

# CoCoTax

Promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary taxes and spending



September 2, 2020

- CoCoTax Officers**
- Susan Pricco**  
President
  - Jack Weir**  
Executive Director
  - James Pezzaglia**  
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  - Ryder Brose**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President
  - Paul Bleeg**  
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  - Honorable Mike McGill**  
Past President
  - Denise Sheehan**  
Business Manager

## CoCoTax President's Report – September 2, 2020

Wow! A month of challenges with fires, smoke, Health Department and Government orders about changes on addressing the Coronavirus, deadlines for the November election and continued business closures affecting our lives.

Ballot measures were filed mostly on August 7 (but not posted until August 10). Between August 19 and 24, CoCoTax filed Oppositions to:

- ✓ **Measure X**, the County ½% sale tax increase
- ✓ **Measure R**, Orinda City sales tax increase of ½%
- ✓ **Measure V**, Concord City sales tax increase of ½ %
- ✓ **Measure S**, San Pablo City sales tax increase

In Orinda, the City selected another competing argument over ours by random draw. CoCoTax objected on grounds that as a Bona Fide organization filing the argument, our argument took priority. A day later, the City reversed itself after reviewing our objection and filed our argument. The group who presented the competing argument was offered the opportunity to collaborate and co-sign the Rebuttal. While they did collaborate, they opted not to co-sign but intend to conduct a local opposition with signage, for which we applaud them.

In San Pablo, the City Clerk's office **REFUSED** to receive or file our Rebuttal, stating that the City Council decided to decline rebuttal filings. However, we have objected and faxed our copies before the deadline. CoCoTax waited all day outside San Pablo City Hall in the heat and thick smoke and the Clerk would not come outside to file/receive after leaving voice mails and exchanging emails. We believe she does not have the authority to reject receipt of a document.

I offer the highest praise and gratitude to those valiant taxpayer advocates who helped navigate this mess: Our good friend **Kathleen Jenkins**, West County Branch Chair **Denise Gianni**, CoCoTax Executive Board Member **Michael Yoder**, and members **Lorraine Humes**, **Richard Colman** and **Arne Simonsen**. And, a special thank you goes to our good friend **Mike Arata**, whose many hours of research, writing, and driving all over the county were invaluable. Without this group, our goals and objectives would not have been met. The job is not done, but we have made our stand for CoCoTax and Contra Costa County taxpayers.



**Lorraine Humes** waiting outside San Pablo City Hall to deliver CoCoTax Rebuttal



**Susan L Pricco**  
President, Contra Costa Taxpayers Association  
*"Good government at affordable cost"*

***Why did we go to all this effort? This year, after COVID, unemployment, business strain, fires, and other financial and emotional difficulties, CoCoTax feels that this is the worst possible time to raise sales taxes!***

**Contact CoCoTax**

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## Robert Brown Presentation to CoCoTax Submitted by Mark Fernwood

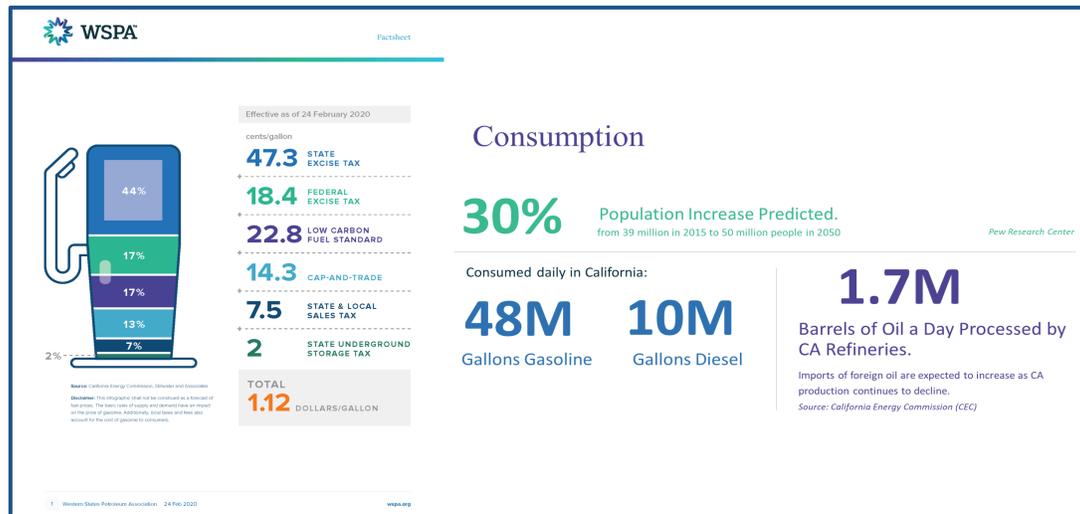
At the most recent **CoCoTax Speaker Series** presentation via Zoom, Robert Brown, from WSPA, discussed the petroleum industry's overall economic impact on our community, the challenging regulatory environment, meeting consumer demand, and our ability to support a safe, reliable, and affordable energy mix. Bob leads the non-profit trade association's advocacy and regulatory efforts on behalf of the five major oil refineries in the Bay Area's nine county region.

**Western States Petroleum Association (WSPA)** represents oil & gas companies in California and Washington, both refiners and producers. There are 5 refineries alone in the East Bay (Richmond, Rodeo, Benicia and 2 in Martinez). Representation by WSPA includes lobbying on legislation. More information on WSPA can be found at [wspa.org](http://wspa.org).

COVID-19 has had a huge negative impact on demand. One East Bay refinery (Marathon) has already closed its refining operations and Phillips 66 in Rodeo will be converting to only renewable fuels.

**"California is an Energy Island"** due to its logistical and geographical isolation, unique fuel specifications, regulations, and public scrutiny. We also have the highest gasoline prices in the nation. This is due to our State required "CA Blends" for summer and winter. The mixture of the "Blend" is set by order of the California Air Resources Board (CARB). Bay Area Refineries actually emit only about 2% to 3% of the pollutants that cause local smog. Despite this fact, this industry is still highly regulated. The California oil and gas industry is the most regulated in the world.

The industry supports 365,970 jobs and generates \$21.8 billion in tax revenue. These jobs are well paying with an average wage of \$80,500 per year. 152,100 people are directly employed in California.



**Robert Brown**  
Director, Bay Area Region and CA Regional Affairs  
Western States Petroleum Assn

If you missed Robert's presentation and slideshow, go to [CoCoTax Videos](#)

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## CoCoTax Speaker Series via ZOOM!

**We Look Forward to “Seeing” You**  
*“Be Happy, Be Safe and Be Well-Informed”*

We hope you are enjoying our ZOOM! Speaker Series. Scheduling stalled a little bit during the rush for submission of election materials. But, there's more to come soon!

If you missed any of our Speakers recently, go to the Contra Costa Taxpayers Association page on YouTube or click on “Videos” on our website under “News/Election 2020”. You will find **Rhovy Lyn Antonio** of California Apartment Association (CAA) speaking on Landlord Tenant trends and legislation, **Debora Allen** on “The State of BART”, **Mike McGill** from Central Sanitary District, **RecycleSmart**, and Supervisor **Candace Andersen** on several County matters.

Be sure to “Like” us on Facebook (and follow us for up-to-date news, events and commentaries we think are worthy of your attention). Also, **subscribe** to our YouTube channel. The more you watch, and acknowledge, the more we will be able offer to you and others.

We do note that the views expressed by our speakers are their own (and sometimes we don't agree on all of it), but our goal is to offer good information and perspectives for your consideration. The video replays on our website generally include any available PowerPoint slides that were used in the speaker's presentation, for easy access.

**Coming soon: Michael Shellenberger**, Forbes contributor, Time Magazine “Hero of the Environment” and author of “Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All”.



**Michael Shellenberger**

*“Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All”*

Of course, we will be scheduling a “virtual” **General Membership meeting via ZOOM! with information on all ballot measures contained in the November election.** When restrictions relax, we plan to have an in-person luncheon (anticipating masks and such) while the warm weather months are friendly to outdoor seating.

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## LEGISLATIVE WRANGLINGS

The California State Legislature has recently met indoors, in limited numbers, masked, distanced and with precautions (note: over 50 people **indoors**). Why can we not do the same?

On the closing days of the Legislature, one senator had been exposed to coronavirus so he, and all registered members of the Senate of his political party, were excluded from the in-person session participating via livestream access. At the same time, an Assembly member who is a new mother, requested proxy voting and was denied (proxy voting not allowed on the floor). But, instead of appearing via livestream, she attended in person with her new baby to vote. Why did she not participate by livestream? With our continued coronavirus "precautions", is livestream participation the same as being there? Consistency seems to be lacking.

### SENATE BILL 1349

Frustrating and complicating our efforts against **Measure X**, is SB 1349 (Glazer), which was before the Legislature **SOLELY** for Contra Costa County to raise the cap on allowable local sales taxes, opening the door to skyrocket our sales tax here. The Board of Supervisors filed their ballot measure in the hopes that SB 1349 would pass the Legislature in time. Without SB 1349 enabling legislation, the County measure exceeds the allowable cap in some cities and therefore, not allowed. (At this time, the maximum sales tax is 9.75%).

On Friday afternoon August 21, after Measure X ballot arguments and rebuttals had been filed, the Board of Supervisors held a Special Meeting and (over the objections of CoCoTax and others) voted for an urgency ordinance to amend the effective date of their previous ordinance, giving themselves another week for the bill to pass. Finally, SB 1349 hit the Senate and Assembly floors on the last day of the Legislative Session, August 31 and passed both houses. This bill opens the door to higher sales taxes in the County – and **ONLY** applies to Contra Costa. You'll hear more about this bill and Measure X in the coming weeks.

### AB 3088 - COVID-19 Tenant Relief Act of 2020 (CTRA)

With appreciation to our good friends at California Apartment Association, we have access to a website for landlords navigating the eviction laws changes. The following is an excerpt from CAA's correspondence to CoCoTax:

"CAA believes this bill signed by the Governor provides guidance to the courts on how to move forward with protecting tenants who have been financially impacted by COVID-19. At the same time, it creates a pathway for rental owners to collect some rent and remove tenants who are a threat to the community's safety or clearly violating the lease agreement.

Recognizing CTRA takes effect immediately, CAA has already created a host of resources to help rental owners comply with the numerous regulations included in the legislation. This morning, we launched a [Comprehensive Website \(https://caanet.org/ab3088/\)](https://caanet.org/ab3088/) with numerous online resources to aid rental owners in navigating this new law. The website includes:

- Video overview of the CTRA
- Executive summary of the bill
- Comprehensive overview of the bill (effects on local eviction moratoria and repayment schedules)
- Different forms, notices, and agreements landlords need to use to comply with the bill
- Information on the income-eligibility provisions in the bill
- A Flow Chart to understand the eviction protections"

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