

NEW TIMES I think when you passed the chair on to Jim Patterson, you seemed to have a gripe with the local media. So I was wondering what we as the media should improve, what the criticisms are, and what—if anything—are we doing right?

HILL Oh, I don't know if I want to go on the record with that, because it's going to sound like a bunch of whining. I mean, I talked to your editor about it, but it's not really the local media so much as it's you guys—you—and your good friend, *Cal Coast News*.

MILLER Good friend?

HILL Well, you guys seemed to focus on some trivial things at the expense of some rather substantive things at times. We counted that I spoke to, or when I was chair, there were more than 1,300 people that spoke in public comment, both for items on the agenda and not on the agenda. One person had their mic shut off during that entire time. Of all those people, there is a woman that comes every week from Los Osos, as you know.

NEW TIMES Yeah, I was there.

HILL You weren't at that meeting, you were at the next meeting.

NEW TIMES No, I was there.

HILL Because I talked to you on the phone. She says some rather, at times, nasty things. And that particular occasion she was reading from divorce records of [Public Works Director] Paavo Ogren from, I think, *Cal Coast News*' website, and I thought that was inappropriate. And I thought that that was one of those things that, you know, it's worth asking somebody to sit down for because it just seemed to be, just, you know, attacking us is one thing, though I think it does cross a line when you get into people's personal lives. But reading [about] the public works director's divorce records? To me, I thought that was—working with Paavo and knowing that it does have a real affect on him, and that he's got kids, that kind of stuff is just particularly not relevant, not pleasant. So to be shredded five times for that by you guys and to have you call me psychotic?

NEW TIMES Oh, you think I called you psychotic?

HILL Well, somebody wrote the Shredder

NEW TIMES Well, somebody wrote the Shredder, but ...

HILL I mean, I thought that was, like, over the line between—five times for that person? I mean, if you saw me really, like, constantly shutting down people's mics and doing things like that, that might be one thing. But one person who happens to be there every week saying sometimes rather ... If you see every single city council, they even have on their [public speaker] slips, 'We discourage or we won't tolerate slanderous, etc.,' that kind of stuff. Personal attacks. I made it clear early on that having the sheriff's deputy was never my idea, it was something that the sheriff and our [county administrative officer] had decided on. Partly just because, as the Los Osos project was moving forward, those people were getting a little more animated and yelling. We've even seen under [Supervisor] Jim Patterson that they've continued to yell.

NEW TIMES But that did start when you took over as chair, right?

HILL But it wasn't at my request to have a deputy there, one way or another. ... Yeah, so I mean that, my sense is that you guys made a big deal out of something that really wasn't a big deal. You give attention to those folks, I mean they thrive on attention, that's why they come every week. I think if there was a legitimate beef about whether I was really—I mean, [Supervisor] Bruce Gibson, when he was chair my first year, only gave them 20 minutes completely—they had to split minutes. Somehow, he wasn't Mussolini, or psychotic. But I did one turn off of a mic, after politely warning her. And whenever I've told anyone, like when they ask me, 'Why is *New Times* continuing to hammer you?' I've told them that it was reading divorce records from our public works director. Everybody said, 'Well that's not appropriate.' ... And I've always been a little bit confused as to how that or anything else led to this kind of grudge against me that you and some of, well, actually, you're the only one that covers the county and whoever it is that happens to be the Shredder that week. I mean, I understand why *Cal Coast News* does what

they do ... [The site's Karen Velie] was a student of mine. And for a couple of years, I would talk to her, and I would hear her say things that I knew were fabrications or, you know, the axes being grinded for somebody who had some problem with whoever it was she was trying to write a story. ... I know they're in it purely for the most sensationalistic, and I was really actually surprised to see how well you guys responded in the Shredder to the [former Paso Robles Chief of Police Lisa] Solomon stuff; I thought that was the most thoughtful thing I've seen in the Shredder in a long time.

NEW TIMES I mean, is it just the Shredder or is it my articles?

HILL I don't really try to get into complaints. I know you guys have a deadline, and it's tough to make sometimes boringly complex things interesting to the reader. I get that. Would we prefer that you or [*Tribune's*] Bob Cuddy or someone else do different kinds of coverage of things we do? At times. I think that there's certain stories that I think deserve more attention, but I understand that they're just not that exciting to tell. ... And even the coverage that you did on the Los Osos people lecturing me on the First Amendment, or whatever, it seemed like there's a reason the *Tribune* or the TV stations don't give them any coverage, because it's gone on for 30 years; they're tired of those people. They've caused the problems. I know a lot of people, including close friends that live in Los Osos, they want the sewer to be built and to be done with so that the community isn't kind of like a laughingstock in a way. But that would be the only thing. I just felt like that was disproportionate to what was really going on. To me, I understand, like I said, I'm fine with taking criticism on things. I'm fine when you guys criticized both COLAB and me—that was fine. I mean, that was a fight that I picked; I'm not ashamed of it; I'm really repelled by the birther racism that their leaders engage in, but I also said to your main editor that it's something to think about the fact that he goes on [*the Andy Caldwell Show*] every week and it's not a real show. I mean, it's not a show, it's a COLAB-sponsored radio show that Andy Caldwell has, and it's meant to divide people and make them think ugly things about anybody who doesn't agree with their agenda.

NEW TIMES Well, it was just something I wanted to ask, because when [Executive Editor] Ryan [Miller] came up to me and said, "Hill's got some beef with some of the things we're printing," I was like, OK, what have I been writing? And I have to wonder, am I skewing this? Am I missing things? I don't know; it sounds like maybe you think we are sometimes, which, I think, is fair enough.

HILL I mean, I know you guys have to make calls on what's trivial and what's not trivial, and especially now with something like *Cal Coast News* and the attention that [Dave] Congalton's given to them. To be quite honest with you, it's really limited. You may know that from your own perspective. I mean, it's really a certain kind of bubble of people that engage. They're probably the same anonymous commenters as callers, etc. It doesn't penetrate. I'm out walking precincts, and have been for the last couple of months, and will be until the end of the campaign. I talk to people all the time at their door, and they don't know anything about *Cal Coast News*. They know your paper or they know the *Tribune* and they watch *KSBY*, but they don't know them.

NEW TIMES What have you done in this term that you're most proud of, that you would like to focus on?

HILL Well, a couple of things. I mean, the fiscal thing is really big, because my first year we had a \$30 million budget gap, which was the biggest in the history of the county. And that had been ongoing, and they'd been addressing it. But we made some changes. We saw what was coming—which did come to pass with the city, their public ballot fight against the police and fire—and we knew that we needed to make some changes on pension pay, because we have a prevailing wage ordinance, too, which was passed by the voters. And the way it's traditionally been interpreted, it's kind of just spiraled up to give people a raise every year, even in exceedingly bad years. ... I mean, I'd been at Cal Poly where I was in a labor union, so I understand it completely and have respect for labor. But we needed to be able to be sustainable

in the future, and that we couldn't just kind of waste a crisis, which was what was going on right now. There was a real reason to make reforms, and there was a lot of public desire to see those reforms. So we're already saving a fair amount of money by putting that system into place that's reformed pensions. So we're proud of that. And you know it's complicated, it's not that sexy in the long run, but it's, you know, next time there's an economic downturn, if there's one of this size, I think the county's in a better place for it. But that's something that, you know, it doesn't receive as much coverage, but we're also thankful to our employees, I mean, we wouldn't have been able to accomplish it if they fought it.

NEW TIMES I was going to say, knowing [SLO County General Employees' Association General Manager] Kimm Daniels, she would probably be saying, "The employees gave a lot."

HILL Oh, and I would agree. Absolutely. We could be—we are fighting with just our small legal units. They're actually literally fighting us in court and we think we'll prevail.

NEW TIMES The DA and the County Counsel?

HILL The DA and the County Counsel's office, right. You know, the ones that are in their units. Yeah, if it wasn't for—and in fact Kimm's the one that, she oversees whenever there's been layoffs. As you know, we've downsized by over 250 positions without layoffs, so whenever there's been the potential for layoffs, they've stepped up and made concessions, and they've done so to save jobs. I mean, think of how big their union is; they're saving jobs of people they don't know, and they're giving up something. So we try to salute, and I think you've heard us, whenever we have on [our] consent [calendar] an agreement, we say, "Great job, employees, we really appreciate it."

NEW TIMES Anything you've done that you feel was overlooked by the press?

HILL Overlooked?

NEW TIMES In terms of, you guys have a big meeting or you do something on the side, and then you expect to open up the paper the next day or the next week and see it, and there's no coverage at all?

HILL Yeah, well, something that is an ongoing project with me, you sort of covered it in an early stage—in a rather uninspired way, I would say—which is the Economic Development Project. Which was always going to take a while to get going, and now it's starting to actually show some ... because we're starting to do things. I've been directly involved in helping to keep some companies here and finding them a place to build new headquarters locally, and one of them is Level Studios. When they got bought by a big conglomerate—you know, it's a really hot digital marketing company. They've got Apple as a client, so they're really good. The history here has been that companies get to a certain size and a certain reputation, they get bought, and then everybody's gone. And so we want to keep young professionals here. We want to have, especially with the public sector shrinking, the private sector's going to be more important. We have better relations with Cal Poly about job-generating things. And so that's something that I've been able [to do]. I worked directly with the people who were representing Level, with the developer who bought land out by the airport to build for them. And we're going to see, I think, within the next couple years, about 10 buildings up there at our east airport commerce park filled with growing companies, and probably a couple of new companies, too. And that's been real hands on. We have in the planning and public works a business-assistance team which tries to move things. Like in that Level instance, from application to planning commission approval was five weeks, which has never been done before. And the woman you've probably covered some of, she always handles controversial projects, Carol Florence. Carol's not one to ever compliment planning, but she has complimented them in this instance. So those things, they're harder to tell because the Economic Development Strategy is not like a boon; we're in a recession, now we've got a strategy, money's going to rain down.

NEW TIMES Well, the issue, I think, with those kinds of things is, from the public's perspective looking through all these things, we just see this much money goes to here and then it doesn't ... I mean, I was asking—I wanted to ask people, "What are we going to get out of this?"

They said, “Well, we’re planning; we’re strategizing.” And I think to your average Joe, those are just bullshit terms. That doesn’t mean anything to me.

HILL Uh huh. Yeah. We were able to, for instance, convene over 125 employers, the CEOs or whoever owned the company, in cluster meetings to talk about their issues, and we had about six different clusters of industries, from specialized manufacturing to knowledge and innovation, and got a lot out of those meetings. And also found out a lot. The consultants did this deep analysis of the county’s economy, which hadn’t been done before. What sectors are growing? Who’s spending money? Who’s employing people? Who’s bringing in money? Because a lot of what we don’t know about—and I didn’t know about many of these companies, either—is because they don’t have their markets here. There’s no real reason for you to know about Level. I mean, their market is everywhere, their clients are international. There are specialized manufacturing companies that we have; they don’t sell a damn thing, even in California sometimes. They sell things all over the world. We’ve got companies that sell parts that are on the space rovers. We’ve got companies that have tens of millions in Defense Department contracts. So they’re bringing a lot of money, so we had them analyze that and look at, OK, here are the sectors. And the two sectors that are most interesting to me that are growing are the specialized manufacturing and the knowledge and innovation, because those are the areas that are going to employ Cal Poly grads, you know, engineers and computer folks and a lot of other people who come out of Cal Poly who have a lot of talent and want to stay here. And they have, actually, mostly been employing—you know, I think Level, half their people are Cal Poly grads. And a couple of the companies that we’ve seen are started by people who were Cal Poly grads, too. So from my perspective, coming from Cal Poly ... I always heard that from students: “We’d love to stay here, but there’s not that many jobs.” So we’re trying to make that an important part of what we do. It’s not a magical thing, and you’re not going to suddenly, you know—strategy doesn’t bring Microsoft, that’s not part of strategy. Ask Microsoft if they’d set up an office here. You don’t really attract out-of-town companies as much as you try to keep your local companies growing and staying here. And so far, the companies are happy about that.

MILLER So from your particular point of view, why are these companies so secretive about what they do?

HILL Well, some of them are secretive just because they do stuff, whatever they’re cutting edge on, they don’t want to share it with people too much. I mean, it could be technology, and there’s reasons for them not to want to.

MILLER So from an economic vitality point of view, and considering the loss of manufacturing jobs in the United States, I found that when I try to approach some of these companies that do these really unique things in the area to do, like, a photo essay on the creation of what they make.—like what you see on *National Geographic* and, you know, how-they-make-it kind of shows—they just don’t want anything to do with broadcasting what they do. Even though it’s kind of like this lauding of the fact that it’s American manufacturing.

HILL I’ve had, actually, a couple of companies that wouldn’t let myself or [Economic Vitality Corp president and CEO] Mike Manchak [visit]. We do these visits, and we tour the company, we talk about what they do, what their future plans are. A couple said “no” completely. One of them’s California Medical Fine Wire in Grover, which makes sophisticated wire that goes into pacemakers and all sorts of things. That’s done in Grover Beach; nobody even thinks of it. And this is stuff that’s sold all over the world. They just said, “We don’t take people for tours.” So I think some of it’s just that the patent secrets stuff, there’s just stuff that they do that they don’t want [to reveal to], I don’t know, Chinese or other countries, competitors probably within the industry. I’m assuming. I’ve never really asked them. We’ve been able to talk to some of our manufacturers and get them involved. Most of them are really happy to talk. They knew about each other. They knew there was a company that worked on unmanned planes. They knew there was a company that makes this equipment that’s in all the TV studios that moves the cameras around. ... So they all kind of knew a little bit about each other, but they hadn’t actually

been in the room together. And that was useful from them. And a lot of this is generated from their point. They need to be able when they're recruiting people—for instance, the hardest people to recruit for them are not the Cal Poly grads—the young talented people who want to jump in and work—it's like mid-level management. Somebody who might be 45, 50 years old, and has to move their family from somewhere. And if there's not another job possibility, they don't want to. It's better for them to know that if for some reason it doesn't work out here, there's 10 other companies you might be able to work for. That's why, if you're in San Jose and you move from wherever to San Jose; if you don't like your job or it doesn't work out, there's a lot of companies. So for those reasons, it was also very helpful. And the technology and innovation ones, they want to show you around, but they don't want you to really understand their software. ... That was fun for me, to find out more of those companies, because you always hear just about the stuff like hotels or wineries or developers. It's like, yeah, we know about that.

NEW TIMES Any regrets from the term so far?

HILL Well, there's always regrets. There's small things, like do I wish that I had been more diplomatic at times with certain people? I mean, I'm edgy; I'm from New Jersey, and I like to get things done. ... I went into this job coming from a very easy, comfortable job at Cal Poly where I just got to spend time in a classroom talking about books every couple of hours every day, and that was it. And I did this for a reason: to get things done. What I did discover is that you can get things done. I mean, you can actually be a leader in a way that I don't think—I didn't come here to vote on things on Tuesdays; it's really the least interesting part of the job sometimes. You're just sitting there, and it's not fun for you guys to cover sometimes; it's certainly not necessarily always fun for us to be there. But you can get things done. I mean, the homeless thing is something that I care a lot about, and they had been looking for a site, and it's still difficult and controversial, but they had been looking and evaluating sites for years when I was asked to get involved; we had this county site that we don't need, and I pushed on it and fought to get my colleagues to approve the giving of it, basically the leasing of it for no money, to [the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County]. And then worked like heck to get it entitled, which first had to go to the Airport Land Use Commission, which everybody told me was going to be the death of it because there's a lot of different things in the city that have died because it is an agency—well, they're pretty ironclad sometimes. But we got a lot of publicity to help us and make the decision work out, and then we got it through the city Planning Commission, and now it's in the quiet stage of the capital campaign. So I have realized you can do a lot of good things, leadership wise. But I guess it's the old cliché that sometimes you have to crack a few eggs, and there's some people who don't get that, I think. And if anything, you know sometimes, yeah, I think that sometimes maybe it's different—East Coast, West Coast style. I mean, I would admit in a second that Jim Patterson's a heck of a lot nicer guy than me. He is. Jim would probably literally give you the shirt off his back. He's going to be the politest and most thoughtful person he possibly can be because he just naturally is.

NEW TIMES I wanted to ask you about this, because when you came on, I think the first time we met I was asking you, "You've got really lofty expectations; how are you going to deal with that?"

HILL Yeah.

NEW TIMES And I know when you got into office, I talked with people who were really disappointed; they felt like you had kind of turned your back on them, or turned your back on their concerns, specifically in the farther left environmental community. And I just wanted to get your response to all that, because it's been kind of bubbling under the surface.

HILL Well, in the farther left environmental community, we're probably talking about a very small number of people. I think when you run in a campaign, especially in a time when a board is doing things that are controversial, to say the least, everybody invests probably all sorts of hopes in a candidate that maybe aren't realistic, or maybe aren't matching that person's ideals and desires. I have always probably been closer to the center than maybe some people—I'm

pretty far to the left on social issues, but we don't deal with social issues. If we dealt with social issues, then I would say I don't know why people are crazy about gay marriage and I don't know why Republicans are talking about contraception. I mean, those types of things. On the social issues, like homelessness and some poverty-related issues, I think it's our duty, I think it's our responsibility to help people. On other environmental issues, there has to be a balance between things, and when you start opposing solar projects—I understand their concerns, I think their concerns were well received by planning the projects. Those environmental reports were really good. And the companies have to do a lot to monitor and to mitigate, to protect the species and all those other things. I think that there was a desire from some people, and I really do think it's a small number of people, and it might be the same people who might have been disappointed with Jim at times, who wanted to push an agenda that wasn't well suited for our—you know, this is still a pretty conservative county. And there's a lot of people who don't like anything government does unless it's giving them subsidies. And so I think that was inevitable. ... I wish we had a stronger environmental presence, because in other places there are probably much more practical environmentalists that are trying to work with—you can't just sort of say, "It's our way or we're going to be against you." And I think that we've seen that too often. I also think that they serve a really important role, though. That's the difference: The role of the activist is outside the system. And also on the far right. I wouldn't have a problem even with COLAB if it wasn't for the stuff that they do on the president and things like that. I mean, they have their view—their anti-regulatory tax view—and, OK. They serve a purpose, and the far left serves a purpose, and somewhere you try to find a way to get things done, very often, in the middle. So I don't think anybody likes to lose some supporters, but I don't think you can get anything done without it. If you haven't lost friends when you're in office, you probably haven't done anything. And I bet you if you ask [SLO City Councilman] Andrew Carter, he'll tell you that from the city council perspective. It really is a sign; it's not something you wear—at least I don't wear it as something I'm proud of. I mean, I did reach out to people early on that were feeling, "These guys aren't doing what we said we wanted them to do." But you start to realize that there was not a lot of satisfaction to be had. There's some people that their view of environmentalism is just to always be in a catastrophic mode.

NEW TIMES Do you think they just had a false expectation of where you landed on the left-to-right scale?

HILL I think that may be the case. I mean, I can't speak for them. I'm not an environmentalist, per se. I mean, that's not my background. I've cared more about human social issues. I can't talk about environmental issues with the same kind of knowledge that say, Jim Patterson, can. But I can talk about social issues. And I've always been involved. Even my public service throughout my life has always been with things like the Food Bank and poverty-related causes. So it's not that I don't think environmental issues are as important, it's just people have their things that they really are more their passionate about. While there are environmentalists that supported me for the obvious reasons, which is the previous board was intent on doing anything they could to approve projects, I think it was probably unrealistic to think that we were going to do the opposite, which was make everything as incredibly restrictive as possible. At the same time, you'd probably find the homebuilders that say, "Yeah, these guys have been incredibly restrictive." You hear Jerry Bunin complain for the homebuilders a lot. And I think we've put into place policies that the people want us to. I don't think they like sprawl. I don't think they want to overbuild the county. I don't think they want to fill the hillsides like they have throughout the state. I think people love the fact that there's trails and open space, and I would much rather look out on vineyards and farms than I would on estate communities. And we have to balance some of those things. But, yeah, I feel at peace with that. I wish that there were, there are some people that have changed their mind. Early on, they thought we were going away from things, and then they've come back around to see things. And there's some people who just quite frankly don't. They see the world really as a darker place than we see it. And

I'm sure Jim's had to deal with that more because of the whole [former SLO County Planning Commission Chairwoman] Sarah Christie thing. I never promised that I was going to be the next environmental hero, nor did I feel qualified to.

NEW TIMES Where do you think the line should be between your personal life and your professional life? Because I know a lot of people will say, "Their personal life should have nothing to do with it," and other people who say, "No, your personal actions speak of you as a public official."

HILL I don't think personal life stuff is really that relevant unless we're talking about crimes of some kind. ... I honestly don't care about people's private romantic lives. I don't really see where that's—we know that through history the fact that, say, presidents or kings or anybody have had mistresses throughout history hasn't really changed. That we report on it doesn't make things different or better or make us better. So I don't really think that it's particularly relevant. And I have been offended by—I don't think you guys necessarily go there, but certainly the [Dave] Congalton, *Cal Coast* access has been despicable, quite frankly. I don't think they have any ethical lines about that. I think that it's up to you guys to have to draw probably on a case-by-case basis whether something in somebody's personal life is worthy of reporting because it's relevant to them as elected officials.

NEW TIMES ... Actually, we were looking, I'm sure you know, I was asking around about one of your relationships, and you recused yourself from a vote, and it was like, "OK, drop it. That's fair."

HILL Yeah, and I've done that, even though the money doesn't directly come from us and the money doesn't directly go to that person. But I just thought for appearances' sake that's the best thing to do.

NEW TIMES When I go and I see in meetings, they'll be talking about a conflict of interest or someone will accuse someone of having a conflict of interest. And an attorney will step in and say, "No, they don't get money from this person; there's no conflict." For the public, we say, "But there is a conflict there. There's a relationship on the side that might affect a relationship in public." Is it better to err on the side of caution or just go with the legal sense?

HILL You mean for the official?

NEW TIMES For the official, yeah.

HILL I've only had this recently, so I would say it's probably better to err on the side of caution. I don't really own anything that I have to worry about any financial things. I've got my dogs, that's about it. So I would say that I think most people try to err on the side of caution. It's a weird thing, because people's sense of conflict, when it comes down to it, let's look at the overall political system and the kinds of money that pour in at every level. Local level's nothing compared to what we're seeing at the presidential level. So we get hung up on, like, small perceptions of conflict, but it seems we should all be a little bit outraged. I know a lot of people are and some people aren't, but just by the fact that money is the great determinant of things, certainly in the state and federal politics. For here, anybody who has an issue can get to see us. At least, I can only speak for myself, you can get to see me. But good luck getting in to see a congressperson if you're not a donor. It's just the truth. So from the local level, I try to be, mine [relationship] is minor in the sense that it's relatively new and there's not much that is related to it, but I try to be cautious, I guess.

NEW TIMES I know that we didn't report on this, but I want to ask, what happened with the crank call with [Pismo Beach City Councilman and supervisor candidate] Ed Waage?

HILL It was what I said it was, and I'm glad you didn't report on it because it's another example of the trivial versus what's really the issue. Sheila Blake's a friend of mine; she's come to every single fundraiser of mine. ... So she was joking because she lives in Pismo and she's been one of the leading opponents of some of the developments that they've pushed on Price Canyon area. She wrote a letter to the editor of the *Tribune*. First, she ran it by me. And she said, "What

do you think of this letter?" And I said, "Well, I think they'll run it because it doesn't make it a personal attack and it's good, because it's better to just be against an issue, or something like that." And so then a few days later—and in her letter, she wrote, "If you want to join us in opposing this, contact me, really, Sheila Blake, here's my phone number." And I said, "You know, the phone number thing's the only thing I would think about, because you're going to get probably a lot of cranks." And she said, "That's just fine, I'm used to it." ... Then she wrote me back and said it doesn't look like they're going to print it, and then the next day they did. So I made a joke calling her, and I said, "This is Ed Waage." And she didn't know it was my voice because she had thought she was going to get a whole bunch of calls; she thought it might have been Ed. So she calls up Ed, he comes over with a tape recorder and records it and gives it to *Cal Coast News*. And that's the story. I didn't know about that until Velie e-mails me. She doesn't tell me she's got a tape or play me a tape and say, "Is this you?" I never denied that it was me; I didn't know what she was talking about—so the way she worked it was, let's see if we can make it seem like he's denying it. So I realized what had happened once she ran the story and said, "Oh yeah, it's me. Talk to Sheila." And Sheila called both Congalton and her and said, "This is a misunderstanding, this is not what you're making it out to be" Even when they tried to get Cuddy from the *Tribune*, he did something real simple: He asked Ed Waage, he goes, "Are there any other reports of anybody getting calls like this? No. OK, so it's just this one instance?" ... I mean, I didn't even try to disguise my voice. It was just, she didn't know it was my voice so she called Ed and he was ready with a tape recorder and next thing you know it's at least 10 Congalton shows. I guess, it's great news. ... I mean, I'm OK if you want to beat up on me on issues or votes or things we haven't supported or that are legitimate. We got criticized for not supporting the pot clinics, the most recent proposal. I think that was legitimate. I'm conflicted about it; I'm not sure that the ordinance is fair in the sense that we're not going to allow it; why are we taking applications? So I'm OK when people criticize me on that stuff, but that seemed like, you know, you've really got to be on the side of trying to humiliate me just for the sake of humiliating me to think of that as a story. ... Well, certainly everybody that supports me says that's something I'm not going to do in the future. I would say, yeah, you know, but really think about it, what are we talking about? Am I going out there and saying, like, really nasty things about people that feeds into a denigrating context? I mean, if I'm out there making jokes about gay people, then I should be bashed. If I'm out there making off-handed remarks about women, bash me. If I'm out there making racist comments, bash me. ... One of the reasons I thought that the Waage thing was ridiculous is because find somebody that hasn't left those kinds of messages on their friend's answering machine. You've never done that to a friend?

MILLER But you're a county supervisor.

HILL So I can't do that to a friend?

MILLER Because you're at an elevated position.

HILL But this has nothing to do with—I mean, I'm not doing it at—I did it to a friend.

MILLER I guess it would be a situation like this in an ethical sense, you know, for me, as a photographer. Say I was walking down the street, and my cameras were at ready, and I saw you in a car, and you were kissing some woman. Would I lift up my camera and take a picture of you in order to be able to put it into the paper? Or would I look over and say, "Adam's having a private moment and it's none of my business?" Even though I'm on public property—and I would, truthfully speaking, as an ethical photojournalist, not take the picture. Because it's got nothing to do with, it's got nothing to do with any news or anything else like that. That's that elevation beyond ...

HILL But how does that analogy fit to making a phone call to a friend that was a joke?

MILLER Because you don't put yourself in a position where you can be criticized in that regard.

HILL But see, I'm OK. I agree with you, and believe me, the people who work on my campaign and my friends would agree with you in the sense, too, that if you're going to get whacked,

then get whacked for stuff that matters. And that's what's puzzled me, which is: This is trivial shit, really. I mean, this is not like how the county's going to deal with its budget, or how we're dealing with land use, or whether homeless people get fed, or any of that stuff.

NEW TIMES ... But my question is: Do you care? Personally, if I saw that about myself, I'd be like, "Oh that was a joke. People who know me will know that that's a joke. People who don't, well, they're not going to like me anyways."

HILL Well, that's a good question. I mean, I don't care in the sense that, yeah, I mean, do I think that people who say nasty, vicious stuff on *Cal Coast News* or *Cal Coast News* itself is—I know where they're at. I could tell you why Velie turned on me. I mean, it's really that incredibly—gosh, I don't know if I want to say it on a recorder.

NEW TIMES You know, I actually don't even want to know.

HILL ... But again, that stuff to me, say that I'm not doing what I said I've done. Like I said, the reason I really like the job is I've been able to get stuff done. A lot of people come into the job and ... I think they realize that it's hard. I don't know what they realize. Maybe they want to be a supervisor, they just don't want to do the work. And there's a lot of stuff that comes in all the time and you get—it's not particularly glamorous. Even people that have less responsibility, like assemblymen and state senators have far less difficulty and trouble. Their job's easy because they don't have anything to do up there. There's nothing to do. You know, as I told Katcho [Achadjian] when he was running for Assembly, it's the same thing up there as it is here: five people make all the decisions. And he's like, "What?" And I go, "Yeah, it's five, the big five. They make all the decisions." And at this point it doesn't really matter, because nobody's making any decisions. But nobody else has a public comment period. You can't go to your legislator and get them in front of you and say whatever you want to say. You can't go to Congress and get them in front of you and say whatever you want to say: "You lousy crooks, why are you doing that?" You can a little bit at the city councils. We see on here every other Tuesday. But we're the game in town that sort of, which is—it's a fine line at times. And most of what we get, frankly—and when I got to city council, I can see that ours is easier because we just pretty much get the Los Osos folks, for the most part. From getting things done, we've got a lot done. I mean, the solar projects are big deals, and they would have died at different times in the Planning Commission. If you talk to solar companies, who was critical on that? It was me. I mean, I was pushing on it, and I made sure when I was chair that we cleared separate days to have single [hearings]; I said if we have to go through the night, then let's do it because these are important projects and the financing is always kind of tenuous on some of them. And I think that they were really important to the county for a lot of reasons. So for me, there's certain things if you want to do them, you can do them. And that means you have to be willing to lead.

NEW TIMES So have you learned anything? Well, clearly you've learned. What have you learned in the last three and a half years or so?

HILL Well, certainly what we were just talking about, which is don't expect that even if you think something is minor and trivial it can't be blown up into some type of media frenzy.

NEW TIMES Would you act any differently knowing that?

HILL Well, it's kind of, it's hard for me, personally, because it requires a kind of caution and my personality, like I said—I would admit to being edgy, but also would admit this: If anybody's offended by anything, I'm not a jerk. ... If I was a carouser, I almost feel like nobody would pay attention. Which I don't, I don't drink much. I mean, I've probably had the same glass of wine in my hand for an entire event. I don't carouse; that's not really who I am. I'm not at the bars; I'm not hitting on girls or things like that. So, I mean, if I was someone like that in the position, then maybe it would be an interesting thing, but a guy who occasionally might say something that makes people go, "Huh?" ... And I understand if you're looking at somebody who hasn't done anything and doesn't say much and then does stupid things, and you criticize that person.

MILLER Then again, if you don't get any criticism, that means you're not doing anything at all.

HILL Oh yeah. That's what he said. There's disenfranchised people on the far left that wanted

things, and they haven't ever held back on criticism. And I think your role is to criticize us on some things. I don't know if you guys really do that, I don't know that Shredder's really a criticism thing so much as kind of a snarky, fun, poke-in-the eye thing. I mean, it's not like—you don't do editorials so much. The *Tribune* does their editorials, and if you look at the *Tribune*'s editorials, generally speaking they have been—I'll tell you this, if you told me four years ago that when I was running for re-election, the news media that I would trust the most to cover me with the most clarity and fairness was the *Tribune*, I wouldn't believe you. Because when I was running, you guys had Patrick Howe working for you, and this is not a slam on you, because I didn't—I worked with him as a candidate, so it was a different thing. I thought he did a great job. I thought he was always trying to follow up on things. He thought that I was—he challenged me on stuff, so there was no problem. I thought *New Times* was—generally speaking, you're a left-leaning newspaper, so I thought, OK. Not that you wouldn't shred me occasionally, as has happened. I got lampooned by Jerry James, I think, when I was a candidate because I went after [Jerry] Lenthall, and he depicted me as a dog biting his butt or something. That was pretty funny. So I'm fine with that, except when it's like, what are we talking about? Are we talking about something really miniscule or something worth getting criticized? Am I not following through on things I said, whether it be land use or social issues that we do deal with? I ran with an economic development position paper as part of what I wanted to do. The reason we had that is because it's something that I said was important. I just think that the stuff that we do and the reforms that we've made on the fiscal issues is pretty important. And you don't have a board for the most part that's been overly dominated by—I mean, you're not having the stuff that we had before. You're not seeing these decisions where staff and everybody else says, "Don't do this," and they just say, "Well, you know these are our friends, and they were citizens of the year, so we should let them develop this." We don't do that. I think we've been more responsible and more deliberate. And that doesn't mean we're perfect. I'm sure that there's things that we could do. There's a whole bunch of things that you could say that you wish you'd gotten sooner or wish that you could do. But I like what we've been able to do, really. And I think that my colleagues have been a big help.

NEW TIMES And actually [*New Times* Staff Writer] Matt Fountain—I was running through these questions with everyone, and he said that I should ask you about Diablo Canyon and kind of how you want to stay on top of that.

HILL Well that's something I'm really proud of, and I'm glad that Matt and actually others have really covered that really with the kind of attention it deserves, because it's kind of tricky. This is, to me—I guess this is where, and I'll admit to being—we're always short sighted about our own faults, and yeah, I can do stupid things. But let me give an example of where perhaps the more thoughtful and deliberate Adam is useful to all of us, and that's on Diablo. We don't have really much authority when it comes to the nuclear power plant. It's a federal authority and some state stuff. But just like trying to follow up with what [Sen. Sam] Blakeslee's done at the state, and we've worked closely with Sam, and I admire what he's done, we wanted to express pretty clearly to both PG&E and the NRC that we thought that them going full steam ahead, no pun intended, with relicensing before they had addressed some of these important seismic issues, just absolutely was critical. Remember I authored the letter that we approved a year before Fukushima, that went to the [Nuclear Regulatory Commission] and said it was a three-to-two thing and PG&E lobbied the heck—you know they didn't want that at all. They were not happy about that, because we wrote a letter that passed three to two that said, "We want you to suspend relicensing, focus on the advanced seismic, get those questions answered, address whatever needs to be addressed, and then move forward." And there was no prejudice one way or another. And the NRC in their own obscure way said "No," though it was confusing to get their letters, and finally two of the five NRC commissioners came to town, and I met with them, and we talked pretty openly about why no one trusts them. So we kept pushing on this, and I kept pushing below. The view I always had with PG&E—which is they're too important in the

community to be out there trying to think that you can say negative things about them and get anywhere—it just doesn't work. I mean, it might be grandstanding and fun in that way, but what are you accomplishing? So my view is, let me work with them, let me keep pushing them. ... And I said, let me keep pushing on this and let me see if I can get to their bosses. To their credit, they've made their president of utilities available to me many times when he's come to town. I've met with their new CEO when he came to town. And I said all along, "You guys need to be with us on not just the seismic studies that are going to happen, but that we get a voice in the peer review panel. You don't want to fight us on that. You want to be supportive of that, because that's the message you want to send to all of our citizens, which is, we're on the same page: safety first. If you say it, you need to really mean it." And they agreed, they were there. [Supervisor] Bruce [Gibson] is on the panel for us, and Bruce is doing a really good job. ...

NEW TIMES Is there any way to get that message out to the public locally? Because when I go and I sit in the audience, generally PG&E comes in—it's a PG&E PowerPoint with their own talking points. It's occasionally questioned. And I just watch this, and all I can think is, "I don't believe them; I don't trust them." And they could be absolutely truthful; they could be talking out their ass.

HILL I think that you should trust Bruce, because he's a geophysicist and he knows not to take those answers. I mean, Bruce is—I know PG&E probably would prefer us not to have Bruce on there, if you were to ask somebody. Because having a scientist is one thing, but as Sam [Blakeslee] has shown, too, having a scientist that knows the difference between bullshit and not-bullshit is good. And willing to say, "This is bullshit because." So Bruce is really good; he's been on research vessels; we have a sense of experts out there, too, seismic experts and other people to consult with. So I feel like we accomplished something really important here, which is we have a voice that's independent of PG&E or anyone else—NRC, or anyone that anyone doesn't trust—that's going to ask the right questions and eventually going to be able to report to the public on his own findings. And the reason why I point to that as a really good accomplishment is because I have a really good relationship with PG&E. Now if I was just this wild man who shot his mouth off every time, they wouldn't listen to me at all. They wouldn't even like me. So I feel kind of—I don't know if proud's the right way when you talk about campaign finance, but I feel kind of proud that I have support from PG&E and I have support from Rochelle Becker and I have support from Jane Swanson, and Linda Seely, and all the Mothers For Peace. Because PG&E's OK with me, and the anti-nukes people are OK with me, because I know what I can do and what I've done. And if I was just out there giving anti-PG&E talks or let's not trust them or let's not do that, then they just wouldn't.

NEW TIMES Do you think your public persona matches your private persona? Because when I sit down and talk with you, I'm like, OK, this is Adam Hill. When I see you up on the board, I'm like, there's Supervisor Hill, and they don't mesh, and every once in a while it feels like private Adam Hill comes out in public Adam Hill. That's just my perception. I was wondering how you see yourself in that way?

HILL Huh, I guess I haven't given it a lot of thought. What's the difference that you see?

NEW TIMES When I watch the supervisor, it's like it's gotten to the point where sometimes it feels a little cyborg-ish; it seems very rehearsed and like this is a show for the public. And covering it for however many years, it gets stale after a while. You start to wonder, "Why am I not seeing the guys who I talk to up there?" And this is the—I think that's what happens with an Ed Waage crank-call, is the public sees you on stage giving presentations, and then they see you doing actual guy stuff.

HILL OK, now it makes more sense in the larger context. I think that public meetings, which are very formal—and you have your Robert's Rules of Order and you have this chamber and all this wood and chrome and shit out there, and we're there in our suits—it doesn't lend to the more relaxed, reflective person that I like to think of myself as being. It is a formality. Every Tuesday, it's this thing that we do. There's an agenda, and we follow these rules and so forth. And then

as we're deliberating, we write some notes of things we want to say. Yeah, so you're right, it's not the most—I mean, the format is not lending to a great amount of spontaneity, and some of the best debates that we've seen have been far and few between. Like, I can think of one of the most fun things, debates I had, was with Bruce Gibson ... over smart growth on a project in Templeton that he voted against and I voted for. And that was, like, a couple of years ago. It was an infill project on Main Street. It's where the auction lot is. And Bruce was against it, and I was for it, and ultimately it was a four-to-one vote. And we had a good exchange of things. And I called Bruce pedantic, and then I apologized for calling him pedantic. But we're good. I mean, Bruce I admire greatly and like him even more. Public meetings are not conducive to this finding out what these people are like. And even sometimes when we're at events, you know, you're kind of pretending to be who you are. I go to these events that you have to go to, like nonprofit events or things like that, and you're the supervisor and you say a few words and you thank people and stuff like that. I don't think of myself particularly seriously on things like that. What would I rather be doing? I'd rather be home reading or listening to jazz than shaking hands with 100 people I don't know. But that's part of the job, and that's fine. I think Katcho's probably a lot more—he's great at it, too—he's a lot more comfortable in that arena of sort being almost a character. He's Katcho; he doesn't even have a last name—nobody can pronounce his last name, so they don't even bother. And he's good at it. The rest of us, you know, we can kind of do our mingling here and there. Patterson's ridiculous: He stays to the bitter end of everything; I try to get out. I know if I'm here for a reason, let me do it, let me say a toast to the good people and let me go home and put on jeans and be myself. So yeah, I could see that persona is definitely mixed. I would say, the first time I encountered Jerry Brown, a long time ago when he was out of office for a long time at that point, he was in Washington when I was working there. I think it was when he was kind of just figuring out if he wanted to get back into the game. And he had this long, full beard. He was sitting in a hotel, and it was during this mid-year convention thing, and people were just walking by him. And I was with some friends—they were young hill staffers, too—and I was like, "You know who that is? That's Jerry Brown." So we went over and talked to him, and we had this long conversation about books; he just asked us all, he's like, "What are you guys reading?" And I came away from that experience and the couple of times that I've met him thinking, say what you will about Jerry Brown, whether he's been successful or not successful as a public figure, as a politician ... what I found really fascinating about him was here's a guy with an inner life. Which is not always the case when you meet politicians at that level. I don't think anyone ever accused anyone as successful in politics as Ronald Reagan of having an inner life that was really much more interesting than whatever movies he and Nancy were going to watch that night on TV. And Jerry's one of those guys who's just interested in the world; he's curious about things. He's gone on his journeys and he's done those things. I'm a lot more interested in things other than—I could spend a lot of time talking to Steve [Miller] about photography, because I have friends who are fine art photographers and it fascinates me.

MILLER So why would you feel that you had to put on a mask, though, in public events and up there in the chamber? Because you have a likable personality, and there are other politicians in this area that are exactly the same in their personal life as they are behind the suit or whatever. ... And you are able to feel the charisma of that natural personality coming from them. So why would you want to hide behind an act?

HILL Well, that's good, because I don't know that it's a conscious thing. Like I said, the situation is formalized in a way—and maybe I'm not there yet—in that formal situation, whereas some other office holders, their situation's not as formal. If you're up in Sacramento and Washington, it's not like you're just stuck up there on this; we're like five monkeys on this bench, and whatever people say or throw at us, we just—it's not the most naturally conducive situation. ... Sometimes people just want you to be at this event to be this furniture that has a little brand name that says county supervisor. So I don't know, it's an interesting question. I guess

maybe the few situations when I've said impolitic things or done impolitic things that were just the pressure of—the truth is yeah, I would love to spend time really actually talking about the substance of some of the issues that we talk about in a way that we don't. My undergraduate major was in political philosophy. I spend more time still reading in that subject than anything outside fiction, you know, I read novels. And I'm always interested in how ideas become expressed in policy. But I don't know that you can do that—I can do that one-on-one with people, and I can do that when I talk to friends or former teachers. I don't know. I just think that part of being a politician is to some degree, you're playing a role.

NEW TIMES Does it have to be that way? I mean, that's clearly the most successful way. I feel like, at least at local level, the farther down you go, the more broken down it gets and the more casual it is. The higher up you go, it gets glossier.

HILL Well, I think it's much more fun at the local level, because what it comes down to is just your neighbor and the guy that's walking across the street that you see every day. ... We're here every day and every night, and you will run into me in the supermarket or wherever. And it's nice that way, so there's not like a layer of separation at the local level, which is good; there shouldn't be. But I think it's different in different places. I went to grad school in Louisiana when Edwin Edwards was governor; he was the last of the big populist governors and ended up going to jail. And I saw Edwin in action, and he was a pathological crook, but probably one of the funniest and most intelligent politicians I've ever seen. You know the guy who had the famous line, "The only way the good people of Louisiana won't re-elect me is if they catch me in bed with a live boy or a dead girl." That was Edwin's humor. He also, when he was running against David Duke, and he was on *Meet the Press*, and Edwin was known to be sort of a scoundrel—not sort of, he was a scoundrel. He loved women. He was on *Meet the Press*, and they were asking him about this race between him and David Duke. And he said, "The only thing that me and my opponent have in common is that we're both wizards under the sheets." I couldn't imagine a governor in California or the Midwest or something being able to say stuff like that. I come from New Jersey; the governor of New Jersey right now, who I don't probably agree with on a lot of policies, is sometimes criticized from people outside of New Jersey for being kind of a loud Jersey guy, Chris Christie. I knew when he was running for election that he would get elected regardless of it, just because he seemed to be much more like the people than the guy who was the incumbent governor, who was a Goldman Sachs CEO who wore handmade suits and probably didn't ever really relate to Bruce Springsteen. I don't know if there has to be. I'm pretty accessible; we all are pretty accessible. ... But it's a weird—let's put it this way: No wealthy person ever invited me inside their mansion when I was teaching books at Cal Poly. ... It's weird, because we're supposed to be stone-faced; then we get criticized if we're not stone-faced.

MILLER Are you supposed to be?

HILL Yeah. Sometimes people come up there and say the nastiest things, and we're supposed to be stone-faced. ... Even *Cal Coast News* ran some article. They don't realize that we've gone paperless in the county, that all our stuff is on our iPads now. So they ran some bogus story ... because Julie Tacker attacked me for looking at my agenda on my iPad. But then Bruce supposedly laughed, and so she yelled at him for that.

MILLER Let's just pretend that you lose this next election. So what would you tell Ed Waage that is the most difficult thing about being a supervisor? What would you want anybody to know about this job and what's difficult about it—most difficult?

HILL People seem to want the job for the title. I mean, my predecessor seemed to like being a supervisor more than doing the job, because the job's a grind and it's pretty thankless in a lot of ways. I mean, you get e-mails from people who are complaining, not usually people saying, "Thank you so much." People have these ambitions that I don't get. I had a specific purpose. I had no dream of being a county supervisor, really. ... I like teaching. I was treated well at Cal Poly; it was fun. I got to do that. I was writing book reviews for the *L.A. Times* and

the *Chronicle*. I was generally sort of satisfied. It wasn't like some morning I woke up and said, "That's what I want to do." So I think that people who want to do it for reasons of ambition or, in some cases—and I think that's the case with my opponent, which is an ideological motivation. That's a bad reason; you're not going to succeed in the job, I think.

NEW TIMES Do you want—I mean, obviously you want to stay in for one more term. If you get another term, do you want to continue as a supervisor? Do you have loftier goals, maybe?

HILL I'm really focused on getting re-elected to the next term. People always bring that stuff up at times. ... To me, like, why go to Sacramento? What do you get done there?

NEW TIMES If Katcho came in today, and let's say this is some alternate universe where this could happen, he says, "Take my job." Would you take it?

HILL No. Honestly. I really don't see it. I don't see what he's doing up there.

NEW TIMES What if Lois Capps comes in and gives the same offer?

HILL I don't think I could handle that commute. One of the reasons why I like this job is because even at the end of the longest grind of a day, I can go home, my dogs are happy to see me, and life is OK. It's nice that way. And I've experienced this—once again, this is what's nice, and this is what's probably calmed me down on some of the stuff you guys or the *Cal Coast* folks—you know, when I'm knocking on doors, people are actually really nice. And they're engaged; they're interesting. They want to talk to you. And I like that. I remember that when I was running the first time. It's much different running as an underdog than running as an incumbent. But it's still fun on the level of just talking to people in their neighborhoods.

NEW TIMES Do you think either you or Jim Patterson is going to have to adjust if Debbie Arnold or Ed Waage wins and then all of a sudden we have a 3-2 Republican-leaning majority? Or do you think it matters at all?

HILL Probably. I think it would. If the majority in terms of land use and the associated regulations matters, which it really does at our level, then yeah.

NEW TIMES What do you do? Do you try to compromise more, or do you try to dig in more and just take a stand?

HILL I would try to find common ground. I mean, I think we've tried to do that for the most part anyway, even where there's three votes that are more aligned on some of the land-use issues. If we've disappointed people on the far-left environmental side at times, then I think that's a sign that we've tried to ... You know, we told them early on, doing the exact opposite of what the last board was doing is not a recipe for survival. I mean, if people didn't like rubber-stamping every project, you don't want rubber-stamping "no" on every project or just saying, "Well, let's just make it impossible for everybody." If the board makeup changes, I think you'd just naturally want to adjust, to figure out how to still get the right things done. I honestly think that what we've done—even when some people have disagreed—is for the best interest, long-term interest of the county. I'm not saying that I'm perfectly right; I may be wrong, but I think I've tried to do the right thing.

NEW TIMES So what's the board doing right at the moment, and then what do you all need to improve on as a collective?

HILL I think on fiscal management, it's interesting that there were people who were worried, because this is only the second time in the county's history that we've had a board that's leaned progressive, so there were a lot of people who were worried that somehow that was going to spell disaster. And yet if you look at what we've done on the fiscal issue, this has been the most conservative board you could possibly imagine. Why didn't former conservative boards do the pension and pay reform that I did—that we did? Why didn't they figure out how to push forward on business initiatives like we've done? So on a lot of things that supposedly we would be pushovers on, I think that we've been much more responsible than we've seemed. And there's a lot of people in the business community that will tell you, because they've told me (well maybe they won't tell you), they've told me, they've sometimes backed it up with checks, which is: This is the best board that we've had. That we've been the most fair and thoughtful and deliberate

on things. What can we do better? Everything can be done better. ... I think we've really gone out of our way to take our time on things. I think you could point to examples, even the animal ordinance is one, but let's go back further, earlier than that, which was the school truancy one. We don't cram stuff down when we don't have answers. It's not just that people are in the audience against it, but when you call people up who are responsible for writing something and they are not giving answers that seem to satisfy, we say bring it back. Answer questions. So I think that we've been good on a level; we're not just trying to pass things. It's interesting that some people on the far right might use that as a claim against us that somehow we've rushed things through. We've been incredibly deliberative. Look at the ag grading update we did. We made sure that the Farm Bureau was basically as involved as it possibly could [be] on that. The events ordinance: I lost supporters for that and basically by just kicking it the heck out of our realm for a while because we weren't getting anywhere; we were spending a lot of time, and it seemed like it was just ticking off a lot of people. As soon as I saw on the Planning Commission that they were full of people who were photographers and caterers and florists, that didn't even know who the Board of Supervisors was, but they had a red shirt on and they were ready to kill us, I said it to Bruce, I said, "This is crazy; this is the worst time to make people who are struggling to make a living feel nervous." This is just not needed. I don't know that there's a problem with events, and there really isn't. There just isn't.

NEW TIMES From the far right criticism, they say that you've been doing a lot of—and clearly you have—the board has only been doing policy stuff as opposed to actual, on-the-ground projects. So you think that you've set up more prohibitive rules?

HILL No. I think that on policy, we've put forward policy that even previous boards said that they supported. Like on strategic growth. I think most people get the fact that we should have infrastructure and water in place before we approve massive projects. Then we don't have to try to catch up with them like we are in Nipomo, like we are in other places in the county, in Los Osos' ongoing saga that will be resolved in the next couple of years. I don't think that we've done anything other than what people wanted the board to do, but they didn't do in the past. We have done projects like the Economic Development Project; we have approved some projects that have come before us. Obviously it's not been huge in terms of the number of things that have come before us. I think that we've also done things that are part of state and federal mandates. I think climate change is by far the most important environmental issue. It concerns me that it's become so politicized. I think that what we're doing is representing what the state voters have continuously expressed, not just by the initial laws, but by every election since then. I mean, look at the last election: Every single candidate that was opposed to AB 32 on a statewide ballot lost. The governor's candidate lost big, and she was going to suspend it. The initiative that they ran that was basically going to kill it was defeated. I think that the state has expressed its commitment to addressing climate change, and at the county, it's our responsibility to do that, too. I think that people on our right—including colleagues on different boards—need to get over their ideological objections and do what the people of the state have tasked us to do, which is to address climate change. So on those kinds of things, we see some of these groups that are going to criticize no matter what, just for political reasons. Ask them, do they know more than a majority of the voters of the state? Do they know more than the overwhelming majority of climate scientists? What, for instance, the [Air Pollution Control District] does is they don't create their own rules, they enforce the rules that the state and the feds put into place. And if we didn't have an air district locally, everybody would have to work with Sacramento with the [California Air Resources Board]. I mean, that's one of the things that's helpful, so that if you have to put your diesel engine up to whatever the standards are, you can work with [San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District Executive Director] Larry Allen's staff to do that. If he wasn't there, you'd have to figure out how to do that in Sacramento. I think that it's just the talking points of the right when they talk, everything has to be anti-government, anti-regulation because that's what the Tea Party has been able to coalesce around. I just don't

think it's true in our case. If it was true, then we would have a lot of unhappy business people, and that's not the case. Δ

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