



The two-lane road in and out of the approved Harmony Grove Village South development in San Diego County. Lawsuits related to the California Environmental Quality Act continue to thwart development of the 453-home project. **NELVIN C. CEPEDA / U-T PHOTOS**

Prop. 45 seeks to accelerate state environmental reviews

Vote has major implications for San Diego, where large projects languish for years

By Jennifer Van Grove
UNION-TRIBUNE

Proponents and opponents of the ballot proposition that would rewrite the state's environmental law to expedite the review of so-called essential housing and infrastructure projects agree on one thing: The future of California is on the line. The existential nature of Proposition 45, the camps say, is either a rare opportunity to make blanket reforms to a law that has hamstrung development and made life in California unaffordable, or it's a snake-in-the-grass attempt to unravel the state's primary way of protecting people from disastrous environmental consequences.



A community group is suing to stop construction of an eight-story apartment complex called The Lawson, located at 2935-2961 A St., between South Park and Golden Hill.

Placed on the November ballot by the California Chamber of Commerce, Proposition 45 seeks to amend the California Environmental Quality Act with new procedures for the environmental review of projects defined as essential. The state law, enacted in 1970, requires public agencies to study and disclose the environmental impacts of projects before approval. The proposition, if approved by voters, would allow project applicants to opt into a revised CEQA process that includes tighter, enforceable timelines for permitting and review periods, shorter windows for public input

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Polls: Von Wilpert favored in House race

GOP donors decline to deliver expected cash for Desmond

By Lucas Robinson
UNION-TRIBUNE

In late September, Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson vowed in a social media video that his party would “defy the odds” in the San Diego region’s most competitive race. Standing beside Republican candidate and San Diego County Supervisor Jim Desmond, Johnson called the 48th Congressional District — split between San



Jim Desmond



Marni von Wilpert

Diego and Riverside counties — “one of the most important races in all of America.” “On paper, this looks like a Democrat district, but we are going to defy history,” Johnson said. Now, with little more than a week before the election wraps

up Nov. 3, Republicans will have to overcome a massive influx of Democratic spending to make that happen. The final sprint of the race comes amid a broader Republican retreat around the country contesting seats once considered competitive or even safe for their party, as Democrats look to capitalize on President Donald Trump’s poor approval ratings. In the critical San Diego-area seat, polls have found Democratic San Diego City Councilmember Marni von Wilpert in the lead. At the same time, wealthy GOP groups have declined to make the kind of

investment in Desmond seen in California’s other competitive congressional races. For months, the contest between Desmond and von Wilpert has been seen as tight, even though Democrats outnumber Republicans in the district. Desmond and von Wilpert both have deep political resumes, and on the trail, they’ve looked to appeal to the district’s moderate and swing voters. But Desmond’s party faces major headwinds this election cycle as more voters sour on Trump’s job performance. In

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U.S. pushes Mexico to allow in its anti-cartel personnel

Trump administration wants to see an expanded security deal by midterm elections

By Steve Fisher, Jack Nicas, Eric Schmitt, Maria Abi-Habib, Julian E. Barnes & Zolan Kanno-Youngs
THE NEW YORK TIMES

MEXICO CITY — The Trump administration is increasing pressure on Mexico to expand its cooperation against cartels, with an eye toward joint operations with the United States, according to Mexican and U.S. officials. In recent weeks, U.S. officials have delivered a memo proposing a path to potentially having U.S. security personnel accompany counter-cartel operations inside Mexico, according to officials briefed on the letter. The memo included a number of other areas where Washington wants to become more involved in Mexico’s security, including broader intelligence sharing, according to U.S. and Mexican officials. The Trump administration has been pushing Mexican officials to help deliver a concrete accomplishment on security that it can point to in time for the midterm elections, according to U.S. and Mexican officials. High gas prices and stubborn inflation have haunted Republicans, and Trump officials appear to be looking to Mexico for a public victory. The memo is one of the firmest moves yet to get Mexico to accept a U.S. military presence in the country, putting new strain on the cross-border relationship. President Donald Trump has repeatedly stated he wants to take U.S. military action against drug cartels in Mexico, which President Claudia Sheinbaum has stead-

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EDUARDO CONTRERAS / U-T FILE

BUSINESS

As Stone ends its run, brewery legacy lives

Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens long has been source of pride for Escondido, even after Stone was sold in 2022. But its new owner will soon close the venue. Stone co-founders Greg Koch and Steve Wagner announced they will take over the restaurant, giving it a new name, Quarry Escondido. While the location will live on, Stone will have been erased from the city’s landscape, but it is still home to a vibrant craft brewery scene. **C1**

Military boards defy trans-troop orders

Some peer-to-peer panels vote to retain colleagues targeted in Pentagon crackdown

By Dave Philipps
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth used a slur to proudly announce to an auditorium of Marines in September that he was ridding the military of all transgender troops. The Pentagon had set up review boards at bases around the globe, staffed by everyday uniformed service members with narrow orders that all but ensured that the trans troops appearing before them would be voted out. But just steps from the auditorium where Hegseth spoke, at Marine Corps Base Quantico, boards assigned to carry out those orders were doing the opposite. Instead of firing trans Marines, the boards were voting to keep them.



Service members voted to retain Marine Staff Sgt. Damien Contreras despite orders to oust transgender troops. **MARIE ERIEL HOBRO / NYT**

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When Spooky Season Ends The Holiday Fun Begins

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