficulties that rural jurisdictions would already face in complying with the regulations without the undue burden of the more stringent enforcement.

RCRC continues to not only pursue alternate compliance pathways for small jurisdictions, but will continue to request a delay in SB 1383 implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read RCRC's comments [here](#).

State Air Board Considers Regulations to Eliminate Diesel Trucks

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) is accepting comments on its latest draft of the Advanced Clean Truck (ACT) regulations, a rulemaking aimed at reducing emissions from the commercial truck fleet at the direction of the Administration. Government entities such as counties would also be regulated under the new requirements.

The ultimate goal of the ACT regulations is to replace much of the existing light-medium duty and heavier commercial vehicle fleet with electric vehicles by the year 2030. The requirements begin with truck sales and a complicated reporting mandate for fleet operators and brokers aimed at building an inventory of the state's fleet and what types of fuels are currently in use.

However, the latest version of the regulations gives no consideration to implementation costs in the wake of COVID-19, nor does it analyze the feasibility of using electric vehicles in rural areas where topography varies and where new barriers such as public safety power shut-offs could make zero emission vehicle use by counties a hazard to public safety. RCRC filed [extensive comments](#) on the latest version of the regulations to engage the agency on rural concerns.

For more information on the ACT regulations, visit CARB's website [here](#).

Rural Communities Face Unique Challenges Not Yet Addressed by Federal Aid Response

In a news article published on Tuesday, Rural County Representatives (RCRC) Chief Operating Officer / Chief Financial Officer, Lisa McCargar, provided insight about barriers that impede the ability of rural businesses to access government aid programs developed in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19)

pandemic. As emphasized in RCRC's ongoing advocacy for direct federal funding for small counties, many rural areas face strained financial resources, especially following the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. The response thus far—while recently moving in a positive direction— has been inadequate to address the distinct needs of rural communities. With unique insight into the plight of rural California, the article highlights the need for future federal aid packages to address rural-centric financial issues.

Read the full article [here](#).

Governor Extends the Timeline for Local Governments to File Reimbursement Claims Regarding Crimes Committed in State Prisons/State Hospitals

On Tuesday, Governor Newsom signed [Executive Order N-65-20](#) addressing several issues in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Among its provisions, the Executive Order (EO) further extends the time limit for local governments to submit reimbursement claims under Section 4750 of the California Penal Code (PC). The time limitation, first extended in March in response to COVID-19, has been delayed for an additional 60 days.

Under PC Section 4750, counties and cities with state prisons or state hospitals within their jurisdiction are eligible to receive reimbursement for various costs related to certain crimes committed at those facilities. The reimbursements are subject to strict administrative [guidelines](#) and time limitations. The latest extension acknowledges that local administrative services are experiencing increased demand as a result of the pandemic. As such, additional time is being allowed for local jurisdictions to meet the deadlines for submission.

Rural Broadband

On Tuesday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a [teleconference forum](#) with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [Chairman Ajit Pai](#) to discuss critical consumer protection, broadband, and spectrum issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the hearing focused on receiving updates from Chairman Pai on what the FCC was doing to keep Americans connected during the pandemic, including the COVID-19 telehealth program and increased broadband access. The teleconference lacked much of the typical partisan discord so often associated with broadband and 5G discussions, with most members agreeing that obtaining and keeping broadband was vital during the pandemic and that the FCC was working hard to try to make that happen. Democrats focused slightly more on the gaps in broadband access the pandemic had exposed, while Republicans focused more on what the FCC was doing to help expand coverage given the current state of broadband. Additionally, both Democrats and Republicans praised FCC Chairman Ajit Pai's [Keep Americans Connected](#) pledge and the 750-plus Internet Service Providers who had signed on to it.

Additionally, on Monday FCC Chairman Ajit Pai [released an op-ed on Medium](#) announcing to expect a 5G infrastructure vote at the FCC's June 9 meeting along with votes on an October rural broadband auction and next-generation broadcast TV tech.

Cannabis Banking

As part of the HEROES Act, SAFE Banking provisions were included to protect banks that service state-legal marijuana businesses from being penalized by federal regulators. Many Republicans have been quick to reject the cannabis provision's inclusion, noting that the word "cannabis" is used 68 times in the Heroes Act which is more than "job" or "jobs" combined, an emphasis especially critical for an economic stimulus bill. Representative Ed Perlmutter (D-Colorado), chief sponsor of the SAFE Banking legislation, made the case on the House Floor this week that while some Republican lawmakers might argue that the cannabis language does not belong in a coronavirus bill, the measure would actually protect public health by reducing the threat of spreading the virus through cash transactions. His office has also published a [one-pager](#) highlighting these and additional reasons why cannabis banking provisions should be included in the final COVID-19 Phase 4 package. It should be noted that reforming federal banking law to allow for state-sanctioned commercial cannabis activities remains a top priority of RCRC.

Calaveras Supervisors Hear About Budget Shortfall Ahead Of Hearings

By B.J. Hansen / MML / **May 27, 2020**

San Andreas, CA — Calaveras County government leaders will need to reduce spending by about 5.3-percent next fiscal year in order to balance the budget.

The board of supervisors received a presentation at yesterday's meeting ahead of budget hearings that are planned for June 9-12. The projections call for a reduction of around \$1.85-million in the General Fund.

CAO Albert Alt stated that some of the shortfall can be offset by continuing a "hiring chill" and cutting discretionary spending.

Noting as a positive, he stated, "In general, right now, the data that we have for the revenues that have come in for the current year, and as we project out, don't give us the same pause that you may be seeing in Tuolumne County, or some of the other sister counties."

Breaking down the numbers, Calaveras is projecting a 25-percent drop in sales tax revenues next budget year (\$825,000), a 25-percent drop in Proposition 172 money (\$475,000) and a 50-percent drop in Transient Occupancy Tax dollars (\$373,000 after money is dispersed to Calaveras Visitors Bureau and Fire).

Still unknowns include the economic recovery rate, California budget impacts, collective bargaining, unemployment, local business impacts, tourism recovery and potential federal and state funding.

There are also some increases in revenues anticipated, like just over a \$1-million in Measure C marijuana money, and \$2-million in Butte Fire recovery funding.

The presentation Tuesday listed a variety of possible cuts/revenue generators that the county could consider. They include things like a hiring freeze, layoffs, furloughs, revisiting the TOT methodology, asking voters to increase the sales tax and cutting “non-mandated” services (economic development department, libraries and public access TV).

The county will pass a preliminary budget next month, following the hearings, and then reassess it late in the summer when updated revenue projections are known.

Barbershops, churches allowed to reopen doors

Supervisors discuss end to Calaveras emergency declaration

By Noah Berner / The Calaveras Enterprise / May 27, 2020

At the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, Health Officer Dean Kelaita, MD, announced that the state will now allow barbershops and hair salons to reopen in Calaveras County. Churches, dine-in restaurants and all retail stores have also been permitted to reopen in recent days.

“Now people can get their haircuts. Churches can resume in-person worship services at 25% of their building occupancy, up to 100 attendees,” he said. “Additional in-person services provided by religious organizations such as counseling services, (Alcoholics Anonymous) and other 12-step programs are also now allowable.”

Kelaita said that the reopenings will require safety measures.

“Specific infection control procedures, physical distancing guidelines and employee training requirements will also need to be implemented,” he said. “The public is still highly recommended and encouraged to wear face coverings when in public and near others.” Kelaita said that additional guidelines for commercial and recreational activities will be released by the state later in the week.

At the request of District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills, the board discussed lifting the county’s declaration of a local health emergency enacted in March.

Mills said that he hoped to spark a discussion among the board, and that projections on the risk posed by the virus had been proven inaccurate.

“There is no justification for any lockdown where there is no health emergency in our county,” he said. “I do not see the justification that our local system will be overwhelmed. Therefore, there is no need to keep a local emergency in place.”

Office of Emergency Services Director John Osbourn said that canceling the declaration may impact the county’s ability to be reimbursed for its emergency spending during the pandemic.

“If we decided to terminate the local health emergency today, anything that we spend from today forward would unlikely be reimbursed by FEMA under the Public Assistance Program that we have applied for and been granted,” he said.

While District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi agreed with Mills “that it is time to move ahead” with reopening, he opposed rescinding the declaration.

“I believe that Calaveras deserves pragmatic leadership, and this is nothing more than a political statement,” he said. “We have to realize that we’re a small county, and we should never be poking someone in the eye – be it the federal government or the state government – when we’ve got our hand out.”

Kelaita said that local authorities were the first line of defense during emergencies.

“No counties in California have rescinded their local health emergencies,” he said. “I’ve yet to hear a medical or public health argument for why terminating the declaration of a local health emergency is a good idea in the middle of a pandemic.”

District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli and the other members of the board also opposed ending the declaration.

“We are under a state of emergency, and to rescind it at this time does not make any sense whatsoever,” Tofanelli said.

At the end of the meeting, the board received a presentation on the projected 2020-21 budget from County Administrative Officer Albert Alt and Christa VonLatta of the Administrative Office.

Alt recommended that the county maintain a relatively flat budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

“We do need to have some reductions,” he said. “We can handle them for the most part through reducing discretionary spending and being very cautionary about our hiring and what I would term a ‘hiring chill.’ But in general right now the data that we have for the revenues that have come in for the current year and as we project out don’t give us the same pause that you may be seeing in Tuolumne County or some of the other sister counties.”

VonLatta said that the general fund balance is expected to be at about \$3 million at the end of the current fiscal year, down from about \$6.5 million at the beginning of the fiscal year. She said that income from sales and use taxes is projected to decline by 25% during the 2020-21 fiscal year, compared to the budgeted amounts of last fiscal year. Income from Proposition 172 is also expected to drop by 25%, while income from the Transient Occupancy Tax is projected to decline by 50%.

The county expects to take in \$1.1 million from Measure C, and about \$2 million for Butte Fire disaster relief.

“Our overall budget message for fiscal year 2020-21 is to do a status quo budget with a 5.3% reduction to balance,” VonLatta said.
