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Strike three It's been 11 years since the Padres were number 1 at anything, but new owner **John Moores** tops the list of professional baseball team owners who contributed money to federal candidates or a national party committee. So says a study by the Center for Responsive Politics. Moores gave \$28,280 during the 1993-1994 tracking period, all to Democrats; members of his family chipped in another \$29,980. Quips **James A. Barnes** in the *National Journal*, "Club owners, who have pleaded collective near-poverty in their current labor dispute with the players, were much more willing to reach into their pockets for gifts to the pols." Moores' largess toward the Democrats is famous; aside from his donations on the national level, Moores last year blew more than \$200,000 on losing gubernatorial runs by **Kathleen Brown** in California and incumbent **Ann Richards** in Texas, who lost to the son of former president Bush, **Neil Bush**.

America's finest sludge That goopy stuff spread out all over Fiesta Island may look like dried sewage and smell like dried sewage, but to **Susan Hamilton**, deputy director of San Diego's clean water program, it's a precious commodity. Miffed over a TV broadcast that castigated San Diego's Point Loma plant and other facilities for dumping sludge on an Indian reservation, Hamilton told *Sludge* magazine that bad press "gives sludge a black eye. We like to think of our sludge as a natural resource." Hamilton argued that the *PrimeTime Live* camera crew added insult to injury by following trucks belonging to a Florida septic-tank company as they dumped raw sewage into a ditch. While cameras rolled, ABC's **Diane Sawyer** discussed hepatitis and tuberculosis threats posed by the material. She ended her broadcast with the disclaimer, "All the materials you've seen in our report can be safely and legally disposed of or recycled," but Hamilton is not placated. "We're worried about sludge being characterized as a toxic waste."

Unfriendly to fatties? San Diego may have lost much of its aerospace industry, but that's nothing compared to the gaping hole El Cajon is about to face. Woman's World Shops — makers of extra-large clothing for the extra-big woman — is moving to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Company president **Tom Najour** says the "restructuring," which will result in the loss of 145 jobs here, should lead to "more streamlined and efficient" production of the jumbo garbs. But **John Linehan**, president of the El Cajon Chamber of Commerce, is angry. "We've lost at least 1,500 jobs in the last five years, and the question always is, when companies consolidate, why do they close the office they have here?" Linehan asks. "The answer is we just don't have a very business-friendly environment." He urges relaxed zoning restrictions and reduced fees and fines. "The city just doubled business-license fees from \$20 to \$40, and some of the fines that have been assessed by various agencies, such as for the overuse of water and contamination, have been excessive and punitive."

Paperboy wants his MTV Last year, MTV rolled into town for a spring break taping session at Mission Beach, and the *Union-Tribune* opened the floodgates of hype, churning out column after column about how hip and harmless the event would be. Then came a nasty, post-concert ruckus that included bursts of gunfire, marauding gangs, and horrendous traffic jams. But that was last year, and MTV has moved on to Arizona. Now it's the turn of **Dave Walker**, TV writer for the *Arizona Republic* in Phoenix, to do his MTV duty. In a gushing preview of MTV's upcoming *Spring Break* in Lake Havasu City, Walker leaves out any reference to the nastiness that seems to follow the event wherever it goes: "San Diego's gray-sea skies evidently failed to provide the perfect collegiate fantasy backdrop. MTV is counting on Lake Havasu's artificial beaches and rocky lakeside setting to provide just that." Didn't anyone tell Walker that the MTV gang was practically run out of San Diego? Or that the year before, it was booted from a Florida resort town? "I saw all that stuff in the clips, but I just didn't have room to get into it," Walker says. "MTV told me that the first several days of shooting were overcast, and that they weren't satisfied with the way things looked. Maybe they weren't being straight with me. Wasn't there this big riot? I probably should have included something about the riot."

Contributor: Thomas K. Arnold

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Bay Politics and the Pete Wilson Money Connection

By Melinda Powelson

Three letters to Governor Pete Wilson's political appointee Judy Johnson

and the state Environmental Protection Agency were all it took to block San Diego Bay's nomination to the National Estuary Program last week. So claim local environmentalists, who argue that the NEP was a unique opportunity to restore and improve the bay.

The NEP is a federal program that encourages communities to come together and develop longterm planning for estuaries that are threatened by pollution, development, and overuse. San Diego groups were asking for \$1 million so that they could monitor pollution and develop a plan to show how the bay could be shared by the military, businesses, and recreationalists, while still protecting the environment.

But state officials withdrew the application immediately after receiving three letters from industry groups. "A successful nomination requires that a community speaks with one voice, be supportive, and have a cohesive view," Johnson says. "That did not materialize in San Diego."

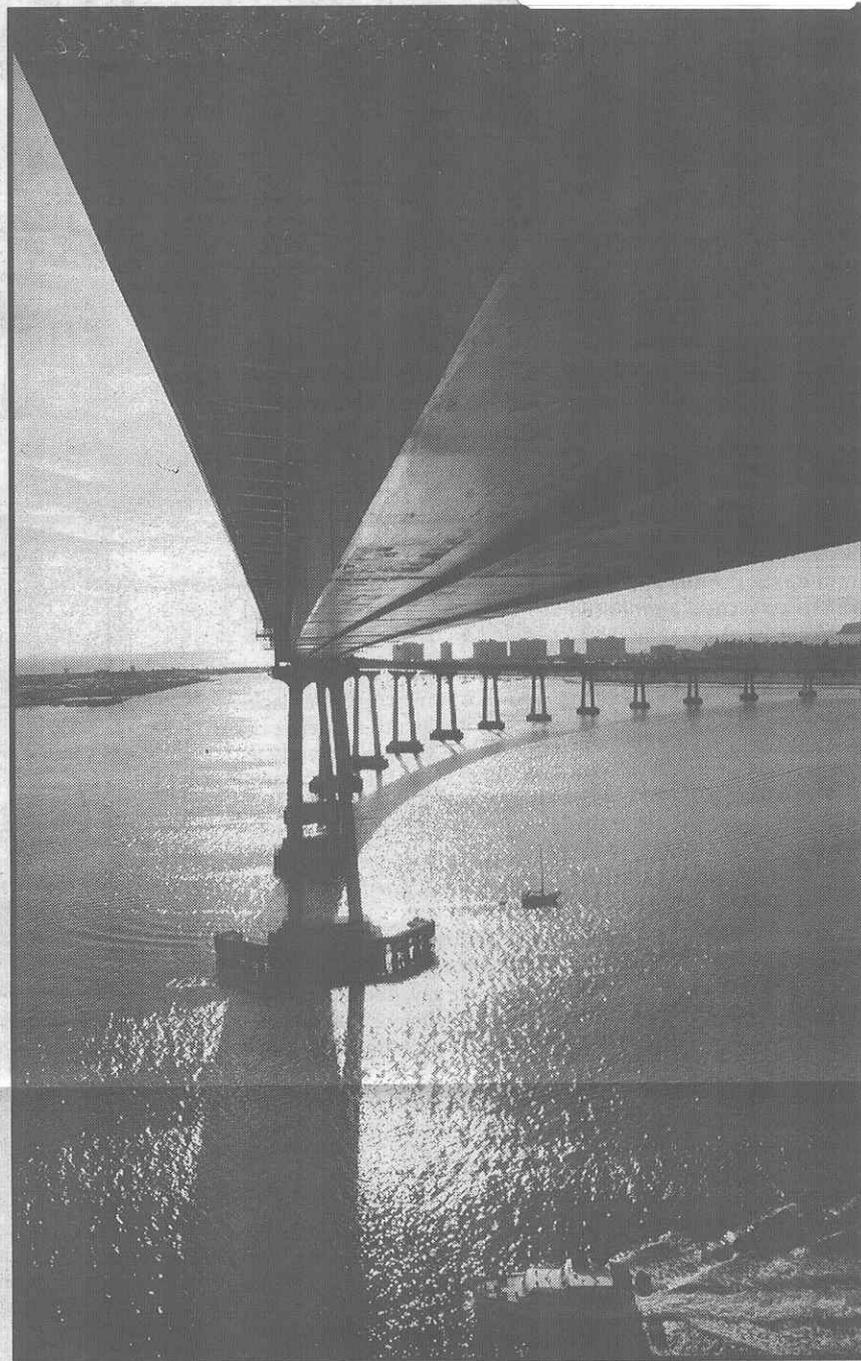
Environmentalist Laura Hunter was stunned that the application — widely supported by such diverse groups as Johnson's Regional Water Quality Control Board, the military, and local environmentalists — could be snuffed out so easily.

After some research, Hunter says the reason became clear. Members of the three business groups that wrote the letters to Johnson — the Industrial Environmental Association (IEA), the Port Tenants Association, and the mayor's Tideland Advisory Board — all donated at least \$243,350 to Wilson's coffers since 1990, and may have considerable influence, she says.

"This is one of the worst cases of special interest lobbying I have ever seen," says Hunter, who is the director of the Clean Bay Campaign for the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC).

Bob Sulnik, executive director of the American Oceans Campaign, another environmental group, says he's seen industry use its influence to derail similar efforts across the country.

"Industry groups are gaining more and more control all of the time," says Sulnik. "Through significant political contributions, they have essentially bought polit-



San Diego Bay: polluted by political paybacks?



Judy Johnson



Laura Hunter

ical representation at the state, local, and federal level," he says. "In turn," Sulnik continues, "these politicians are attacking mainstream environmental protections — such as the National Estuary Program — and the citizens of San Diego should be outraged. San Diegans should be clamoring at the chance to get into this program."

Hunter says she's upset about the lost opportunity. "Here we had a program that would give us \$1 million to help pay for the future planning of San Diego Bay," says Hunter, "and because these people objected, the [chance] has gone out the door."

The NEP was established under the Clean Water Act in 1987. "San Diego Bay is a perfect candidate for the program because of its important commercial, industrial, and military uses and because of its fisheries and wildlife habitats," explains Hunter.

The program would have provided \$300,000 for super-computers to track

pollution in San Diego Bay. The program would also provide funds for developing a comprehensive plan.

The California EPA invited San Diego to apply for the NEP program in mid-January. Local agencies and environmentalists got together and prepared an application ahead of the March 7 deadline, when Governor Wilson was expected to submit the plan to the federal government. But the plan was pushed off track on March 3, when three industry groups wrote a letter to Judy Johnson, chairwoman of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, opposing San Diego's nomination to the federal program.

Johnson denies that the decision has anything to do with Wilson's political contributions. "I don't know who gives money to the governor. It simply became apparent that we did not have unanimous support," she says.

The industry groups that blocked San Diego's nomination to the NEP are composed of some of Wilson's biggest donors. The Industrial Environmental Association, for example, is made up of 43 manufacturers and businesses including Hughes Aircraft Company, which gave \$47,000 to Wilson; San Diego Gas & Electric (\$42,000); and Helen and David Copley of the Union-Tribune Publishing Company (\$25,250).

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Bay Pollution

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Many of the companies in the association have a history of incurring pollution violations from the EPA. In 1987, the EPA fined Solar Turbines

Inc. of San Diego \$250,000 for discharging polluted wastewater into the City of San Diego's sewer system.

In 1994, Teledyne Inc. agreed to pay \$500,000 to the federal government for discharging chromium-tainted wastewater from its San Diego facility. A 1993 study on "toxic

hotspots" conducted by the EHC named National Steel & Shipbuilding Co., Southwest Marine Inc., General Dynamics Corporation-Convair Division, and Rohr Inc. — all members of the IEA — companies with the highest potential cancer-causing risks in the region.

All three industry groups say they want to protect the bay, but they are worried the estuary program will result in more environmental regulation and increased business costs. "The members of my association were reluctant to receive federal money, because it would probably have strings

attached to it," says Peter Litrenta, a spokesman for the Port Tenants Association. "They were worried that it would result in another layer of bureaucracy.

"This had absolutely nothing to do with political contributions, it never entered

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my mind," he says. "There was no political gesture here. The members of my organization that were opposed to this are the users on the bay, and on an every day basis, they are concerned with the environmental health of the bay."

Patty Krebs, executive director of the Industrial Environmental Association, also says political contributions to Wilson had nothing to do with pulling San Diego's nomination. "This decision was made locally," she says, adding that the nonprofit IEA can't donate to political campaigns.

"Of course, we want to protect the bay, but we aren't sure that we should proceed with this approach right now."

Krebs says one of the problems with the estuary program is that it fails to provide adequate funds once the pollution problems have been identified. "All the NEP gives us is money for developing a comprehensive plan. You get to the implementation phase, and nobody addresses where the money is going to come from. Business would have to pick up a portion of that," says Krebs.

Guidelines also called for the EPA to approve the final bay plan, Krebs says. The agency, she adds, "might require changes and this would mean a loss of local control."

Krebs points out that the Unified Port District is already trying to do much of this same planning in its 1992 Five Year Action Plan For a Clean San Diego Bay, which affects 50 percent of the lands surrounding the bay and about 70 percent of its water.

But Hunter argues that the five-year plan will not reach far enough. "We really need to look decades into the future and plan for the bay. If we don't plan now, there is no guarantee that there will be any resources left to plan for in the future."

Hunter suspects that the industry groups didn't want to disturb the status quo. "Right now there are 20 different agencies responsible for overseeing different parts of the bay," she says. "There is no one who really knows how much total pollution is out

there — how far the fish population has declined, and what the overall health of the marine life is. We need to monitor these things in order to protect the bay in the future."

Hunter continues, "In my experience, the Industrial Environmental Association and the Ports Tenants Association are not groups who are interested in protecting the natural resources. They have blocked the nomination to serve their own interests."

Diane Takvorian, executive director of the Environmental Health Coalition, agrees. "The National Estuary Program is one of the most mainstream approaches to planning for the health of the bay," she says. "If we can't get businesses to agree to this type of minimal planning — which doesn't even really improve the health of the bay — I think we have a very dismal future ahead."

Krebs says her group is committed to environmental protection, and she is confident that San Diego will develop some sort of comprehensive plan. "We don't outright oppose the program, we just want to make certain that we have thoroughly discussed and understood what the exact arrangements are. Protecting the bay is definitely in the best interest of our companies," she says.

According to EPA guidelines, the National Estuary Program required consensus among dischargers, regulators, agencies, and environmentalists in the development of a plan to restore the bay. The plan was supposed to offer solutions to the most critical problems now facing the bay, including storm water and urban runoff pollution; public-health risks associated with swimming near storm drain outlets; and the quality of bay seafood.

San Diego Bay is considered one of the nation's most imperiled coastal areas. Pollution problems in San Diego include spills of fuel, contaminated bilge water, and other waste from military operations and chemical discharges from industry. Health officials warn that some fish have elevated levels of mercury and PCBs. ■

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