

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

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COUNTY

Warning Signs Installed in Parts of Tijuana River Valley



Illustration

New warning signs were posted today alerting the public about the health risks from hydrogen sulfide gas in sections of the Tijuana River Valley Regional Park, and at Saturn Boulevard in the city of San Diego.

The County of San Diego partnered with the City on the installation of the signs on their respective properties after reviewing the results from two CDC health surveys in the community. Residents in the area reported having lingering health symptoms including headaches and nausea related to Tijuana River sewage.

The signs include a QR code that takes people to a County website dedicated to health and environmental concerns in the area. The website also explains County efforts in the Tijuana River Valley and directs people to the Air Pollution Control District website for a free air purifier .

The Tijuana River has long carried untreated sewage across the U.S.-Mexico border. The contaminated water has created an ongoing environmental and public health crisis.

The new warning signs serve to inform the public while local, state, and federal partners continue to push for long-term pollution control solutions.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 20, 2025



Illustration from a photo by Edward O'Connor (hober) · Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0

COUNTY

Have Your Say on County's Legislative Priorities

The community is invited to a virtual meeting to learn about the County's state and federal legislative priorities and give feedback on what they think is important for the 2026 Legislative Program.

Community input is an important aspect of the County's legislative strategy. The Legislative Program is updated each year, and your feedback helps ensure that the issues San Diegans care about most are included.

During each state and federal legislative session, the County takes positions on bills and regulatory actions. The Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs (EDGA) helps advocate on behalf of the County and the Board of Supervisors. EDGA uses the Legislative Program's priority issues, policy guidelines and public input to make those decisions.

So far this year, the County has taken positions on 26 state and federal bills. These bills relate to some of the County's top priorities such as:

Equitable Access to Quality Health and Social Care

The virtual community meeting takes place from 5 to 6 p.m. on Aug. 27 over Zoom. To learn more about the 2026 Legislative Program and register for the virtual meeting, visit Engage San Diego County .

If you have questions about the

virtual meeting, the legislative program or need disability-related modifications, language interpretation or other accommodations, email Legislative.Program@sdcounty.ca.gov . The meeting will be recorded and available at the Engage San Diego site at a later date.

You can also submit your comments on Engage San Diego County through Sept. 5.

In addition to the Legislative Program, EDGA is responsible for:

implementing an economic development strategy and promoting small business

leading the County's binational affairs strategy for the California-Baja region

expanding the County's role in arts and culture

updating and implementing the County's Strategic Plan and governance documents.

For details, visit the EDGA website or call 619-531-5198.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 20, 2025

COUNTY

Stay Cool in the Heatwave

With an extreme heat warning for the deserts and an extreme heat advisory for the mountains and valleys, it is important to avoid getting overheated. Extremely high temperatures can be dangerous to people and pets.

Signs of extreme heat in people and animals are exhaustion, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and a headache. It can even lead to heat stroke and death. Children and the elderly are particularly at risk, according to health officials.

Head to a Cool Zone. The County's Cool Zones, including the County's 33 branch libraries , community centers and other locations, offer people safe, air-conditioned sanctuaries from the

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Stay Cool in the Heatwave

heat. Here is a complete list of County Cool Zone sites , their hours and locations. People can call the County Aging & Independence Services call center at 800-339-4661 if they need help finding a Cool Zone site.

Stay in an air-conditioned area during the hottest hours of the day. Even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler. Do not rely on electric fans for cooling if temperatures exceed 90 degrees.

Drink plenty of water (avoid alcohol and sugary drinks) and don't wait until you are thirsty.

Never leave a child, elderly person, or pet unattended in a car.

Avoid unnecessary hard work or activities outside during the hottest part of the day.

Avoid unnecessary sun exposure and wear a wide-brim hat if you need to be in the sun.

Tips to Keep Your Pets Cool in Hot Weather

Keep your pets indoors if the temperature is lower inside.

Exercise pets in early morning hours or early evening to avoid prolonged exposure to the heat. Avoid strenuous runs or hikes.

Keep your pets' water supply in a tip-proof container, always topped off, and be sure it stays cool (pets will not drink water that is too hot).

Consider a misting system to keep the outdoor areas cooler.

Be sure your pet has shade ALL DAY, if they are outside. Remember, the sun's position changes during the day.

Do not take your pets for car trips unless absolutely necessary. A car can heat up very quickly. On an 85-degree day, a car can reach 102 degrees in 10 minutes and soar upward even with the windows down an inch or two.

Don't take your dogs for walks on the hot pavement. If it is too hot for you to walk barefooted, then don't make your dogs do it either.

Consider adding a child's wading pool for your dog. Many dogs will keep cool by "taking a dip."

Responding to Signs of Heatstroke or Heat Exhaustion

First and foremost, if you find someone who is suffering from symptoms of heatstroke or heat exhaustion —dizziness, nausea, confusion, headache—call 9-1-1 and start cooling them. But DO NOT give them fluids to drink. A person with heatstroke may not be able to swallow. Fluids could run down their tracheas into their lungs and make it hard for them to breathe.

After calling 9-1-1, start cooling the person by moving them into the shade, spraying them with cool water and fanning. Place them in a cool shower if they are alert, monitor their body temperatures and continue cooling them.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 20, 2025

COUNTY Local Senior Thrives in Her Own Home

For many older adults, being independent and aging in their own home for as long as possible is a priority. Home is where they are comfortable, with familiar surroundings in a community they know.

But "aging in place"

requires planning ahead and support. This can include help with health care, personal care, making meals, managing money, household chores, transportation and safety.

The County's Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) is a care management service for older adults, age 60 and older, who are eligible for Medi-Cal and at risk of being placed in a nursing facility.

MSSP care managers work with the client, family members and medical team to provide services designed to help the client remain independent at home.

One local senior says she wouldn't have survived this long in her own home if it weren't for MSSP.

County of San Diego news release · Aug 19, 2025

COUNTY Specialized Library at Polinsky Children's Center gets a Sparkling Renovation

The County's A.B. and Jessie Polinsky Children's Center library is a place of learning and imagination, and it just got a renovation.

The San Diego County Library and County Child and Family Well Being teamed up in July on an amazing refresh that included an expanded collection of books, new activities and a brighter atmosphere for children to enjoy.

Youth at Polinsky Children's Center can now browse through a collection of newly curated books, in an inviting space full of color and light.

"This partnership has truly flourished to support the love for reading and learning for all of our kids at Polinsky Children's Center," said

Norma Rincon, County Child and Family Well Being. "This library will bring them joy, adventure and an interest in new hobbies."

County of San Diego news release · Aug 19, 2025

COUNTY Do Your Homework – Check Your Receipts!

It's back-to-school time and that means shopping for school supplies. And that also means, a reminder to check your receipts!

In the school shopping flurry of new backpacks, notebooks, pencils, pens, and everything else on the teacher's list, keep an eye on your receipt. Double-check it before you leave the store to make sure the school supplies you bought were sold to you for the advertised price.

After all, the National Retail Federation reports the average K-12 shopper plans to spend \$858.07 on school supplies, clothes, shoes and electronics this year. Plans for back-to-college spending are even higher at an average of \$1,325.85.

Overall, the amount is a little less than last year, but for many of us, that's still a lot of money.

The County's department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures inspects more than 1,620 local businesses and 23,900 price-scanning devices every year to make sure they're accurate. That includes scales that charge for items by weight, and other price-setting equipment.

But faulty cash registers and price scanners can accidentally overcharge you.

In 2025, between January and August, 18.6% of every local business inspected—nearly one out of every

five—had overcharge errors. The average overcharge was \$1.80.

That may not seem like a lot, but that amount can add up, especially when times are tight.

Here are some tips to make sure you're getting what you pay for.

Always verify receipts and immediately notify store management of any price discrepancies.

Stores must display the price of an item, as you are buying it, before the transaction is complete. Watch the display screen as your items are scanned.

Take sales advertisements with you when shopping to verify prices.

Know that stores cannot legally charge more than their lowest advertised, posted or quoted price.

Plan ahead. Watch for store sales, flea markets, garage sales, clearance sales, etc.

Comparison shop with at least five different sources for the best values.

Don't buy everything at once. Buy what you need over several weeks or months to take full advantage of future sales and true bargains.

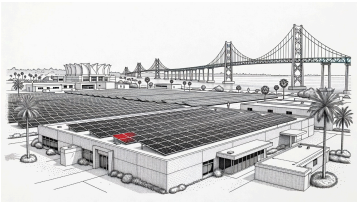
To contact Agriculture, Weights and Measures, download and use the County's Tell Us Now app , call 1-888-TRUE SCAN (1-888-878-3722) or email wm.awm@sdcounty.ca.gov to report overcharges you can't resolve with a store.

For more information, go to Agriculture, Weights and Measure's Consumer Protection webpage . And you can check out our archived video about scanner inspection program .

County of San Diego news release · Aug 15, 2025

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy



Illustration

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight: Powersmith Solar

PowerSmith Solar – Building a Brighter, Cleaner Future for California

At PowerSmith Solar , we believe in creating a sustainable future by

empowering homeowners and businesses to harness the clean, renewable power of the sun. Founded with the mission to make solar energy accessible, affordable, and efficient, we are proud to serve communities across California with cutting-edge solar solutions and exceptional customer care.

Our team combines decades of experience in the renewable energy sector with a passion for innovation. We specialize in

custom-designed solar systems, battery storage, and energy efficiency upgrades, ensuring each project is tailored to meet our clients' needs and maximize long-term savings. We also handle every step of the process — from design and permitting to installation and maintenance — delivering a seamless, hassle-free experience.

Beyond installations, PowerSmith Solar is dedicated to giving back. We

actively participate in community initiatives, promote green education, and work with local organizations to spread awareness about the benefits of renewable energy. Our partnerships with industry leaders ensure that our clients always receive the latest technology and best warranties available.

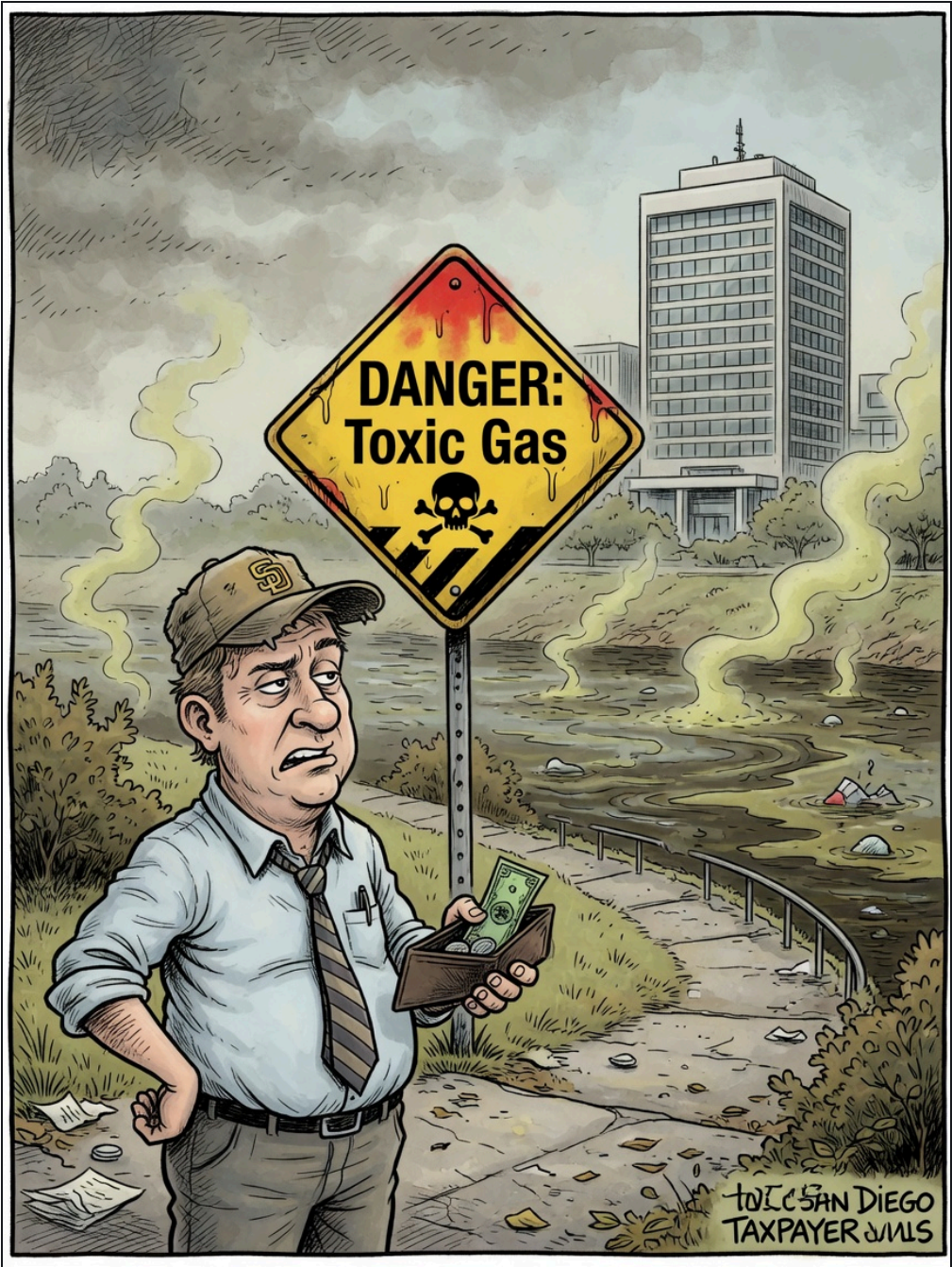
As California continues to lead the nation in clean energy adoption, we are committed to being a driving

force in this movement. Whether it's helping a family reduce their energy bills or enabling a business to achieve its sustainability goals, our mission remains the same: to provide energy solutions that make a lasting, positive impact.

To learn more about how PowerSmith Solar can help you power your future, visit https://powersmithsolar.com or call +1 (951) 415-7469.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Aug 12, 2025

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New toxic gas warnings in the park

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

COMMENTARY

California Transit Systems Rely on Billions in Taxpayer Subsidies, Report Finds
A new analysis highlights persistent financial shortfalls across the state's transit operators and calls for major reforms including automation and consolidation.

California's 85 transit operators required more than \$10 billion in annual taxpayer subsidies in fiscal year 2023 to cover the difference between revenues and expenses, according to a new study.

The report, which examined financial data submitted to the federal government, found that the agencies collected \$897 million in fares while incurring \$8.76 billion in operating expenses. Adding non-fare revenue and capital costs for maintenance and replacement brought the total taxpayer subsidy needed to

break even to \$10.31 billion.

The statewide farebox recovery ratio stood at just 10.25 percent. Performance varied widely, from a high of 96.77 percent for the California Vanpool Authority to a low of 1.31 percent for the City of Los Angeles, which maintained fare-free policies.

Operating expenses per passenger mile were as low as \$0.13 for CalVans and \$0.91 for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System. At the other end, paratransit provider Access Services reached \$4.83 per passenger mile, while the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District hit \$4.35.

The largest absolute subsidies went to the biggest operators, led by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority at \$2.45 billion, followed by San Francisco's BART at \$1.39 billion and Muni at \$1.09 billion.

The report attributes these

persistent shortfalls to several structural problems. Chief among them is what economist William Baumol called "Cost Disease," in which a labor-intensive industry sees slow productivity gains but must raise wages to match other sectors, driving costs above the rate of inflation.

Low ridership density on long suburban and rural routes, inefficient operations marked by slow bus speeds, frequent stops, high administrative overhead and expensive capital projects that add few riders all worsen the picture. The report notes that AC Transit's budget equates to roughly \$15 for a typical four-mile ride.

Fare policies also play a role. Fare-free programs and lax enforcement, often justified on equity grounds, reduce revenue while sometimes creating safety and cleanliness problems that drive away paying riders.

The study contends that transit's effect on climate

change is negligible and that policymakers should instead prioritize financial sustainability. Without major changes, taxpayer subsidies will keep rising even as post-COVID ridership recovers somewhat.

The report offers several recommendations. It urges embracing automation for trains and buses to cut labor costs, citing successful driverless systems in Vancouver and Honolulu. It also advocates supporting micromobility options such as e-bikes, e-scooters and neighborhood electric vehicles to handle short trips and solve the first-mile/last-mile challenge.

Other suggestions include focusing on proven, lower-cost models like vanpools, Bus Rapid Transit and app-based rideshare rather than expensive rail projects, and consolidating smaller agencies into larger regional entities to reduce administrative overhead and improve coordination.

While some improvement appears likely in fiscal 2024 data, with statewide deficits possibly falling to around \$9 billion, the report warns that costs were already spiraling before the pandemic and will continue to do so absent policy shifts and new technologies.

The bottom line is that California must adopt automation, cost-effective alternatives and structural reforms or face ever-growing taxpayer burdens to sustain its transit systems.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Aug 15, 2025

ABOUT THIS PAPER
San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first — City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.

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