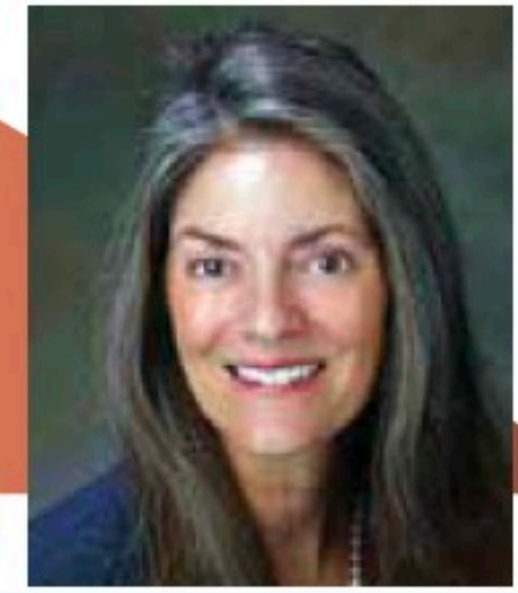


# Santa Barbara Happenings



Terry A. Bartlett – Reetz, Fox & Bartlett LLP

## **Argentina's President Milei Repealed Rent Controls in His Country. Since Last October there are More Housing and Lower Rents.**

In 2023, the president of Argentina, Javier Milei, repealed the 2020 Rental Law enacted under his predecessor, Alberto Fernandez. The Rental Law mandated a 3 year term for rentals, limited rent adjustments, and required rent to be paid in pesos.

By 2023, 1 in 7 homes were empty while residents struggled to find available rentals. Many landlords were reluctant to rent under the conditions of the Rental Law, and, due to high inflation opted to sell in U.S. dollars or list their properties on short-term rental sites where they could charge in foreign currencies.

According to one study, rents in Buenos Aires increased 140% between 2020 and 2023. Since Milei repealed the rent control law, rental listings increased by more than 170% with a 40% decline in the price of rental properties. This change demonstrates that rent control policies reduce the amount and quality of rental housing instead of helping tenants.

## **FEMA Opens Appeal Period for New Flood Zone Maps**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a preliminary flood insurance rate map and flood insurance study for Santa Barbara County. Residents of new flood zones can appeal their placement until December 18<sup>th</sup> with technical and scientific evidence.

Residents of Santa Barbara, Solvang, Buellton, and Carpinteria can contact their local floodplain administrator and those in unincorporated areas of the county can contact the Santa Barbara County Flood Control and Water Conservation District 805.568.3440 or email [fccontact@countyofsb.org](mailto:fccontact@countyofsb.org). The new maps will take effect in 2026. The preliminary maps can be viewed at [fema.gov/preliminary-floodhazarddata](https://fema.gov/preliminary-floodhazarddata).

## **Former S.B. Mayor Sheila Lodge Looks at Commuting, Building Homes, and Vacation Rentals**

In an opinion piece published recently, former Santa Barbara Mayor, Sheila Lodge, described the many steps Santa Barbara has taken over the last 15 years to address the housing shortage. The 2011 general

plan update, for instance, took steps to encourage the construction of rental housing and in 2013 the City of Santa Barbara adopted the Average Unit Size Density Program in an effort to stimulate new housing construction projects.

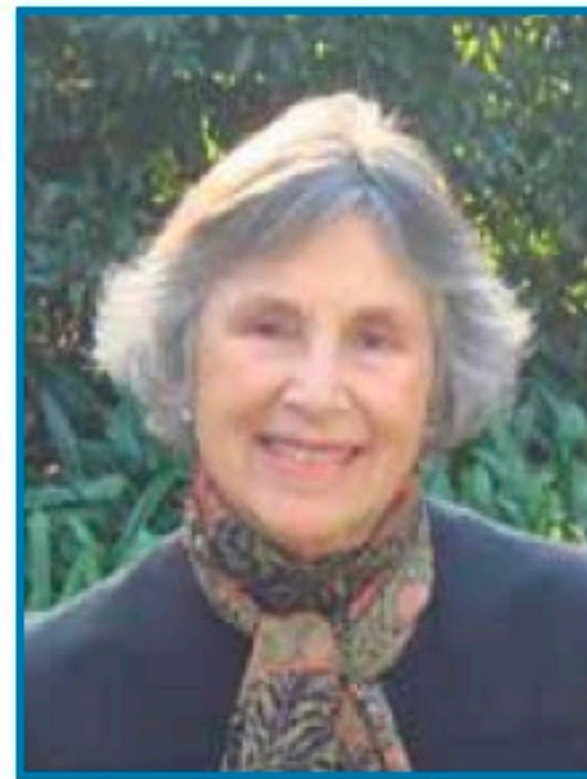


Image [www.newsmakerswithjr.com](http://www.newsmakerswithjr.com)

A priority overlay zone was also created downtown which allows for densities as high as 63 dwelling units per acre but there remains concern that such a high density means that there are not enough larger units for families. Editor's Note: With these tiny, dense units where will families live and raise their children? Perhaps these student housing sized units without adequate parking should be built near the university in Isla Vista?

Also addressed are the lack of housing built by UCSB for its employees and students, and the proliferation of short-term vacation rentals in our community, both of which worsen the housing shortage.

## **Santa Barbara County Supervisors Approve Another \$766K for Tajiguas Landfill**

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors approved another \$766,000 for the Las Tajiguas Landfill in September. The landfill's anaerobic digester, composting and automated recycling units have already costed close to \$150 million and performed poorly.

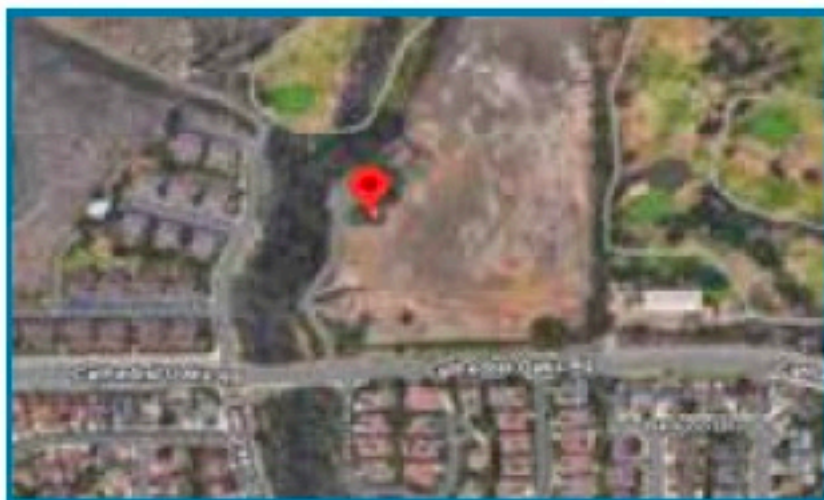
Since the installation of these units there have been ongoing complaints from the nearby community of Arroyo Quemado. The recent addition of special coverings has helped eliminate the odor and lessen complaints.

Now, the County is attempting to address the water violations faced by the facility with some of the money that was just approved.

## **Property Owners Sue City of Goleta over Right to Pursue Builder's Remedy Housing Project**

The Couvillion Family, owners of the 12-acre Shelby property at 7400 Cathedral Oaks Road in Goleta, applied in 2023 to build housing there under the





builder's remedy. Their application requested that they retain their right to build housing outside of measure G's vote requirement, that they use a vested tract map

they acquired in 2011, and they invoked SB 330 which requires that the city hold no more than 5 public hearings while processing the application.

The City Attorney stated in a letter that the City of Goleta could not accept the application because the Couvillions wanted to retain their vested map of 2011 which they could not use while also applying under the builder's remedy. The Couvillions are now in litigation with the City in an effort to build the housing they have applied to on their application using both the tract map and the builder's remedy.

### **ACT Test makes Science Section Optional. What is Wrong with Education Today?**

The ACT announced that it will be making the science section of its standardized test used for college admissions optional. They will also be shortening exam times and reducing the number of questions in their test. The company that administers the SAT also recently shortened its test by an hour and made it digital.

Standardized tests have, since their inception, been created and administered according to the underlying social ideals of the institutions that create and require them. Science education in general has been becoming less rigorous despite increased spending on STEM classes. State standardized test scores in math and science have been declining.

Instead of improving our curriculum and methods of instruction we are making standardized measures of science skills and knowledge optional and standardized tests in general shorter and easier. You can't produce the best and brightest by dumbing down the tests.

### **Joe and Jill Biden are Moving to Santa Ynez**

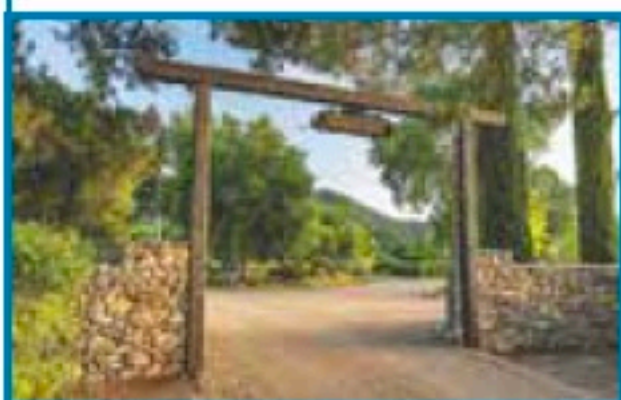


Image Zillow.com

According to a report for the Santa Barbara Current, Joe and Jill Biden recently purchased the 12-acre ranch for \$8.9 million at 3930 Indian Way in Santa Ynez. Welcome new neighbors.

### **Another Retailer Abandons Carless State Street**

Another popular business, World Market, is leaving its location on State Street. According to re-

cent survey by the firm, Magid, the majority of respondents support returning State Street to its pre-COVID vehicle friendly status while the City Council completes its master plan and repealing Title 31 which designated State Street as a pedestrian promenade between Victoria and Haley Streets.

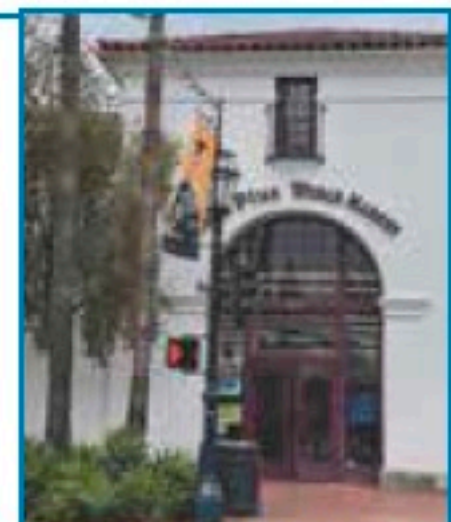


Image worldmarket.com

Nearly half of the respondents to the survey considered the upkeep and cleanliness of State Street to be average or below average and 1/3 of those who responded said that they are less likely to visit State Street since the closure to vehicles. The results of the survey illustrate how the closure of State Street to vehicles has had a negative impact on the businesses and community.

### **Lompoc Lauded for Financial Reporting Excellence**

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has once again recognized the City of Lompoc for the clarity and transparency of its financial reporting in its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. Lompoc has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the last 7 consecutive fiscal years.

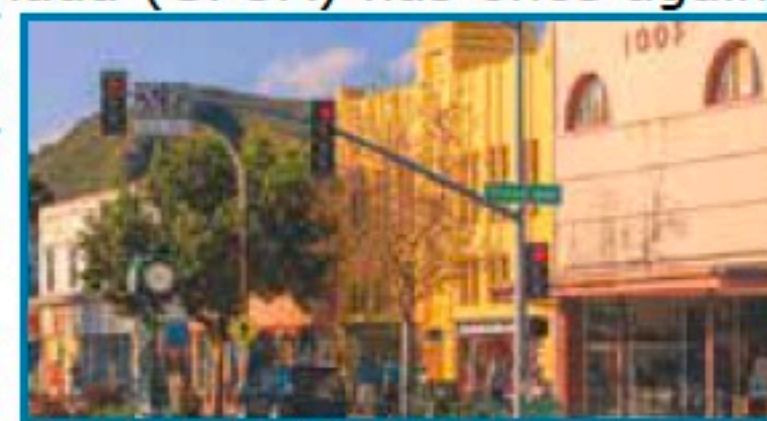


Image explorelomdoc.com

### **California Insanity: Coastal Commission Rejects U.S. Space Force Plan for SpaceX Launches Because Elon Musk Supports Trump**

The California Coastal Commission recently rejected the Air Force's plan to allow SpaceX to launch up to 50 rockets per year from Vandenberg Air Force Base. The commissioners cited concerns over Elon Musk's political beliefs, concerns regarding SpaceX's classification as a military contractor and their labor record as reasons for their rejection of the proposed plan.

Previously, the California Coastal Commission had approved SpaceX for up to 36 launches per year.

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