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Subject: WAKE UP CA Newsletter #6 - May 22, 2026
Date: May 22, 2026 at 6:49:13 PM
To: amylkalish@gmail.com



Newsletter Number 6

THE PRICE OF DENSITY THE PRICE OF ABUNDANCE

And other timely information

www.wakeca.org

Affordability, Safety, and Local Accountability

IN THIS ISSUE

[Rancho Palos Verdes Summary & Cal Poly Fire Study](#)

[Harmony Grove & SB 1256](#)

[Do Voters Actually Want “Abundance”?](#)

[Amy's Thoughts on Candidates — June Primary](#)

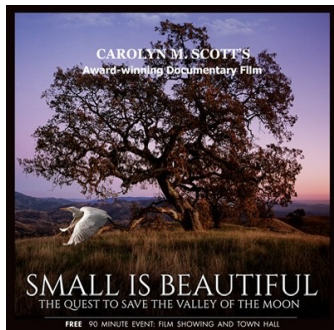
[Monday Zooms Resume June 1](#)

FROM THE FIELD

Rancho Palos Verdes Summary

Just back from a successful showing of the film and town hall in Rancho Palos Verdes. *Small Is Beautiful* was warmly received and very resonant for the issues facing the community. Thanks to **Joan Davidson** for hosting, and to my fellow panelists — **Mike Griffiths** (long-time former Torrance Councilmember and founder of California Cities for Local Control), **Stephen Perestam** (Rancho Palos Verdes Mayor Pro Tem),

and **Barbara Ferraro** (RPV Councilmember) — and the audience for an engaging discussion. We were honored to have **Carolyn Scott**, the filmmaker, join us remotely to introduce our work and the film, which now has **WAKE UP CALIFORNIA** featured in the credits. **Jacki Bacharach**, Executive Director of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, was on hand to describe the SBCCOG RHNA Replacement letter and her COG's further plans, which we will follow. About two days after the event, fire season started early. I got a tour of Rancho Palos Verdes and Portuguese Bend — even without the cracked homes and buckled roads, this area clearly would have major evacuation issues. Yet RHNA is unchanged, and truly massive developments — now under challenge — are moving forward.



BRING THE FILM TO YOUR COMMUNITY

An impactful showing and town hall in your community can be easily arranged.

Contact us or visit **bullfrogfilms.com**.



Structure-to-Structure Spread

A peer-reviewed Cal Poly study released last week confirms what fire scientists have been documenting for years: in urban firestorms, **structure-to-structure spread is the primary driver of home loss**. Researchers examined more than 15,000 structures and 52,000 tree canopies within the Eaton and Palisades fire scars; they found *building density*, not the presence of urban trees, was the strongest predictor of whether a home survived.

“During extreme urban firestorms, houses become the primary fuel source.”

— Reed Kenny, lead author, Cal Poly biological sciences

The implication for the rebuild after the January firestorms is direct: high-density redevelopment in the burn scars will re-create the conditions that produced the worst losses. Yet that is precisely what is being planned.

YIMBY Law is still actively pursuing litigation to force restoration of SB 9 rights and increase density options in the burn areas, including Pacific Palisades. The current fight is specifically over Governor Gavin Newsom's 2025 executive order, which allowed local governments to suspend SB 9 in high-fire-risk rebuild zones after the Palisades and Eaton fires.

[Read the Cal Poly summary →](#)

[Full research paper at ScienceDirect →](#)

FROM SATURDAY'S LIVABLE CA ZOOM

Harmony Grove's Fight

J.P. Theberge, Chair of the Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Town Council in north San Diego County, described his community's fight against a billionaire developer. Harmony Grove — population roughly 2,500 — sits in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone with a single evacuation road; per the County's own findings, topography prevents any second route. Residents have been contesting plans to at least double the community's population since 2006. Nineteen fires have torn through the area over the decades, and just this past week an arsonist was apprehended attempting to start another. SB 1256 — authored by Jones, whose own district includes Harmony Grove — would halt the wildfire-safety litigation over

the project.

SB 1256 GUT AND AMEND — *updates coming as it moves to the Assembly*

It's our public officials' duty to protect public safety over developer self-interests.

SB 1256 (Jones) would allow builders to avoid the most current wildfire safety standards. With devastating fires occurring in California almost every year and worsening over time, communities need stronger evacuation and fire safety protections, not weaker ones.

Help us keep doing this work.

SUPPORT WAKE UP

FROM POLITICO

Do Voters Actually Want “Abundance”?

A sweeping new poll of Southern Californians finds residents want housing and infrastructure built faster — but oppose loosening CEQA and

other environmental and regulatory standards by **more than two to one**, even when told it would mean slower construction. Underneath the numbers is a trust problem: Angelenos do not believe their elected officials would use deregulation in the public interest.



A threat to the Abundance movement? Trust.

politico.com

Politico frames the result as a threat to the Abundance movement — the deregulatory housing agenda popularized by last year's bestseller and embraced by Governor Newsom when he signed legislation erasing CEQA review for urban homebuilding. But the survey raises a sharper question for the agenda itself.

Would the public actually support “abundance” if they

understood how it was being achieved?

[Read the full Politico story →](#)

ELECTION NOTES · JUNE 2026 PRIMARY

Amy's Thoughts on Candidates

Make up your own minds! — these are my personal observations, not WAKE UP endorsements.

GOVERNOR

Tom Steyer

There's no obvious candidate without huge flaws. I picked Steyer because:

- OUTSIDE THE SUPERMAJORITY
- OPEN TO BEING EDUCATED
- RAISED ISSUES OF UNFUNDED MANDATES
- PRO-ENVIRONMENT · MAY DEFEND CEQA
- NOT BEHOLDEN TO YIMBY MONEY
- POSSIBLY REACHABLE BY US

I'm not stoked about supporting a billionaire who thinks we need to build a million homes — but I could fill a page about the cons of every other candidate.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Janelle Kellman (D)

Solid local government background, including the housing element process. Strong environmentalist, outside Newsom's circle. Understands housing policy and willing to engage. Not a land-use job, but a high “stepping stone.”

janellekellman.com →

Note: Janelle is the only Lt. Governor candidate I have met with.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Rob Bonta (D)

Has done an admirable job for Democrats in protecting the party's social platform, but on housing he has been a draconian, finger-pointing foe, enforcing flawed housing policy with perceived glee. He publishes a weekly self-promoting newsletter from his office, which also contains the Housing Strike Force.

robbonta.com →

Michael Gates (R)

Guest on a recent WAKE UP call. Very strong proponent of local land use control. As a Republican, he will have contrasting social priorities.

gates4ag.com →



CONGRESS · DISTRICT 11

Connie Chan (D)

★ **Endorsed by Nancy Pelosi**

Most of San Francisco. Supervisor Connie Chan is running against Scott Wiener. Help her give Wiener a run for his money.

[Watch Connie Chan on YouTube →](#)
[conniechansf.com →](http://conniechansf.com)

With Pelosi's endorsement Connie got a huge boost — her grassroots campaign doesn't take money from corporate PACs, AIPAC or its lobbyists, or any other funding from special interests.

DONATE IF YOU CAN — LET'S GIVE WIENER A REAL RUN FOR HIS MONEY →

STATE SENATE · DISTRICT 2

Damon Connolly (D)

Marin and the coast, partially inland, to the Oregon border. Has my strong support.

[damonconnolly.com →](http://damonconnolly.com)

STATE ASSEMBLY · DISTRICT 12

Two to consider

I've met with two candidates:

Eric Lucan — Marin County District 5 Supervisor · ericlucan.com →

Eli Beckman — Corte Madera City Council, former Mayor ·
elibeckman.com →

*I think Eli would be more open to new thinking on the issues that matter to us.
I will reach out to whoever holds the Assembly seat, as I have with Damon
Connolly.*

SF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS · DISTRICT 2

Lori Brooke

Energetic community organizer and president of the Cow Hollow Association.

loribrooke.com →

LOOKING AHEAD

Monday Zooms Resume June 1

Registration link and details will be sent the Sunday before.

As we grow, so do our expenses.

Please consider a donation to help us continue our quality work.

D O N A T E

— *Amy Kalish, President and founder*

WAKE UP CALIFORNIA — Mill Valley, CA

A volunteer-run 501(c)(4) nonprofit

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