

ECO-LOGIC

The Official Newsletter of Tri-City Ecology



TAKING THE LEAD - CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION BY PAST TCEC CHAIR

by Senator Bob Wieckowski

Senator Wieckowski's SB 38 is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee with a vote scheduled for May 20. The bill would reform California's broken beverage container recycling system. It requires beverage distributors, and large manufacturers who act as distributors, to form a stewardship organization to manage the collection and recycling of beverage containers subject to the California Refund Value (CRV).

NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

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Cal Recycle would provide oversight of the stewardship organization. The current system is failing consumers. More than 40 percent of people's beverage deposits are unredeemed because redemption centers have closed across the state. The result is more waste in our landfills, fewer jobs and less recycling.

SB 38 builds on the best practices of more cost-effective systems, such as those in Oregon, Michigan and Norway, where recycling rates are higher and consumers have more convenient locations to recycle. SB 38 would make it as easy to recycle a container as it is to purchase one. <http://bit.ly/SB-238>

State Senator Bob Wieckowski represents the 10th District, which includes parts of Alameda and Santa Clara counties.



GOVERNOR, LEGISLATURE UNVEIL HUGE DROUGHT RELIEF PACKAGES

by Senator Bob Wieckowski

California is facing an increasingly severe drought and the Legislature and Governor Newsom are quickly putting together a massive response package to provide billions of dollars in rate relief to customers and assistance to water agencies. The final drought package will be approved as part of the 2021-22 state budget next month.

As the subcommittee budget chair for Resources, Environmental Protection and Energy, I shepherded the Senate's \$3.4 billion drought plan through the subcommittee in late April. It was approved unanimously with bipartisan support. This comprehensive Senate drought package will provide crucial relief for ratepayers and make immediate investments to help homeowners, businesses and the agricultural sector use water more efficiently. With climate change making droughts more likely in the foreseeable future, this plan targets state and federal funds where they will have the greatest effect: conservation, sustainability and reliability.

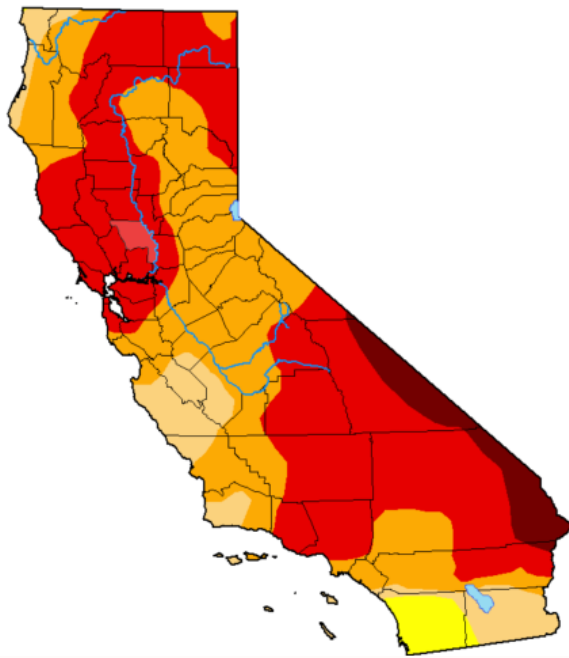
It aids local agencies, promotes water connections to larger systems, boosts water recycling, protects fish and wildlife, uses the latest technology to improve forecasting, and invests in sustainable groundwater management. Californians have answered the call when asked to conserve water and this plan will enable us to be even more efficient in the future. It is an essential, responsible plan that provides the relief and resources to help us get through this drought.

The U.S. Drought Monitor reports that the entire state is facing abnormally dry conditions, with much of California already in moderate or extreme drought.

The Governor unveiled a \$5.1 billion package that also focuses on helping people and businesses

Map released: Thurs. April 29, 2021

Data valid: April 27, 2021 at 8 a.m. EDT



Intensity:

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Author(s):

Richard Heim, NOAA/NCEI

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying [text summary](#) for forecast statements.

It's the second straight year of dry conditions and the eighth in 10 years. The snowpack is less than half of normal this year. The drought relief funds are targeted for off-the-shelf projects that can start immediately. They also include funds from the federal American Recovery Act and bonds.

Governor Newsom recently expanded his drought emergency proclamation, which now includes 41 counties, including Alameda, and 30 percent of the state's population.

The Governor unveiled a \$5.1 billion package that also focuses on helping people and businesses who are behind on their water bills as a result of the pandemic. Both the Senate and Governor's plans build on the lessons learned from the 2012-2016 drought. The state has better groundwater management plans in place and has given hundreds of millions of dollars for safe and affordable groundwater since the last drought. It is also now authorized to order failing public water agencies to consolidate with better-run systems.

The Senate will negotiate with the Assembly before reaching an agreement with the Governor on the exact size of the drought relief package.

We must all continue to do our part to conserve water as we face another dry year ahead.

Bike Month 2021



May is Bike Month in Fremont

BIKE MONTH 2021

Hop on your two wheel, three, or any wheel traveling frame that requires some pedals and think about the activities of the month.

May 5th was National Bike to School day, and while it's tough to ride to a Zoom screen, there was still a chance to enjoy Cinco de Mayo by riding around town with fellow students.

May 10 – 14 was Bike to the Moon Week – Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools Program organized a weeklong event in which students, families, and school staff will track their miles and minutes of physical activity with the goal of collectively “biking” all the way to the moon.

Friday, May 21 – Bike to Wherever Day - Fremont will join the Bay Area in commemorating this annual event. Complete a pledge to ride online to receive a map to energizer stations and a digital goodie bag. More information at:

<https://bikeeastbay.org/civicrm/event/register?id=1814&reset=1>



THE RAMIREZ FARM AND PETERSON RANCH FARMHOUSE

Liz Ames – Vice President TCED, BART Director, Chair, Save Our Hills

Imagine securing the state-owned Ramirez farm and historic Peterson farmhouse, and retaining the last local farm in the tri-cities located on thirty-seven acres in Union City bordering Fremont on Alvarado-Niles Road. We can also transform and take care of riparian habitat next to the farm, old Alameda Creek, that could be habitat for Steelhead Trout according to the San Francisco Estuary Institute. We hope the State of California is considering Ramirez Farm as a candidate for land conservation and water quality protection as part of their climate action planning efforts.

Is that the best use for the benefit of the public, Caltrans, Fremont and Union City?

We need a City zoning change to reduce the cost of the land from \$2 Million/acre and keep it as farmland. For 120 years, the land has been a farm. Union City wishes to state this land is part of a transit-oriented community with Quarry lakes Parkway, a highway, roadways, housing and a bike path with multimodal transit connections. In fact, the City is building another suburb on our last farm with a highway running through it. Please email your council members to ask for their leadership to stall development and reconsider more housing within walking distance to BART.

Urban agriculture changes the land use narrative, like the Gill Tract in Berkley, the Ramirez farm serves hundreds of families, balancing housing and food needs. Join us in the preservation to make Ramirez farm a conservation area for future generations.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) will discuss climate action plans related to transportation infrastructure, land conservation and greenhouse gas impacts mid-May. In June 2021, The CTC will consider a land sale to the highest price and bidder possibly agree to a third party developer, to allow housing at \$2 Million an acre on our public farm, the Ramirez farm Let's ask the CTC to reconsider conserving Ramirez farm as a conservation area.

Comments due May 19 - California's climate action plan for transportation infrastructure

<https://calsta.ca.gov/subject-areas/climate-action-plan>

Misplaced priorities of this State-owned farm and farmhouse slated this area for Highway 84, purchased around 1960. Caltrans, Fremont and Union City are claiming the area is not Highway 84 land, yet there is a highway bypass called Quarry Lakes Parkway, a direct 4-lane connection to Interstate 880, to Mission Boulevard and to Niles Canyon, Highway 84. Also Fremont and Union City agree to build hundreds of homes on this farmland. Is that the best use for the benefit of the public, Caltrans, Fremont and Union City? How can we tackle the development and preserve this unique prime farmland resource?

Here's how Union City describes the Quarry Lakes Parkway

<https://www.unioncity.org/499/Quarry-Lakes-Parkway-Project>



TRAILS IN FREMONT

William Yragui, co-founder, Mission Peak Conservancy

According to a recent survey by the city of Fremont's Community Services department, residents say that multi-use trails are their top recreational priority. This shouldn't come as a surprise, since trail usage has surged during the pandemic. Trails and regional parks have proven enormously valuable for maintaining our sanity and health.

The city of Fremont, Alameda County, CalTrans and EBRPD are designing a trail to connect Niles through the eponymous canyon to Sunol. The first phase (one third of the way) could be completed within five years and would extend to Palomares Canyon. This would provide a safer cycling alternative than Highway 84 and add miles of trails through the canyon.

All railroad easements have contamination from arsenic in brake linings, diesel leaks and herbicides.

The Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) is working to expand the Greenway Trail from Oakland to Union City. ACTC expects to spend as much as \$230 million to acquire 17 miles of easement between Oakland and south Hayward. In 2015, ACTC granted funds to the city to plan the Greenway Trail segment from Vallejo Mill near Niles Canyon to Central Park along the 1.7-mile UPRR corridor:<https://bit.ly/3vhaYEu>

The city spent \$300,000 on three feasibility studies (2008, 2016 and 2018). Consultants estimated that the easement would cost \$17 million, not including several bridges. The city signed a conditional purchase agreement with UPRR in 2018 for \$3 million. However, the city withdrew from the deal, citing concerns about the required environmental cleanup. All railroad easements have contamination from arsenic in brake linings, diesel leaks and herbicides. To protect the public—with or without a trail - the contamination on the UPRR easement needs to be cleaned up.

Multi-use trails provide an alternative to automobiles and reduce greenhouse gases. They promote public health and provide an opportunity to spend time in nature. Finally, trails reduce injuries and death since they separate cyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic. We believe the Greenway Trail will be the trail hub for downtown Fremont connecting the Alameda Creek Trail, Niles Canyon Trail, Bay Ridge Trail and Morrison Canyon Trail. The city needs to listen to its residents and expand the trail network with a sense of urgency. We look forward to working with city and county staff to implement the community's vision of a connected Fremont.

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JOHN LANDERS MEMORIAM

Gus Morrison, Immediate past chair

Our 50th year has been tough for the Ecology Center. Last year we lost Donna Olsen and now John Landers will be greatly missed. Over the years he served the ecology center in many ways. I'm not sure if he was an original board member (I always called Donna for that kind of information) but John was on the board when I joined it in 1977. He was a hands-on guy. When we had the recycling center, he would come over after school (he taught at Castro Valley high school) and clean up after people, fix anything broken, and keep us out of trouble from the community. If we needed something built, he built it. John was the one that found the bicycle pedal powered can crusher that we used for many years. It was built by a company called Anything Inc. and it was designed for gold miners who would shovel their rocks and dirt into the top of it and peddle it like crazy, breaking the rock up so it could be run through a panning system to seek out gold from the broken-up rocks.

The proponents said "... We know that's a problem but we've got 10 years to solve it." After more than ten years and a lot of money spent, it turned out John was right.

John was such a hands-on guy that he entered the Orchard Supply hardware handyman Olympics several years and actually won it a couple of times. He was the creator and the maintainer of the irrigation system at our garden at the Museum of local history and Mission San Jose.

When the recycling center phased out around 1990 he moved on and did other things for us, especially as treasurer. He had his own unique way of keeping track, keeping us out of trouble, and protecting our money over the years. He made sure we treated it like we would treat our own money and was famous for coming to the board meeting with four copies of his treasurer's report and introduce it by saying "here's one copy for each side of the table."

When the Dumbarton Quarry sought an extension of their quarry permit, they supplied a plan to convert the quarry. (Which was 330 feet deep) into a recreational lake. John and another John, John Bernstein, got together and figured out there was not enough water nearby to ever fill it. They made a convincing presentation to the city Council. The proponents said "... We know that's a problem but we've got 10 years to solve it." After more than ten years and a lot of money spent, it turned out John was right.

I first met John in 1968. We have been friends and allies ever since. I will miss him. The ecology center will miss him but we will remember him for his friendship, his decency, his common sense, and his dedication to the causes we fought for together. His contributions to the community will last a long time.

Thank you John!

Celebration of John Landers will take place on June 19th at their church on Washington blvd. Event will take place outdoors so everyone can sing and share their thoughts on John. Time to be announced later.



GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT

CLIMATE LITERACY RESOLUTION

Climate Literacy Resolution – a program to provide education on Global Warming, Climate Change, and the environmental history, present, and future, was voted on by the Board of the Fremont Unified School District and was given a unanimous approval! Congratulations to Shreya Ramachandran and the dedicated team that organized and brought it all together! There will always for hope for the stewardship of the planet.

TUFA TREE PLANTING

Despite the many challenges of working with the City of Fremont in accessing tree planting locations, a successful planting took place at Saber Cat Creek and several other projects have since taken place.

VIRTUAL EARTH DAY

Thanks again to Shreya Ramachandran for a superb Earth Day, even in the time of the pandemic. Students from 11 countries participated at the event which included a traditional art contest for K-12, a design thinking workshop, open mic where students talked about climate change and water issues, grey water workshop by our very own Phil Stob and a student panel on science research.

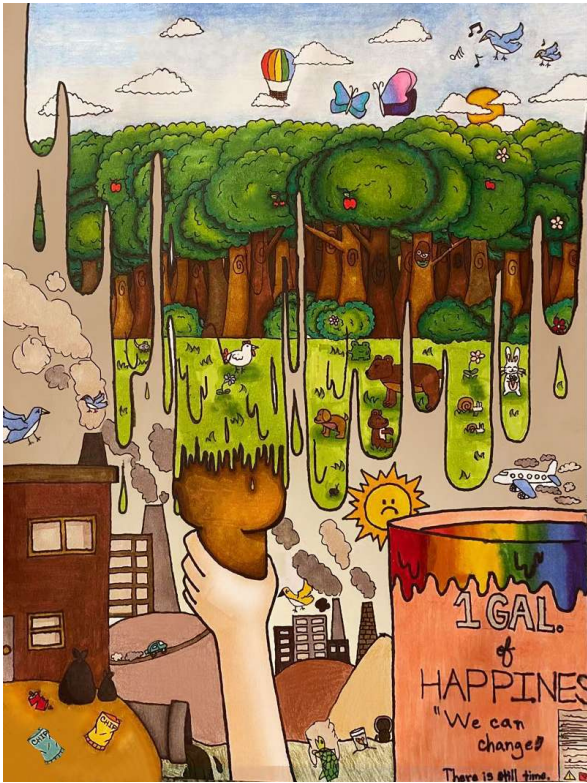
The art contest prizes were sponsored by TCEC and judged by Steve Evans, Richard Godfrey and Janis Stob. The overall grand prize went to Aayush Jha from India. Please find the winning art work below.

You can view all the art submissions and the winners at <https://www.thegreywaterproject.org/earth-day-gallery-2021>

OVERALL GRAND AWARD



GRAND AWARDS



BECOME A MEMBER

WANT TO JOIN TCEC?

If you want to become a member please click [HERE](#) to fill out this form and mail a check to 3375 Country Drive, Fremont, CA 94536. To know more about TCEC please visit our website at <http://www.tricityecology.org>.

Board meets on the first Thursday of each month on Zoom due to Covid-1. Please call to verify. If you wish to speak on a subject, please call 510.793.6222 or 510.790.1685.

If you have any suggestions or want to contact us, please fill out [THIS](#) form.

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