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Meet the red-lipped batfish

Reconciliation law offers radiation compensation to more people

Appeals court rules against North Dakota tribes in voting rights case that could go to Supreme Court

Palisades Tahoe ski resort plans new hotels, condos, recreation facilities — but kills water park idea

Didn't Kill Enough Indians" Violent and Shameful Hate Speech Targeting Tribal Nations

ONAP Staffing Updates

Presidential Executive Orders and Memoranda

Scratching the Record (unprecedented assault on knowledge infrastructure of the federal government)

Should bioplastics be counted as compost?

Atomic energy, out of a box? In the rural West, an experimental reactor technology inches closer

Officials celebrate as iconic wetlands see remarkable comeback after years of drought

Audio: Klamath River bounces back following dam removal

Trinidad reconsiders joining study for water pipeline extension as Rancheria connection project moves



Reconciliation law offers radiation compensation to more people

Advocates said current coverage wasn't accounting for large swaths of populations

The reconciliation law signed by President Donald Trump last week will provide greater compensation to more victims of radiation exposure from America's nuclear weapons programs through 2028, putting an end to a yearslong lobbying effort.

The language in the fiscal 2025 law spearheaded by Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., would expand coverage for more populations "downwind" of nuclear testing in the Southwest, as well as add compensation for individuals near uranium refining and disposal sites connected with the Manhattan Project.

The compensation program was established by the 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act that provided financial help and medical screening to those downwind of nuclear testing sites, including people in states such as New Mexico and Arizona, as well as those exposed and sickened through uranium mining and exposure to waste.

Hawley and other advocates of expanding the program said its current coverage wasn't accounting for large swaths of populations, including in Alaska, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee, who have been impacted by exposure connected to the Manhattan Project.

Uranium processed in St. Louis was used in the first atomic bombs, and issues surrounding nuclear waste continue to plague that region, even requiring the closure of an elementary school in 2022 because of contaminated soil.

Hawley's 2024 version of the bill to reauthorize and expand the program was passed by the Senate but died in the House. The law expired more than a year ago, and exposure victims have been unable to file claims since. Another version of Hawley's RECA renewal and expansion measure wasn't included in a fiscal 2025 stopgap spending law enacted at the end of the last Congress despite Hawley and other advocates signaling there was an agreement.

Opponents of Hawley's measure had initially balked at the price, which the Congressional Budget Office in 2023 estimated to be \$147.1 billion over 10 years. A CBO estimate of the reconciliation bill found the RECA language would add \$49.5 billion in federal budget authority between 2025 and 2029.

Aside from expanded geographical coverage, the reconciliation bill allows core drillers and uranium mine and mill remediation workers to qualify for benefits. Uranium miners can claim compensation for a wider range of diseases, including chronic renal disease.

"To all the radiation survivors and nuclear veterans across the country: WE DID IT," Hawley wrote on social media platform X last week. "Today, we have prevailed. Your country thanks you and honors your sacrifice."

The language also expanded the eligible timeframe for so-called downwinders, allowing those with qualifying diseases who lived in New Mexico for at least a year from 1944 to 1962 to receive benefits. It also raised the compensation amount for downwinders and onsite participants with qualifying diseases from \$50,000 and \$75,000, respectively, to \$100,000 for both groups.

“A bright spot in this otherwise terrible reconciliation bill is that it finally allows some of the people harmed by nuclear weapons testing and production to access a federal program from which they were unfairly excluded,” Gretchen Goldman, president of the Union of Concerned Scientists, said in a statement. “That truly is a win for thousands of people across the country, including the people harmed by the first atomic bomb test in New Mexico.

<https://rollcall.com/2025/07/08/reconciliation-law-offers-radiation-compensation-to-more-people/>

Ed note: Please make sure all your Yomba people see this.

Appeals court rules against North Dakota tribes in voting rights case that could go to Supreme Court

https://apnews.com/article/voting-rights-act-redistricting-lawsuits-north-dakota-7d0bfc48f5a335db0a01d2ab66df7377?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=share

A federal appeals court has upheld its decision against two Native American tribes challenging North Dakota's redistricting map.

‘Awesome sense of place’: Settlement ends long-running Lake Tahoe development battle

Palisades Tahoe ski resort plans new hotels, condos, recreation facilities — but kills water park idea

Under a settlement agreement made public July 8, 2025 between Palisades Tahoe, Sierra Watch and the League to Save Lake Tahoe, the ski resort will be permitted to construct 896 new hotel and condominium rooms, commercial space, and a recreation center featuring climbing walls, ziplines, and swimming pools in part of the resort’s main parking lot. (Courtesy of Palisades Tahoe)

More (this case has gone on for 14 years): https://www.mercurynews.com/2025/07/08/awesome-sense-of-place-settlement-ends-long-running-lake-tahoe-development-battle/?utm_email=85834408B47115A944CE9435C9&g2i_eui=U6Qop7ZXyTLDIr5KZLtlUcZHPEyHfUJ%2f&g2i_source=newsletter&lctg=85834408B47115A944CE9435C9&active=no

Didn't Kill Enough Indians" Violent and Shameful Hate Speech Targeting Tribal Nations

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) emphatically condemns the hateful, genocidal statement of Ann Coulter on July 6, 2025, through a post on the social platform X, declaring: "We didn't kill enough Indians." There is no place in society for this direct incitement of hatred and violence toward American Indian and Alaska Native people.

"These words are not provocative social commentary; they are a violent attack on Native people and Tribal Nations. Celebrating genocide against Tribal Nations crosses every moral line," said NCAI President Mark Macarro. "Careless comments like this glorify the darkest chapters of U.S. history and actively endanger Native peoples' lives today. We will not sit silently at attempts to normalize this abhorrent behavior. We demand an immediate retraction and public apology — and we expect leaders of every political persuasion to denounce this abomination without equivocation."

"Free speech does not confer a license to advocate for or justify mass murder — past or present," added NCAI Executive Director Larry Wright, Jr. "When a public figure with more than two million followers romanticizes extermination, it fuels harassment, hate crimes, and political violence. Silence from elected officials and media outlets will only normalize this genocidal history. We call on them to speak up now."

NCAI further demands that X enforce against vitriol like this and send a message that such inciting hate speech will not be tolerated by banning this individual from their platform. Instead of amplifying divisive and inhuman perspectives, let us turn our attention to celebrating the powerful, nation-building contributions of Tribal Nations to the United States.

NCAI encourages all Americans to learn more about the many contributions that Native peoples and Tribal Nations have made and continue to make to this country. Visit a Tribal Nation near you, explore the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., or New York, read from abundant award-winning literature produced by American Indians and Alaska Natives. We encourage all media outlets, elected leaders, educators, and individual Americans to uplift these living stories of service, innovation, and cultural resilience. In centering these and other Native achievements, we reject hatred and misinformation, celebrate our Tribal sovereignty, and honor our shared community and history.

For more than 80 years, NCAI has advanced the inherent sovereign rights of American Indian and Alaska Native Nations and fought for truthful, respectful representation. We will continue to confront negative rhetoric that demeans and threatens our people and build solidarity against hate in all its forms. The next national convening of Tribal Nations, NCAI's 82nd Annual Convention & Marketplace, will be held in Seattle, Washington, in mid-November 2025.

[Download Press Release](#)

[Read the Full Statement](#)

ONAP Staffing Updates

ONAP has experienced several staffing transitions over the past few months. Here are a few recent leadership staffing updates.

Headquarters:

- Hilary Atkin, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary
- Brian Cook, Acting Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary
- Erna Reeves, Director, Headquarters Grants Management (IHBG and IHBG Competitive)
- Rebecca Halloran, Acting Director, Headquarters Grants Management (ICDBG and Tribal HUD VASH)

Southwest Office of Native American Programs

- Floyd Tortalita, Acting Administrator
- Shane Begay, Acting Deputy Administrator

Northern Plains Office of Native American Programs

- Amber Hunter, Acting Administrator (Also Director, Headquarters Grants Evaluation Division)
- Sebastian Dawiskiba, Acting Director, Grants Management Division

Visit ONAP's Codetalk contact information [webpage](#) for Area Office and program specific points of contact.

~~~~~ Presidential Executive Orders and Memoranda

- [Extending the Modification of the Reciprocal Tariff Rates Executive Orders](#) July 7,
- [Ensuring Accountability and Prioritizing Public Safety in Federal Hiring Presidential Memoranda](#) July 7, 2025
- [Ending Market Distorting Subsidies for Unreliable, Foreign-Controlled Energy Sources Executive Orders](#) July 7, 2025
- [Establishing the President's Make America Beautiful Again Commission Executive Orders](#) July 3, 2025

How this group got Trump to sign a pro-environment executive order

“President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday seeking to “Make America Beautiful Again,” establishing a council tasked with conserving public lands, protecting wildlife populations and ensuring clean drinking water while remaining silent on climate change. For an administration that has largely focused on rolling back climate regulations and boosting the oil

industry, the order is a first nod at outlining a cohesive environmental policy. The move is the culmination of a months-long campaign by Benji Backer, a 27-year-old self-described conservative environmentalist, who brought a draft of the order to the White House in February. But many environmental groups questioned the administration's commitment to environmental protection. "Given the all-out assault on clean water, public lands and wildlife protection from the Trump administration, it's hard not to be skeptical of anything it announces," said Andrew Wetzler, senior vice president for nature at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group, in a statement. ... " [Read more from the Washington Post.](#)

- [**Making America Beautiful Again by Improving Our National Parks**](#)
[Executive Orders](#) July 3, 2025

[**160th Anniversary of the United States Secret Service, 2025**](#)
[Proclamations](#) July 2, 2025

- [**Nominations Sent to the Senate**](#)
[Nominations & Appointments](#) July 1, 2025

[**Presidential Permit: Authorizing Junction Pipeline Company, LLC to Construct, Connect, Operate, and Maintain Pipeline Facilities at Toole County, Montana, at the International Boundary Between the United States and Canada**](#)
[Presidential Memoranda](#) June 30, 2025

- [**National Security Presidential Memorandum/NSPM-5**](#)
[Presidential Memoranda](#) June 30, 2025

- [**Providing for the Revocation of Syria Sanctions**](#)
[Executive Orders](#) June 30, 2025

- [Presidential Memoranda](#) [June 30, 2025](#)

[**Presidential Permit Authorizing Steel Reef US Pipelines LLC To Operate and Maintain Pipeline Facilities at Burke County, North Dakota, at the International Boundary Between the United States and Canada**](#) [Presidential Memoranda](#) [June 30, 2025](#)

[**Simplifying the Funding of Energy Infrastructure and Critical Mineral and Material Projects**](#) [Presidential Memoranda](#) [June 30, 2025](#)

[**Presidential Permit Authorizing the City of Eagle Pass, Texas, to Expand and Continue to Maintain and Operate a Vehicular and Pedestrian Border Crossing at the Camino Real International Bridge Land Port of Entry**](#) [Presidential Memoranda](#) [June 20, 2025](#)

[**Further Extending the TikTok Enforcement Delay**](#) [Executive Orders](#) [June 19, 2025](#)

Scratching the Record

On the long history of governments attempting to restrict access to documents about their inner workings.
by Asheesh Kapur Siddique

Since re-taking office in January 2025, President Donald Trump has engaged in an unprecedented assault on the knowledge infrastructure of the federal government. He has canceled billions of dollars in grants for research at institutions such as the [National Institutes of Health](#), the [National Science Foundation](#), and [National Endowment for the Humanities](#); moved to transform the Smithsonian Institution's museums, galleries, and research centers into [propaganda outfits](#) dedicated to rooting out “wokeness” from the study of the past; [taken over the Kennedy Center](#) and pledged to purge it of “woke culture”; [removed information from government websites](#); and dismissed the [Librarian of Congress](#). Of particular concern to historians, Trump in February fired the Archivist of the United States, Colleen Shogan, and many other staff members at the National Archives, entrusting control of this executive branch agency to his [secretary of state](#), Marco Rubio. Since the National Archives is tasked with overseeing the management and preservation of federal government records, many [rightly fear](#) that the administration is, in the words of the American Historical Association, “render[ing] it impossible for Americans to learn about and from the past.” If you’re having one of those days when you look in the mirror and don’t like what you see, consider this:

Indeed, in seizing control of the National Archives, the Trump administration is taking aim at a central, widely shared if often unarticulated belief about the nature of public records preservation: that the bureaucratic past should be preserved and managed independent of political interference. As an op-ed in the *New York Times* [recently argued](#), the public should have a “right to remember,” and “what gets preserved and what vanishes should not be decided based on ideology.” This belief is surprisingly tenuous: it has constantly been contested even from its initial articulation, and it is in no way bound up with the creation of American democracy. Rather, the idea that public records should be preserved and made available free of political ideology is a surprisingly recent development. Trump’s effort to manipulate the federal infrastructure of historical knowledge is a reminder that the past is a site of constant political contestation — and that the public must be vigilant and insistent that our archives are managed toward democratic ends.

There is nothing new about governments seeking to control records in order to protect their reputations and facilitate their preferred political outcomes. Centralized state archives began to emerge in Europe in the 1500s and 1600s, as secular governments sought to consolidate control over territory against the competing authority of churches. Officials envisioned their purpose in what we would now consider explicitly political terms: as instruments to enhance, support, and bolster their own institutional power. At a time when the power of the ruler was considered to emanate from the sanction of God, and in which rulers made vast claims to control over the lives of those over whom they ruled, the collection, ordering, and preservation of knowledge was considered vital to the successful exercise of that authority. As one 17th century writer [put it](#), “the entire force of an archive, and of its records, depends on the authority of him in whose power the archives are.” This was a world not made up of citizens bearing rights that governments were obligated not to violate, but instead of subjects who bore relationships of

obligation and obedience to their sovereigns in exchange for safety against military attack. In the governing cultures of early modern states — which the historical sociologist Charles Tilly [famously described](#) in 1982 as “protection rackets” whose rulers’ penchant for coercively eliminating rivals both inside and outside their territories bore a striking resemblance to the operations of “organized crime” — there was simply no expectation that anyone but rulers and their authorized servants could dictate the terms on which the access and control of official records proceeded. Indeed, as [recent scholarship](#) has emphasized, the powerful have consistently sought to manipulate the past to defend their preferred political outcomes. Reacting against the Protestant Reformation, for example, Catholic authorities sought to [censor books](#) they believed challenged their authority. Sixteenth century rulers in Venice [sought to suppress records of popular revolt](#). The English East India Company over the 17th and 18th centuries [continuously invoked](#) its archival holdings to defend its commercial sovereignty as rooted upon historical precedents. For much of history, it has been normal for elites to manipulate the past to protect their privileges.

Today, by contrast, the idea of politicians controlling the terms on which the past is written may strike us as an affront to democracy — something we associate with [authoritarian regimes](#) elsewhere. Yet, the sanctity of archival practices was not part of the founding ethos of the United States. Even as early Americans across the hemisphere turned against the monarchies of Europe at the end of the 18th century, independence did not result in any widely accepted belief in the new United States that the public should have ready access to government archives — or that the management of these archives should be free from political manipulation. In 1789, during its first session, Congress [passed the Records Act](#). It compelled the secretary of state to oversee the publication of congressional legislation for public knowledge and the preservation of such legislation for posterity, and to have “custody” over the papers and records of Congress and other government agencies. Yet, the Act said nothing about whether anyone else had a right of access to these records beyond what [government itself chose to publish](#). Moreover, the federal government at times used records in highly political ways — perhaps most notably in its handling of compensation claims from Americans who had lost property in the aftermath of the Civil War and who appealed to the government for restitution. As the historian Yael Sternhell [has demonstrated](#), government used records to deny claimants recompense by showing that they had supported the Confederacy. Subsequently, Sternhell shows, government officials at the War Department curated the publication of the multi-volume *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* in the closing decades of the 19th century, which presented a highly selective version of the war that diminished the accomplishments of African American veterans, contributing to the broader post-Reconstruction erosion of full African American citizenship.

Even the creation of the National Archives and the position of Archivist of the United States in 1934 did not mean that the preservation of government paperwork was now permanently free of political control. Only with the [1946 Administrative Procedure Act](#), an effort to make government appear “responsible” in the face of [concerns about the threat of fascism](#), were federal government agencies compelled to make their records publicly available. In 1949, control of the National Archives passed to the General Services Administration, [limiting the institution’s autonomy](#). And the status of presidential records as “public records” — with the federal

government, rather than presidents themselves, designated as their proper custodian — was only clarified after the Watergate scandal with the 1978 [Presidential Records Act](#). The papers of [members of Congress](#) and those of [federal judges](#) continue to be considered the personal property of their creators. Even the autonomy of the National Archives itself is more recent than many think. In the midst of Watergate, Richard Nixon signed a now [infamous agreement](#) with the then-head of the General Services Administration, Arthur Sampson, allowing the president to retain control of his records. Partly in response to [complaints](#) about the National Archives' politicization, Congress in 1984 passed the [National Archives and Records Administration Act](#), which established the body as [an independent government agency](#), and made it explicit that the Archivist of the United States should be appointed “without regard to political affiliations and solely on the basis of the professional qualifications required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the office of Archivist.”

The legitimate outrage around Trump's shocking decision to fire the Archivist nevertheless risks obscuring the relatively proximate development of policies clarifying the “public” nature of official records and the independence of the National Archives — and its limited applicability to Congress and the Judiciary, since both members of Congress and judges retain control over their own records. We may want to believe that the government's responsibility to preserve its records without political bias — and the public's ability to access those records — are fundamental aspects of American democracy and deeply rooted in the country's founding principles. Yet history demonstrates that this is not true: both the political independence of the National Archives and the classification of many government records as “public” only emerged out of a long struggle. That said, there is no doubt that in firing Colleen Shogan and bringing the institution in-house, Trump has engaged in an unprecedented politicization of this government agency. Despite the precarious nature of the National Archives' institutional autonomy, [no president before Trump had ever fired the Archivist of the United States](#). Nor has any president also embarked on the systematic dismissal of the National Archives' staff, [which Trump has also begun to do](#). While the administration gave no explicit reason for the firing of Shogan or the other staff members, despite [the law](#) stating that the president must “communicate” to Congress “the reasons” for the archivist's “removal,” there are grounds to believe that Trump is motivated by political animus. Shogan was in office when the National Archives [sought to retrieve government records](#) that Trump had taken with him into his private custody after his first term ended in 2021, a development that eventually resulted in his [criminal prosecution](#) for violating the Presidential Records Act. Given Trump's [well-known penchant](#) for revenge against anyone who defies his aspiration to absolute authority, it is not hard to imagine why he has taken aim at an agency he accuses of undermining him simply for insisting that he follow the law.

In firing Shogan, however, Trump violates the [fundamental requirement](#) governing appointments to the position as clarified by the 1984 National Archives and Records Administration Act: that the Archivist should be appointed based on professional, rather than partisan qualifications. Instead, Trump seems to want to return to a world in which rulers treated archives as political tools. He seeks to erode the important developments that have, over the course of American history, both expanded access to the nation's heritage and gradually established the relative independence of government records from political manipulation. The autonomy that the National Archives has until recently enjoyed was by no means foreordained: it emerged only out

of political struggle, with far more proximate origins than we may think. Let's fight to preserve this hard-won autonomy — for the sake of our past, but also our present and future.

[*Asheesh Kapur Siddique*](#) is an assistant professor of history at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and the author of [*The Archive of Empire: Knowledge, Conquest, and the Making of the Early Modern British World*](#).

Should bioplastics be counted as compost? Debate pits farmers against manufacturers

“Greg Pryor began composting yard and food waste for San Francisco in 1996, and today he oversees nine industrial-sized composting sites in California and Oregon that turn discarded banana peels, coffee grounds, chicken bones and more into a dark, nutrient-rich soil that farmers covet for their fields and crops. His company, Recology, processes organic waste from cities and municipalities across the Bay Area, Central Valley, Northern California, Oregon and Washington — part of a growing movement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing food waste in landfills. But, said Pryor, if bioplastic and compostable food packaging manufacturers’ get their way, the whole system could collapse. At issue is a 2021 California law, known as Assembly Bill 1201, which requires that products labeled “compostable” must actually break down into compost, not contaminate soil or crops with toxic chemicals, and be readily identifiable to both consumers and solid waste facilities. ... ” [Read more from the LA Times](#).

‘A self-inflicted tragedy’: Congress approves reversal of US climate policy

“The U.S. House of Representatives voted 218-214 on Thursday to pass President Donald Trump’s sweeping domestic policy bill, greenlighting deep cuts to America’s social safety net and the decimation of the country’s only federal climate strategy. Democrats uniformly opposed the bill, while all but two House Republicans supported it. “This bill will leave America a far crueler and weaker place,” said Robert Weissman, co-president of the nonprofit Public Citizen, in a statement. It “races the United States and the world toward climate catastrophe, ending support for renewable energy that is absolutely vital to avert worst-case climate scenarios.” The so-called Big Beautiful Bill has now been approved by both chambers of Congress; all it needs now is Trump’s signature before it can become law. Trump is expected to sign it during an evening ceremony on July 4, Independence Day, according to White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. ... ” [Read more from Grist](#).

Atomic energy, out of a box? In the rural West, an experimental reactor technology inches closer to reality.

” ... The anti-nuclear movement’s grassroots legacy has echoed across the American West and still lingers as a new generation of reactors, known as small modular reactors (SMRs), sparks renewed debate from Oregon to Wyoming over nuclear energy’s role in the transition from older power sources pouring greenhouse gases into the atmosphere to newer, cleaner ones. Today’s debate is shaped by a new context: the accelerating climate crisis. While past activists feared the risks of nuclear power, many now weigh those concerns against the urgent need for rapid decarbonization. The question is no longer just whether nuclear is safe, but whether it’s necessary. Developers bill SMRs as cleaner, cheaper, and more flexible than their towering predecessors. TerraPower, a company co-founded by Bill Gates, backs them, and tech giants like Google and Amazon view them as a low-carbon solution to meet the skyrocketing energy demand, particularly for the growing number of data centers needed to meet the exploding

demand for artificial intelligence. Do they trade safety, water, and local control for uncertain solutions to power a data-hungry future? Or are they a necessary element of that future? ... ” [Read more from & the West.](#)

Officials celebrate as iconic wetlands see remarkable comeback after years of drought:

‘Revitalizing a habitat that had been idle for years’“Record-breaking snowfall at the Klamath Basin flooded 23,000 acres of the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges, bringing the wetlands back to near full capacity, where it has not been since 2008. The wetlands are actively being refilled with an additional 14,000 acres of water as snow continues to melt. “This lifeblood source of water is revitalizing a habitat that had been idle for years,” an article for Western Outdoor News reported. Even privately owned lands beyond the refuge have been flooded by local farmers, adding to the 30,000 acres of privately owned agricultural fields that provide foraging grounds for migrating waterfowl in the Pacific Flyway, which is a major north-south flyway for migratory birds in the Americas. ... ” [Read more from The Cool Down.](#)

Audio: Klamath River bounces back following dam removal

“The Klamath Basin is a large, beautiful area of southern Oregon and far Northern California. This area has long been celebrated for fishing, hunting, agriculture. The river has been the center of life for many tribes who rely on salmon and trout for food. There are rich cultures still there, and their lives revolve around the fish and the river. The Klamath was once the third-largest salmon run on the entire West Coast. And those numbers really crashed after the construction of four major dams during the early part of the last century. The dams had produced electric power, but they weren’t designed to coexist well with fish. And dams have a limited lifespan. It would have cost a ton of money to update them. And there was much more support to take them down. This was something tribes and others had wanted for decades. And this effort has allowed the river to be reborn in a more natural state. Something else in this area is that land is increasingly being returned to tribal control. Recently, about 15,000 acres were turned over from a conservation group to the Yurok. So this is a time of a lot of change and revitalization along the Klamath.” [Listen at KQED.](#)

Trinidad to reconsider joining engineering study for water pipeline extension as Rancheria connection project moves forward

“As the Trinidad Rancheria slowly but surely works toward securing a source of water for the multi-story Hyatt hotel it wants to build next to The Heights Casino, the City of Trinidad will take a fresh look at whether or not to upgrade its own municipal water supply from that same source — a mainline extension from the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD). The Rancheria is currently working on a draft feasibility study analyzing the potential connection to an extended HBMWD mainline. Trinidad residents, meanwhile, have been divided, sometimes bitterly, over the question of whether the city needs a more reliable and voluminous water supply. ... ” [Read more from Lost Coast Outpost.](#)