



Meeting Report for Feb.20, 2012

Bob Hertzberg



### Pauline Tallent's report

Valley VOTE Board members, community leaders, and concerned citizens convened on Feb.20 at Galpin Ford to hear from our featured speaker, Bob Hertzberg. Bob, looking fit and dynamic as ever, also brought with him, Dennis A. Cardoza, Congressman from the 18th District of California (Central Valley).

When called to the podium Bob Hertzberg attempted to sit on the table. Then, looked at the table and thought better of it, and stood in front of the podium. Thus began, a dynamic, almost tirade, of a speaker, who had no notes and who brooked no interruption.

He pointed out that he was passionate about fixing California, and, numerous times, referred to **California Forward**, an organization that he Co-Chairs. He pointed out that three "changes" would fix California: (a) budget approval, should be changed to 50%+1; (b) terms limits should be the law; twelve year maximum, and (c) a smaller government that listens to the people. California has 6.6 million people, which equates to the size of Panama, in other words, a country. Also, there is a need to revise the tax code, and reduce taxes across the board. As far as legislators are concerned, a 12-year term, and shrink government by two thirds. He said that "democracy only works, if the people participate," Big Unions need to come under scrutiny. This includes, Unions representing prison guards, teachers and government workers. Flexibility was a term, he used a lot.

The above is only a brief summary of what a dynamic speaker had to say. Go on line and access **California Forward**, Google can help.

## Valley VOTE Committee Reports

### Vic Viereck - Trash Issues

As I have previously reported, the Sanitation Department the City of Los Angeles intends to begin a five year process to phase-in an exclusive franchise system for waste collection. The latest is that the plan is to severely limit competition among waste haulers by choosing just one

company for each of eleven areas to provide trash services in Los Angeles. It is anticipated that over 100 companies currently providing waste hauling and recycling services in Los Angeles – many of them long-term family owned waste collection businesses – in a City with record unemployment of over 14%, will see thousands of jobs destroyed overnight. That **plan is completely contradictory** to the City's supposed desire to visibly become business friendly, including elimination of the Business License Tax. The plan also includes a requirement for residential tenants to recycle their waste, but the apartment owners would be fined for failure to properly recycle waste. Some of the plan's advocates are eager for environmental improvements to the hauling trucks. Although there are costs involved with such requirements, it should not be a reason to limit the number of companies providing the service, eliminating thousands of jobs, and causing additional, significant cost increases to all of the customers. Advocates of the exclusive franchise system for waste collection say it would not increase fees charged to customers. But the increased compensation and benefits for employees of the franchised companies, increased environmental requirements for the remaining trash haulers, and substantially reduced competition would certainly push collection fees much higher. In other much smaller L.A. County cities with exclusive franchise arrangements, multi-family and commercial business owners experience fee increases of 50% over what the same companies pay for trash in Los Angeles. Due to probable union control over the City approved franchise haulers, there is naturally a concern over potential lack of trash pickup city wide during any contract problems between the unions and the trash haulers. Meeting environmental standards does not need to impose limits on the number of trash haulers, destroying thousands of jobs. Also, apartment owners should not be held liable for something they have no control over.

### **Denny Schneider- Airport Report for Valley VOTE**

The predominant airport in Southern California remains LAX which handles 75% of all of the air traffic. A recent FAA projection reaffirms its dominance and expects little growth in other regional airports in its 2030 projection. LAX, however, will see a 35% increase to a million operations per year!

Congress finally passed a FAA reauthorization bill after in excess of 20 short term extensions. FAA plans major revisions to air traffic patterns. Planning will begin at the end of this year. No area will be spared. The authorization bill has a provision which precludes invoking NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) to insist on studies of impacts to those on the ground.

Meanwhile, at LAX, foreign airport travelers will have an improved Tom Bradley International Terminal. Completion has slipped into 2013. Excessive weather (fog) is blamed for the slippage. Other improvements are planned for domestic terminals, but we won't find out about them until the new Master Plan update and environmental review are released in June. Rumor has it that public review periods will be cut to the legal minimum because it has taken LAWA so long to complete their plans and they want it approved during the Villaraigosa administration.

Regionalization, the development of a network of airports to distribute airport traffic, continues to meet LAWA resistance. The Palmdale and Ontario communities have been attempting to

regain control of their local airports from Los Angeles. Passenger traffic at Ontario is down 60%! Inland Empire communities support a bid by Ontario to pay LA up to \$150 million to regain control. Since Federal law prohibits taking money out of an airport I continue to wonder why there is such strong resistance from LAWA. The City Council is to take up this issue in the near future. In the mean time as many as 30,000 people have missed flights due to one accident on the 405 freeway and added auto traffic from the 62 million annual passengers at LAX continues to add regular major traffic backups.

### **Bart Reed - Transportation Report**

Transit Coalition Executive Director Bart Reed discussed current developments with regard to statewide high-speed rail. Under the new "blended approach" for HSR, the San Fernando Valley is poised to become a huge benefactor. This new approach to HSR will bring grade separations with roads above and below the tracks paralleling San Fernando Road. In addition, a second track will be added for safety. Ultimately, these improvements will bring travel times between Palmdale and Los Angeles down from the current 2 hours to just 1 hour.

Reed also discussed the Orange Line Chatsworth extension project. The busway extension will be completed in June, well before its deadline and under budget. One concern is that bus service crossing the new extension will not be increased. Also, no station exists at Saticoy Street, which houses a mental health center, a community center, high-density residences, and a school.

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**The next regular monthly meeting of Valley VOTE will be on Monday, March 19 , 2012 at Galpin Ford.**

#### ***Valley VOTE Mission Statement***

*Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, is committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.*